

Illinois Energy Bill Assistance

Illinois utility bill and energy assistance programs.

Financial assistance programs in Illinois can help the low to moderate income pay their energy and heating bills. Below you will find information on various options and resources that are offered by the government and utility companies themselves. Non-profits, charities, and other agencies in Illinois also may be able to provide financial help to pay utility bills, and offer access to emergency and crisis assistance.

Ameren - Hardship Assistance for Residential Customers is run by community action agencies in Illinois, and the non-profits distribute program funds and cash grants that will be based on the financial hardship being experienced by customers with household incomes of up to 400 percent of the federal government poverty level. The agencies may award cash grants and aid of up to \$600 per household. Customers may call 1-877-411-9276 to get more information on this resource, or to obtain the name and address of your community action agency in your county or town.

Ameren - The Residential Bill Payment Assistance may be able to provide \$300 worth of grants to pay energy or heating bills to low-income electric customers. The income level for a customer to qualify is 150 percent to 200 percent of the energy bill assistance levels that are established by the federal government poverty level. The grants and financial assistance will be provided through the local community action agencies that administer the federal LIHEAP program.

Ameren – The Warm Neighbors Cool Friends is an assistance program that provides utility and heating bill payment assistance as well as home weatherization and energy conservation measures for qualifying Ameren low to moderate income customers. The program is based on certain income guidelines that are established by the federal government. Call 800-755-5000 to find a location in your town or city to apply to. Another option is Dollar More, which may be able to offer emergency funds for paying a wide variety of home energy and utility bills including gas, oil, propane, and electric. All Dollar More contributions go to those who need help through a network of local charities, human services agencies, and community action groups.

Ameren also participates in an assistance program that is known as the Good Samaritan Initiative. The program is available for qualified participants who are facing a disconnection or who have had their utilities terminated. Customers who fall into this category can get their utility service restored by paying 20 percent or \$250 of the remaining balance on their home energy or utility bill. To qualify for help from this particular program, utility customers must have account balances that are too high to be covered by the state of Illinois Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, but the balance on their bill needs to be less than \$3,000. The Good Samaritan initiative is currently being run by the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services. Contact your local community action agency to apply for help or more information.

Nicor Gas Reconnect Assistance.

This gas bill assistance program was designed by Nicor Gas with the goal of helping those households who have had their natural gas service disconnected. This resource is a possibility for those customers that had a shut off because of nonpayment of their bills and the program may be able to help reconnect their service. It is also available during the fall months so families can enter into this plan before the onset of winter.

Nicor currently provides service to almost 2.3 million residential customers in the northern third of the state of Illinois, however they do not provide coverage to the city of Chicago itself. The number of residential customers who have had their gas service turned off for nonpayment of their gas bills increased almost 5 percent year over year. As an example of the struggles faced by families, from 2007 to 2009, the number of people who have had their service turned off increased a total of about 35 percent. So the demand for assistance and options is very high. Only a small number of qualified customers may qualify due to limited funding. Find a listing of other [Illinois energy bill assistance programs](#).

The **Nicor Reconnect Assistance** program will allow customers who have had their natural gas service disconnected to have it turned back on by paying only 50 percent of their outstanding gas bill if they sign up. So they pay 50% of the bill up front, and then have to pay the remainder of their unpaid bill in equal monthly installments over the next 12 months.

If payments are missed on this installment plan then the customer could go back to a shut off status. So it is important that you can pay the balance over the following year. As if residential customers cannot pay the remainder of their gas bill within those 12 months, then their accounts will fall back into default and the service may be turned off again. So this repayment schedule offers customers of the power company with an incredible amount of flexibility and, most importantly, time so that they can get back on track with their gas and utility bills.

This option can be combined with other solutions as well. Some customers that qualify for reconnection will have the opportunity to use other programs, such as LIHEAP. They can then put any grants or credits from LIHEAP toward paying for their initial Reconnect Program payment. The program can also assist customers by getting their natural gas service restored before the arrival of colder winter temperatures in Illinois.

Customers who have had their gas service disconnected should look into and sign up for the Nicor Gas Reconnect Assistance program as soon as possible by calling **Nicor Gas** at 1-800-310-0566. There are no conditions to the program, and all residential customers who have been disconnected for nonpayment of their bills are eligible for the Reconnect Assistance Program. If you decide not to use the Reconnect Program or miss some of the agreed upon payments, then those customers that have been disconnected for non-payment on their account will be required to pay their outstanding natural gas bill in full before service can be restored by the energy company.

LIHEAP Energy Assistance Programs.

