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*Government of Cumberland County, Maine*  
*Contact: Travis Kennedy | 207-619-2663*

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## **Cumberland County Makes \$1.35 Million Available for Home Heating Aid**

### **Qualifying residents can request heating aid through participating town offices**

PORTLAND, MAINE -- Cumberland County Government announced Tuesday that County-funded home heating funds are now available to residents, through participating towns and cities. The County Commissioners have allocated \$1.35 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for homeowners who are struggling to pay for heat this winter.

Cumberland County established the “Keep Cumberland County Warm” project in December 2022. Funds are distributed to qualifying residents who need help with heating bills through town and city offices, and so the program is voluntary for municipalities to participate. Eleven communities in Cumberland County have signed up to participate in the program so far.

“High costs associated with home heating are forcing low- and middle-income households to face impossible choices,” said County Manager Jim Gailey. “Hopefully these funds will help a lot of people in Cumberland County get through a tough winter.”

The heating aid program is designed to support residents whose earnings are above the limit to qualify for General Assistance aid or Federal Low Income Heating Assistance Program (LIHEAP) funds, but are still earning below 300 percent of the Federal Poverty Limit, and are struggling to keep up with the rising cost of heat.

In Cumberland County, a household of four would qualify for aid if their household income is below \$82,710.

“People at all income levels are feeling the pinch,” Gailey said. “These funds were designed for households who don’t normally qualify for heating aid, but are still having trouble making ends meet in this environment.”

Cumberland County has committed \$50,000 to each participating community to distribute to residents who qualify. There is no standard award; towns and cities will each have the discretion to choose how they want to allocate funds, as long as they meet the overall program guidelines.

Since 2021, Cumberland County has invested more than \$20 million in critical projects and programs in the region, by way of ARPA funding.

Prior to launching the Keep Cumberland County Warm Fund, Cumberland County had already invested more than \$2 million in direct support to residents; County funds have gone toward reducing housing and food insecurity, and expanding access to health care and transportation for people who have been disproportionately impacted by the Pandemic.

The County has dedicated millions of ARPA dollars to affordable housing projects, directly funding hundreds of new units under construction in the region and providing incentives for developers to continue building affordable housing in the coming years.

Through partnerships with the City of Portland Homeless Service Center and Tedford Shelter in Brunswick, the County has allocated more than \$4 million towards the development of non congregate shelter space and wraparound services for people who are experiencing homelessness within our region.

Finally, Cumberland County has recently announced competitive grant programs for uncommitted ARPA funds to preserve and produce affordable rental housing; improve sewer and water infrastructure; and increase the number of childcare slots available in the region.

Cities and towns in Cumberland County that are distributing heating aid through the Keep Cumberland County Warm project - or are in process to start soon - include Bridgton, Baldwin, Brunswick, Casco, Harpswell, Long Island, Naples, North Yarmouth, Pownal, Westbrook and Yarmouth. For more information about how to apply please contact your local Town office and speak to the General Assistance Administer.

To read more about income guidelines for Keep Cumberland County Warm, Contact information for each town and other Cumberland County's ARPA investments, visit the County's dedicated Keep Cumberland County Warm website: <https://cumberlandcounty.org/858/8589/Keeping-Cumberland-County-Warm-Heating-A>