



Utility Assistance Guide

The Public Utility Commission requires utility providers to have programs and protections that help low-income customers keep their utility service. These programs may help you to pay utility bills or lower the amount of electricity or natural gas you use. If you or someone you know is without utility service, or has received a utility shut-off notice, first call your local utility company for help. Your utility company will work with you and explain programs that may help you depending on your income or hardship situation.

For More Information contact **The Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission at 1-800-692-7380** or visit their website: www.puc.pa.gov

Your local electric or natural gas company may call them by different names, but each company has the following programs listed below.

- **BUDGET BILLING**: All residential customers may contact their electric or natural gas company to request budget billing at any time. This form of billing is based on the customer's past 12 months of energy usage to arrive at a fixed "average" amount to bill each month. The utility company can adjust this average four times a year higher or lower depending on the customers usage.
- **CUSTOMER ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS (CAP)**: This program is set up between the utility company and a low-income, payment troubled customer to pay utility bills that are based on household size and gross household income. CAP customers agree to make regular monthly payments, which are usually less than the current bill, in exchange for continued utility service.
- **CUSTOMER ASSISTANCE REFERRAL and EVALUATION PROGRAM (CARES)**: The CARES program will help customers with special needs. Special needs customers are consumers who are experiencing family emergencies, divorce, **unemployment**, or medical emergencies. The program's goal is to provide support and direction to help customers pay their utility bill.
- **LOW-INCOME USEAGE REDUCTION PROGRAM (LIURP)**: LIURP helps low-income residential customers lower the amount of electricity or natural gas used each month. The utility company may provide free home weatherization. A utility company representative may come to your home to install energy saving features to help reduce your monthly bill.
- **HARDSHIP FUNDS**: Utility company hardship funds provide cash assistance to utility customers to help them pay their utility bills. Hardship funds provide assistance grants to customers who "fall through the cracks" of other financial assistance programs, or to those who still have a critical need for assistance after the other resources have been exhausted. The fund makes payments directly to companies on behalf of eligible customers. Contact your local utility company for more information.

2019 - 2020

Pennsylvania Hardship Program

Dollar Energy Fund's **Pennsylvania Hardship Program** provides one-time assistance grants that are applied directly to a limited-income household's utility bill. Funding is available on a first come, first serve basis and eligibility requirements vary based on the utility company. **Program guidelines and eligibility requirements are subject to change.**

Partnering Utility Companies:

Gas

Columbia Gas
 Peoples Gas Company, LLC
formerly Peoples TWP
 Peoples Natural Gas
 Valley Energy

Electric

Citizens Electric
 Duquesne Light Company
 Met-Ed, a FirstEnergy Company
 Penelec, a FirstEnergy Company
 Penn Power, a FirstEnergy Company
 West Penn Power, a FirstEnergy Company
 Wellsboro Electric

Water

Pennsylvania American Water

Program Dates:

For customers of Peoples Gas Company and Peoples Natural Gas:

- Open from October 1, 2019, through November 29, 2019, for services that are off or in threat of termination *only*.
- Open from December 2, 2019, through March 31, 2020, for services that are *off only*.
- Starting April 1, 2020, the program is open to all eligible applicants regardless of service status.

For customers of Columbia Gas:

- Open from October 1, 2019, through October 31, 2019, to all eligible applicants regardless of service status.
- Open from November 1, 2019, through November 29, 2019, for services that are off or in threat of termination *only*.
- Open from December 2, 2019, through January 31, 2020, for services that are *off only*.
- Open from February 3, 2020, through February 28, 2020, for services that are off or in threat of termination.
- Starting March 2, 2020, the program is open to all eligible applicants regardless of service status.

For customers of other utilities:

- Open from October 1, 2019, through November 29, 2019, for services that are off or in threat of termination *only*.
- Open from December 2, 2019, through January 31, 2020, for services that are *off only*.

- Open from February 3, 2020, through February 28, 2020, for services that are off or in threat of termination.
- Starting March 2, 2020, the program is open to all eligible applicants regardless of service status.

If applicants are eligible and programs are open, applicants must apply for LIHEAP and CRISIS before applying for the Dollar Energy Fund Hardship Program.

Sincere Effort of Payment:

Applicants must have paid at least **\$150** on their gas and electric accounts in the past three months. **Senior Citizens**, age 62 and over, must have paid **\$100** on their accounts.

Applicants must have paid at least **\$100** on their water account in the past three months. **Senior Citizens** must have paid at least **\$50**.

Exceptions may be made in cases of extreme hardships.

Balance Requirement:

Applicants must have an outstanding balance on their utility bill of at least **\$100**.

