



## February: American Heart Month – A Time to Prioritize Your Heart Health

February is American Heart Month, a time dedicated to raising awareness about heart health and the prevention of cardiovascular diseases, which remain the leading cause of death in the United States. This month encourages individuals, families, and communities to focus on making healthy choices that can reduce the risk of heart disease.

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) includes conditions such as heart disease, stroke, and high blood pressure, and affects millions of people each year. While some risk factors like age, gender, and genetics can't be changed, there are plenty of proactive steps you can take to protect your heart and improve your overall health. Here are a few heart-healthy habits to consider this February:

**Eat a Balanced Diet** – A diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and healthy fats can help lower cholesterol levels, maintain a healthy weight, and support heart health. Focus on foods that are low in saturated fats, sodium, and added sugars.

**Get Moving** – Physical activity is essential for heart health. Aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate exercise most days of the week. Whether it's walking, cycling, or swimming, regular movement helps improve circulation, reduce blood pressure, and manage weight.

**Quit Smoking** – Smoking is a major risk factor for heart disease. If you smoke, seek support to quit. If you don't smoke, avoid exposure to secondhand smoke.

**Manage Stress** – Chronic stress can negatively impact your heart. Finding healthy ways to cope, such as through relaxation techniques, mindfulness, or physical activity, can help reduce your stress levels.

**Know Your Numbers** – Regularly check your blood pressure, cholesterol levels, and blood sugar. Monitoring these can give you a clearer picture of your heart health and help you take action before problems arise.

**Stay Hydrated** – Drinking plenty of water is vital for overall health, including heart health. Proper hydration helps keep your blood circulating smoothly and your cardiovascular system functioning efficiently.

American Heart Month is an important opportunity to take stock of your heart health and commit to making positive changes that can last long after February ends. Whether it's learning more about heart disease, adopting healthier habits, or supporting heart health initiatives in your community, every step you take can make a difference.

**National Wear Red Day is Friday, February 7, 2025.**

## Important Update: 211 No Longer Taking Appointments for AARP's Free Tax Assistance

If you're planning to take advantage of AARP's free tax preparation services, we have an important update for you. Starting this year, 211 will no longer be accepting appointments for AARP's Tax-Aide program.

AARP's Tax-Aide program has long been a valuable resource for seniors and low-to-moderate income taxpayers who need help filing their taxes. While 211 is no longer handling appointments, the good news is that AARP's Tax-Aide program is still available at many locations.

### What You Need to Know

**Who is eligible?** AARP's Tax-Aide program is typically available to seniors and individuals with low-to-moderate incomes.

**What should you bring?** Bring all necessary tax documents such as W-2 forms, 1099 forms, prior year tax returns, proof of identification, and any other relevant paperwork.

**What to expect?** IRS-certified volunteers will help you with tax filing, answering your questions, and ensuring you receive all the deductions and credits you're entitled to.

### Please find the following options to schedule an appointment near you.

#### Mercer Area

East End Fire Department:

DATE & TIME

WE: 09:00 AM - 01:30 PM

TH: 09:00 AM - 01:30 PM

ADDRESS: 104 Wilson Avenue, MERCER, PA, 16137

SERVICE TYPE In-Person

#### APPOINTMENT REQUIRED

To schedule call 724-300-3112.

#### West Middlesex Area

DATE & TIME

WE: 09:00 AM - 01:30 PM

TH: 09:00 AM - 01:30 PM

ADDRESS: 3747 NEW CASTLE RD,

WEST MIDDLESEX, PA, 16159

SERVICE TYPE In-Person

#### APPOINTMENT REQUIRED

To schedule call 724-418-4119.

If you are instructed to leave a voicemail please only leave one.

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#### Hermitage Area

HICKORY VFW POST 6166:

DATE & TIME

MO: 09:00 AM - 01:30 PM

TU: 09:00 AM - 01:30 PM

ADDRESS: 5550 E STATE ST, HERMITAGE, PA, 16148

SERVICE TYPE In-Person

#### APPOINTMENT REQUIRED

To schedule call 724-815-0206.

If you are instructed to leave a voicemail please only leave one.



The Pennsylvania Medicaid income guidelines have been updated for 2025. If you're looking to save money on Medicare or need assistance understanding your eligibility, now is a great time to get screened for available programs.

For more information and to see if you qualify for any savings, call PA MEDI at 724-662-6222.



