



**Snohomish County**  
**County Executive's Office**  
**Aaron Reardon**  
*County Executive*

## **For Immediate Release**

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# **Snohomish County Offers Low-income Households Relief on Energy Bills**

*State funds of nearly \$500,000 will provide relief to low-income households*

Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon announced that more relief is on the way for thousands of low-income consumers struggling to pay their electric and gas bills this winter.

\$487,785 was allocated this week by the state Legislature and Governor Christine Gregoire to supplement Snohomish County's low-income energy assistance program. These funds were part of a total statewide fund of \$7.6 million to help low-income consumers pay their energy bills and to help weatherproof their homes for energy savings.

"These funds will keep warm, the homes of many of our County's most vulnerable and at-risk populations—the elderly, young and disabled," says Reardon.

The supplemental funds will allow the County to provide direct energy assistance to an additional 1,200 households. Combined with existing funds, the County is expected to provide energy assistance to 9,000 households this year, about 27,000 people in all. That represents about 40% of the total population of 19,600 in Snohomish County who, according to the U.S. Census 2000, have household incomes at 125% of the national poverty rate. The current national poverty rate for household incomes of one is \$997 per month and for households of four, \$2016 per month.

These supplemental funds will increase the County's existing low income energy assistance and weatherization budget to about \$2.6 million for the 2006 heating season. Energy funds also come from the federal Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, the Washington Consumer Energy Fund and the Puget Sound Energy Help for Customers Fund.

“Working in partnership with our state and federal government and with Puget Sound Energy and Snohomish County Public Utilities is the best, most cost efficient and effective way to address one of this County’s most serious and complex challenges.” says Reardon.

“With energy costs rising, it has come as no surprise that there has been a sharp increase in the number of people seeking first time assistance for winter heating bills,” said Bill Beuscher, Supervisor of the County’s Energy Assistance and Weatherization Programs.

The level of energy assistance to households is determined based on formulas provided by each energy program and is dependent primarily on household income in relation to the poverty threshold.

People seeking energy assistance should contact the Snohomish County Assistance and Weatherization Program at 425.259.5185.

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