

March 25, 2021

**\*\*\*CONSUMER ALERT\*\*\***  
**ATTORNEY GENERAL RAOUL URGES CONSUMERS TO CONTACT UTILITIES TO PREVENT  
DISCONNECTIONS BEFORE MORATORIUM ENDS**  
***Utility Consumers May be Disconnected Beginning April 1; Financial Assistance Available for Those  
Facing Financial Hardship***

**Chicago** — Attorney General Kwame Raoul today urged Illinois utility customers to be aware that state-regulated electric, natural gas, and utilities may begin to disconnect customers for non-payment beginning April 1. Raoul encourages residents who are behind on their bills to contact their utilities now to learn about assistance and repayment options to prevent disconnection.

“Utility costs have become unsustainable for many Illinois households, particularly as individuals and families continue to struggle due to the financial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic,” Raoul said. “Over 800,000 ratepayers have utility arrearages and are potentially subject to having their service cut off. Unfortunately, a disproportionate number of these households are located in predominately minority communities. My office successfully advocated for protections for customers with past due balances, however the financial assistance that is available is limited. I urge consumers to contact their utilities before they get disconnected to learn about bill assistance and repayment options.”

The annual winter moratorium on utility disconnections expires on March 31, and utility companies may begin to send disconnection notices to customers beginning on April 1. The Attorney General’s office worked in collaboration with the city of Chicago and other consumer advocates to obtain relief for customers with past due balances that will be in place until June 30, 2021. Consumers who are struggling to pay their utility bills should notify their utility provider that they are experiencing financial hardship and request information about assistance and repayment options. The Attorney General’s office has resources available for both [Illinois customers](#) and [Chicago customers](#) that detail their repayment and financial assistance options, which can be found on the [Attorney General’s website](#).

Customers who need assistance may be eligible for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). Households with existing past due balances are encouraged to apply for financial assistance before they are disconnected. Funds are available on a first-come, first-served basis and are limited. Raoul encourages customers outside of Chicago to call the Illinois LIHEAP Hotline at 1-877-411-9276, or visit the [Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity’s website](#) to determine whether they are eligible or to find an agency that can help with applications. Customers residing in the city of Chicago should call 800-571-2332 or visit [www.cedaorg.net](http://www.cedaorg.net). Chicago water customers can apply for the city of Chicago’s Utility Billing Relief program by calling the Customer Service Center at 312-744-4426 or [visiting their website](#).

In addition, federal rental and utility assistance is expected to become available soon. For more information please visit the [U.S. Department of the Treasury’s website](#).

Residents who have questions can contact the Attorney General’s office at 1-800-386-5438 (Chicago), 1-800-243-0618 (Springfield), 1-800-243-0607 (Carbondale), or by [filing an online complaint](#).



## CONSUMER PROTECTIONS FOR UTILITY CUSTOMERS

### THE ANNUAL PUBLIC UTILITY DISCONNECTION MORATORIUM EXPIRES ON MARCH 31, 2021.

Many Illinois households have fallen behind on their electric, natural gas, and water utility bills due to economic hardship caused by COVID-19. The Office of the Illinois Attorney General obtained enhanced consumer protections for customers with past due balances that will be in place until June 30, 2021.

**Contact your utilities now to prevent disconnection and obtain limited bill payment assistance funds from the utilities, county government, state government, LIHEAP, and local community agencies.**

These protections apply to customers of the following companies:

Ameren Illinois	800-755-5000	Nicor Gas	888-642-6748
Aqua Illinois	877-987-2782	Utilities Services of Ill.	800-831-2359
ComEd	800-334-7661	North Shore Gas	866-556-6004
Ill. American Water Co.	800-422-2782		

#### **Deferred Payment Agreements (DPA) To avoid disconnection for lack of payment:**

- Households earning less than 300% of the [Federal Poverty Level \(FPL\)](#) may enter into an agreement to pay the past due balance over 18 months with \$0 down.
- All households may pay the past due balance over 18 months, with 10% down.
- All Nicor residential customers may pay the past due balance over 24 months, with 0% down.
- All customers may renegotiate their DPA at least once with no penalty.
- Households who enter into a payment plan will not be disconnected before July 1, 2021 (even if they miss a payment), allowing time to obtain bill payment assistance and to renegotiate the DPA.

