

Winter Assistance in Aroostook County Resource Guide for Older People

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Aroostook Agency on Aging: Check out our Benefits Checklist – a guide to quickly screen potential eligibility for several Federal and State benefits that may put cash in the pocket of older people and disabled people. Access on-line at www.aroostookaging.org. Available also by calling 764-3396, toll free 1-800-439-1789.

ELECTRICITY HELP

Electric Utility Companies: Special Payment Arrangements may be made for electric service. During the period November 15 through April 15, customers who cannot pay their utility bill because of reasons that may cause their household to be deprived of food, medicine, heat or some other necessity can declare eligibility for a “Special Payment Arrangement”. Customer whose income does not exceed 150% of federal poverty guidelines or who are eligible to participate in the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) may qualify for a “Special Payment Arrangement”. Contact electric utility to make special payment arrangement.

- **Eastern Maine Electric Coop 1-800-696-7444**
- **Houlton Water Company 532-2259**
- **Maine Public Service Company 1-877-655-4448**
- **Van Buren Light & Power 868-3321**

Low Income Assistance Program (LIAP): Electric utility companies have low income assistance programs designed to provide bill payment assistance/credits to electrical accounts of households that receive a Federal LIHEAP benefit, are not tenants of subsidized housing and meet other eligibility criteria. Contact utilities directly to determine details.

- Eastern Maine Electric Coop 1-800-696-7444
- Houlton Water Company 532-2259
- Maine Public Service Company 1-877-655-4448
- Van Buren Light & Power 868-3321

FOOD

Food Bank/Pantries – Provides food to needy people.

- **Agape Food Pantry** serves Benedicta, Dyer Brook, Island Falls, Mt. Chase, Patten, Sherman, Staceyville, call for information 463-2449 or 463-2844. 69 Sewall St., Island Falls

- **Ashland Food Pantry** serves Ashland, Garfield, Masardis, Oxbow, Portage open 2nd Tuesday monthly 5 pm-7 pm and 3rd Thursday 2 pm-4 pm; 31 Station St. Ashland 435-6340, 435-6015
- **Caribou Ecumenical Food Pantry** serves Caribou area, Monday and Thursday 1-3 PM, 199 Madawaska Road, Caribou 493-4860
- **Caribou Goodwill Pantry** serves Caribou and surrounding towns, 872 Main St. Caribou Call Betty Keirstead for access 496-4201
- **Caribou United Baptist Church** serves Caribou, Perham, Wade, Washburn, Woodland. Wednesday 7:30 am – 11 am, 74 High St. Caribou 496-7881
- **Community Cupboard of Mars Hill** serves Blaine, Bridgewater, Easton, E Pltn, Mars Hill, Westfield. Open 2nd Tues monthly 1-3 pm; 4th Tues 6-8 pm, 10 ACI St. Mars Hill 429-8022
- **Fort Kent Food Pantry** serves Allagash, Daigle, Fort Kent, Guerette, St. Francis, St. John, Soldier Pond open Monday through Friday 8:30 am-5 pm, 342 West Main St. Fort Kent 834-5135
- **Friends Helping Friends** serves Fort Fairfield. Call 8 AM-7PM to arrange pick-up, delivery available to elderly. Telephone 472-3041, 472-3802. 94 Presque Isle St. Fort Fairfield
- **Grace Interfaith Food Table** serves Presque Isle, Mapleton, Chapman, Crouseville areas, open Monday 9 AM-Noon and 1-4 PM. 24 Industrial St., Presque Isle 764-8584 and 762-7711
- **Greater Fort Kent Ecumenical Food Pantry** serves Allagash, Daigle, Fort Kent, Guerette, New Canada, St. Francis, St. John open 2nd & 4th Wednesday 9 am-10:30 am and 1st, 3rd, 5th Wednesday 5 pm-6 pm, 229 West Main St, Suite 103 (rear entrance) Fort Kent 834-4126
- **Limestone Ecumenical Community Food Pantry** serves Limestone, Van Buren, Fort Fairfield, Caswell, Caribou; call to schedule pick-up 325-4148, St. Louis Catholic Church at 100 Main St. Limestone
- **Ludlow Food Pantry** serves Ludlow area Thursday and Friday 3-9 PM, 831 Ludlow Road, 532-7743
- **M & M Ministries Parsons Pantry** serves central Aroostook communities, open Monday thru Friday 1 pm-5 pm. 21 Parsons St. Presque Isle 764-0758
- **Nature's Bounty Food Pantry** serves southern Aroostook towns, open Monday through Saturday 9 am-5 pm, in Smyrna Mills phone 521-4239
- **Orient Food Pantry** serves Orient area Monday & Friday 9 AM-2 PM at 82 School House Road, Orient 448-7729
- **Our Lady of the Valley Food Pantry** serves Cross Lake, Guerette, St. Agatha, Sinclair open Tuesday 9 am-12 pm St. Joseph Catholic Church, 413 Shore Road, Sinclair 543-6634
- **Salvation Army of Houlton Food Pantry** serves Aroostook County open Monday, Wednesday, Friday 10 am-2 pm; 12 Court St. Houlton 532-2322
- **St. Peter-Chanel Food Pantry** serves Van Buren, Cyr Pltn open 2nd & 4th Friday 3:30-4 PM; 180 Main St. Van Buren 868-2718

