# UTILITY-PROVIDED ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

**Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel**
*"Your Residential Utility Consumer Advocate"*
**www.occ.ohio.gov**

Utility companies may offer assistance programs to help with electric, natural gas, and water bills. Funded through various means like customer donations, utility contributions or shareholder support, these programs have specific eligibility guidelines based on income. To check if these programs are available, customers should contact their utility company, local Energy Assistance Provider/community action agency, or nonprofit organizations in their community.

Eligibility, program benefits, and income guidelines vary among the programs. Some require disconnection status to provide benefits, meaning there either needs to be a disconnection notice or the service has already been disconnected.

To apply for the utility company assistance programs, contact the local utility company or the agency managing the program. Customers may be asked to submit proof of household income when applying. Refer to the chart below for current income guidelines.

Information on additional sources of utility bill-payment assistance is available at www.occ.ohio.gov/utilityassistance.

***Please Note: This information is provided as a guide to resources and is subject to program changes and availability. Funds may run out before the end of a program's term. Please contact the fund administrators or the utility for fund availability.***

## ELECTRIC

### American Electric Power (Ohio Power, Columbus Southern Power)

**Neighbor-to-Neighbor Program**

*Benefit:* Up to $350.



*Eligibility:* Must be an AEP Ohio customer with a household income at or below 200% of the federal income guidelines. Must have an outstanding balance of at least $50, be at least 30 days behind, and have paid at least $75 on the account in the past 90 days. Current PIPP Plus customers are not eligible.

*Availability:* Winter Assistance: Nov. 1, 2025 through March 31, 2026. Grants are provided on a first-come, first-served basis to eligible applicants while funding is available.

*Contact:* AEP at 1-800-672-2231 or www.aepohio.com/N2N; or Dollar Energy Fund Inc. at 1-800-683-7036 or www.dollarenergy.org/n2n.

### AES Ohio

**Gift of Power**

*Benefit:* Based on need (does not necessarily follow income guidelines).

*Eligibility:* AES Ohio consumers with a disconnection notice or past due balance and having trouble paying the electric bill who do not qualify for HEAP or PIPP Plus may seek assistance.

*Availability:* Jan. 12, 2026, through December 31, 2026 or until funds run out.

*Contact:* The Salvation Army Dayton Kroc Center at 937-528-5120 or AES Ohio at 1-800-433-8500 or www.aes-ohio.com/gift-power.

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## Dynegy

**Dynegy Energy Aid**

An electric bill-payment assistance program for Ohioans in crisis who receive their supply service from Dynegy Energy through the following utilities:

*Partnered Utilities:* AEP Ohio, AES Ohio, Duke Energy and FirstEnergy (The Illuminating Company, Ohio Edison, Toledo Edison).

*Benefit:* Up to $350.

*Eligibility:* Must be a customer of Dynegy Energy and one of the utilities listed above with a household income at or below 400% of the federal income guidelines. Must also be experiencing a financial crisis due to a verifiable emergency (such as—job loss, unable to work due to illness or injury, medical expenses, utility service shut off or at risk of shut off, or circumstances endangering a vulnerable adult or child). Must be past due, but a disconnect notice is not required. All alternative resources need to be used first.

*Availability:* Jan. 1, 2026, through Dec.. 31, 2026, or until funds run out.

*Contact:* www.dollarenergy.org/program/dynegy-energy-aid or the local utility company.

*NOTE: Consumers should check their electric bill to determine if Dynegy Energy is already listed as their supplier, which could be through a local government aggregation program. Switching to an energy marketer can be risky. Consumers need to do careful research before choosing an energy supplier. Use OCC's "How to Make Wise Energy Choices" and "Energy Choice: Know Your Rights" fact sheets if considering switching suppliers.*

## FirstEnergy (The Illuminating Company, Ohio Edison, Toledo Edison)

Each FirstEnergy company has a separate website that can be found at https://firstenergycorp.com/about/utilities.html.

**OPAE Fuel Fund**

*Benefit:* Up to $250.

*Eligibility:* At or below 200% of the federal income guidelines. Customers must apply for the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) or the Winter Crisis Program if available.

*Availability:* Begins March 1, 2026 and is available until funds run out.

*Contact:* To apply, contact the local Energy Assistance Provider/community action agency at 216-350-8008 to schedule an appointment or apply online at www.energyhelp.ohio.gov.

**Emergency Hardship Funds**

These funds vary by company (see below) and assist residential customers who need temporary assistance or have an emergency hardship. The Illuminating Co.—Community Outreach Opportunity Program (COOP), Ohio Edison—Project REACH, and Toledo Edison—Neighbors Helping Neighbors.

*Benefit:* Up to $200.

Eligibility: At or below 200% of the federal income guidelines.

*Availability:* Open year-round.

*Contact:* The Illuminating Co. customers contact the local Salvation Army at 216-861-8185. Ohio Edison customers contact the local Salvation Army: www.firstenergycorp.com/content/dam/customer/get-help/files/asst-programs/Project-Reach-Agencies.pdf. Toledo Edison customers contact the Salvation Army at 419-241-3549.

# NATURAL GAS

## CenterPoint

**Customer Assistance Program (CAF)**

*Benefit:* Up to $200 (The Salvation Army will pay the last $200 still on the account to avoid disconnection.).

*Eligibility:* Household must be at or below 250% of the federal income guidelines.

*Availability:* From January 1, 2026, to December 31, 2026, or until funds run out.

