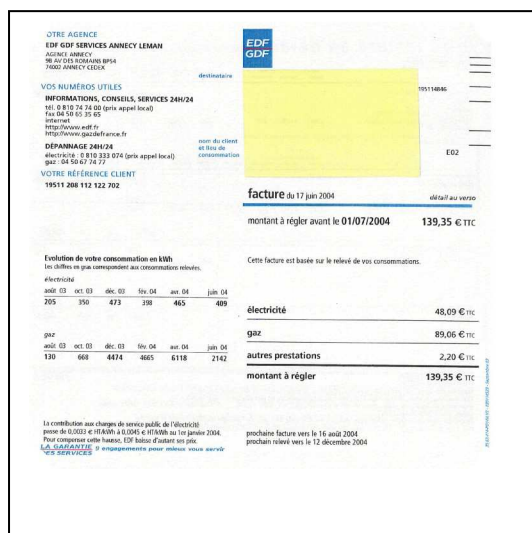


## Case Study 17



## Local Energy Fund (LEF)

For approximately the past fifteen years public initiatives have acted to help families pay their energy bills in France.

The law of July 29th 1992 regarding minimum income levels (RMI in French) created a national financial assistance and prevention system, which forms the background to the regulation of support for households unable to pay their energy bills.

This law was complemented by the July 29<sup>th</sup> 1998 law regarding social exclusion which enabled the provision of assistance to households in difficulty to help pay their energy, water and telephone bills.

This system was later integrated into the Housing Solidarity Fund (HSE) and decentralized to the Departmental administrations.

In the Haute-Savoie Departement, The fund is currently the subject of an agreement between the local administration, EDF (the French historic electricity provider), and Gaz de France (the French historic gas provider).

The fund is aimed at any person holding a domestic gas or electricity supply contract who has some difficulties in paying the electricity or gas bill for their main accommodation, due to the precariousness of their situation.

SHARE is an Intelligent Energy Europe Project working in Eight European areas to develop energy efficiency and low carbon technologies in social housing. For more information about the SHARE project and for other case studies see the project website:

**www.socialhousingaction.com**



The financial assistance can be total or partial. One grant for financial assistance a year can be allowed per person, to a maximum value of 800 euros.

The criteria that are taken into account in the grant assessment are the financial resources of the household and the proportion of total household income represented by the energy bills.

Anne-Sophie Masure, Share project coordinator in France says: 'in the Haute-Savoie region, not only can we observe a constant increase in the number of requests for financial assistance for unpaid energy bills, but also an increase in the number of positive responses to these requests.

In the current context of rising energy prices and rent increases, this situation is bound to keep on moving in that direction. '

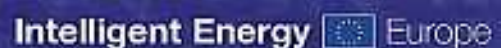


## The steps to a submission to the Fund

- 1- Before any submission to the Housing Solidarity Fund, the household seeking assistance has to contact the energy supplier to try to find an amicable solution to the payment of the debt. In cases where this seems totally or partially impossible, the supplier gives a debt information form to the seeker. This form is addressed to a social worker with a view to preparing a possible instruction for a financial assistance request.
- 2- With this document, the seeker can now speak with a social worker who will assess the situation and decide if they are likely to be eligible for financial help.
- 3- The HSE assistance request is addressed by the social worker to the Prevention Service of the 'Prevention and social development Department'
- 4- The social worker informs the energy supplier by fax to indicate the request has been sent and to review the state of energy supply.
- 5- It is imperative that the request, made on a single financial assistance printed form, includes documents supporting the seeker situation (identity justification, invoice, consumption detail form ...)

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