The LIHEAP assistance program is a federally funded energy bill assistance program. Help is provided to both struggling and lower income households who need assistance paying for their home energy bills. The program's purpose is to assist lower income families and households with meeting their immediate home energy needs. Funds are available to help pay for both winter heating bills, as well as summer cooling bills, so the program provides year round assistance.

The program will always give priority to those families with the highest home energy needs, which usually means lower income households with high energy and heating bills and/or the presence of a vulnerable individual in the household, such as a disabled family member, a young child, or a frail older individual.

Some forms of energy and heating bill assistance that is provided to low income households through local state government LIHEAP programs include: emergency bill assistance if a household's home energy service is either shut off or about to be shut off, financial assistance towards a household's heating or utility bill, and a wide range of other energy-related services are available if a states choose to offer them, such as utility equipment repair and replacement, weatherization upgrades and improvements, financial budgeting counseling and more. Find a listing of programs and how to [apply](#).

Who can receive LIHEAP assistance?

Both renters and homeowners who are responsible for paying their home energy and heating bills and have a low or fixed income are eligible for this assistance. You do not need to have an unpaid utility bill to receive energy assistance, and you can also receive this money without being on welfare.

What types of assistance are available?

The Cash Grant is available to assist with paying your heating and utility bills. Once again, you do not need to have an unpaid bill or to be in crisis situation to receive a Cash Grant.

Water Bill Assistance

[Low Income Cell Program](#)



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[ssdisabilityapplication.com](#)

Free Disability claim information SSI/SSDI, see if you qualify free!

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Apply for LIHEAP Online. Illinois Energy Assistance Program.

[\\$500-\\$5,000 Personal Loan](#)

[moneytoday.com](#)

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H2O Help to Others Program

The H2O Help to Others Program was created to assist those who need the most water bill assistance and are facing a possible shut off of their service. Customers who qualify for this program may receive a free cash grant of up to \$500 to help them with paying their monthly water bill. The funds will be applied to any past due balance on your account.

Unfortunately a cash grant from the H2O Help to Others Program may not cover a recipients

entire water bill. In certain cases, recipients of the grant money will still need to pay a portion of their water bill that will be based upon their income.

To qualify for the H2O Help to Others Program, the total monthly household income of the recipient may not exceed certain monthly thresholds, depending on the state and area in which you reside. Please contact American Water for more information and how to apply.

Yet another benefit of the H2O Help to Others Program is that American Water and the organizations that oversee the program will often connect customers with other resources and sources of financial aid in their local communities. So referrals and information is usually available on other charities, agencies, non-profits and assistance programs for which they might qualify for aid.

There are many benefits to the program. What has been experienced is that those who qualify for the water bill assistance program are also able to begin paying their water and other utility bills on time going forward. They also are usually able to start meeting other financial obligations and commitments and work towards long term self-sufficiency. Find additional ways to get help with utility bills, including [LIHEAP](#) and more.



Water bill assistance programs

Many water companies will do what they can to work with customers to help them keep their service on. They may offer payment plans, allow unpaid bills to be paid in installments, and other options. In addition, many counties across the nation have **non-profit agencies, churches, or government programs** that may offer cash assistance for paying water bills. While funding is almost always limited, and income criteria often need to be met, individuals should always look into their local resources. Find a [listing of local assistance programs](#) by state and county.

While not as common, certain charity type organizations like the **Salvation Army, Saint Vincent DePaul, or Catholic Charities** may provide financial help. Each of these groups will have limited funding. If they can assist with unpaid water bills, it will usually only be a last resort and when a family is facing an unexpected emergency. [Read more.](#)

Discounts, extensions and payment programs are available from some water companies. In addition, government mandated resources may be offered in certain states, counties, or cities that will provide discounts to income qualified households. While these payment plans are not common, they do exist in some areas. They can generally provide customers more time to pay their water bills and the programs may provide other forms of assistance as well. More on [water bill payment plans](#).

General Assistance

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

This program helps both families and pregnant women with one or more dependent children. It provides them with temporary cash and also other benefits. The financial aid from TANF can help pay for shelter, rent, food, utilities, heating bills, and expenses other than medical. (800) 843-6154

Food Stamp Program

The Food Stamp Grant Program/SNAP will help lower income people and families in Illinois buy the food they need for good health. Many households that have a low income can get food stamp benefits and vouchers from the state. 1-800-843-6154

Peoria Area Food Bank

721 W. McBean St.

Peoria IL 61605

(309) 671-3906

Service area: DeWitt, Fulton, Livingston, Mason, McLean, Peoria, Tazewell, and Woodward counties

Bartonville Christian Church Food Pantry