*Contact:* The Salvation Army Dayton Kroc Center at 937-528-5120 (press option 2) or CenterPoint at 1-800-227-1376.

## Columbia Gas of Ohio

**HeatShare Program**

*Benefit:* Up to $450 once per year.

*Eligibility:* Household income must be at or below 300% of the federal income guidelines. Applicants


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who are experiencing extreme financial hardship due to unexpected events (medical emergencies, job loss). The account must be past due, in disconnection status, or be currently disconnected.

*Availability:* Once in a rolling 12-month period.

*Contact:* Columbia Gas of Ohio customers can apply at http://sahelp.me/ or by contacting their local Salvation Army office at 1-800-725-2769. Customers may also contact Columbia Gas of Ohio at 1-800-344-4077 or www.columbiagasohio.com.

## Enbridge Gas (formerly Dominion Energy Ohio)

**Heat Care**

*Benefit:* Up to $300.

*Eligibility:* Household income must be at or below 300% of the federal income guidelines. Applicants must have a disconnection notice or be currently disconnected and have used the Winter Crisis Program, if applicable. Seniors, 60 or older, do not require a disconnection notice but must demonstrate a need.

*Availability:* For heating assistance Dec. 1, 2025, through May 31, 2026 or until funds run out.

*Contact:* The Salvation Army at 1-800-725-2769 or https://easternusa.salvationarmy.org/; or Enbridge at 1-800-362-7557 or www.enbridgegas.com/ohio.

## Northeast Ohio Natural Gas

**Hardship Program**

*Benefit:* Up to $500.

*Eligibility:* Service must be disconnected or at risk of disconnection. Household income must be at or below 250% of the federal income guidelines. Must have paid at least $100 on the account in the past three months, except for those aged 62 and over must have paid $75. Must have an outstanding balance of at least $100.

*Availability:* First-come, first-served from Oct. 1, 2025 through Sept. 30, 2026, or until funds run out. Income-eligible clients must apply for all federally funded programs.

*Contact:* www.dollarenergy.org/program/northeast-ohio-natural-gas-hardship-program or Northeast Ohio Natural Gas at 1-800-237-2099 or 1-740-862-3300.

# NATURAL GAS AND ELECTRIC

## Duke Energy Ohio

**Share the Light**

*Benefit:* Up to $1500.

*Eligibility:* Based on need (does not necessarily follow income guidelines). Duke customers must use the utility for heating and have an account in his or her name. Must have a past-due balance, an unpaid deposit, or an unpaid reconnection charge. PIPP Plus customers are ineligible until after March 31, 2026. Customers can apply every other year.

*Availability:* Jan. 19, 2026, until funds run out.

*Contact:* Share the Light hotline at 513-762-5636 or Duke at 1-800-544-6900. Customers residing in Adams, Brown, Butler, Clermont, Clinton, Highland, and Warren counties should contact their local Salvation Army, which can be located at https://easternusa.salvationarmy.org under "I Need Help" or at 1-800-725-2769. For more information, visit https://sahelp.me/.

**Ohio Utility Assistance Program**

The Ohio Utility Assistance Program is administered by Dollar Energy Fund and assists eligible customers with the following utilities:


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*Utilities:* AEP Ohio, Columbia Gas, Duke Energy and Enbridge Gas Ohio.

*Benefit:* Up to $300 per utility. ($600 maximum if used for both gas and electric).

*Eligibility:* Customers must receive service from one of the utilities listed above. Household income must fall between 175% +$1 and 250% of the federal income guidelines. Service must be disconnected or at risk of disconnection. Must apply for all federally funded programs when those programs are open. PIPP Plus customers are not eligible for assistance.

*Availability:* First-come, first-served from Oct. 1, 2025 through Sept. 30, 2026, or until funds run out. Once per utility every 12 months.

*Contact:* www.dollarenergy.org/program/ohio-utility-assistance-program/ or the local utility company.

## WATER

### Aqua Ohio

**Aqua Aid**

*Benefit:* Up to $300 for water and up to $500 for water and wastewater combined.

*Eligibility:* Must be an Aqua account holder. Household income must be at or below 175% of the federal income guidelines. Applicants may be required to have a disconnection notice or be currently disconnected. The customer cannot have had any bad debt, tampering or collection issues with Aqua within the last 2 years.

*Availability:* January 2026 until funds run out. Once in a rolling 12-month period. Until funds run out.

*Contact:* Aqua Ohio at 1-877-987-2782. Funds are administered by a local Salvation Army.

## 2026 Income Guidelines

| Size of household* | Total Gross Annual Household Income | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 175% | 200% | 250% | 300% | 400% |
| 1 | $27,930 | $31,920 | $39,900 | $47,880 | $63,840 |
| 2 | $37,870 | $43,280 | $54,100 | $64,920 | $86,560 |
| 3 | $47,810 | $54,640 | $68,300 | $81,960 | $109,280 |
| 4 | $57,750 | $66,000 | $82,500 | $99,000 | $132,000 |
| 5 | $67,690 | $77,360 | $96,700 | $116,040 | $154,720 |
| 6 | $77,630 | $88,720 | $110,900 | $133,080 | $177,440 |
| 7 | $87,570 | $100,080 | $125,100 | $150,120 | $200,160 |
| 8 | $97,510 | $111,440 | $139,300 | $167,160 | $222,880 |

* For families/households with more than 8 persons, please contact your local Energy Assistance Provider.