

WINTER ENERGY PRICE INCREASE

How much is it expected to increase?

Energy prices through the winter will be increasing, but by how much? Although we can't say exactly how much as there are several variable factors (weather, global issues, politics, supply), we want to give our customers an estimate of these increases. Customers should anticipate a 15 to 25% increase in their current electric bill, while gas customers can expect an increase in their natural gas bill by as much as 30%. **It is important to note that these numbers are just estimates; real amounts may vary (higher or lower) due to the above-mentioned factors.**

What can you do to help you save?

Although there are factors beyond our control that impact your bill, the following tips and tricks can help you save money on your bill during the winter season:

- Keep curtains and blinds open during the day and close them when the sun goes down
- Weather strip and air seal doors, windows, and drafty spots
- Take out AC units from windows and keep dampers on fireplaces when not in use
- Reset the water heater thermostat a few degrees lower (temperature difference is minimal but make sure that you keep the temperature above 120 degrees)
- Program or set thermostats a few degrees cooler, and set it 7-10 degrees cooler overnight
- Consider a free home energy audit and replace old equipment with new energy efficient equipment

Why the increase?

Due to regional, national, and global factors, WMGLD energy prices are increasing this winter. Natural gas and wholesale electricity markets are heavily influenced by factors beyond WMGLD's control. Inflation is at an all-time high as we continue to recover from the pandemic, and a general increase in prices, amplified by the Russian invasion of Ukraine, has caused a significant increase in the price of gas and subsequently, electricity. While the WMGLD has taken proactive steps to shield customers from the full brunt of these global increases, there will still be an impact.



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Who to contact for fuel assistance?

Fuel Assistance through Lynn Economic Opportunity (LEO)

- Contact our local fuel assistance agency, LEO, online at <https://leoinc.org/services/fuel-assistance-home-heating/> or by calling **781.581.7220** and asking about how to enroll in the following programs, if applicable to you:
 - o Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
 - Program is designed to help pay some of your energy costs (Homeowners or Renters)
 - o Heating System Repair & Replacement Program (HEARTWAP)
 - Program is designed to help fund the repair or replacement your current heating system
 - o Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP)
 - Program is designed to help fund weatherization, air sealing, and insulation projects to reduce energy costs
- Eligibility is 60% of the state median income. 2022-2023 income eligibility guidelines: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/fy-2023-liheap-income-eligibility-and-benefit-level-chart-december-5-2022/download>. Customers must qualify for LIHEAP to qualify for HEARTWAP and WAP.

Good Neighbor Energy Fund

- The Massachusetts Good Neighbor Energy Fund is available to any Massachusetts resident who, because of temporary financial difficulty, cannot meet a month's energy expense and is not eligible for state or federal energy assistance.
- The Massachusetts Good Neighbor Energy Fund is a cooperative effort between sponsoring Massachusetts energy companies, including the WMGLD, and caring neighbors throughout the Commonwealth.
- Income must fall between 60 and 80% of the state's median income levels. Apply for assistance by directly contacting your local Salvation Army Corps Community Center or Service Extension Unit. For information about income eligibility and locations, visit <http://magoodneighbor.org/assistance.html>.

Wakefield Heating Assistance Program

- Town Council approved \$400,000 of ARPA funds for fuel assistance (all heating sources applicable)
- To qualify, residents must apply for, and be accepted into, LIHEAP or Good Neighbor Energy Fund. Apply online at: https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=FKWlXsXWbUiqc-DHGW5zK13yijYF_RMgjilaRSqFWNURVFEVkhSUTZGMEgOODhYTzk3WENFUE9NRS4u
- **For any questions or assistance regarding this application or LEO and Good Neighbor forms, please contact Wakefield Social Services Coordinator Jason Stone at 781-670-4935.**

Metro Housing Boston Relief

- Contact Metro Housing Boston for eligibility of housing payment relief (includes utility bills)
 - o RAFT program is designed to assist renters with utility bills and rent payments
- For information call 617.425.6700, email ResourceLine@MetroHousingBoston.org, or visit website: <https://www.metrohousingboston.org/what-we-do/rental-relief-and-eviction-prevention/>