



## **THAW GIVES ENERGY TO HEROES IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CORONAVIRUS**

*Our Front Line Energy Program will raise and distribute up to \$1 million in utility assistance*

Detroit, MI—April 21, 2020. The Heat and Warmth Fund (THAW) announced today that it has developed and launched a dedicated utility relief program for essential workers that begins on April 22, 2020. The announcement was made by THAW CEO Saunteel Jenkins.

“Our front-line workers are our lifeblood and are giving us every bit of their energy,” said Jenkins. “They are selflessly putting themselves in harm’s way each and every day. We want them to know that we see them. We appreciate them. We support them. And that we are fighting for them. This program is focused on giving some of that energy back.”

Thousands of brave Michiganders are still going to work and putting themselves at risk in service of the State’s massive shelter-in-place population, yet many of them are struggling to make basic ends meet. THAW’s Front Line Energy program is focused on helping those individuals and families.

Essential workers across the state of Michigan with household incomes up to 250% of the Federal Poverty Level guidelines may qualify for up to \$500 in utility assistance per household. THAW is following the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s definition of essential worker. Examples include hospital cleaning, maintenance and support staff, grocery and food service, transportation and many, many others. It also includes front-line workers who have lost income due to them or household member contracting the virus and/or quarantine requirements. The bill payments will be paid directly to the utility vendor by THAW.

“While many of these workers make too much to qualify for traditional assistance programs such as Michigan Energy Assistance Program, they may not earn enough to bridge the gap between their monthly income and the basic cost of living,” said Jenkins. “These heroes need our help now more than ever.”

The program is being funded through a combination of mission-specific fundraising, a generous matching \$40,000 donation from Enbridge Inc. and a portion of a \$300,000 Consumers Energy donation secured through a settlement by Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel.

“I can think of no better way to help those on the front lines of COVID-19 than relieving some of the stress in their lives,” said Attorney General Nessel. “It is wonderful of THAW to find a way to use their energy, creativity and financial support to help those who are the saints among us.”

“Michigan families, neighbors and communities are facing extraordinary circumstances and unprecedented challenges, said Candice Braddock, senior community engagement advisor, Enbridge Inc. “Southeast Michigan is one of the hardest hit regions in the state as it comes to COVID-19 cases. We are inspired by the contributions of workers in essential services whose selfless efforts are

helping ensure that residents are cared for and their most basic needs are met. Enbridge is incredibly grateful to those essential front line workers who put their lives on the line during this pandemic, and we are proud to support THAW's work in Michigan."

"We are using our corporate and settlement dollars as matching funds for all individual donations," said Jenkins. "It's a great opportunity for those who want to help support essential workers during this unprecedented time but just don't know how to do it. There is significant need and we want to help as many people as we can."

**How to Apply:**

Individuals can apply online at [www.thawfund.org](http://www.thawfund.org) or via mail. A signed complete application as well as ID, proof of income, proof of household/family members, and a copy of the utility bill/bills to be paid will be required. Upon approval, THAW will make the payment directly to the utility. Qualifying utilities include electric, heat and water.

**How to Donate:**

Every dollar raised for this program will be matched by our generous corporate sponsors and settlement dollars. This is a great opportunity for philanthropic donations to go further. Donations will be accepted at [www.thawfund.org](http://www.thawfund.org).

**About The Heat and Warmth Fund**

The Heat and Warmth Fund (THAW) is stabilizing and empowering Michigan families, keeping them healthy, safe and warm. THAW, an independent 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, distributes utility assistance to low-income residents throughout Michigan. In the last year, THAW distributed more than \$14 million in utility assistance to over 17,000 Michigan households. Since its inception in 1985, THAW has distributed over \$250 million in assistance to more than 260,000 Michigan households. For more, visit [thawfund.org](http://thawfund.org).

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