



ENERGY ASSISTANCE OUTREACH TOOLKIT



INSIDE THIS TOOLKIT:

SECTION

1

PURPOSE OF THE TOOLKIT

Welcome!

Find out what this toolkit is, who it's for, and how to use it.

SECTION

2

ENERGY ASSISTANCE 101

Review Energy Assistance 101-get a refresher on energy assistance programs, their individual eligibility requirements, and how to access this assistance.

SECTION

3

OUTREACH TIPS & BEST PRACTICES

Get quick tips & best practices on how to design your outreach based on behavioral science research.

SECTION

4

USE OUR RESOURCES

The MPSC has produced several print materials to help partners with educating customers about energy assistance options. Use the resources in the following pages in your outreach!

PURPOSE OF THE TOOLKIT

Hello and thank you for your interest in the MI Public Service Commission's Energy Assistance Community Outreach Toolkit. We appreciate the work you do in your community.

As a community focused organization, you understand the importance of educating and engaging Michigan residents on the issues of interest to them, especially available energy assistance programs and opportunities, and we would like to partner with you in this effort.

This document provides resources to community organizations, advocates, and energy and community stakeholders as they carry out meaningful and ongoing community engagement.

Community based organizations and stakeholders not only have valuable insights into the needs of their communities, but the confidence of their local communities. When organizations like yours speak, community members listen.

We know you are busy responding to the needs of your community members, and may be experiencing a lack of resources, information, or time to achieve your goals. With this in mind, we have developed materials, graphics, and messaging that can be shared with your community members or utilized as resources to create your own materials.

While this toolkit is designed to give you tools to provide your community members with accurate information regarding energy assistance programs, it is prepared as a guide and foundational resource for you to utilize when helpful within your community and is not intended to be a comprehensive library of tools. Please note that not all the materials may be directly applicable to your community's needs.

We hope that you will find these materials of use in your outreach and education efforts. Should you have questions, need additional information, or have recommendations for improving our materials or for additional outreach toolkits, please don't hesitate to reach out to us. We are appreciative of your partnership and look forward to continuing to work with you on issues important to your community.

Sincerely,
The MPSC Communications Team
LARA-MPSC-Communications@michigan.gov

ENERGY ASSISTANCE 101

Access to energy – whether electricity to run home appliances or fuel to heat our homes – is crucial. Without access to electricity, food and vital medications go bad and residents who rely on medical devices to maintain their quality of life, or even life itself, are put in jeopardy. Without access to home heat – regardless of fuel source – residents’ health is put at risk, and some have even died. Ensuring that energy is affordable is equally vital. However, what may be affordable for one utility customer may be out of reach for another.

Energy Assistance Programs play a vital role in ensuring that qualifying low-income customers are able to keep their lights on and their houses warm. Several energy assistance programs exist and may be offered through the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, community partners, or the utilities. In this section, we will provide a brief overview of energy assistance programs, their individual eligibility requirements, and how to access this assistance. Given the various types of energy assistance and the unique application and eligibility requirements for each program, customers with questions should contact the [MPSC](#) or [2-1-1](#) for additional information.

This section also provides an overview of existing utility shut off protections which prohibit shut off of utility services for qualifying customers under certain circumstances.

ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Several types of energy assistance programs are authorized under state law and funded through a combination of rate payer surcharges and federal grants. These assistance programs are overseen by state departments and agencies though some of these funds are disbursed through grants to community partner organizations.

Customers in need of help should reach out to their utility, [2-1-1](#), their local community partner organization or [DHHS office](#), or the [MI Public Service Commission](#).

State Emergency Relief

State Emergency Relief (SER) is a crisis intervention program administered by MDHHS that provides assistance for energy-related expenses such as heating fuel and electricity. To qualify, a customer must have an income at or below 150% of the poverty level and be past due on their utility bills, facing imminent shut off, or have had their services shut off. Customers interested in receiving SER can apply through [MIBridges](#) or through a paper application that is returned to the local MDHHS office.

Weatherization Services

Customers at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level may qualify for assistance with home improvement projects that will improve the energy efficiency of their home which in turn lowers their energy bills. Local community action agencies are responsible for disbursing these funds and interested customers should reach out to their community agency by calling [2-1-1](#).

Home Heating Credit

The home heating credit is a tax credit available to customers at or below 110% of the Federal Poverty Level. Customers apply for the credit on their annual tax forms through the [Michigan Department of Treasury](#). Customers may apply for the credit even if they are not required to file a Michigan income tax return. The application for the credit must be filed between January 1 and September 30 each year.

Assurance 16 Self-Sufficiency Services

Assurance 16 self-sufficiency services provide households with the tools to reduce their home energy needs and thereby the need for energy assistance. These services include needs assessments, counselling, and assistance with energy vendors. To qualify, customers must be at, or below, 150% of the Federal Poverty Level. Customers interested in receiving Assurance 16 services should call [2-1-1](#).

MI Energy Assistance Program

The [Michigan Energy Assistance Program](#) (MEAP) works with households to provide supplemental bill payment assistance, including enrollment in a longer term (24 month) affordable payment plan for customers of participating utilities, and self-sufficiency services to low-income residents statewide. Importantly, this assistance program can be used for electricity, natural gas, or deliverable fuels like propane, fuel oil, or wood. To qualify, customers must be at or below 150% of the federal poverty level and have received State Emergency Relief assistance.

UTILITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Utility assistance programs are administered by the utilities and approved through the rate case process. These programs may be subject to spending limits established in the applicable rate case.

Residential Income Assistance Credit (RIA)

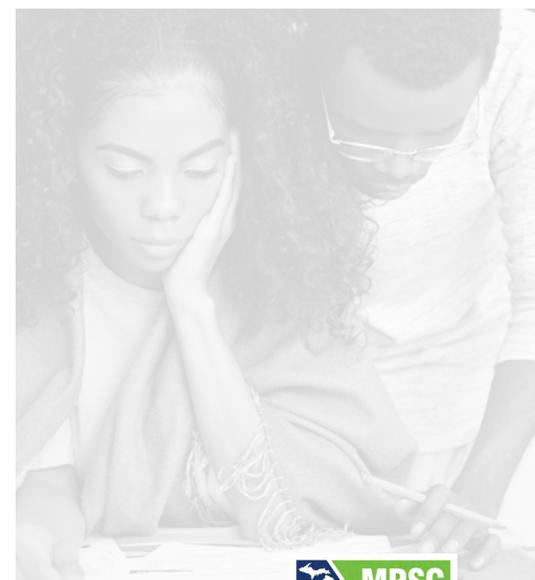
The RIA is a program offered by Consumers Energy (electric and gas), DTE Energy (electric and gas), Indiana Michigan Power, and SEMCO Gas that provides a monthly bill credit (typically limited to the monthly customer charge) for qualifying customers. Qualifying customers have an income at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level. Assistance amounts, program limitations and requirements, and application information varies by utility. Customers interested in applying for the RIA should contact their utility.

Low Income Assistance Credit (LIA)

The LIA is a program offered by DTE Electric, DTE Gas, Consumers Energy (electric and gas), and SEMCO Gas that provides a monthly bill credit of \$30 - \$40 for qualifying customers. Qualifying customers have an income at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level. Assistance amounts, program limitations and requirements, and application information varies by utility. Customers interested in applying for the LIA should contact their utility.

Senior Credit

The Senior Credit is available for customers of DTE and Consumers Energy and provides a monthly bill credit of \$3.75 a month. Customers 65 years old and older qualify for this credit but must notify the utility of their eligibility.



SHUT-OFF PROTECTIONS

In addition to the payment assistance programs, several protections exist under MPSC rules to prevent the shut-off of utility service due to non-payment for qualifying customers. Due to the various types of shut-off protection programs, customers seeking shut off protection should contact their utility or the [MPSC](#) with any additional questions.

Medical Emergency Shut-off Protection

Households where a member is experiencing a medical emergency that would be made worse by a lack of utility services are eligible for up to 3, 21 day shut-off holds in any 12-month period. Customers needing a Medical Emergency shut-off hold need to submit the Commission approved [medical certification](#) form to their utility provider. Customers should direct any questions or requests for the form to their utility.

