

Frequently Asked Questions

About LITE-UP

- The 80th legislature approved funding for a summer low-income electric discount program for individuals who meet certain criteria. If you are currently receiving Food Stamps or Medicaid you will automatically be included in the discount program if the information on file with the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) matches the information on file with your Retail Electric Provider. You may apply if your household total income is less than 125% of the federal poverty guideline.

Questions from Media

All Media questions about the program should be referred to Terry Hadley, PUC Public Relations Director, at 512.936.7135.

General Questions

Length of Program

How long will I receive the discount?

- The program will provide discounts to eligible customers in the following billing months:
 - **July, August, September and October 2007 bills;**
 - **June, July, August, September and October 2008 bills;** and
 - **June, July, August, and September 2009 bills.**
- You will receive the discount from the time you are deemed eligible and your information is sent to your Retail Electric Provider (REP) to the end of the year's program.
- Some REPs may not be able to provide a discount beginning in July. In this case only, eligible customers will receive a credit on their August bill for the discount missed the prior month.

Application Requests

How do I apply?

- You may request an application by either printing the application from this web site or by calling **1-800-241-7011**.
- If you call **1-800-241-7011** you must provide your name, ESI ID, electric company name, and address and an application will be sent to you.
- You should receive the application within 5 business days.
- The application must be signed and returned accompanied by a copy of your:
 - electric bill, and
 - supporting documentation for State Programs (if applicable); or
 - 2 months of proof of income (if not eligible for a State Program).

Do I need to send additional information with my application?

- You should send a copy of your entire electric bill that contains your name and address as proof you are the household member eligible for LITE-UP benefits along with your application.
 - Please make sure to send a copy of the electric bill, as it will not be returned by the administration.
 - If you are certifying under income, please provide a copy of your prior year's tax return or 2 consecutive months worth of documentation that supports your total household income.

Are applications available in Spanish?

- Yes, the application for LITE-UP Texas is available in Spanish.

Where do I mail the form?

- LITE-UP TEXAS
1779 Wells Branch Parkway, Ste. 110B #320
Austin, TX 78728-7022

Am I required to provide my Social Security number?

- No, but this information greatly enhances our ability to apply discounts to your account. It will also make it easier for us to provide assistance in the future. This information will only be used for the purposes of this program and it will not be released for any other purpose.

If you don't provide your Social Security Number, it will not affect your qualification.

I had previously received my pre-filled application but misplaced it. What can I do?

- You may request an application by either printing the application from this web site or by calling **1-800-241-7011**.

Do I send the application to my retail electric provider?

- No, your retail electric provider cannot process your form. Please send the form directly to the LITE-UP TEXAS at the address on the form:
LITE-UP TEXAS
1779 Wells Branch Parkway, Ste. 110B #320
Austin, TX 78728-7022

Does the application need to be in the electric customer's name or head of household's name?

- The name and address on the application must match the name and address on the electric bill (electric customer).

My electric service was disconnected but service has been restored. What do I have to do to obtain my LITE-UP discount again?

- You do not have to do anything. Once your name shows up in the file from your electric provider, you can be matched.
- If your electric bill does not show a discount 30 days after you have been reconnected, contact the call center at **1-800-241-7011**.

How long will it take to get approved?

- Provided that you send in the appropriate documentation, your application should be approved within a week after we receive your completed application with all necessary supporting documentation. At the end of the month that your application was approved, your electric company will be notified so they can include the discount on your electric bill.

Application Documentation

Can I use my old LITE-UP Texas form?

- No, you must use the current LITE-UP Texas form.
- You may request an application by either printing the application from this web site or by calling **1-800-241-7011**.

What are other sources of additional income?

- Other sources include but are not limited to money obtained from inheritances, financial aid, alimony, gifts, lottery winnings, and the like.

Do I need to send my documentation to anyone's attention?

- No. Only if instructed to do so.

Application Status

How do I know if I'm getting the discount?

- If a line item on your electric bill that states "LITE-UP Discount" then you are already enrolled in the program. **Note:** Due to billing difficulties, during the Summer of 2007 some REPs may apply the discount without this line item. If you do not see the line item, you can call 1-800-241-7011

Why does it take so long?

