

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, or by calling 800.686.7826 and at the Ohio Consumers' Council at 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 888.817.3777 to find out if you are eligible for Legal Aid, or visit a Brief Advice Clinic (see www.lasclev.org for schedules and locations) to meet with an attorney.



The
Legal Aid Society
of Cleveland
Since 1905

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

Intake Line for New Legal Cases

Toll Free: 888.817.3777

Tenant Information Line

Call for info related to tenants' rights and rental housing.
(This line does not provide legal advice.)
216.861.5955

Learn more about Legal Aid and upcoming brief advice clinics:

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, Ohio 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.



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Utility Problems?



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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, 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 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 https://www.development.ohio.gov/is/is_heap.htm) 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 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 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 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.
- 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.