Critical Care Customer Shut-off Protection

The Critical Care Customer protection requires that utilities refrain from disconnecting service where a disconnection would be immediately life threatening. The customer must submit the Commission approved [medical certification form](#) to their utility provider and must renew the form annually as long as the critical care condition continues. In addition to providing shut-off protection, customers who have submitted a critical care customer form to their utility must be informed of any planned service interruptions.

Winter Senior Protection Plan

The Winter Senior Protection Plan prevents the shut-off of utility services for senior customers who are age 65 and older during the heating season (November 1 – March 31). Qualifying customers must notify their utility. Any unpaid balance accrued during the heating season must be paid in monthly installments outside of the heating season.

Military Protection Plan

The Military Protection Plan prevents the shut-off of eligible military customers for up to 90 days with a potential 90-day extension under certain circumstances. Any balance due from the protection period will be split into monthly installments and must be repaid.

Winter Protection Plan

The Winter Protection Plan (WPP) prevents utility shut-off of qualifying customers during the heating season (November 1 – March 31) for reasons of non-payment. Qualifying customers are those at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level and are enrolled in, and making payments under, a monthly payment plan for the duration of the shut off protection period.

Shut-off Protection Plan

The Shut-off Protection Plan is available for qualifying customers of Consumers Energy and DTE Energy. The protections afforded are similar to those under the Winter Protection Plan except that customers up to 200% of the Federal Poverty Level may qualify.

OUTREACH TIPS & BEST PRACTICES

Researchers have long studied the way we access, process, and act on information. We've taken their insights and come up with recommendations and questions to ask yourself when developing your messaging. Grounding your communications in these principles will make them as effective as possible.



MAKE IT ACTIONABLE

Reducing friction in the path towards action is critical-and sometimes the smallest tweaks can have a significant impact.



MAKE IT RELEVANT

Position your message to work for the audience you hope to engage-accounting for what's important to them and what motivates them.



PLAN THE DELIVERY

Meet people where they're at-the packaging of your message matters.

MAKE IT ACTIONABLE

Reducing friction in the path towards action is critical-and sometimes the smallest tweaks can have a significant impact.

1 Keep it simple.

Is all the information in my message immediately useful? Am I using simple language?

When communicating to mass audiences, there is no award for impressive use of an extensive vocabulary. Stick to a fifth grade reading level and a conversational style (such as the use of contractions) that's to the point. It's easy to over-share in an attempt to be thorough. Instead, provide only the most essential items for the immediate actions people need to take, and include reference links for those interested in learning more.

2 Make it visual.

What pictures could I use to convey my message?

We've all heard the saying "a picture is worth a thousand words," but very few informational campaigns begin by drawing a picture. Humans are drawn to attractive imagery and color, and some studies show we read as little as 20% of the text on a page. Make your design default a picture, and then add words, rather than start with extensive written text.

3 Create a checklist.

What are the individual steps my audience should take?

To help people take action, show a clear to-do list, next steps, or break down the specific tasks required to complete that action.

Here's how:

- Start each step's sentence using the specific verb of the action they need to complete.
- Help people know what to expect, such as documents they'll need to bring with them to an appointment, etc.
- Break things down into smaller, more manageable chunks-for example, "Open a savings account" is more concrete than "Save money."

4 Prompt people to make a plan.

What kind of planning does my audience need to do?

There is often a gap between what we intend to do and what we actually do. To close this gap, a proven tactic is to provide a fill-in-the-blank template helping individuals to plan specific details of completing a task. Have them answer logistical questions such as what time they'll do something, what mode of transportation they'll use, the route they plan to travel, and other basic yet critical details.

APPENDIX A

Planning Worksheet

Who do I want to reach?

What barriers may my audience encounter that would prevent participation?

What is the action I want my audience to take?

These are the concrete steps required:

Why should my audience care about my message?

What kinds of people does my audience trust and admire?

What channels of communication does my audience prefer?

What times of day is my audience available?

Where will my audience be most receptive to my message?

MAKE IT RELEVANT

Position your message to work for the audience you hope to engage—accounting for what's important to them and what motivates them.

1 Make it salient.

Why does my audience care?

It's easy to forget that the thing you're advocating for, which you know a lot about, may not be as clear to someone even one step removed. Frame the "why" of taking an action as a value proposition that's important to your targeted listener.

2 Make it personal.

Where can I add a personal touch?

Remember when your mom may have made you write thank you notes to your relatives after your graduation? It turns out she was on to something! Research has shown that personalization can increase response rates. Try these approaches:

- Personally address communications, such as letters or emails
- Tailor content to cite specific examples that matter or include the reader
- Include personal appeals from the sender, like a little handwritten note or signature on a template letter

3 Make it social.

Who does my audience identify with or admire?

We are strongly influenced by what those around us do, what we perceive to be "normal" or "acceptable," and what others think of us. If we publicly commit to doing something, we're more likely to follow through. We will purchase products that people we hope to emulate endorse, and consider how others rate restaurants or items we want to buy.

4 Consider the right incentives.

How can I make my incentive seem even better?

Both financial and non-financial incentives can be powerful motivators. Whenever applying this tactic, carefully consider the timing of the incentive and the context in which it is framed.

For example, a \$1 coupon is much more exciting for a \$5 item than a \$100 item even though in both instances an individual is saving the same amount. Providing a free financial planning consultation may be much more valuable during tax season.

PLAN THE DELIVERY

Meet people where they're at-the packaging of your message matters.



1 Consider the messenger.

Who will my audience listen to?

People pay attention to who is asking them to do something. Is it someone they know? Trust? Respect? Consider who will resonate best with your target audience.

Additionally, if you're sending a written communication such as a letter or postcard, including a photo of the person sending the message has been shown to increase responsiveness.

2 Consider the timing.

What is my audience's schedule like?

When will my message be most relevant?

Research has shown that sending emails at lunchtime led to increased click rates.

Whenever possible, make your case for doing something linked to short term costs or benefits. We have a tendency to discount things that occur in the future because they seem more abstract.

3 Consider the location.

Where does my audience spend time?

Where will my message be most relevant?

The context of your setting can also affect people's interest in hearing your message. Are you knocking on someone's door when they're home relaxing on a Saturday morning, or talking to them about their energy assistance options while at a school parents' night?

4 Get creative with your mechanism.

What kinds of communication channels does my audience like and already use?

While sending letters or flyering can still be effective communications mechanisms, research has shown that text messages, pop-up boxes, and in-app messages are also cost-effective ways to connect.

Consider what channels your audience already engages with so you can meet them there, rather than trying to direct them to a new path of having to open their mail or visit a new website.



APPENDIX B

Message Checklist

1 Know Your Audience.

- Who is my primary audience?
- Why might they not participate in one of the programs?

2 Have an Objective.

- What do I want my audience to do after receiving my message?
- Does my audience have an incentive to take that action?

3 Make it actionable

- Is all the information in my message immediately useful? Am I using simple language?
- What pictures could I use to convey my message?
- Have I communicated the individual steps my audience should take?
- What kind of planning does my audience need to do in order to take the action I want?

4 Make it relevant

- Why does my audience care?
- Where can I add a personal touch?
- Who does my audience identify with or admire?
- How can I make my incentive seem even better?

5 Plan the delivery

- Who will my audience listen to?
- What is my audience's schedule like?
- When will my message be most relevant?
- Where does my audience spend time?
- Where will my message be most relevant?
- What kinds of communication channels does my audience like and already use?

STEP

4

USE OUR RESOURCES

We know you are busy responding to the needs of your community members, and may be experiencing a lack of resources, information, or time to achieve your goals. With this in mind, we have developed materials, graphics, and messaging that can be shared with your community members or utilized as resources to create your own materials.

PRESS MATERIALS

Press materials provide reporters additional information about your campaign to help them write articles or produce news segments.

Media Advisory

A media advisory alerts the media, in a concise manner, to your event. Think of it like an invitation and answer only the important questions: Who, What, When, Where, Why and How. A template for your use can be found in [Appendix C](#).

