

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



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FLAT RIVER OUTREACH MINISTRIES (FROM) AWARDED FUNDS TO HELP PAY UTILITY BILLS THIS YEAR

LOWELL: Flat River Outreach Ministries (FROM) has been awarded \$67,765 from the Michigan Agency of Energy (MAE) and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) to provide utility assistance for qualifying families living in the Lowell Area School District.

FROM's Utility Payment Program (UPP) helps pay for electric, natural gas, propane heat, and other deliverable fuel such as fuel oil or wood pellets. The program also offers an in-home energy audit, in partnership with Lowell Light and Power, and weatherization supplies such as caulk, LED light bulbs, smoke alarms, and plastic weatherization kits for insulating windows.

The program also provides additional support as part of a goal-oriented program. Dawn Broene, Executive Director at FROM, says, "Utility assistance can be the result of deeper challenges. Some families come to UPP due to a job loss or mounting medical bills while others need help for different reasons. No matter the circumstance, we work together to see how we can meet their needs." Dawn adds, "During the one-on-one meeting we may discover that they also can benefit from enrolling in our food programs or securing new employment. We work together to address those concerns and identify any additional challenges that have contributed to their need for energy assistance."

FROM has been providing utility assistance for four years. In 2017, 80 households received utility payment assistance while connecting with other programs and services. This includes employment services, community-building opportunities, mental health services, and more. In 2018 FROM will provide at least 85 households with utility assistance. Twenty-five households or more might also enroll in a program from a partnership between FROM, Consumers Energy, and The Salvation Army.

UPP requires a utility shut off, past due notice, or being at/ below 25% in deliverable fuel as well as other eligibility requirements. To fill out a program application, or for more information, contact FROM at (616) 897-8260 or by email at info@fromlowell.org.

FROM is one of ten agencies statewide to receive funding from MAE and MDHHS to provide this service. Other organizations include Barry County United Way, Michigan Community Action Agency Association, Society of St. Vincent de Paul of the Archdiocese of Detroit, Superior Watershed Partnership, The Heat and Warmth Fund, Salvation Army, TrueNorth Community Services, United Way of Jackson County, and United Way of Southeastern Michigan.

Flat River Outreach Ministries (FROM) is a nonprofit organization focused on bringing together individuals, families, churches and businesses to respond to the needs of our neighbors in the greater Lowell community. Organized in 1998 by 13 local churches, FROM is a Christian organization helping our neighbors in need by walking alongside them; helping them improve their quality of life. For more information, visit www.fromlowell.org or call (616) 897-8260.