- Ideally, it will not take much time. However, to receive the discount, your application must contain all information requested and then be reviewed and processed. Retail electric providers are notified once a month of customer eligibility. Your provider must then place the discount on your next bill which may be 1-29 days from when they receive notification of the certification, depending on the billing cycle. The most time the process may take should be 60 days.

I received a rejection letter or insufficient data notice. What do I have to do at this time to get the discount?

- Prior to August 31, 2007: You can resubmit the entire application and attachments, however it must be received by August 31, 2007.
- After August 31, 2007: The time frame for this program does not allow for applications to be submitted or resubmitted after August 31, 2007. You may apply for the next discount period which is May thru September 2008. Applications will be accepted starting in March 2008.

I received a letter that says my application has been denied.

- The application may have been denied because:
 - the electric service customer on the electric bill is not qualified for at least one of the State programs listed on the application (Food Stamps, Medicaid, Medicaid TANF, Medicaid QMB or Medicaid SSI);
 - the household income is more than 125% of federal poverty guidelines reflecting household size and income needed to qualify; or
 - you do not receive electricity from a provider in a deregulated area.

Can I appeal a rejection?

- Yes. If you believe that your application has been erroneously denied, you may request that LIDA review your application. To request a review, you must provide a letter to LIDA explaining why you believe LIDA's decision was incorrect, and you may include additional proof of your eligibility. This letter should be sent to:
LITE-UP TEXAS
1779 Wells Branch Parkway, Ste. 110B #320
Austin, TX 78728-7022
- If you do not agree with the second eligibility determination, you may contact the Public Utility Commission of Texas at 1-888-782-8477 or 1-800-735-2988 (TTY) to request an informal hearing.
- Please note that due to the short timeframe of this program you will have to be deemed eligible by August 31, 2007, in order to receive a discount.

I don't have a copy of my rejection letter or insufficient data notice but have the documentation the letter/notice is looking for. What do I do?

- Prior to August 31, 2007: You can resubmit the entire application and attachments, however it must be received by August 31, 2007.
- After August 31, 2007: The time frame for this program does not allow for applications to be submitted or resubmitted after August 31, 2007. You may apply for the next discount period which is May thru September 2008. Applications will be accepted starting in March 2008.

Qualify/Eligibility

Who qualifies for the discount?

- Eligible Customers are those where:
 - household incomes are not more than 125% of federal poverty guidelines reflecting household size and money needed to qualify),

OR

 - the person whose name is on the electric bill is in one of the following programs:
 - Food Stamps
 - Medicaid
 - Medicaid – TANF
 - Medicaid – QMB
 - Medicaid - SSI

AND

 - You are an electric customer receiving electric service from a RETAIL ELECTRIC PROVIDER in an area of Texas with customer choice. (Caller can go to www.powertochoose.com for additional information.)

Please note: Master metered complexes do not qualify b/c the landlord is the electric customer.

Request for an application / How do I enroll in the program?

- You may request an application by either printing the application from this web site or by calling **800-241-7011**.
- If you call **800-241-7011** you must provide your name, ESI ID, address and an application will be sent to you. (this number can be found on your bill)
- You should receive the application within 5 business days.
- The application must be signed and returned accompanied by a copy of your:
 - electric bill, and
 - supporting documentation for State Programs (if applicable); or
 - 2 months of proof of income (if not eligible for a State Program).

Who do I call to find out what programs I am eligible for?

- Please call your local social services agency or state Dept. of Health and Human Services.

Do I need to provide proof of program eligibility to qualify for the LITE-UP discount?

- If you are self-enrolling then proof of program eligibility is required to apply for the **LITE-UP** discount. However, if you are enrolled in a qualified HHSC program, then you do not have to self-enroll. You will be automatically enrolled for as long as you remain on a HHSC program if the information on file with the Health and Human Services Commission matches the information on file with your Retail Electric Provider. You do not need to provide proof of income if trying to qualify for the discount under state program eligibility.

My child receives (insert program here). As a parent do I automatically qualify?

- No, the person enrolled in the program must be the electric service customer in order to qualify for the **LITE-UP** Texas discount.

Do I qualify for Medicaid or food stamps?

- Please contact your state Department of Health and Human Services with any questions regarding these programs.

Is QMB a valid program for LITE-UP?

- Yes, QMB is a form of Medicaid.

Do I qualify for the LITE-UP discount if I receive Social Security benefits and/or Medicare?

