

November 24, 2020

*****CONSUMER ALERT*****

ATTORNEY GENERAL RAOUL REMINDS ILLINOIS RESIDENTS OF WINTER MORATORIUM ON UTILITY SHUT-OFFS

State-Regulated Utilities Cannot Shut Off Services Through March 31, 2021; Financial Assistance Available for Consumers Facing Financial Hardship

Chicago — Attorney General Kwame Raoul today urged Illinois utility customers to be aware that state-regulated electric and natural gas utilities are prohibited from shutting off power and gas for customers under state law through the winter. All customers, regardless of financial situations cannot be disconnected through March 31, 2021 to protect the public during the cold winter months. Even with the moratorium, Raoul encourages residents who are behind on their bills to contact their utilities to learn about assistance options.

"Utility disconnections have disproportionately affected minority communities, and this has only been magnified as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic," Raoul said. "My office has advocated on behalf of consumers to ensure residents have access to manageable repayment plans and bill assistance so that they stay connected to vital utility services, regardless of financial situations. I urge consumers to take advantage of the resources my office provides to learn about the options available to them."

Even though households cannot be disconnected from gas and electric utilities during the winter months, customers should explore their options to manage their bills over the winter and avoid having a large balance become due all at once in the spring. Customers who need assistance may be eligible for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). The LIHEAP application period is open until June 20, 2021, or until funding is exhausted. Utility customers may be eligible for LIHEAP funding if their household income in the last 30-day period is at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. Many households that were not previously eligible for LIHEAP may now qualify if they are now unemployed or underemployed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Raoul encourages people 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.

In addition, regulated electric and gas utilities are offering extended bill payment options, including up to 24 months to pay amounts past due as well as bill assistance to customers who are facing financial hardships due to the COVID-19 pandemic. 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.

2020 Federal Poverty Guidelines for 200% of Poverty for 2021 Program Year

Family Size	30 Day Income	Annual Income
1	\$2,127	\$25,520
2	\$2,873	\$34,480
3	\$3,620	\$43,440

4	\$4,367	\$52,400
5	\$5,113	\$61,360
6	\$5,860	\$70,320
7	\$6,607	\$79,280
8	\$7,353	\$88,240

Attorney General Raoul encourages Illinois residents to [visit his website](#) for more information about the consumer protections in place, particularly if they are facing disconnection. Residents who have questions can contact his office at 1-800-386-5438 (Chicago), 1-800-243-0618 (Springfield), 1-800-243-0607 (Carbondale), or by [filing an online complaint](#).