



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS
101 SOUTH BROAD STREET
PO Box 800
TRENTON, NJ 08625-0800

PHILIP D. MURPHY
Governor

TAHESHA L. WAY
Lieutenant Governor

JACQUELYN A. SUÁREZ
Commissioner

October 10, 2024

Dear Vendor:

Please be advised that on August 7, 2023, the regulations for the Winter Termination Program (WTP) (N.J.A.C. 5:45) were adopted.

The Winter Termination Program prevents service discontinuation for eligible residential customers receiving residential electric, sewer and water service from a vendor (local authority, municipal utility, or rural electric cooperative) from November 15th through March 15th. Service cannot be disconnected during this period to those residential customers who demonstrate at the time of the intended termination that they are:

1. Recipients of benefits under the Federal Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) or certified as eligible therefore protected under standards set by the New Jersey Department of Human Services.
2. Recipients of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF).
3. Recipients of Federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI).
4. Recipients of Pharmaceutical Assistance to the Aged and Disabled (PAAD).
5. Recipients of General Assistance (GA) benefits.
6. Recipients of the Universal Service Fund (USF).
7. Recipients of benefits under the Lifeline Credit Program.
8. Persons unable to pay their utility bills because of circumstances beyond their control. Such circumstances shall include, but shall not be limited to, unemployment, illness, medical related expenses, recent death of an immediate family member, or any other circumstances that might cause financial hardship.
9. A participant in any other State or local program that provides assistance, specifically, to help eligible customers pay electric, sewer, or water bills.

Please be advised that residential customers can either submit the program's Self-Certification form or verbally notify their utility company of their eligibility to receive protection under the Winter Termination Program. All customers in arrears should be referred to DCAid or NJ211 for possible assistance.

The regulations require all vendors to do the following:

1. Send a notice to all residential customers about the Winter Termination Program in the billing cycle prior to November 15th. The notice shall set forth the terms and conditions of the Program. A vendor shall also send a notice about the Program to a residential customer who has started a new service, after the billing cycle, prior to November 15th at the time the residential customer starts the new service. The notice must also include information about all available bill-payment assistance programs.

- a. If a vendor has a policy that prohibits service from being shut off to any residential customer from November 15th to March 15th, the vendor does not have to comply with the notice requirement above.
2. Post a notice describing the Program on its website. This notice should include the following:
 - a. A summary of the program including eligibility requirements.
 - b. A phone number, email address and mailing address for residential customers to use to communicate their eligibility.
 - c. A statement that protection under the Winter Termination Program can be obtained by verbally advising a utility company of their eligibility or by submitting a Self-Certification form to the utility company.
 - d. A link to DCA's Winter Termination Program website: <https://www.nj.gov/dca/dhcr/offices/wintertermination.shtml> and the self-certification form: <https://www.nj.gov/dca/divisions/dhcr/forms/docs/Self Cert for WTP.pdf>
3. Not request a security deposit or an addition to an existing security deposit from a customer who is eligible for, and seeks the protection of, the Winter Termination Program.
4. Restore service during the Winter Termination Program period if a residential customer applies for utility bill payment assistance, as provided by N.J.S.A. 40A:5A-29.b(3).

The regulations require that all residential electric, water, and wastewater customers who are eligible for, and seek the protection of the Winter Termination Program, do the following:

1. Make good-faith payments during the period if they are able. The bills remaining unpaid during the Winter Termination Program period will still be owed and may lead to disconnection after the WTP period.
2. Forward any electric, water, or wastewater-related financial assistance received to their appropriate electric, water, or wastewater vendor.

Attached are copies of the Winter Termination Program Flyer and the Self-Certification Form. Both documents are available on the Department's website at:

<https://www.nj.gov/dca/dhcr/offices/wintertermination.shtml>. Also attached is a sample bill insert.

If you have any questions about this program, please contact Fidel Ekhelar at fidel.ekhelar@dca.nj.gov.

Sincerely



Jacquelyn A. Suárez
Commissioner

Attachments



Winter Termination Program

Dear Customer:

Are you having trouble paying your electric, sewer and/or water bills?

If the answer is yes, you may be able to temporarily stop your service from being disconnected through the State's Winter Termination Program.

The Winter Termination Program prevents service discontinuation for eligible households from November 15th through March 15th.

