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FOR RELEASE AT WILL

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AMID THIS WINTER'S CHILL, LOWER HEATING AND UTILITY COSTS AGAIN AVAILABLE FOR LOW-INCOME NEW JERSEYANS

EDISON — The latest newsletter of Legal Services of New Jersey (LSNJ) focuses on programs that make many low-income residents eligible for substantially reduced electric and gas costs, as well as preventing shut-offs of crucial utility services.

The bilingual publication, “Looking Out For Your Legal Rights,” may be viewed online at www.lsnjlaw.org.

The newsletter spells out how to apply for the benefits, the financial eligibility requirements for applicants, and numerous other significant details available by contacting listed sources, such as <https://dcaid.dca.nj.gov/en-US> or the LSNJLAW Hotline, www.lsnjlawhotline.org | 1-888-576-5529.

The publication focuses on the two most vastly expanded electric and gas assistance programs, which, in combination, effectively make many more low-income residents eligible for increasing credits on their utility bills. At the same time, a procedure, known as “fresh start,” is again available, allowing eligible customers to erase what they owe for past unpaid bills.

The two key programs are the Universal Service Fund (USF) and the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). The program information telephone number for the two services is 1-866-240-1347.

Income eligibility is based on the size of the household and the maximum monthly gross income limits. A family of three, for example, can qualify with a monthly income of up to \$6,448, while the limit is \$3,991 a month for a single person.

There are details about other utility-related programs and services, including various Lifeline programs for qualifying seniors and disabled homeowners and tenants who can receive \$225 checks to offset gas and electric costs.

Additionally, the publication offers an article on the rights of renters under the state's Abandoned Tenant Property Statute, which, in part, specifies landlords must store a tenant's property for a limited time when the tenant voluntarily moves or is evicted from the rental.

Legal Services of New Jersey (LSNJ), located in Edison, heads the state's Legal Services system, a network of six independent nonprofit corporations that provides free essential legal aid in civil matters to low-income people in all 21 counties.

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