

Programs for Utility Customers and Utility Bill Assistance Information

There are several programs designed to help Kansans with utility bills: some are for seniors or handicapped customers only, some are for low- or moderate-income households, and some are available to everyone.

Additionally, there are programs designed to help you weatherize your home and use less energy. Federal stimulus grants are also being utilized to create new programs to help Kansans conserve energy and use it more efficiently.

FIRST: CONTACT YOUR UTILITY about assistance programs it may offer, or check the utility's website. Many utilities in the state are now offering bill-assistance programs, assistance with energy-efficiency improvements, or will work with you if you are behind on your bill. It's best to call as soon as you realize you will not be able to keep current on your bill, because some bill-management options like even-pay plans are not always available to customers with arrearages.

KANSAS CORPORATION COMMISSION regulates the public utilities in the State of Kansas. If you have a complaint about your utility service, utility billing or other concerns call them at 800-662-0027 (or in the Topeka area, call 271-3140) or see their link at: <https://kcc.ks.gov/consumer-information>

CALL 211: You can locate utility assistance programs in your area that are funded through the United Way by dialing 211 in the state of Kansas, or by visiting the following web site: <https://211kansas.myresourcedirectory.com/index.php>

SALVATION ARMY UTILITY ASSISTANCE: You may call 1-877-566-2769, Ext. 402 or 403 or visit the following link for information to see if you reside in the areas covered by one of its utility assistance programs: https://www.needhelp-payingbills.com/html/kansas_salvation_army_financia.html

LIFELINE PROGRAM: Provides income-eligible consumers with a reduction in the price of basic local service for phone and internet service. Please see the following link for information on the Lifeline assistance program, and how to apply: <https://www.lifelinesupport.org/>

AFFORDABLE CONNECTIVITY PROGRAM: It is a Federal Communications Commission benefit program that provides income-eligible consumers with broadband for work, school, healthcare and more. Please see the following link for information on the Affordable Connectivity Program, and how to apply: <https://www.fcc.gov/acp>

LOW-INCOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LIEAP): Once-a-year, income-based utility assistance is available through SRS' LIEAP program: unfortunately, the SRS limits applications to certain times of year. You may want to check with SRS at 1-800-432-0043 to inquire about the dates of this year's application period and income guidelines, or check for updates at the following site: <http://www.dcf.ks.gov/services/eas/Pages/EnergyAssistance.aspx>

COLD WEATHER RULE: the publicly-regulated utilities are required by the KCC to follow certain rules before disconnecting customers from November 1 thru March 31. See the link below for information on how to qualify for protection under the Cold Weather Rule: <https://kcc.ks.gov/consumer-information/cold-weather-rule>

CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF NORTHEAST KANSAS: Operates an Emergency Assistance Program in 21 northeast Kansas counties, which includes utility assistance. <https://catholiccharitiesks.org/contact/>