



Public Service Commission

SERVING MARYLAND SINCE 1910

Frequently Asked Questions

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Need Help with Paying your bill or Have a Termination Notice

1. Where can I obtain help with paying my heating and electric bills?

The Office of Home Energy Programs (OHEP) is available to help consumers who need help with paying their winter heating and/or yearly electric bills. Consumers may apply for the Maryland Energy Assistance Program (MEAP) for help with their heating bill (gas, electric or oil). Payments are made directly to your fuel provider or utility company one time per year. In addition, consumers may apply for the Electric Universal Service Program (EUSP). This program provides assistance dollars that are applied to reduce future electric bills. The consumer is required to participate in budget billing to receive this grant. The grant is available once per program year. In addition, consumers may be eligible for help with past due electric bills provided they had not received arrearage retirement within the past seven years. To obtain more information, including the income eligibility requirements, contact [OHEP](#).

In addition, consumers may contact the [Fuel Fund of Maryland](#). The Fuel Fund pays a portion of an eligible customer's outstanding bill and you are responsible for paying the rest. You must have received all other government and program help first before contacting Fuel Fund. Households can receive help from Fuel Fund once every 12 months.

2. If I receive a termination notice, what help can I obtain from the Office of External Relations (OER)?

If you receive a termination notice, you must first contact the utility company to request an extension and/or a payment arrangement. Often if you contact the utility before the notice expires, the utility will try to work with you as long as you are able to make a reasonable offer to pay what you owe. If the utility is not willing to give you an extension and/or payment arrangement, then you can contact OER for assistance.

OER is not a consumer advocacy office. OER will try to assist you with obtaining an additional extension or payment arrangement. However, you are required to tell OER how you intend to pay on your past due bill in addition to keeping up on current charges. OER will refer you to the [OHEP](#), [Fuel Fund](#) and may suggest [additional places](#) for you to contact.

3. How do I contact OER?

OER staff is available to assist you Monday through Friday, except holidays, between 9 a.m.-Noon and 1-4 p.m. To reach OER call toll-free at 1-800-492-0474, option #3 then press #1 or call (410) 767-8028, press #1.

4. My gas and/or electric service has been turned off – what should I do?

If your gas and/or electric service has been turned off, the first thing you should do is contact the [utility](#) to find out what they are requiring as payment to have them restore your service. The utility by law can require that you pay the entire past due bill, a reconnection fee, and part of a deposit as a condition to restore your service. If you are unable to pay the amount the utility is requiring that you pay, you should seek assistance from the Office of Home Energy Programs (OHEP) first. If you qualify for assistance, your Maryland Energy Assistance Program (MEAP) grant can be used to pay off your arrearage. In addition, you should apply for the Electric Universal Service Program (EUSP). This program provides assistance dollars that are applied to reduce future electric bills. You are required to participate in budget billing to receive this grant. In addition, you may be eligible for help with past due electric bills provided you had not received arrearage retirement within the past seven years. Finally, you should apply for the Utility Service Protection Program (USPP). As a USPP participant, you can have your service reconnected between November 1 and March 31 without paying a reconnection fee and deposit. To obtain more information about these programs, including the income eligibility requirements, contact [OHEP](#).

After you applied for these grants and if you still do not have enough to get the service reconnected, you should contact the [Fuel Fund of Maryland](#). The Fuel Fund pays a portion of an eligible customer's outstanding bill and you are responsible for paying the rest. You must have received all other government and program help first before contacting Fuel Fund. Households can receive help from Fuel Fund once every 12 months.

Additional [referral information](#) is provided.

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