- **St. Gerard-Mt. Carmel Food Pantry** serves Grand Isle & Lille open Monday through Saturday 9 am-5 pm, 1009 Main St. Grand Isle 895-3305
- **St. Joseph Parish Food Pantry** serves Caswell, Hamlin; call for information 325-4314. St. Joseph Catholic Church Route 1-A, Hamlin
- **St. Luce Food Pantry** serves Frenchville, call for information 728-4635; 441 US Rt. 1 at St. Luce Catholic Church. Food delivery can be arranged
- **St. Mary's Food Pantry** serves Eagle Lake, Plaisted, T16 R8, Winterville open 2nd & 3rd Wednesday 7 am-12 pm at St. Mary's Catholic Church, Church St. Eagle Lake 444-5404
- **St. Mary's Food Pantry** serves Houlton, Amity, Cary, Dyer Brook, Hodgdon, Littleton, Merrill, Monticello, Moro, New Limerick, Smyrna open Tuesday & Thursday 1 pm-3 pm; 112 Military St. Houlton 532-9122
- **St. Thomas & St. David Food Pantry** serves Madawaska and St. Davis, open 1st & 3rd Wednesdays, 8 am-10 am 105 12th Ave. Madawaska 728-3841
- Sherman-Upper Valley Economic Council serves Sherman area at Sherman Municipal Building, Monday thru Friday 8 AM-1 PM 365-7631
- **The Lord's Pantry** serves Connor, New Sweden, Perham, Stockholm, Westmanland, Woodland open 2nd Saturday monthly 8 am-11 am; New Sweden First Baptist Church, 17 Westmanland Road 896-3392
- **Town of Haynesville Food Pantry** serves Haynesville open Monday, Wednesday 7:30 am-1 pm and Thursday 7 am-10 am, 16 Danforth Road, Haynesville 448-2239
- **Town of Ludlow Food Pantry** serves Hammond, Hodgdon, Houlton, Linneus, Littleton, Ludlow, Monticello, New Limerick, Oakfield open 2nd Thursday monthly 3 pm-6 pm, 831 Ludlow Road, Ludlow 532-7743
- **Town of Orient Food Pantry** serves Orient open Monday through Friday 11 am-1 pm, 82 School House Road, Orient 448-7729
- **Washburn Soup Kitchen/Pantry** serves Washburn area. 18 Trafton St. Washburn; Tuesday & Thursday 3-5 PM. Telephone 455-4900

General Assistance (see page 5) can provide help with food purchases for eligible people.

