

Drowning in Your Utility Bills?

Getting Help to Pay Bills.

If you need assistance in paying your energy bill, there are a number of places you can turn. First, contact your utility company to find out about their programs. Some utilities have shareholder-funded emergency payment assistance programs for their customers. These can provide cash assistance to help offset the costs of heating and cooling their homes. There are also other plans that may be of assistance to you in managing your energy bills, such as balanced payment plans.

California Alternative Rates for Energy (CARE)

Low-income customers enrolled in the CARE program receive a discount of 30% or more on their electric and natural gas bills. This applies to customers of Southern California Edison (SCE), Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) and San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E). CARE is funded through a rate surcharge paid by all other utility customers. To request an application form and more information, contact your utility company or check out their websites for more information or go to:

<http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/general.aspx?id=976>

Family Electric Rate Assistance Program (FERA)

Families whose household income slightly exceeds the low-income energy program allowances will qualify to receive FERA discounts, which bills some of their electricity usage at a lower rate. FERA is available for customers of SCE, SDG&E and PG&E. Please contact your electric utility to see if your family qualifies or go to:

<http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/general.aspx?id=976>

Energy Savings Assistance Program (ESAP)

ESAP provides no-cost energy-saving home improvements and furnace and water heater repair or replacement services for low-income households who meet the CARE guidelines. Energy-saving home improvements may include attic insulation, weather-stripping, caulking, low-flow showerheads, water heater blankets, door and building envelope repairs, energy efficient lighting, refrigerators, microwaves, and high-efficiency clothes washers, among other services. Renters and homeowners are eligible to participate in ESAP. To request an application form and more information, please contact your energy utility company or go to : <http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/esap/>.

Medical Baseline

This program provides an increase in the baseline allowance, the amount of energy that is charged at the lowest possible rate, and is available to customers at any income level. If someone in a household has multiple sclerosis, a life-threatening illness, is a paraplegic, quadriplegic, or requires regular use of life-support equipment, they may qualify for this additional allowance of electricity at the lower rate. Both the customer and their doctor or a physician Assistant must complete a Medical Baseline Application. To learn more, call your utility company or go to:

<http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/medicalbaseline>



Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

LIHEAP provides financial assistance to eligible households to offset the costs of heating and/or cooling dwellings. For more information, call 1-866-675-6623. Administered by the California Department of Community Services and Development (CSD) Find contact information for your local Low-Income Energy Office at:

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ocs/resource/help-with-paying-for-heating-or-cooling>

To find an office in your community go here:

www.csd.ca.gov/Services/FindServicesinYourArea.aspx

For Income guidelines go here:

www.benefits.gov/benefits/benefit-details/1540

The Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)

HEAP provides financial assistance to eligible households to offset the costs of heating and/or cooling dwellings. For more information, call 1-866-675-6623.

The Weatherization Assistance Program provides free weatherization services to improve the energy efficiency of homes, including attic insulation, weather stripping, minor housing repairs, and related energy conservation measure. For more information call: 1-866-675-6623

Become an Informed Consumer

Visit TURN at www.turn.org or contact amontes@turn.org

Utility Company Programs

PG&E - Relief For Energy Assistance Through Community Help (REACH). REACH can provide an energy credit for up to \$300 based on the past due bill amount. You must have received either a 15-day or a 48-hour disconnection notice. Call 1-800-933-9677

Southern California Edison - Energy Assistance Fund: Provides one time assistance of \$1,000 during a one year period. Call 1-800-205-8596 for more information.

Southern California Gas – Gas Assistance Fund: Provides a one-time grant for the amount of the gas bill, up to \$100.00. Call 1-800-427-2200 English 1-800-4545 Spanish.

San Diego Gas & Electric – Neighbor to Neighbor: bill assistance for customers. Call 211 for more information.

For A List Other Utility Company Programs Go To:

<https://liheapch.acf.hhs.gov/profiles/California.htm>

Exercise Your Rights

If you are denied service or assistance from CARE, FERA ESAP, or Medical Baseline, you have the right to file a complaint with the California Public Utilities Commission at: <https://appsssl.cpuc.ca.gov/cpucapplication/> or call 1-800-649-7570.

However, it is important that you first contact the company to try to resolve any complaints.