

FirstEnergy Corp.
76 S. Main Street
Akron, Ohio
www.firstenergycorp.com

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News Media Contact
Jeffrey Straight
(724) 838-6463

FirstEnergy's Ohio Utilities Remind Customers of Available Assistance Programs to Help with Winter Bills

Akron, Ohio – With cold weather now affecting the region, financial assistance programs are available for FirstEnergy Corp. (NYSE: FE) customers in Ohio who need help with winter heating bills. FirstEnergy's Ohio utilities include Ohio Edison, The Illuminating Company and Toledo Edison.

Assistance to qualifying customers is available through the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP), Percentage of Income Payment Plan Plus and the \$175 Winter Reconnection Option.

- **HEAP** is a federally funded grant program administered by the Ohio Development Services Agency through a network of local community action agencies. HEAP provides eligible customers help with paying winter heating bills. For information about how to apply call 800-282-0880 or visit www.development.ohio.gov. The program provides customers with help paying winter heating bills in two ways:
 - HEAP Cash Program – annual grant to help with heating bills
 - HEAP Emergency Program – provides emergency payments until March 31 to avoid shut-off or restore electric service. Can be used only once per heating season.
- **Percentage of Income Payment Plan Plus (PIPP Plus)** is a year-round program that helps qualifying customers with a household income at or below 150 percent of the federal poverty level manage their energy bills. Payments are based on a percentage of household income and are consistent year-round. For information call 800-282-0880.

- **The \$175 Winter Reconnect Option** is based on an annual order issued by the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) that allows residential customers who are disconnected or being threatened with disconnection the opportunity to pay a designated amount to have their service restored or maintained. The option may be used once during each heating season, which runs from mid-October through mid-April. Residential customers are required to pay no more than \$175 to maintain service under the reconnection order. If the customer's service has already been disconnected, the customer must pay the \$175 and possibly a reconnection fee. There is no income eligibility requirement to use the Winter Reconnect Option. For information call the FirstEnergy Contact Center at 800-589-3101.

Specific customer assistance programs also are available for each utility:

The Illuminating Company

- **The Ohio Fuel Fund grant** is a company-funded program that provides a one-time annual benefit to an eligible customer's electric account. The grant is a maximum of \$300 and can only be used for electric usage, security deposits and reconnection charges. Customers can apply at CHN Housing Partners at the corner of E. 30th Street and Payne Avenue or the Council for Economic Opportunities in Greater Cleveland at 1801 Superior Avenue, both in Cleveland, or call 216-350-8008.
- **The CEI Co-Op Fuel Fund** is an emergency hardship fund designed to help residential customers restore or maintain electric service. The program funding is provided by The Illuminating Company customers and employees. Customers can apply at the Cleveland Salvation Army or call 216-861-8185.

Ohio Edison

- **Ohio Edison Project Reach** is an emergency hardship fund designed to help residential customers restore or maintain electric service. The program funding is provided by Ohio Edison customers and employees and the distribution of funds is administered by Salvation Army offices located

throughout Ohio Edison's service area. To find an agency visit www.firstenergycorp.com/ReachAgencies.

Toledo Edison

- **Toledo Edison Neighbors Helping Neighbors** is an emergency hardship fund designed to help residential customers restore or maintain electric service. The program funding is provided by Toledo Edison customers and employees. Customers can apply at the Toledo Salvation Army or call 419-241-3549.

FirstEnergy Ohio utility residential customers also can manage their electric bills through the Equal Payment Plan (EPP). With EPP, customers can make consistent monthly payments to avoid seasonal highs and lows in their electric bills. To apply or learn more about other company programs, visit www.firstenergycorp.com/billassist or call 800-589-3101.

In addition to the payment options, FirstEnergy offers a Medical Certification program. Disconnection of electric service resulting from overdue bills can be delayed up to 30 days if it is determined that the loss of electric service would be especially dangerous to the health of a permanent member of a customer's household. An appropriate health care professional must complete and sign a Medical Certification Form for the eligible customer.

FirstEnergy also offers a program called Third Party Notification where a relative, friend, clergy, or social service agency can be notified along with the customer if electric service is about to be disconnected. The third party is not obligated to pay the overdue bills but can help make payment arrangements for the customer who might have difficulty paying their bill.

The Illuminating Company serves 750,000 customers across Ashtabula, Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake and Lorain counties. Connect with The Illuminating Company at www.illuminatingcompany.com, on Twitter [@IlluminatingCo](https://twitter.com/IlluminatingCo) and on Facebook at www.facebook.com/IlluminatingCo.

Ohio Edison is a subsidiary of FirstEnergy Corp. (NYSE: FE) and serves more than one million customers across 34 Ohio counties. Follow Ohio Edison on Twitter [@OhioEdison](https://twitter.com/OhioEdison), on Facebook at www.facebook.com/OhioEdison, and online at www.ohioedison.com.

Toledo Edison serves more than 300,000 customers in northwest Ohio. Follow Toledo Edison on Twitter [@ToledoEdison](https://twitter.com/ToledoEdison) or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/ToledoEdison.

FirstEnergy is dedicated to safety, reliability and operational excellence. Its 10 electric distribution companies form one of the nation's largest investor-owned electric systems, serving customers in Ohio, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, West Virginia, Maryland and New York. The company's transmission subsidiaries operate more than 24,000 miles of transmission lines that connect the Midwest and Mid-Atlantic regions. Follow FirstEnergy online at www.firstenergycorp.com. Follow FirstEnergy on Twitter: [@FirstEnergyCorp](https://twitter.com/FirstEnergyCorp).

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