# Monthly Scam Corner

## Watch Out for Fake Tax Preparer Scams This Tax Season

As tax season approaches, it's important to be cautious when selecting a tax preparer. Scammers often take advantage of taxpayers during this time by posing as legitimate tax professionals. These fake tax preparers may promise large refunds or charge unusually low fees, only to steal your personal information or scam you out of money.

### **How to Spot a Fake Tax Preparer:**

**Unclear Credentials:** Always check a tax preparer's qualifications. Look for a valid Preparer Tax Identification Number (PTIN), which is required by the IRS for anyone who prepares or assists in preparing federal tax returns for compensation.

**Too Good to Be True Promises:** Be wary of anyone promising large refunds without reviewing your documents or asking for upfront fees. A legitimate preparer will need to evaluate your specific financial situation.

**No Paper Trail:** Always ask for a written estimate of the fees and a copy of your completed tax return. Fake preparers often disappear after the return is filed, leaving you with no documentation.

**Evasion of Responsibility:** Avoid anyone who asks you to sign a blank tax form or refuses to sign your return. Legitimate preparers are required to sign your return and provide their PTIN.

### **Protect Yourself:**

Do your research. Check the IRS website for a list of authorized tax preparers.

Ask for references or search online for reviews before hiring someone.

Never give out personal or financial information over the phone or email unless you're sure of the preparer's identity.

If you have any doubts, consider seeking help from a well-known or trusted tax preparation service.

### **If You Suspect Fraud:**

If you suspect that you've fallen victim to a fake tax preparer, report the incident immediately to the IRS. They can provide guidance on how to handle the situation and ensure your information is protected.

This tax season, stay vigilant and protect yourself from scams. Don't let fake tax preparers take advantage of you!

## **Upcoming Healthy Steps for Older Adults Classes**

The program is an evidence-based falls prevention initiative for adults aged 50 and over. It addresses various fall risks such as home safety, medication management, strength, balance, flexibility, and more. Through interactive activities, assessments, and discussions, participants identify risks in their lives and create personalized strategies to mitigate them, using local community resources. The program also includes evaluations and follow-up to measure its effectiveness, with both output and outcome measures. It emphasizes awareness of factors like nutrition, mental health, sensory issues, social connection, and overall well-being.

Part 1: Thursday, February 13, 2025 1:00PM-3:00PM Greenville Senior Center

Part 2: Thursday, February 20, 2025 1:00PM-3:00PM Greenville Senior Center

Parts 1 & 2: Friday, February 21, 2025 1:00PM-5:00PM Grove City Senior Center

# HELP FOR HEATING LIHEAP

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is open from November 4, 2024 through April 4, 2025.

LIHEAP grants range from \$200 to \$1,000

CRISIS maximum grant \$1,000\*

\*Must have a shut off notice or service denial letter

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## Who qualifies for LIHEAP?

The 2024/2025 LIHEAP Income Guidelines:

Household Size	Monthly Maximum Income Limit	Annual Maximum Income Limit
1	\$1,882	\$22,590
2	\$2,555	\$30,660
3	\$3,227	\$38,730
4	\$3,900	\$46,800
5	\$4,572	\$54,870
6	\$5,245	\$62,940
Additional members add	\$672 each	\$8,070 each
For income limits for larger households, visit <a href="http://www.LIHEAPhelps.com">www.LIHEAPhelps.com</a>		

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## How to apply? It's easier than ever! Depending on your circumstances, you may apply:

- **Online** - [www.LIHEAPhelps.com](http://www.LIHEAPhelps.com).
- **By mail** – Download an application at [www.compass.state.pa.us](http://www.compass.state.pa.us).
- **In person** – Applications are taken at all local County Assistance Offices.
- **For more information**, call the LIHEAP hotline at **1-866-857-7095**.
- **By telephone** - Contact the local County Assistance Office.

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## What will you need to apply?

- Names of people in your household
- Dates of birth for all household members
- Social Security Numbers for all household members
- Proof of income for members of your household
- A recent heating bill
- Dates of birth for all household members
- Termination notice or denial letter for CRISIS

## Apply for Property Tax and Rent Rebates for 2024 – Deadline June 30, 2025

The Department of Revenue has officially opened the application period for property tax and rent rebates for the year 2024. If you paid property taxes or rent in 2024 and meet the eligibility criteria, you may qualify for a rebate. Be sure to submit your application by June 30, 2025 to take advantage of this benefit.

### Eligibility Criteria:

To qualify for the Property Tax/Rent Rebate, you must meet the following requirements:

### Age Criteria:

- 65 and older.
- Widows and widowers 50 and older.
- People with disabilities 18 and older.