Press Release

A press release is a short (usually one-page) description of your news or event designed to inform media of high-level information—the Who, What, Where, When, Why and How. A press release should include these key elements:

- Your contact information
- A captivating headline
- A quote from your organization’s President or spokesperson
- Essential information about your issue or event

A template for your use can be found in [Appendix D](#).

Public Service Announcements (PSAs)

PSAs are non-commercial, unpaid radio and television messages used to promote information intended for the public good. They are generally produced in four different lengths: 15 seconds (40 words), 20 seconds (50 words), 30 seconds (75 words), and 60 seconds (150 words). Before developing a PSA for your local radio or television stations, ask how long, in number of words and in time, your PSA should be, as different stations tend to prefer different lengths depending on their other advertising constraints. Samples for your use can be found in [Appendix E](#).

Newspaper / Newsletter Articles

Newspaper articles, also known as drop-in articles, are an effective, cost-efficient way to share information with your community, as well as an excellent vehicle for sharing your success stories.

Your article should focus on “soft” news and have a longer shelf life than more time-sensitive news releases. Samples for your use can be found in [Appendix E](#).

- Keep articles to one page if possible.
- Offer solutions.
- Include a photo or graphic.
- Localize the story with quotes, statistics or local contact information.
- Learn what format your publication prefers before submission.

APPENDIX C

Media Advisory Sample

[ON LETTERHEAD]

MEDIA ADVISORY FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Organization of Contact:

Phone:

Email:

[Name of Your Organization] [Type of Event] to Support Local Efforts to Address Energy Assistance Programs

[CITY, MI] - [Name of Your Department/Organization] is hosting a [Type of Event], which is expected to involve more than [Minimum Number of Expected Participants] from [Name(s) of Area(s)].

WHO: [List any VIPs and other attendees of note who may be of interest to the press. Include titles whenever possible.]

WHAT: [Provide additional details about the event (i.e., what activities are scheduled, etc.).]

WHERE: [Address of the event location]

WHEN: [Date and time of the event]

WHY: Access to energy – whether electricity to run home appliances or fuel to heat our homes – is crucial. Without access to electricity, food and vital medications go bad and residents who rely on medical devices to maintain their quality of life, or even life itself, are put in jeopardy. Without access to home heat – regardless of fuel source – residents' health is put at risk, and some have even died. Ensuring that energy is affordable is equally vital. However, what may be affordable for one utility customer may be out of reach for another.

Energy Assistance Programs play a vital role in ensuring that qualifying low-income customers are able to keep their lights on and their houses warm. Several energy assistance programs exist and may be offered through the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, community partners, or the utilities.

For more information about energy assistance, see michigan.gov/mpsc and the MPSC's [Energy Assistance Shut-off Protection](#) consumer tips sheet.

APPENDIX D

Press Release Sample

[ON LETTERHEAD]

PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Organization of Contact:

Phone:

Email:

[Organization] today urged community members struggling with their home energy bills to call their utility, 211, or the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) for information regarding available energy assistance programs and utility service shut off protections.

“Access to energy – whether electricity to run home appliances or fuel to heat our homes – is crucial to ensuring the safety and well-being of our families,” said [organization representative]. “It’s important that families who are struggling to pay their utility bills know that help is available.”

For customers who qualify, several energy payment assistance programs are available through their utility provider or the State of Michigan. These programs range from affordable payment plan options to direct bill payment assistance. State assistance programs include:

- State Emergency Relief, which is a crisis intervention program that provides assistance for energy-related expenses.
- The Michigan Energy Assistance Program, which works with households to provide supplemental bill payment assistance, including enrollment in utility affordable payment plans and self-sufficiency services.
- The Home Heating Credit, which is a tax credit available to customers to offset their utility bills.

Additional programs including weatherization services and self-sufficiency services are also available. Each program has different requirements, so customers are encouraged to reach out to their utility or 211 to determine the right program to meet their needs.

Customers may also find help through various shutoff protections put into place by the MPSC which include shutoff protections for critical care customers, military customers, senior customers, low-income customers, and customers experiencing a medical emergency.

For more information about energy assistance, see michigan.gov/mpsc and the MPSC's [Energy Assistance Shut-off Protection](#) consumer tips sheet.

CONTACT: [Name, phone number, email address of contact person]
For more information about energy assistance, michigan.gov/mpsc
and [Energy Assistance Shut-off Protection](#) consumer tips sheet.

APPENDIX E

Public Service Announcement (PSA) Samples

:30

An important message from Michigan's energy providers.

If you're experiencing financial hardship due to the pandemic, call us now and we'll create a payment plan to get you through and keep the power on.

You can also call United Way at 2-1-1 or visit www.mi211.org for help with critical needs such as food, childcare, energy bills, and more.

Please stay safe and stay healthy.

:60

Hi, this is [community leader's name] with an important message for Michiganders in [City/County].

The past few years have been tough for a lot of people.

Unfortunately, there are thousands of Michiganders with past-due energy bills.

Maybe you, or someone you know, need options to get your bills paid.

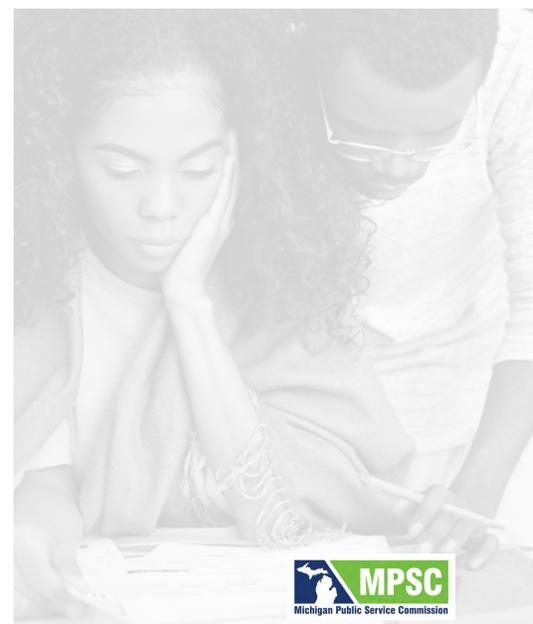
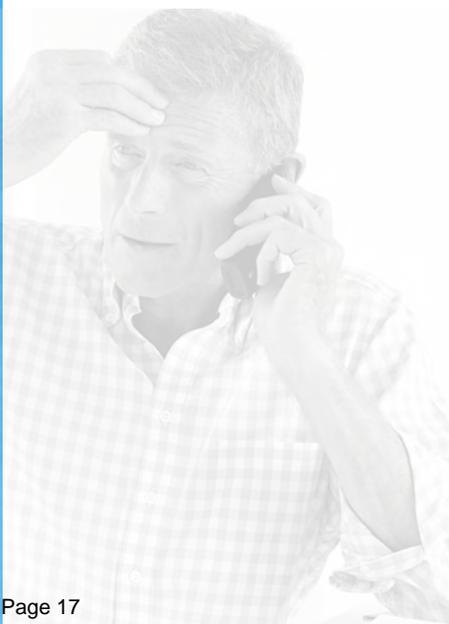
Apply now for Michigan's Energy Assistance Program.

It's offered by local providers throughout Michigan.

Get up to \$2,00 [two thousand dollars] in aid.

Search online for Michigan Energy Assistance.

That's Michigan Energy Assistance.



APPENDIX F

Newspaper / Newsletter Article Samples

The State of Michigan and local energy companies are working to ensure protections are in place for customers as efforts to help slow the spread of the coronavirus impact families and businesses across the state.

The [Michigan Public Service Commission](#) encourages any customer struggling with their energy bills due to the impacts of COVID-19 and in need of [utility bill assistance](#) to first contact their utility company to ask what kind of protections, funding, flexible payment options, or energy savings tools and resources are available.

You may also call 2-1-1 or go to [www.mi211.org](#) for energy assistance information or to learn about agencies that can help you with your energy bill. In addition, you can apply for State Emergency Relief (SER) through [MI Bridges](#) or by contacting your local [MDHHS](#) office. Households who qualify for SER also qualify for assistance through the Michigan Energy Assistance Program (MEAP), which provide supplemental bill payment assistance and energy self-sufficiency services. The State of Michigan has implemented changes to allow for faster processing of emergency requests and to make access to assistance benefits easier. [Click here](#) for more information about energy assistance.