Your service cannot be disconnected from November 15th through March 15th if you are receiving benefits from one of the below programs:

1. Federal Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP).
2. Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF).
3. Federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI).
4. Pharmaceutical Assistance to the Aged and Disabled (PAAD).
5. General Assistance (GA) benefits.
6. Universal Service Fund (USF).
7. Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program.
8. Lifeline Credit Program
9. State or local program that provides assistance, specifically, to help eligible customers pay electric, sewer, or water bills.

You may also be eligible if you are unable to pay your utility bills because of circumstances beyond your control, such as being unemployed, illness, medical-related expenses, recent death of an immediate family member, or any other circumstances that might cause financial hardship.

To qualify for the Winter Termination Program, you can either send the attached Self-Certification Form to the following address and/or email _____. OR call us at _____.

Please be advised that this debt does not go away, all of the money that you owe must be repaid after March 15, 2025 or your services may be disconnected.

Please visit the DCAid website <https://dcaid.dca.nj.gov/en-US/are-you-eligible/> OR call NJ211 (dial 2-1-1) for possible assistance with your past-due bills.

Attached is a copy of the Self-Certification Form.



Winter Termination Program

If you are having trouble paying your residential electric, sewer and water service bills this winter, the NJ Department of Community Affairs has a program to protect you from having these utilities turned off from

November 15 through March 15

Who is Eligible?

You qualify for protection during this period if you are being helped by one of the programs listed below:

- Federal Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)
- Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)
- Federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Pharmaceutical Assistance to the Aged and Disabled (PAAD)
- General Assistance (GA) benefits
- Universal Service Fund (USF)
- Low-income Household Water Assistance Program
- Lifeline Credit Program

OR

You are unable to pay your utility bills because of circumstances beyond your control such as unemployment, illness, medically related expenses, recent death of an immediate family member, and any other circumstances, which might cause financial hardship.

What do you have to do?

1. If you qualify for protection from shut-off during this period, you should contact your utility company to advise the company that you are eligible for coverage under the State's Winter Termination Program. You should also pay as much as you can on your bill(s) during the winter.
2. Customers also have the option to complete the following Self-Certification form and provide this form to their utility company as a way of notifying the company of their eligibility for protection. When using the Self-Certification form it is recommended that a copy of the form be retained for one's personal records. [Click here for the Self-Certification Form](#)

Please note that completion and submission of the Self-Certification form to your utility company is NOT required in order to receive protection under the Winter Termination Program. Protection under the Winter Termination Program can be obtained by verbally advising your utility company(ies) of your eligibility or by submitting this Self-Certification form to the utility company. In either case, please contact your utility company's customer service number to report your eligibility and/or learn how it wishes to receive the Self-Certification form. You should also log onto DCAid: <https://dcaid.dca.nj.gov/en-US/are-you-eligible> or contact **NJ211 at 211** or 1-877-652-1148 for possible assistance with your utilities.

Winter Termination Program Self-Certification

*As an alternative to verbally advising their utility company of their eligibility to receive protection under the Winter Termination Program, customers may complete this Self-Certification form and submit the form to their utility company(ies). It is recommended that a copy of this form be retained by the customer for their records. **Please note that completion and submission of the Self-Certification form to your utility company is NOT required in order to receive protection under the Winter Termination Program. Protection under the Winter Termination Program can be obtained by verbally advising your utility company(ies) of your eligibility or by submitting this Self-Certification form to the utility company. Please contact your utility company's customer service number to learn how it wishes to receive this form.***

Head of Household's Name: _____

Address: _____

I certify that I am receiving assistance from one or more of the below programs and am requesting protection under the NJ Department of Community Affairs' Winter Termination Program:

- Federal Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)
- Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)
- Federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Pharmaceutical Assistance to the Aged and Disabled (PAAD)
- General Assistance (GA) benefits
- Universal Service Fund (USF)
- Low-income Household Water Assistance Program
- Lifeline Credit Program

OR

I certify that I am unable to pay my local authority and/or municipal utility bill due to circumstances beyond my control and am requesting protection under the NJ Department of Community Affairs' Winter Termination Program.

Please select the circumstances under which you are requesting protection under the Program:

- Laid off/unemployed
- Illness
- Medically related expenses
- Recent death of an immediate family member
- Other: _____

I certify the foregoing statements made by me are true. I understand that if any of the foregoing statements made by me are willfully false, I am subject to punishment in accordance with law

Signature: _____

Date: _____