- Receiving Social Security and/or Medicare benefits does not automatically qualify you for the **LITE-UP** discount. These are not eligible state programs. However, you may apply based on your income if it is at or below 125% of federal poverty guidelines as listed on the application.
- If you receive Medicaid benefits in your name you would qualify for LITE-UP benefits automatically. If you are applying for the LITE-UP discount using the income criteria, the SSI received by anyone else in the household must be included as part of total household income.

How do I know if my income is at or below 125% of Federal Poverty Guidelines?

- The application indicates the income limits for 125% of Federal Poverty Guidelines.

How long am I eligible? Do I need to reapply? Will I be sent a notice that I need to reapply?

- You remain eligible until you no longer participate in a qualifying program or your total household income exceeds 125% of the federal poverty guidelines. In either case this program is a 4 month program in 2007. You will only receive a maximum of 4 discounted months. The Program is **ONLY** for **July, August, September and October 2007 billings**.

Discount

How much is the discount?

- 12% off of the rate for the Provider of Last Resort in your territory. This should equal a little more than 12% off of the electric charges on your electric bill excluding taxes and fees.

When will I begin receiving the discount?

- The discount should appear on the bill within 30-60 days after your application has been approved or LIDA has been notified of your enrollment in an applicable HHSC program, provided that the information results in a match. The discount will take effect following the next matching cycle provided that your information results in a match. You should see the discount on the first bill you receive from your REP after this process takes place.

I used to get the discount but it stopped. What happened?

- If you have changed providers, you need to contact your new retail electric provider to make sure they have all of your information correctly entered into their system.
- If you are no longer enrolled in an approved HHSC program, this can cause your LITE-UP eligibility to cease unless you have self-enrolled based on income.
- The Program is **ONLY** for **July, August, September and October 2007 billings**.

I applied _____ months ago. Why am I not receiving my discount?

- There are several reasons you may not be receiving your discount.
 - It can take 1-3 months for your application to be processed, approved and to receive the discount on your electric bill.
 - It takes up to 7 business days for the Texas **LITE-UP** to review your completed application and supporting documentation (if applicable).
 - The matching process takes place once a month at the end of the month, and then your retail electric provider then promptly notified of the matches.
 - It may take a month or two for the discount to appear on your electric bill due to the once a month matching process and your retail electric provider's billing cycles.
 - You may have been denied and were sent a letter explaining why.
 - You can contact the call center 1-800-241-7011 for further information.

Is the discount retroactive?

No. The discount will take effect following the next matching cycle provided that your information results in a match. You should see the discount on the first bill you receive from your REP after this process takes place.

Changes

If I switch providers or if I move, will I still get my discount?

- If you are in a qualified program through HHSC you should continue receiving your discount. You must notify HHSC of your new address.
- If you are self enrolled you should submit a new application with the updated information including a copy of your new electric bill to minimize any disruptions. The new electric service provider may not have your information correct, therefore a match with the system may not be happening. Your address and your ESI ID are important to ensuring a proper match between you and your electric provider. By failing to report your change of address or provider, you are running the risk of losing your discount

Electric Service

Is any other assistance available for paying my utility bill?

- Payment assistance programs are offered by TDHCA as well as many retail electric providers. You can contact TDHCA at 1-877-399-8939. You can also contact your

REP for additional assistance or to inquire about payment arrangements, deferred payment plans or level and average payment plans.

If I am a LITE-UP Customer, does this relieve my obligation to pay a deposit to my REP?

- Being a LITE-UP Customer does not relieve your obligation to pay a deposit, but does require the REP to allow you to pay the deposit in two installments if the deposit exceeds \$50.00. Please inquire with the REP regarding the ability to pay a deposit in installments.

My REP is threatening to disconnect me. Can they disconnect me if I am a LITE-UP Customer?

- Your status as a LITE-UP Customer does not relieve your obligation to pay, and therefore does not prevent you from being disconnected. You may want to inquire with your REP about payment arrangements or deferred payment plans.

Why don't electric providers outside of competition participate in the program?

- This program was specifically designed for the deregulated electric market. Customers in deregulated areas pay into the fund, and therefore only customers in deregulated areas may benefit from the program. You should contact your electric provider to inquire about programs that they do have, or programs that they know of that serve your area.