Arabic

نشرة إخبارية: وسائل الحماية والمساعدة المتعلقة بالطاقة التي تقدمها ولاية ميشيغان أثناء فترة انتشار فيروس كورونا (COVID-19)

تعمل ولاية ميشيغان هي وشركات الطاقة المحلية على ضمان وجود وسائل حماية للعملاء في إطار الجهود المبذولة من أجل إبطاء انتشار تكثيرات فيروس كورونا (COVID-19) على الأسر والأعمال التجارية على مستوى الولاية.

وتشجع لجنة ميشيغان للخدمة العامة ([Michigan Public Service Commission](#)) أي عميل يعاني من صعوبة في سداد فواتير الطاقة، بسبب آثار فيروس كورونا (COVID-19)، ويحتاج إلى الحصول على مساعدة خاصة بسداد فاتوره الخدمة، أن يتواصل أولاً مع الشركة المُقَدِّمة للخدمة لاستفسار عن أنواع وسائل الحماية، أو التمويل، أو خيارات السداد المرنة، أو أدوات توفير الطاقة ومواردها المتاحة.

ويمكنك أيضًا الاتصال بالرقم 2-1-1 أو الذهاب إلى [www.mi211.org](#) للحصول على المعلومات الخاصة بمساعدات الطاقة أو لمعرفة الوكالات التي يمكنها مساعدتك في فاتوره الطاقة. وإضافة إلى ما تقدم، يمكنك التقدم لبرنامج إعانات الطوارئ التابع للولاية (State Emergency Relief, SER) من خلال زياره [MI Bridges](#) أو من خلال الاتصال بمكتب إدارة الصحة والخدمات الإنسانية لولاية ميشيغان ([MDHHS](#)) المحلي. وتناهل كذلك الأسر المؤهلة لبرنامج إعانات الطوارئ التابع للولاية (SER) لتلقي المساعدة من خلال برنامج مساعدات الطاقة لولاية ميشيغان (Michigan Energy Assistance Program, MEAP)، الذي يقدم خدمات المساعدة التكميلية في سداد الفواتير والاكفاء الذاتي من الطاقة. وقد طبقت ولاية ميشيغان تغييرات تسمح بمعالجة طلبات الطوارئ بسرعة أكبر وتسهيل إمكانية الحصول على مخصصات المساعدة. [انقر هنا](#) للحصول على المزيد من المعلومات حول مساعدة الطاقة.

خيارات وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي:

النموذج 1:

"هل تعاني من صعوبات مالية تتعلق بوباء فيروس كورونا (COVID-19)؟ تتوفّر المساعدة لسائكي ولاية ميشيغان الذين تأثرت وظائفهم أو دخولهم بسبب فيروس كورونا."

النموذج 2:

"هل تشعر بالقلق بخصوص كيفية تسديد فواتير الخدمة؟ كن مبادراً، واتصل بالشركة المُقَدِّمة للخدمة لاستفسار عن أنواع وسائل الحماية، أو التمويل، أو خيارات السداد المرنة، أو الموارد الأخرى المتاحة."

CONT: APPENDIX F

Newspaper / Newsletter Article Samples

Spanish

Boletín informativo: Protecciones y asistencia de energía de Michigan durante la pandemia de COVID-19

El estado de Michigan y las compañías locales de energía están trabajando para garantizar que haya protecciones para los clientes, ya que los esfuerzos para ayudar a frenar la propagación del coronavirus afectan a las familias y las empresas en todo el estado.

La [Comisión de Servicios Públicos de Michigan](#) anima a cualquier cliente que tenga problemas con sus facturas de energía por los impactos del COVID-19 y que necesite asistencia con las facturas de servicios públicos a ponerse en contacto primero con su compañía de servicios públicos para preguntar qué tipo de protecciones, financiaciones y opciones de pago flexibles, o herramientas y recursos de ahorro de energía están disponibles.

También puede llamar al 2-1-1 o visitar www.mi211.org para obtener información sobre asistencia de energía o para conocer las agencias que pueden ayudarlo con su factura de energía. Además, puede solicitar Ayuda de Emergencia Estatal (State Emergency Relief, SER) mediante [MI Bridges](#) o poniéndose en contacto con su oficina local del [MDHHS](#). Los grupos familiares que califican para SER también califican para recibir asistencia mediante el Programa de Asistencia de Energía de Michigan (Michigan Energy Assistance Program, MEAP), que da asistencia complementaria para el pago de facturas y servicios de autosuficiencia de energía. El estado de Michigan implementó cambios para permitir un procesamiento más rápido de las solicitudes de emergencia y facilitar el acceso a los beneficios de asistencia. [Haga clic aquí](#) para obtener más información sobre la asistencia de energía.

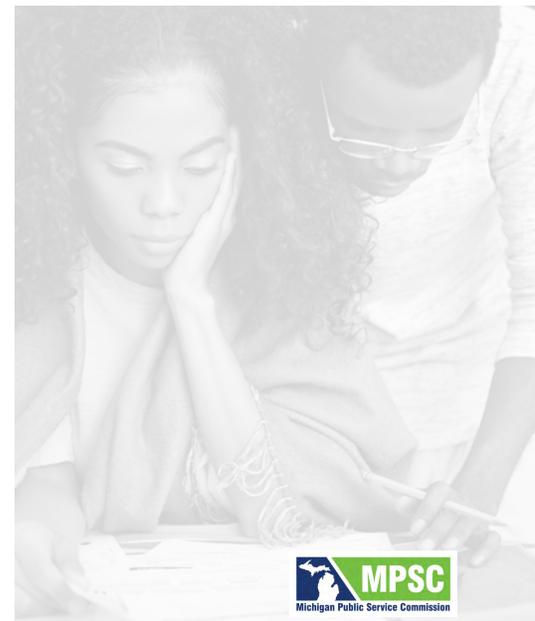
Opciones de redes sociales:

Ejemplo 1:

“¿Tiene problemas financieros relacionados con la pandemia del COVID-19? Hay ayuda disponible para los ciudadanos de Michigan cuyos trabajos o ingresos se vieron afectados por el coronavirus”.

Ejemplo 2:

“¿Le preocupa cómo pagará sus facturas de servicios públicos? Sea proactivo y póngase en contacto con su compañía de servicios públicos para preguntar qué tipo de protecciones, financiaciones, opciones de pago flexibles u otros recursos están disponibles”.



SOCIAL MEDIA

It's important to note that there are many other social media platforms (such as Instagram, Tumblr, Pinterest, YouTube, and Snapchat), but Facebook and Twitter remain the largest and most popular platforms for distributing information.

It is impossible to deny the prevalence of social media platforms, like Facebook and Twitter. Because these social media channels are regularly used by consumers, it's not surprising that businesses and non-profit organizations have implemented a social media strategy in their communication plans.

In order to take advantage of this free tool and utilize it correctly, it's important for organizations to understand how to engage their audience, what each social media channel's platform is best used for, and the types of content that you will often find with each network.

- Post when your audience is most active online to increase engagement. For Twitter and Facebook, the best time to post is typically between 1 p.m. and 4 p.m.
- Include calls to action. Ask your audience to visit a website, come to an event, or share content with a friend—just be sure to direct them to take an action. Providing clear, direct calls to action helps motivate audiences to engage.
- Use visuals. Infographics and photos are a great way to increase interaction.

Facebook

Facebook is best used for promoting events (such as enrollment deadlines, training sessions, or relevant community partner events). It is important to include timing of when things are going to happen.

Do You Need Help Paying Your Heating Bills?

To download and save image / GIF, click on the hyperlink then right click on image / GIF and select "save image as".

Post Text: *There is help available for households struggling to pay energy bills.*

[English](#)



[English GIF](#)



SOCIAL MEDIA

It's important to note that there are many other social media platforms (such as Instagram, Tumblr, Pinterest, YouTube, and Snapchat), but Facebook and Twitter remain the largest and most popular platforms for distributing information.