Prepared Meals

- **Aroostook Agency on Aging Senior Dining Centers** provide hot meals to all residents of Aroostook County age 60 or older. Donation is requested to help with cost of meal. Please call between 10 AM-noon a day in advance to assure a meal will be available and for meal service time. Locations are –
Caribou – Lyndon Heights Housing telephone 498-8197
Fort Kent Senior Center, 20 Pine St. Fort Kent telephone 834-6453
Madawaska Senior Center – 291 Newberry Drive, Madawaska phone 728-3879
Presque Isle High School (Wednesday only when school is in session) 764-3396
Van Buren Community Center on Champlain St. 868-3931
- **Aroostook Agency on Aging Meals on Wheels** provide home delivered meals to older people who are homebound and unable to prepare meal for themselves or lack

- **Central Aroostook Senior Meal Program** provides hot meals Tuesday when school is in session at Central Aroostook High School for people age 60 and older in Blaine, Bridgewater, E. Plantation and Mars Hill. Call Wendy at 425-2811 before 9 am on Tuesday. Small fee is charged to cover cost of meal.
- **Caribou Bread of Life Soup Kitchen** provides hot meals and take-out meals for the homebound if ordered before 9 AM on Monday through Thursday with meals served between 4 pm-5 pm. No cost, all ages. Serves residents of Caribou, Conner, Fort Fairfield, Limestone, New Sweden, Perham, Presque Isle, Stockholm, Van Buren, Woodland. 60 Collins St., Caribou 493-4858
- **Martha and Mary's Kitchen** serves residents of central Aroostook area. No cost, all ages. Monday and Friday 1 pm-5 pm, Tuesday and Wednesday 2 pm-5 pm; Thursday hours vary. 21 Parsons St. Presque Isle 764-0758
- **Washburn Soup Kitchen** serves residents of Washburn area providing hot meals and food for delivery to the homebound. No cost, all ages. Tuesday and Thursday 3-5 PM. Telephone 455-4900.

FUEL ASSISTANCE – NON-EMERGENCY

Aroostook County Action Program (ACAP): call 768-3053 or toll free 1-800-585-3053 to schedule an appointment to apply for help with heating fuel.

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- **Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP):** Provides eligible homeowners and renter's help with heating costs. The income guideline for a non-elderly single person household is \$1,805 monthly or \$5,415 for the three-month income test period and \$2,428 monthly or \$7,285 for the three-month income test period for a two person household. If anyone in the household is over age 60, below age 2, or has a health condition that puts them at risk for hypothermia, the income limit is higher. **The income guideline for an elderly single person or hypothermia risk household is \$2,076 monthly or \$6,227 for the three-month income test period and \$2,793 monthly or \$8,378 for the three-month income test period for a two-person elderly or hypothermia risk household.** Households having income over the guidelines may provide out-of-pocket non-reimbursed medical bills paid within the same income test period. Twelve-month income guidelines are also available at ACAP. Home visits may be arranged for people who are unable to travel because of medical reasons. NOTE: **this is not an emergency program;** it may take approximately six weeks between the time of application until the benefit is received.

Citizens Energy/CITGO Oil Company: No firm information on program for 2010, expect details to be announced after January 1, 2010. In 2009 provided eligible people with

100 gallons of heating fuel at no cost. Get information by calling 1-877-JOE-4-OIL (1-877-563-4645) or go to www.citizensenergy.com.

FUEL ASSISTANCE – ALMOST OUT/EMERGENCY HELP

After Business Hours/Nights/Weekend/Holiday for Help or Information:

Call 211 for information on energy help. One telephone number – 211 – connects you with people that can provide information on a full range of health and human services. They are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week including holidays. For information on energy or heating assistance especially at times when most of the agencies cited in this guide may be closed, call 211.

Aroostook County Action Program (ACAP): call 768-3053 or toll free 1-800-585-3053 for help with heating fuel.

- **Energy Crisis Intervention Program (ECIP):** Provides emergency financial help to buy home heating fuel, assistance to prevent electrical disconnection if the household is threatened with disconnection because of a broken payment arrangement with a utility and that disconnection will stop the heating system or pays for a minor home heating system repair. Must be LIHEAP eligible within the last year and be down to less than 1/4 tank of fuel at the time of application. Limited funds are only available periodically from November 1, 2009 through March 31, 2010. Maximum amount of help to household \$400 per program year.
- **Keep ME Warm:** Provides grants to homeowners and tenants who may be over the income limits for LIHEAP assistance and need help with home heating. Note: Availability of help is based on funding being available and is dependent on donations from individuals, churches and businesses willing to help. Contact ACAP to make a donation to this fund. You may specify that the help be limited to people in a specific community if that is your desire.