#### **If you have been disconnected:**

- Households earning less than 300% of the [Federal Poverty Level \(FPL\)](#) will be reconnected upon payment of 25% (others will be required to pay the usual 100%) of the past due balance through July 10.
- Bill Payment Assistance and other assistance program funds may be used to make this payment.
- Outstanding balances will be included in a customer's DPA.

#### **The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)**

LIHEAP has additional funds to assist utility customers. Households with past due balances are encouraged to apply for assistance in advance of a disconnection notice or disconnection. **Funds are available first-come, first-served.** For additional information, call 877-411-9276 or visit the list of community action [agencies](#) that can assist, located on the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity website at [www2.illinois.gov/dceo](http://www2.illinois.gov/dceo) under the community tab.

\*\*\*

Immigration Status: Subject to applicable laws, utilities will not require customers who seek assistance to prove legal residency or immigration status.

Federal rental and utility assistance is expected to become available soon. For more information, see: <https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/cares/emergency-rental-assistance-program>

*If you have more questions about what assistance you may be eligible for, contact your utility.*

#### **Attorney General Consumer Fraud Hotlines**

Chicago 1-800-386-5438 1-800-964-3013 TTY	Springfield 1-800-243-0618 1-877-844-5461 TTY	Carbondale 1-800-243-0607 1-877-675-9339 TTY	Línea Gratuita en Español 1-866-310-8398
---	---	--	---



## CONSUMER PROTECTIONS FOR CHICAGO UTILITY CUSTOMERS

### THE ANNUAL PUBLIC UTILITY DISCONNECTION MORATORIUM EXPIRES ON MARCH 31, 2021.

Many Chicago households have fallen behind on their electricity, natural gas, and water utility bills due to economic hardship caused by COVID-19. The Office of the Illinois Attorney General obtained enhanced consumer protections for Chicago customers of Peoples Gas and ComEd with past due balances through **June 30, 2021**.

**Contact Peoples Gas (866-556-6001) or Commonwealth Edison (ComEd) (800-334-7661) now to prevent disconnection and obtain limited assistance funds from the utilities, the City of Chicago, state government, LIHEAP, and local community agencies.**

#### **Deferred Payment Agreements (DPA): To avoid disconnection for lack of payment:**

- Households earning less than 300% of the [Federal Poverty Level \(FPL\)](#) may enter into an agreement to pay the past due balance over 18 months with \$0 down.
- All households may pay the past due balance over 18 months, with 10% down.
- All customers may renegotiate their DPA at least once with no penalty.
- Households who enter into a payment plan will not be disconnected before July 1, 2021 (even if they miss a payment), allowing time to obtain bill payment assistance and to renegotiate the DPA.

#### **If you have been disconnected:**

- Households earning less than 300% of the [Federal Poverty Level \(FPL\)](#) will be reconnected upon payment of 25% (others will be required to pay the usual 100%) of the past due balance through July 10.
- Bill Payment Assistance and other assistance program funds may be used to make this payment.
- Outstanding balances will be included in a customer's DPA.

#### **The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)**

LIHEAP has additional funds to assist utility customers. Households with past due balances are encouraged to apply for assistance in advance of a disconnection notice or disconnection. **Funds are available first-come, first-served.** For additional information, contact CEDA at 800-571-2332 or visit: <https://www.cedaorg.net/>

\*\*\*

Immigration Status: Subject to applicable laws, utilities will not require customers who seek assistance to prove legal residency or immigration status.

Water customers can apply for the City's Utility Billing Relief program. Call the Customer Service Center at 312-744-4426 or visit: [https://chicago.docugateway.com/main/guest/billing\\_relief/](https://chicago.docugateway.com/main/guest/billing_relief/)

Federal rental and utility assistance is expected to become available soon. For more information, see: <https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/cares/emergency-rental-assistance-program>

*If you have more questions about what assistance you may be eligible for, contact your utility.*

#### **Attorney General Consumer Fraud Hotlines**

Chicago  
1-800-386-5438  
1-800-964-3013 TTY

Springfield  
1-800-243-0618  
1-877-844-5461 TTY

Carbondale  
1-800-243-0607  
1-877-675-9339 TTY

Línea Gratuita en Español  
1-866-310-8398