Senior Citizens, age 62 and over, may have a **\$0** balance as long as there is no existing credit on the account.

Maximum Grant:

The maximum grant amount an applicant may receive is \$500.

Applicants can only receive one grant per utility, per program year. (10/1/2019 - 9/30/2020)

Grant awards are based on need and each family's circumstances are different. Grant amounts are determined on a case-to-case basis.

If a customer's utility service is off or in threat of termination when they apply and the maximum grant amount will not restore service or stop termination, the application will be denied. The amount needed to restore service or stop a termination is determined by utility review. Notification will be sent to the customer advising them that their application was denied and that an additional payment is required in order to be considered for assistance.

Additional Guidelines:

- Account must be residential, single home or apartment. No "cooking only", commercial, industrial, or apartments with shared utility service.
- Name on account must be that of an adult who is currently living in the home.
- Dollar Energy Fund grants cannot be used to cover security deposits or reconnection fees.

Income Guidelines:

With the exception of FirstEnergy customers, total gross household income must be at or below 200% of the 2019 Federal Poverty Income Guidelines* as shown in the chart below.

Household Size	200% Monthly	200% Yearly
1	\$2,082	\$24,980
2	\$2,818	\$33,820
3	\$3,555	\$42,660
4	\$4,292	\$51,500
5	\$5,028	\$60,340
6	\$5,765	\$69,180
7	\$6,502	\$78,020
8	\$7,238	\$86,860
Each add'l add	\$737	\$8,840

Total gross household income for FirstEnergy customers must be at or below 250% of the 2019 Federal Poverty Income Guidelines* as shown in the chart below.

Household Size	250% Monthly	250% Yearly
1	\$2,602	\$31,225
2	\$3,523	\$42,275
3	\$4,444	\$53,325
4	\$5,365	\$64,375
5	\$6,285	\$75,425
6	\$7,206	\$86,475
7	\$8,127	\$97,525
8	\$9,048	\$108,575
Each add'l add	\$921	\$11,050

**The 2020 Federal Poverty Income Guidelines will take effect on February 1, 2020, and will remain in effect for the remainder of the program year.*

Application Attachments:

- Verification of income or proof of LIHEAP or Crisis application, when those programs are open, must be attached to all applications.
- A copy of the most recent utility bill with proof of minimum payment must be attached to all applications.

How to Apply:

The best way to start seeking help is by calling your utility company. They will provide you with information on a number of different assistance programs that are available to help low-income utility customers.

Information about assistance programs can also be found by visiting www.dollarenergy.org, click on **Need Help** (green bar) which will take you to the screen to **choose your state** from the dropdown then click on **Go**.

To find an agency in your area go to www.dollarenergy.org and click on Agency Finder (located at the very top of the screen).

What is LIHEAP?

The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) helps low-income families pay their heating bills. LIHEAP is a grant. You do not have to repay it.

To receive help...

- Apply between Nov. 1, 2019 and Apr. 10, 2020.
- You don't have to be on public assistance
- You don't need to have an unpaid heating bill
- You can either rent or own your home

How does LIHEAP work?

LIHEAP offers both cash and crisis grants. Families may apply for:

Cash Grants

Cash grants help families pay their heating bills. The one-time payment is sent directly to your utility company or fuel provider, and it will be credited on your bill. (In some cases, the check may be mailed to you directly.) Cash grants range from \$200-\$1000 and are based on household size, income, and fuel type.

Crisis Grants

Crisis grants may be available if you have an emergency situation and are in jeopardy of losing your heat. You can receive more than one Crisis grant, as necessary, during the season until the maximum benefit of \$600 is reached.

Crisis situations include:

- Broken heating equipment or leaking lines that must be fixed or replaced
- Lack of fuel
- Termination of utility service
- Danger of being without fuel (less than a 15 day supply) or of having utility service terminated (received a notice that service will be shut off within the next 60 days)

If you have a heating emergency please call your local county assistance office (CAO).

How do I apply?

- Apply online at: www.compass.state.pa.us
- Request an application by calling the Statewide LIHEAP Hotline at 1-866-857-7095 or call PA Relay at 711 for the hearing impaired.
- Applications are available at your local CAO

To apply, you will need

- Names of people in your household
- Dates of birth for all household members
- Social Security Numbers for all household members
- Proof of income for all household members
- A recent heating bill

INCOME GUIDELINES 2019 - 2020 LIHEAP

Household Size	Maximum Annual Income
1	\$ 18,735
2	\$ 25,365
3	\$ 31,995
4	\$ 38,625
5	\$ 45,255
6	\$ 51,885
7	\$ 58,515
8	\$ 65,145
9	\$ 71,775
10	\$ 78,405