Twitter

Twitter is best used for brief commentary on breaking news, interesting links, quick tidbits of information, and connecting with others in real-time. Because Twitter is such a quick-moving platform, it's important that posts are concise and include visual media, such as videos, photos, polls, and links to catch the audience's attention.

Worried About Your Energy Bills?

To download and save image / GIF, click on the hyperlink then right click on image / GIF and select "save image as".
Post Text: There is help available for households struggling to pay energy bills.

[English](#)  To retweet, click the "retweet" button.

[Bengali](#)

WORRIED ABOUT YOUR ENERGY BILLS?

Are you having difficulties paying your electric or heating bills due to the impacts of COVID-19?

With COVID-19 taking a toll on many Michigan households, it's important to know that assistance is available. Your utility company may have certain protections or flexible payment options to help prevent a shutoff or collections activity.

CONTACT YOUR UTILITY OR PROPANE SUPPLIER TODAY

- Don't wait until you receive a shut-off notice or are low on propane fuel!
- If you are unable to pay your bill on time due to the impact of COVID-19, inform your energy provider.
- Ask if they offer a special protection or flexible payment option.

Call 2-1-1 or go to www.m211.org to learn about agencies in your county that may assist with your energy bill.

Have an urgent need for assistance, apply for State Emergency Relief (SER) online or through your local MDHHS office.

Income-qualified households can apply for a limited heating credit online or by calling 517-636-4486.

আপনার শক্তি বিলগুলি নিয়ে চিন্তিত?

COVID-19 এর প্রভাবে আপনার ইলেক্ট্রিক বা হিটিং বিল পরিশোধ করতে আপনার কি সমস্যা হচ্ছে?

COVID-19 অনেক মিয়ানার পরিবারের উপর প্রচণ্ড ফেলছে, এটি জমা জমা কি যে পরিস্থিতি পাওয়া হচ্ছে। আপনার ইউটিলিটি কোম্পানির বন্ধ করার বা সংরোধন কার্যকর রাখিবেমহ মহামা ক্রান্তে কিছু সুযোগ বা কর্মসূচি অব্যাহত রাখতে পারবে।

আজই আপনার ইউটিলিটি বা প্রোপেন সাপ্লাইয়ারের সাথে যোগাযোগ করুন

- অপেক্ষা করবেন না! আপনি একটি বিল পরিশোধের নোটিশ পান বা প্রোপেন ফ্যুয়েলের স্তর খুবই কম হলে তাৎক্ষণিকভাবে যোগাযোগ করুন।
- COVID-19 এর কারণে আপনি আপনার বিল পরিশোধের সময়ের মধ্যে বিল পরিশোধ করতে পারছেন না, তাহলে আপনার প্রদানকারীকে জানিয়ে দিন।
- কিছুটা সময়ের জন্য বিশেষ সুযোগ বা কর্মসূচি পেতে আপনার প্রদানকারীকে জিজ্ঞাসা করুন।

আপনার কাউন্টির এজেন্সিতে সম্পর্ক জানার জন্য 2-1-1 করতে ফোন করুন বা www.m211.org থেকে দেখুন। আপনার জেলা থেকে পাওয়া সহায়তা রয়েছে।

আপনার জমা জমা কি যে পরিস্থিতি পাওয়া হচ্ছে।

আপনার জমা জমা কি যে পরিস্থিতি পাওয়া হচ্ছে।

আপনার জমা জমা কি যে পরিস্থিতি পাওয়া হচ্ছে।

[Spanish](#)

[Simple Chinese](#)

¿ESTÁ PREOCUPADO POR SUS FACTURAS DE ENERGÍA?

¿Tiene dificultades para pagar sus facturas de electricidad o calefacción por los impactos del COVID-19?

Con el COVID-19 afectando a muchos grupos familiares de Michigan, es importante que sepa que hay asistencia disponible. Su compañía de servicios públicos puede tener ciertas protecciones u opciones de pago flexibles para ayudar a prevenir un corte o una actividad de cobro.

¡NO ESPERE EN CONTACTO CON SU PROVEEDOR DE SERVICIOS PÚBLICOS O PROPANO HOY MISMO!

- ¡No espere hasta que reciba un aviso de corte o tenga poco combustible de propano!
- Si no puede pagar su factura a tiempo por el impacto del COVID-19, informe a su proveedor de energía.
- Pregunte si ofrecen una protección especial o una opción de pago flexible.

Llame al 2-1-1 o visite www.m211.org para conocer las agencias en su condado que pueden ayudarlo con su factura de energía.

Si necesita asistencia urgente, solicite Ayuda de Emergencia Estatal (SER) en línea o en su oficina local del MDHHS.

Los grupos familiares con ingresos calificados pueden solicitar un crédito de calefacción para la casa en línea o llamando al 517-636-4486.

担心您的能源费用?

您是否因受 COVID-19 疫情影响而难以支付电费或取暖费?

COVID-19 疫情对您所在地区许多家庭造成了巨大影响，重要的是要知道，有援助是可行的。您的公用事业公司可能有某些保护措施或灵活的付款选项，以防止停电或催收活动。

立即联系您的公用事业公司或丙烷供应商

- 不要等到收到停电通知或丙烷燃料不足时才联系!
- 如果您因 COVID-19 疫情影响无法按时支付账单，请告知您的能源供应商。
- 询问他们是否提供特殊的保护或灵活的付款选项。

拨打 2-1-1 或访问 www.m211.org 以了解您在县的哪些机构可能帮助您支付能源费用。

如果您需要紧急援助，请在线或通过当地 MDHHS 办公室申请紧急援助 (State Emergency Relief, SER)。

符合收入条件的家庭可以在网上或通过致电 517-636-4486 申请家庭取暖信贷。

[Arabic](#)

هل تعاني من صعوبة في سداد فواتير الكهرباء أو التدفئة بسبب تأثيرات فيروس كورونا (COVID-19)?

هل تشعر بالقلق بخصوص فواتير الطاقة الخاصة بك؟

مع انتشار فيروس كورونا (COVID-19) في الكثير من الأسر الأمريكية في ولاية ميشيغان، من المهم أن تعلم أن المساعدة متاحة. قد تكون لدى الشركة الموفرة للخدمة خدمات أو وسائل حماية سداد مبررة مؤقتة تساعد على منع الأرباح بتقطع الخدمة أو التحصيل.

اتصل بالشركة الموفرة للخدمة أو مزود الغاز اليوم

- لا تنتظر حتى تظهر إشعار قطع الخدمة أو انخفاض مستوى وقود البروبان لتبدأ!
- إذا كنت لا تستطيع سداد الفواتير في موعدنا بسبب تأثيرات فيروس كورونا (COVID-19)، فابذل جهدك في إبلاغ مزود الطاقة الخاص بك.
- سألت عما إذا كانوا يقدمون حماية خاصة أو مبررات سداد.

اتصل بالرقم 2-1-1 أو قم بزيارة الموقع الإلكتروني www.m211.org لمعرفة الوكالات الموجودة في منطقتك والتي يمكنها مساعدتك في فواتير الطاقة.

إذا كنت في حاجة عاجلة إلى الحصول على المساعدة، فقدم طلب لإعانة طوارئ (State Emergency Relief, SER) عبر الإنترنت أو من خلال مكتبنا في 517-636-4486 للحصول على المساعدة الفورية.

الأسر المؤهلة بناءً على الدخل يمكنهم التقدم بطلب للحصول على خدمة التدفئة المنزلية عبر الإنترنت أو من خلال الاتصال بالرقم 517-636-4486.

SOCIAL MEDIA

It's important to note that there are many other social media platforms (such as Instagram, Tumblr, Pinterest, YouTube, and Snapchat), but Facebook and Twitter remain the largest and most popular platforms for distributing information.

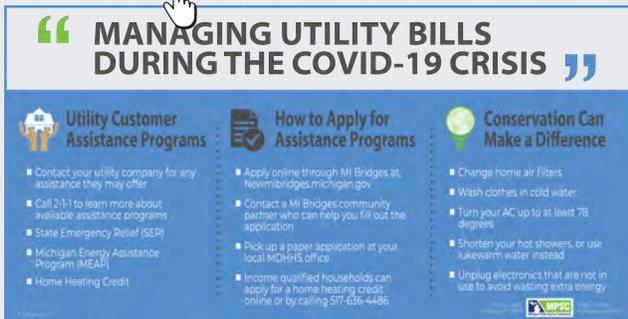
Cont: Twitter

Managing Utility Bills During the COVID-19 Crisis.

