

Want to Raise a Million?

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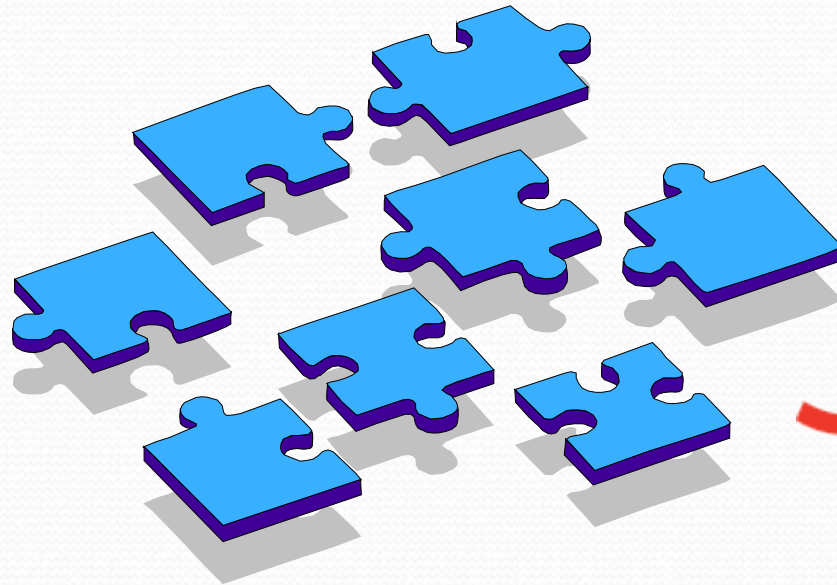
Our Mission

New Jersey SHARES, Inc. (NJS) is a statewide non-profit corporation primarily providing assistance to individuals and families in need of help meeting their energy and utility burden. Through advocacy, community outreach, education, information and referral we connect low and moderate income households with available resources.



Benefits of Assistance Programs

- Assistance grants help our neighbors to put the pieces back together



NJS Programs

NJS offers assistance for Energy, Telephone and Water bills through partnerships with New Jersey regulated energy utility companies, Verizon New Jersey, SUEZ Water and New Jersey American Water Company.

NJS partners with a network of over 230 community based organizations and legislative offices with over 277 sites.



NJ SHARES Highlights

- Helped more than 180,000 households in New Jersey with \$73,000,000 in energy assistance grants
- Won the National Fuel Fund Network's Victorine Q. Adams Award in 2002, 2006 & 2009



Key Findings

□ NJ SHARES serves vulnerable households

- 19% have children under the age of six
- 54% had a child 18 or younger
- 21% are single parent households
- 55% had a household member of 50 years of age or older
- 19% have a family member over 60 years of age
- 84% had employment income



Our Mission

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, social welfare organization with a membership of nearly 38 million that helps people turn their goals and dreams into real possibilities, strengthens communities and fights for the issues that matter most to families — such as health care, employment and income security, and protection from financial abuse.



Creating Real Possibilities

Enhancing the quality of life for all as we age—not just serving our nearly 38 million members—is our mission. At its heart, the work that AARP and its affiliates do can be summed up in just 12 words: “We fight for and equip each individual to live their best life.” It’s all about real possibilities.

Escheat Funding (Unclaimed Property)

Escheat Funding in our context refers to the title transfer of financial assets such as utility deposits, unclaimed utility refunds or other checks in accounts that have been dormant for a very long period of time to a state authority. Institutions with such dormant accounts are required to make efforts - such as sending reminders and issuing notices in publications - to locate the owners of these assets before transferring title to the state under escheat. Some jurisdictions maintain online registries of dormant assets such as bank deposits, which enables their rightful owners to reclaim them since escheat is revocable in most cases.

Want to Raise a Million

- IF you work for an energy utility, a nonprofit consumer group, or for state government, or you know someone who does, and...
- IF you're willing to work together, collaboratively, toward gaining a new and relatively simple state law to redirect utility escheats...
- Then we're here to tell you that the information we have to share could bring you significant value.
- In other words, at a relatively low cost, utilities, consumer groups, and state governments working together can gain significant benefits.

Want to Raise a Million

These benefits include:

- Enabling thousands of moderate-income utility customers in your state – households above LIHEAP income maximums but below 400% of FPG and suffering a temporary financial emergency – to gain grants to help pay off their seriously past-due electric & gas utility bills;
- Enabling thousands of moderate-income utility customers to avoid utility shutoffs, and the usual shutoff-related problems that result;
- Saving utilities capital costs, collection expenses and uncollectible bill expenses from significantly past-due and eventually unpaid electric & gas utility bills; and
- Helping utilities avoid regulatory and public relations problems that can result from shutoff-related candle fires, heat stroke, etc. while everyone gains improved relationships with state legislators and each other.