General Assistance (GA-Local Welfare) for Heat and Electric Assistance: Each city, town and plantation must provide for General Assistance. In unorganized townships, Maine Department of Health and Human Services has contracted to handle requests for GA. Non-emergency General Assistance has specific income criteria and income must be at or below these Maine Department of Health and Human Services designated thresholds to qualify. Emergency General Assistance (22 MRSA S.4308(2)) provides that “a person who does not have sufficient resources to provide one or more basic necessities in an emergency is eligible for emergency general assistance, even when the applicant has been found ineligible for non-emergency general assistance except (under certain circumstances).” It goes on to state “municipality may provide emergency general assistance when the municipality determines that an emergency is imminent and that failure to provide assistance may result in undue hardship and unnecessary costs.” Municipalities generally require verification of who lives in the household, monthly income of each household member, proof of expenses for the month (where/how money was spent), verification of any money that may be in bank account. Contact your city or town office to apply. Residents of unorganized territory contact...

- T16R4 (Big Madawaska) Stockholm Town Office 896-5659
- T17 R3 Van Buren Town Office 868-2886
- T17 R4 (Sinclair, Long Lake) Marie Picard 543-6233 or 543-6117
- Benedicta, Silver Ridge, TA R5 Jacqueline Roach 465-9983
- T10 R4 (Squa Pan) Ashland Town Office 435-2311
- E Township Blaine Town Office 425-2611
- Connor Caribou City Office 493-3324
- TA R2 Linneus Town Office 532-6182

Aroostook Agency on Aging: May provide emergency help to people age 60 and older who are near out of fuel and lack the personal resources or family help and not qualify for General Assistance. Aid depends on whether the agency has sufficient donations to cover the cost of fuel and delivery. United Way of Aroostook is a huge help to us and we encourage contributions to their “Keep Aroostook Warm” initiative. To get emergency help contact us at 764-3396, toll free 1-800-439-1789.

Helping Neighbors: contact Helping Hands for Children and Families at 764-7664 and toll free 1-800-464-7664. Helping Neighbors is funded with donations from individuals, churches and businesses as well as special donations channeled through United Way of Aroostook. Provides small 0% interest loans to people with very limited income to meet their basic needs such as home heating, home heating system repair and utilities. Note: Availability of help is based on funding being available and is dependent on donations from individuals, churches and businesses willing to help. Contact Helping Hands to make a donation to this fund. You may specify that the help be limited to people in a specific community if that is your desire.

Salvation Army: contact Houlton office at 532-2322. Provides small grants to help with utility disconnects, evictions, heating fuel assistance, food and clothing. Note: Availability of help is based on funding available and is dependent on donations from individuals, churches and businesses willing to help. Contact Salvation Army to make a donation to this fund. May specify that the help be limited to people in a specific community if that is your desire.

FUEL DELIVERY

Consumer Right to Fuel Delivery: Between October 15 and April 30 heating fuel dealers must make small deliveries of at least 20 gallons if you can pay cash on delivery or if you have a government guaranteed payment for the fuel (such as a LIHEAP credit or General Assistance Voucher). Even if you owe the fuel dealer money, the fuel dealer must still deliver fuel if you can pay cash on delivery or if you have a government guaranteed payment (such as a LIHEAP credit or General Assistance Voucher). This does not mean that the dealer must drop everything and make an emergency delivery if you call. It does mean that, at the latest, a dealer must deliver oil to you on the next scheduled delivery trip to your area. If you are an established customer (means you purchased fuel twice previously from the dealer) and the dealer regularly provides emergency deliveries or unscheduled deliveries to

other established customers, the dealer must do the same for you provided you can pay cash on delivery and you order at least 20 gallons. **If the dealer makes an emergency or unscheduled delivery, the dealer has the right to charge you extra, over and above the cost of the fuel.** To make a consumer complaint to the Attorney General's Office call toll free 1-800-436-2131.