To download and save image / GIF, click on the hyperlink then right click on image / GIF and select "save image as".

Post Text: As we head into home heating season, did you know there are protections for seniors and low-income households as well as financial assistance programs to keep the lights and heat on?

English  To retweet, click the "retweet" button.



MANAGING UTILITY BILLS DURING THE COVID-19 CRISIS

- Utility Customer Assistance Programs**
 - Contact your utility company for any assistance they may offer
 - Call 2-1-1 to learn more about available assistance programs
 - State Emergency Relief (SER)
 - Michigan Energy Assistance Program (MEAP)
 - Home Heating Credit
- How to Apply for Assistance Programs**
 - Apply online through MI Bridges at Newmbridges.michigan.gov
 - Contact a MI Bridges community partner who can help you fill out the application
 - Pick up a paper application at your local MDEHS office
 - Income qualified households can apply for a home heating credit online or by calling 317.636.4486
- Conservation Can Make a Difference**
 - Change home air filters
 - Wash clothes in cold water
 - Turn your AC up to at least 78 degrees
 - Shorten your hot showers, or use lukewarm water instead
 - Unplug electronics that are not in use to avoid wasting extra energy

You Don't Have to Choose.

To download and save image / GIF, click on the hyperlink then right click on image / GIF and select "save image as".

Post Text: There is help available for households struggling to pay energy bills.

English  To retweet, click the "retweet" button.



You don't have to choose.

Call 2-1-1 or go to www.mi211.org

Do You Need Help Paying Your Heating Bills?

To download and save image / GIF, click on the hyperlink then right click on image / GIF and select "save image as".

Post Text: There is help available for households struggling to pay energy bills.

English GIF  To retweet, click the "retweet" button.

English



DO YOU NEED HELP PAYING YOUR HEATING BILLS?



DO YOU NEED HELP PAYING YOUR HEATING BILLS?

PRINT MATERIALS

Cont: Flyers

Critical Care Customer Shut-Off Protection 2018

English



Are you a critical care utility customer?

A "critical care customer" means any customer who requires, or has a household member who requires, home medical equipment in a life support system, and who, on an annual basis, provides a commission-approved medical certification from their physician or medical facility to the utility identifying the medical equipment or life support system and certifying that an interruption of service would be immediately life-threatening.

If your medical condition meets this definition, talk to your doctor or public health official about filing out the Michigan Public Service Commission approved Medical Certification Form. Once approved by the utility, the form will give you or your family member some protection from shut-off of utility service. The Medical Certification Form is available from your utility and on their website. It is also available at www.michigan.gov/mpsc.

Critical care customer shut-off protections:

- A utility shall restore or refrain from shutting off service due to an inability to pay a bill within an interruption of service would be immediately life-threatening.
- Customers will be given a three business day grace period from shut-off if utility services for time to complete the Medical Certification Form.
- A utility shall notify the customer when they have received the completed Medical Certification Form.
- A bill of critical care customers will be kept by the utility so they can make sure service is provided as long as critical care customer resides in the home and the customer's inability to pay continues.
- You will be contacted by the utility when any scheduled service interruptions occur. The utility will contact you before any remote shut-off of utility services occurs.
- Nothing in this rule relieves the customer of his or her obligation to pay for utility service. A utility may require that the customer enter into a reasonable payment plan.

NOTE: If critical care status changes, you, or a person at your home, must file the utility notice of the change in status. However, if a person's status does not change, on an annual basis, you must submit an updated Medical Certification Form to the utility.

Michigan Admin Code R 390.0000
Michigan Admin Code R 390.0010

800-292-4933 | www.michigan.gov/mpsc P.O. Box 30221, Lansing, MI 48908

Medical Emergency Shut-Off Protection 2019

English



Are you having difficulty paying energy bills because of a medical emergency?

Do you or someone in your home have a medical emergency? Will the condition become worse by the lack of gas or electric utility service?

A "medical emergency" means an existing medical condition of a customer or a member of a customer's household, as defined and certified by a physician or public health official on a Michigan Public Service Commission approved Medical Certification Form, that will be aggravated by the lack of utility service.

The Medical Certification Form is available from your utility and on their website. It is also available at www.michigan.gov/mpsc. Once this form is completed by a physician or public health official and sent to the utility for approval, you or your family member may have some shut-off of utility service protections.

Medical emergency shut-off protections:

- Customers will be granted a three-business-day grace period from shut-off of utility services for time to have the Medical Certification Form completed.
- The utility will restore or delay shutting off service for not more than 21 days if a customer or someone in the customer's home has a medical emergency.
- A non-payment may be exercised for additional days, not to exceed 63 days in a 12-month period per household member. Customers must provide additional Medical Certification Forms. A utility is not required to keep services on under this rule for more than 120 days per household in any 12-month period.
- A utility shall not require payment for an after-hours reconnect fee or a deposit as a condition of restoring service for a medical emergency.
- Customers must have a physician or public health official sign off on the Medical Certification Form:
 - (a) the medical condition,
 - (b) the medical equipment needed, and
 - (c) the specific time period a shut-off of utility service will make the medical emergency worse.
- Customers are still obligated to pay for utility service used, and may be required to enter into a payment plan.

Michigan Admin Code R 390.0000
Michigan Admin Code R 390.0010

800-292-4933 | www.michigan.gov/mpsc P.O. Box 30221, Lansing, MI 48908

Utility Help for Military Customers 2018

English



Utility help for military customers

The Michigan Public Service Commission's Consumer Watchdog Division provides utility shut-off protection for eligible military customers.

Prerequisite Requirements

An eligible military customer means a utility customer, spouse of a customer, or customer whose spouse is in the military who meets all of the following:

- is an full-time active duty
- is deployed overseas or responder for a declared war or conflict in an area of military operations as designated within the United States in response to a declared national or state emergency with a resulting reduction in household income
- receives the utility of his or her eligibility
- prevents evaluation of eligibility, if requested by the utility.

Open customer request, the protection includes:

- Utility protection for an eligible military customer for a period of 90 days
- A payment schedule at the close of the last 30 days that allows the customer to pay past due bills in monthly installments over a 12-month period
- Utility also has to provide eligible military customer with information on payment assistance programs.

Home Heating Credit

Utility customers may apply for the Home Heating Credit (HHC) until September 30th of each tax year, and must meet the income guidelines but are not required to file an income tax return. Forms are available from the Michigan Department of Treasury.

Utility Program

If you receive a Veterans and Survivors Pension:

800-292-4933 | www.michigan.gov/mpsc P.O. Box 30221, Lansing, MI 48908

Utility-Related Senior Programs and Protections 2019

English



Utility-related senior programs and protections

Are you age 65 or older? If so, inform your utility company. There are programs to protect and assist you if you are having difficulty paying your gas, electric, or telephone bill.

Winter protections from shut-off

The Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) and state law require all regulated gas and electric companies, and municipal electric utilities, to provide shut-off protection for seniors, age 65 and older, during the heating season (November 1 through March 31).

If your gas or electric service is shut off before November 1, MPSC rules or state law require the utility to restore your service during the heating season without paying the past due amount, a deposit, reconnect fee, or other charges. There are no requirements for specific payment amounts during this time. When the heating season is over, your account will be placed on a payment plan and payment must begin immediately.

Consumers Energy and DTE Energy have programs that help customers manage energy payments with extended time to pay.

Shutoffs outside of the heating season for all customers can occur only between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. Prior to a shutoff, a 30-day disconnect notice will be sent and the utility will make at least two telephone attempts to contact you before utility service is shut off.

Third party notification

You can designate someone else, such as a family member or friend, to receive bills, shutoff notices, or other mailings from the utility on your behalf. This allows a third party to help you keep track of your utility bills.

Medical Emergency and Critical Care Customers

An energy bill that is subject to shutoff may qualify for shut off protections under a Medical Emergency or Critical Care shut-off protection program. To see if you may qualify for either of the programs contact your utility.