Key Steps

- Together, line up some state legislative friends who are willing to introduce a simple state law – I can provide copies of New Jersey's.
- The NJ state law simply calls for a redirection of up to 75% of annual gas and electric utility escheats from the state's General Treasury to the state's utility regulatory commission.
- The regulatory commission then issues a RFP for nonprofits who want to administer grants funded by the escheats.

Redirecting Utility Escheats

- A key was NJ's gas and electric utilities getting together with the state's major consumer groups.
- It wasn't difficult for all parties to identify the significant benefits from redirecting an average of more than \$1 million in gas and electric utility escheats into a special fund to help the oft-forgotten middle income class.
- I was directly involved as state director of AARP in NJ, and I can tell you it was not a difficult sell with state politicians, anxious to help families who had no other place to turn.
- It's important to note that gas and electric utility escheats typically represent a miniscule % of a state's overall budget, even if they exceed a million dollars which they often did in New Jersey.

NEW JERSEY CHAPTER 132

AN ACT concerning the establishment and funding of an energy assistance program, supplementing Title 48 of the Revised Statutes, and amending R.S.46:30B-74 and R.S.46:30B-75.

BE IT ENACTED by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

(New section) The Legislature finds and declares that certain citizens of the State may find it difficult to pay for energy services because of a temporary financial reversal, medical crisis or other family problem; and that non-profit energy assistance organizations such as New Jersey Statewide Heating Assistance and Referral for Energy Services (SHARES), have been formed, joining together various non-profit human service agencies and the major energy utilities in the State to raise money through contributions of the members and others to provide temporary financial assistance to needy customers that may have exhausted all other available resources.

The Legislature therefore determines that it serves a public purpose to provide supplemental funding to such statewide non-profit energy assistance organizations from the unclaimed property held by the electric and gas utilities in the State.



Escheat Funding (Unclaimed Property)

Utility related Escheat Funding can expand the reach of existing energy assistance programs and can be designated in such a way as to assure statewide coverage. AARP working with NJS obtained Escheat Funding for Energy Assistance in NJ in 2000. This is a summary of the NJ experience from escheat funding:

• NJ Escheat Funds Received	\$25,000,000
• Average Grant	\$400
• Individuals and Families Assisted	62,500

Escheat funding has provided critically needed assistance to thousands of households in NJ. The need to provide assistance for households with incomes above the LIHEAP eligibility standard is enormous. NJS programs provide a critical safety-net for the forgotten middle class households that do not qualify for LIHEAP or have a crisis when the LIHEAP program is closed.

Restoration of service! These grants would often get either electricity and/or natural gas turned back on!

Potential Number of Grants

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Total
Unclaimed \$	\$8,617,638	\$7,071,859	\$12,507,151	\$11,131,593	\$10,735,323	\$50,063,564
# of States	12	13	13	13	12	13
# of Grants						
\$500	17,235	14,144	25,014	22,263	21,471	100,127
\$700	12,311	10,103	17,867	15,902	15,336	71,519



What did this mean to the utilities in NJ?

- Utilities reduced their cost of capital
- Utilities reduced their collection expense
- Utilities reduced their uncollectible bill expense
- Lack of impairment of regulatory relationships and public relations from avoided shut-offs and fewer associated shut-off related tragedies

Want to Raise a Million

**And for everyone involved, utilities,
consumer groups, and regulators**

**A much greater ability to solve
tough problems for those in need
who have no other place to turn...**

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In California, approximately \$5,000,000 are escheated annually to the state's general fund.

In Texas, annual utility escheats averaged over \$3,500,000 – that could fund over 8,000 grants!

In Pennsylvania, annual utility escheats averaged approximately \$2,000,000 with the potential to fund 5,000 grants !

Want to Raise a Million

Your state might be able to use the federal government's prescription drug Medicare Part D Low Income Subsidy monthly-supplied database of recipients in your state to arrange for presumptive eligibility and automatic LIHEAP enrollment? That would greatly increase the % of seniors in your state getting LIHEAP benefits

Your state's utilities could significantly increase payments of past due heating bills from low-income working families with children, likely by many millions of dollars, simply by promoting the federal government's Earned Income Tax Credit! It can bring millions more in bill payments for very little cost!

For Additional Information

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