FURNACE/HEATING SYSTEM REPAIR

Aroostook County Action Program (ACAP): call 768-3053 or toll free 1-800-585-3053 for help with furnace and heating system repair.

- **Central Heating Improvement Program:** Provides assistance to LIHEAP eligible homeowners to perform energy-related repairs. May provide help with furnace replacement if furnace has been inspected by a licensed technician and determined to be hazardous.

Maine Department of Health and Human Services: southern Aroostook call 1-800-432-7338; central Aroostook call 1-800-432-7366; north Aroostook 1-800-432-7340

- Families with children in household that receive support such as TANF, Food Stamps, MaineCare may qualify for an annual one-time payment of \$150 to assist with paying a broken "Special Payment Arrangement" with electricity supplier if their source of heat is electricity and disconnection may result. The \$150 does not extend to other sources of heat, only electricity. Up to \$250 may be available to assist with rental payment if eviction is imminent or emergency housing is necessary. Up to \$500 may be available to assist with payment for furnace repair, chimney repair, well/water system repair. All payments are made directly to vendor.

FURNACE/HEATING SYSTEM REPLACEMENT:

Credit Unions and Energy Assistance: Some credit unions are offering special low interest rates to members for heating system improvements and/or conversion to less expensive fuel alternatives. If you are a member of a credit union, check with them to find out what they might be offering to help with the cost of energy.

Maine State Housing Authority: telephone 1-800-452-4668

- Home Energy Loan Program (HELP) – Offers loans through commercial lenders at a low fixed interest rate of 3.95% for home improvements increasing energy efficiency. Loan amounts can range from \$2,800-\$20,000 payable over 15 years. Note: no financial institutions in Aroostook County participate. Aroostook residents may work through an out-of-County lender. Contact MSHA for list of lenders.

US Department of Agriculture/Rural Development Office: Presque Isle office services Aroostook County, contact 764-4157.

- **504 Grant Program** – Grants of up to \$7,500 may be made to low-income homeowners age 62 and older to assist in removing hazards in home to health and safety. This may include weatherization including replacement of windows, doors,

- **504 Loan Program** – eligible individuals and families may borrow up to \$20,000 at interest rates as low as 1% to make home improvements including heating system upgrades, weatherization, roof repairs.

WEATHERIZING – Saving Energy

Energy Auditors (Certified by Maine State Housing Authority): Certified energy auditor can provide a detailed analysis of home heating loss risk and recommend cost effective remedies.

- **Aroostook County Action Program (ACAP)** employs weatherization specialists certified as energy auditors. Contact them through ACAP, P.O. Box 1116, Presque Isle, ME 04769; telephone 768-3023 or 1-800-432-7881. Contact person is Rob Bragdon at extension 651.
- **Maine Public Service Company (MPS)** certified energy auditors specialize in reviewing electrical energy usage and can recommend more efficient ways to utilize electric energy. Can be contacted through MPS at 760-2300. Richard Green rgreen@mainepublicservice.com; Andrew McNeally amcneally@mainepublicservice.com
- Brad Bragg, Mar Car Solar, 1060 Washburn Road, Washburn, ME 04786 telephone 455-4628, cell 227-1316, marcarsolar@yahoo.com
- A complete list of Maine Certified Energy Auditors is available at www.mainehousing.org/ENERGYAuditors.aspx

Aroostook County Action Program (ACAP) Weatherization Program: call 768-3053 or toll free 1-800-585-3053. Provides assistance to LIHEAP eligible homeowners to improve home energy efficiency. Note: this program is not readily available, there is a waiting list of approved applicants.

Credit Unions and Energy Assistance: Some credit unions offer low interest rates to members for home improvements to save on energy costs. If you are a member of a credit union, check to find out what they might be offering to help with the cost of energy.

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- **504 Grant Program** – Grants of up to \$7,500 may be made to low-income homeowners age 62 and older to assist in removing hazards in home to health and safety. This may include weatherization including replacement of windows, doors, roof work, and defective heating systems. Note: not readily available, there is a waiting list for grants.
- **504 Loan Program** – eligible individuals and families may borrow up to \$20,000 at interest rates as low as 1% to make home improvements including heating system upgrades, weatherization, roof repairs.