Partial payment option

Income-eligible customers of DTE Energy or Consumers Energy who receive a shutoff notice, and are unable to pay the full amount of a bill, may make partial payments. There is also the option to designate either gas or electric service for termination. Contact your utility for details.

800-292-4933 | www.michigan.gov/mpsc P.O. Box 30221, Lansing, MI 48908

Spanish



PROGRAMAS Y PROTECCIONES RELACIONADOS CON LOS SERVICIOS PÚBLICOS PARA CIUDADANOS DE EDAD AVANZADA

¿Tiene 65* años o más? Si es así, informe a su compañía de servicios públicos. Estos son programas para protegerlo y ayudarle si tiene problemas para pagar su factura por servicios de teléfono, eléctrico o gas.

Protección contra el corte de energía durante el invierno

MPSC y las leyes estatales requieren que todas las compañías reguladas de gas natural y electricidad y algunas compañías eléctricas proporcionen protección contra el corte de energía para los adultos de edad avanzada durante la estación de calefacción (1 de Noviembre al 31 de Marzo).

Si se cortara la energía eléctrica antes del 1 de noviembre, la ley estatal le exige a MPSC le solicite a la compañía que restablezca su servicio durante la temporada de calefacción en pagar la cantidad adeudada, un depósito, cuota por reconexión o otros cargos. No hay requisitos para cantidades específicas de pago durante este tiempo. Sin embargo, cuando termine la estación de calefacción será colocado en un plan de pago a plazos con un pago voluntario adicional.

Consumers Energy y DTE Energy tienen programas de protección de corte de energía que ayudan a los clientes, incluso los adultos de edad avanzada, a disminuir los pagos de energía eléctrica con tiempos extendidos para pagar o volúmenes de descuento por persona de edad avanzada.

Los cortes de energía fuera de temporada de calefacción, para los adultos mayores y otros, pueden ocurrir solo entre las 8 a.m. y las 4 p.m. Antes de un corte de energía, recibirá un aviso de desconexión con 30 días de anticipación y la compañía hará por lo menos dos intentos por comunicarse con usted por teléfono antes de desconectar el servicio.

Notificación de terceros

Puede nombrar a alguien más, como un familiar o un amigo para que reciba en su nombre las facturas, avisos de corte de energía o otros envíos postales de parte de la compañía. Esto le permite ayudarle a llevar el control de sus facturas por servicios públicos.

Energías médicas

Una factura de energía que está sujeta a cortes de energía debido a falta de pago se puede prorrogar hasta 21 días debido a una emergencia médica. Si puede con ayuda de extensiones adicionales disponibles. Proporcione a su compañía de gas o electricidad una declaración por escrito del médico o funcionario de salud pública indicando que su condición médica impide pagar el servicio. Una prórroga por una emergencia médica no puede exceder 93 días para la misma persona o más de 120 días por hogar familiar.

Plan de facturación de acuerdo con el presupuesto

Después de los cortes, y reducciones por temporada de los facturas de electricidad y gas el monto restante cada mes.

Opción de pago parcial

Como cliente de bajo ingreso de DTE o Consumers, si no puede pagar el monto total de una factura y recibe un aviso de desconexión, puede realizar pagos parciales. También puede la opción de designar el servicio de electricidad o

800-292-4933 | www.michigan.gov/mpsc P.O. Box 30221, Lansing, MI 48908

PRINT MATERIALS

Post Card

How to Apply for Energy Assistance

English

How To APPLY FOR UTILITY ASSISTANCE
Residential Customers

1 STATE EMERGENCY RELIEF (SER)

- If you have an urgent need for energy assistance, you can apply for SER in the following ways:
 - Online through MI BRIDGES at www.bridges.michigan.gov
 - Pick up a paper application at your local MDHHS office, complete the application and return it to your local MDHHS office. Contact MDHHS at www.michigan.gov/2153
 - Ask for assistance from a local community partner who can help you fill out the application. www.michigan.gov/2153
 - If you need help finding a community partner, call 2-1-1 or go to www.211.org

2 MICHIGAN ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (MEAP)

- Need more help? Once an SER application has been submitted, supplemental bill payment assistance and energy self-sufficiency services can be sought through the Michigan Energy Assistance Program, visit: www.michigan.gov/2153 for more information.
- You can connect with a www.michigan.gov/2153 in your area during your MI Bridges SER application. www.michigan.gov/2153
- Call 2-1-1 or go to www.211.org to connect with a MEAP provider.

MPSC PO Box 30221 Lansing MI 48909 1-800-292-3655 michigan.gov/mpsc

How To APPLY FOR UTILITY ASSISTANCE
Residential Customers

3 HOME HEATING CREDIT

- Apply for a Home Heating Credit (HHC) for the current tax year to help pay winter heating bills if you meet the listed household income guidelines and exemptions. You can apply for the credit even if you are not required to file a Michigan income tax form.
- Complete the application form (MI-1040CD-7). The application and eligibility requirements can be found at www.michigan.gov/2153 or by calling the Michigan Department of Treasury at 517-636-4466.
- Must be filed between January 1 and September 30 each year.
- Visit an online self-service tax software or contact organizations that help with tax preparation to assist you in filing for the credit. Call 2-1-1 or go to www.211.org to find an organization that can assist with the form preparation.

MPSC PO Box 30221 Lansing MI 48909 1-800-292-3655 michigan.gov/mpsc

Infographics / Posters

Utility Scam Alert Detector

English

Spanish

Arabic

UTILITY SCAM ALERT DETECTOR

IDENTIFY
A utility company will not...

- Request personal or financial information, such as utility account #.
- Ask for unusual forms of payment such as Bitcoin or gift cards.
- Show up unannounced at your house to inspect or repair equipment, a leak or perform a free audit for energy efficiency.
- Claim you are entitled to a refund or rebate but needs your bank account or credit card information.
- Use aggressive tactics to collect a bill, threaten shutoff, or get into your home.
- Solicit personal information for a government program to reduce energy bills.

RESPOND
Do not...

- Answer calls from unknown numbers.
- Provide sensitive data to unknown callers.
- Follow instructions like "Press 1 to get off the call list".

REPORT
If it still feels wrong...

- File a report with the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division at www.michigan.gov/ag.
- Call the Federal Trade Commission at 877-382-4357.

MPSC PO Box 30221 Lansing MI 48909 1-800-292-3655 michigan.gov/mpsc

DETECTOR DE ALERTA DE SERVICIOS PÚBLICOS

IDENTIFICAR
Una empresa de servicios públicos no ...

- Solicitará información personal o financiera, como el número de cuenta de servicios públicos.
- Presentará por formas de pago inusuales como Bitcoin o tarjetas de regalo.
- Se presentará sin previo aviso en su casa para inspeccionar o reparar el equipo, una fuga o hacer una auditoría gratis de eficiencia de energía.
- Afirmará que tiene derecho a un reembolso o devolución, pero necesita la información de su cuenta bancaria o tarjeta de crédito.
- Usará tácticas agresivas para cobrar una factura, amenazar con un corte o entrar a su casa.
- Pedirá información personal para un programa del gobierno para reducir las facturas de energía.

RESPONDER
No ...

- Responda llamadas de números desconocidos.
- Dé datos confidenciales a personas desconocidas.
- Siga instrucciones como "Presione 1 para salir de la lista de llamadas".

DENUNCIAR
Si todavía le parece que está mal ...

- Presente una denuncia ante la División de Protección al Consumidor del Procurador General en www.michigan.gov/ag.
- Llame a la Comisión Federal de Comercio al 877-382-4357.

MPSC PO Box 30221 Lansing MI 48909 1-800-292-3655 michigan.gov/mpsc

شركة المرافق غش مستكشف

تحذير
إن تقوم شركة المرافق بأي مما يلي ...

