



The  
**Legal Aid Society**  
of Cleveland  
*Since 1905*

## You should know:

- Try to handle the problem BEFORE utilities are disconnected. There are more, less costly options if the utilities are still on.
- Dial 2-1-1 for information about your specific county resources.
- More information can be found online for utilities regulated by PUCO at [www.puco.ohio.gov](http://www.puco.ohio.gov), or by calling 1.800.686.7826 and at the Ohio Consumers' Council at [www.occ.ohio.gov](http://www.occ.ohio.gov).

## Legal Aid may be able to help with some utility problems, such as:

- 1) An issue with the utility company approving a medical certification;
- 2) Tampering issues; or
- 3) Cleveland Water billing dispute where hearing denied or unfavorable decision.

Call 1.888.817.3777 to find out if you are eligible for Legal Aid, or visit a Brief Advice Clinic (see [www.lasclev.org](http://www.lasclev.org) for schedules and locations) to meet with an attorney.

*This brochure was prepared by Legal Aid which serves low-income residents of Ashtabula, Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake and Lorain Counties in Northeast Ohio.*

### New Client Intake

Toll Free: 888.817.3777

Phone: 216.687.1900

Learn more about Legal Aid and upcoming brief advice clinics:

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

### Legal Aid Offices:

#### Cleveland & Administrative Offices

1223 West Sixth Street, Cleveland, OH 44113

#### Elyria Office

1530 West River Road, Suite 301, Elyria, OH 44035

#### Jefferson Office

121 East Walnut Street, Jefferson, OH 44047

#### Painesville Office

8 North State Street, Suite 300, Painesville, OH 44077

*If you have a communications limitation, contact Legal Aid through the Ohio Relay Service at 800.750.0750.*

*Legal Aid offers interpretation and translation services so those with limited English proficiency can communicate with Legal Aid staff in their dominant and/or preferred language.*

*The information in this brochure cannot take the place of advice from a lawyer. Each case is different and needs individual legal advice. You should contact a lawyer if you need representation or if you have questions.*



05/16

# Utility Problems?



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

Many programs help people pay electric, gas, and water bills. The following programs assist customers of **regulated** utility companies.

Common regulated companies in Northeast Ohio include Dominion Gas and First Energy. You can find out if your provider is regulated at [www.puco.ohio.gov](http://www.puco.ohio.gov), and type “regulated company list” in the search box.

If your utility provider is **NOT regulated**, call the company directly to ask if assistance is available.

## Do you have utility debt?

**Percentage of Income Payment Program Plus (PIPP)** allows customers to pay a percentage of their household income instead of the full *gas or electric* bill each month, while also reducing previous debt.

- To be eligible, household income must be at or below 150% of the poverty line.
- If you heat your home with gas, your monthly payment will be 6% of your monthly income. Your electric payment will also be 6% of your monthly income.
- If you heat your home with electric, your monthly electric payment will be 10% of your monthly income.
- Each on time, full payment will reduce old debt, and help avoid new debt.
- Contact 1.800.282.0880 to apply.

## Struggling to keep your heat on?

**Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)** assists eligible low-income residents with *winter heating costs related to natural gas, electric, oil, kerosene, or wood*.

- Eligibility is based on household size and total income.
- You need to mail the application (found online at [www.development.ohio.gov/community/ocs/heap](http://www.development.ohio.gov/community/ocs/heap)) and proof of income, citizenship, and most recent heating bill to:  
Ohio Department of Development  
Office of Community Service/HEAP  
P.O. Box 1240  
Columbus, Ohio 43216
- You may also call 1.800.282.0880 for assistance.

## Did you get a shut off notice?

**Winter Reconnect Order (WRO)** is an order issued by Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) that allows customers who have a pending *heating* disconnection the opportunity to pay a maximum of \$175 to maintain their *gas and/or electric* service.

- There is no income requirement for this program.
- Participants may only use the order once per winter season and must also enroll in a payment plan.
- If both gas and electric are in danger of being disconnected, customers may split the benefit and use it to maintain both services, if done at the same time.
- If disconnected, the customer must pay a reconnect fee up to \$36 to restore service.
- Contact 1.800.282.0880 to apply.

**Summer Crisis Program** assists low-income residents with *cooling* costs in households that include a member with an illness, or a person who is age 60 or older.

- Households are eligible once per season (July 1st to August 31st).
- Eligibility is based on household size and income (at or below 200% of the poverty line).
- Doctor must verify that the person with illness would benefit from AC.
- Contact 1.800.282.0880 to apply.

**Medical Certification Program** ensures that utility companies cannot shut off *natural gas, electric, or water* services for persons with serious or life-threatening medical conditions.

- Medical certificates are valid for 30 days and will prevent your gas, electric, or water from being disconnected. You can get up to three certificates for your household in each 12-month period.
- A certification form should be requested from the utility company and then signed by your doctor. The form can also be found at [www.puco.ohio.gov](http://www.puco.ohio.gov).
- You will still be responsible for paying the utility bill for the entire time period the medical certificate is in effect. The utility provider will require you to enter into a payment plan before the certificate expires.