### Income Criteria:

Your household income must be \$46,520 or less annually.

### Required Documents:

To ensure your application is complete and accurate, gather the following documents before applying:

- Proof of age.
- Proof of disability (if applicable).
- Proof of death (if applicable).
- Proof of income.
- Proof of taxes paid.
- Proof of rent paid – a completed Rent Certificate (PA-1000 RC) is required.
- Copies of a will, deed, decree of distribution, or trust agreement proving property ownership.
- DEX-41 if filing on behalf of a deceased individual.

### Important Note:

Be sure to submit all necessary documents to avoid delays in processing your application. You have until June 30, 2025, to apply for this rebate, so make sure you don't miss out!

If you need assistance or have questions regarding the application process, please don't hesitate to reach out to any senior center near you or by calling 724-662-6222.



# MERCER COUNTY FOOD BANK



## Mobile Pantry • 2025 Schedule



### Sandy Lake, PA

Sandy Lake Presbyterian Church • 3461 Sandy Lake New Lebanon Rd.

#### from 11am–1pm

*or until supplies last*

- Jan 8\*      • July 2
- Feb 5      • Aug 6
- March 5    • Sept 3
- April 2     • Oct 1
- May 7      • Nov 5
- June 4     • Dec 3



### Greenville, PA

St. John's Lutheran Church • 10 Beil Hill Rd.

#### from 11am–1pm

*or until supplies last*

- Jan 9      • July 10
- Feb 13     • Aug 14
- March 13   • Sept 11
- April 10    • Oct 9
- May 8      • Nov 13
- June 12     • Dec 11



### Reynolds, PA

Reynolds Drive-In Theater  
3706 N Hermitage Rd

#### from 12pm–2pm

*or until supplies last*

- Jan 17     • July 18
- Feb 21     • Aug 15
- March 21   • Sept 19
- April 18    • Oct 17
- May 16     • Nov 21
- June 20    • Dec 19

If you are in need of food, but are unable to attend a Mobile Pantry distribution, we can help connect you with a local member agency for assistance. Visit [mercercountyfoodbank.org](https://www.mercercountyfoodbank.org) or call 724-981-0353.



### Senior Resources

**AARP ([www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org))**— The National site for AARP a nonprofit, nonpartisan membership organization for people, ages 50 and older. Call 1-888-687-2277

**Benefits Checkup ([www.benefitscheckup.org](http://www.benefitscheckup.org))**— An online questionnaire to help search for a list of all state and federal benefits.

**COMPASS (Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Application for Social Services [[www.compass.state.pa.us](http://www.compass.state.pa.us)])**— Enables Pennsylvania citizens to apply for social service programs online. Call 1-800-692-7462.

**Medicare ([www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov))**—The official government site for Medicare consumer information. Call 1-800-633-4227

### Mental Health Services

Do you need to talk to someone about loneliness or depression?

Locally:

Mercer County Crisis:

724-662-2227

Community Counseling Center Warm Line:

724-981-1741

1-866-853-7758

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:

Dial 988 –or- 1-800-273-8255

Veteran Crisis Line: Call 988 then press 1.



*"Love is like a fine wine, it only gets better with age."*

PRESCRIPTION ASSISTANCE		
<b>ELIGIBILITY</b>		
Call: 800-225-7223	PACE	PACENET
Age 65+	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
PA Resident for at least 90 days	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Individual Income	under 14,500	between 14,500-33,500
Married Income	under 17,700	between 17,700-41,500

#### Local Volunteer Opportunities:

Mercer County Area Agency on Aging, Inc.

724-662-6222

American Red Cross 1-800-422-7677

Meals on Wheels 724-342-2042

United Way of Mercer County 724-981-1884

Mercer County Food Bank 724-981-0353

#### MCAAA, Inc. Contact Information:

[www.mercercountyaging.org](http://www.mercercountyaging.org)



Administration / Care Management /

Older Adult Protective Services

133 N. Pitt Street, Mercer, PA 16137

724-662-6222

Greenville Senior Community Center

45 Alan Avenue, Greenville, PA 16125

724-588-3155

Grove City Senior Community Center

301 S. Broad Street, Grove City, PA 16127

724-458-6844

McQuiston Center by the Park

29 Railroad Street, Sandy Lake, PA 16145

724-376-3608

Shenango Valley Senior Center

and Adult Day Care

220 N. Buhl Farm Drive, Hermitage, PA 16148

724-981-7950