- طلب معلومات شخصية أو مالية، مثل رقم حساب المرافق.
- طلب الدفع بطرق غير معتادة، مثل بيتكوين أو بطاقات الهدايا.
- الحضور إلى منزلك بدون سابق إخطار لمخض أو إصلاح المعدات أو التسربات أو إجراء تدقيق مجاني لكفاءة الطاقة.
- الإدعاء بأن من حثك الحصول على مبلغ استرداد أو خصم ولكنها تحتاج إلى بيانات حسابك المصرفي أو بطاقة الائتمان الخاصة بك.
- استخدام تكتيكات عدوانية للحصول الفواتير أو التهديد بقطع الخدمة أو دخول منزلك.
- طلب معلومات شخصية فواتير حكومي لتلقي فواتير الطاقة.

الرد
لا تقم بما يلي ...

- الرد على المكالمات من أرقام غير معروفة.
- تقديم بيانات حساسة للمضللين غير المعروفين.
- اتباع تعليمات مثل "اضغط 1 للخروج من قائمة المكالمات".

الإبلاغ
إذا كنت لا تزال تشعر بأن هناك خطب ما ...

- قدم بلاغا إلى قسم حماية المستهلك لدى المحامي العام على الموقع www.michigan.gov/ag.
- اتصل على لجنة التجارة الفيدرالية على 877-382-4357.

MPSC PO Box 30221 Lansing MI 48909 1-800-292-3655 michigan.gov/mpsc

PRINT MATERIALS

Cont: Infographics / Posters

Utility Scam Alert Detector

Chinese

公用事业 诈骗 探测器

识别

公用事业公司不会进行以下事项...

- ✗ 要求提供个人或财务信息，如公用事业账户号码
- ✗ 要求不寻常的付款方式，如比特币 (Bitcoin) 或礼品卡
- ✗ 突然出现在您家进行检查或修理设备、检查泄漏或进行能源效率的免费审计
- ✗ 声明您有权获得退款或退税，但需要您的银行账户或信用卡信息
- ✗ 使用激进的策略来收取账单，威胁中断，或进入您的家
- ✗ 为一项政府计划征集个人信息，以减少能源账单

响应

请勿做以下事项...

- ✗ 接听未知号码的电话
- ✗ 向未知来电者提供敏感数据
- ✗ 按照诸如 Press 1 to get off the call (按 1 退出呼叫列表) 之类的指示操作

举报

如果您还是感觉不对劲...

- ✓ 通过 www.michigan.gov/ica 向司法部的消费者保护部门提交举报
- ✓ 致电 877-382-4357 联系联邦贸易委员会 (Federal Trade Commission)

MPSC 10 Feb 2021 Lansing, MI 48917 888.382.4357 michigan.gov

Protect Yourself Against Utility Scams

English

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST UTILITY SCAMS

- DON'T OPEN THE DOOR**
No matter what the person might say, **DO NOT** let the person into your home.
- ASK ABOUT THEIR VISIT**
Did they identify themselves and their purpose when you asked?
- NOTE THEIR VEHICLE**
Does the vehicle have company logo decals or magnets?
- OBSERVE THEIR UNIFORM**
Are they wearing a company uniform with matching logos?
- IDENTIFICATION BADGE**
Ask for their ID badge. Does the logo match their vehicle and clothing?
- IF IT STILL FEELS WRONG**
CALL the police to come verify their employment. File a complaint with the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division at www.michigan.gov/ag or call the Federal Trade Commission at 877-382-4357.

MPSC 10 Feb 2021 Lansing, MI 48917 888.382.4357 michigan.gov

Home Heating Credit- Residential Customers 2021

English

2021 HOME HEATING CREDIT

Residential Customers

The Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) doesn't want you to miss your chance to receive the Home Heating Credit (HHC) from the state of Michigan! The HHC can help pay your winter heating bills and is funded by the federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). If you use a large portion of your monthly income to pay heating costs, you may be eligible for the HHC for the 2021 tax year.

WHO is eligible to apply?

Eligible customers must meet all of the following requirements:

- ✓ You are homebased (where you live) in Michigan
- ✓ You own or rent a home where you live (e.g., a rented apartment or mobile home on a lot in a mobile home park).
- ✓ Income is within the limits listed in the chart to the right or you qualify based on alternate guidelines including household income, exemptions, and heating costs. Check the HHC form (MI-1040CR-7) for more information.

Exemptions	Annual Ceiling
0-1	\$1,365
2	\$1,956
3	\$2,547
4	\$3,138
5	\$3,729
6	\$4,320

Additional information: Add \$1,000 for each additional exemption.

HOW do I apply?

You can apply for the HHC by filing out form MI-1040CR-7 for 2021. You do not have to file a Michigan tax return to apply for the HHC.

If you qualify for the HHC, you may be eligible for the Winter Protection Plan and should contact your local utility for more information.

WHERE can I find an HHC form?

There are many ways you can receive an HHC form:

- Michigan Department of Treasury**
 - ✓ Enter "Home Heating Credit" in the search box at www.michigan.gov/ica
 - ✓ Call them at 517-636-4864 to receive a copy.
- Michigan Relay Center, 711**
 - ✓ For hearing or speech impaired, TTY is available.
- Utility Companies**
 - ✓ Contact your company for a form. They have personnel who can assist you.
- Other Locations**
 - ✓ Michigan public libraries & post offices.
 - ✓ Department of Health and Human Services offices.
 - ✓ Locations where income tax forms are available.

WHEN can I apply?

File your HHC form as soon as you know your household income for 2021. The deadline for filing the form is **SEPTEMBER 30** of each year.

Before submitting your form, check to make sure it is complete, accurate, and has been signed. Keep a copy of the number of exemptions you are claiming, the date you filed, and the amount of the credit. You'll need this information to verify the status of your application with the Department of Treasury. If you have trouble paying your heating bills before you receive the credit or receive a shutoff notice, call your utility company immediately.

WHO can I call for help?

2-1-1 is a free and confidential phone service available 24 hours a day. They will provide you with information and referrals for agencies in your community who can help.

If you are having difficulty resolving issues with your utility company, the MPSC staff will assist you. You may contact them by:

Phone: Toll free, 800-292-9555

MPSC 10 Feb 2021 Lansing, MI 48917 888.382.4357 michigan.gov

PRINT MATERIALS

Cont: Infographics / Posters

Electrical Safety While Working From Home

[English](#)



6 Safety Tips for Portable Generators

[English](#)

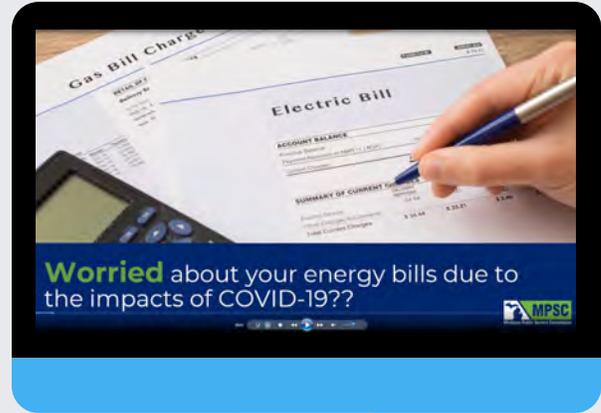


VIDEOS

▶ Protect Yourself Against Utility Scams



▶ Worried About Your Energy Bills?



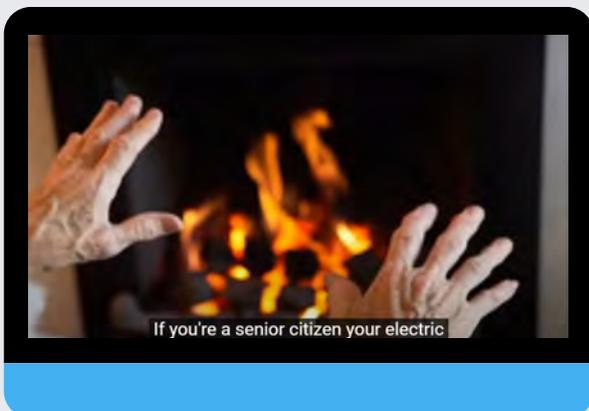
▶ PSA - Energy Assistance Message



▶ PSA - MPSC Payment Assistance



▶ PSA - MPSC Senior Citizen



▶ Do You Need Help Paying Your Heating Bills?





R-CA: 12/16/2021

Energy Assistance Outreach Toolkit