

The Public Utility Commission requires utilities 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.

The local electric or natural gas company may call them by different names, but each company has the following programs listed below. Here are some tips to help you stay warm, lower your heating bills, and tell you who to call when you need help.

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 customer's 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 USAGE 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.

LOW-INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LIHEAP)

LIHEAP provides financial assistance to low-income households to pay energy bills. LIHEAP is a federal program administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare and consists of (3) components:

CASH BENEFITS: Helps low-income customers pay their home energy bill.

CRISIS: Helps low-income customers meet home emergency situations and restore services if their service has been shut off.

WEATHERIZATION: Helps qualified low-income customers reduce their energy consumption through home improvements.

NOTE: Low-income customers who qualify for Cash and Crisis can receive both. For more information please contact your Local County Assistance office or the Department of Public Welfare at: 1-800-692-7462.



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. For further information, contact your local utility company.

NOTE: You must meet certain income limits and be payment troubled to qualify for CAP, CARES, LIURP, LIHEAP and the hardship fund. Call your local utility company for more details to see if you qualify.



**Turn
down**

Seal off

**Save
up**