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PSEG Long Island Offers Payment Plans, Other Assistance to Help Avoid Shutoffs

As shutoffs resume after more than two years, low- and moderate-income customers will continue to have assistance with bills and may be eligible for new protections

(UNIONDALE, N.Y. – June 30, 2022) Utility service shutoffs for nonpayment have begun to resume across New York State, and PSEG Long Island expects to resume shutoffs on July 12. Continuing more than two years of outreach efforts, PSEG Long Island stands ready to work with customers with outstanding balances to avoid interruptions to their service. Service shutoff for nonpayment is always the last resort, and customers who are behind on their bills can still call 1-800-490-0025 to get help and protect their energy service from disconnection.

“We want to reassure our customers that if they're struggling with their energy bills, we are here to help. We are ready and willing to partner with households who have fallen behind on their bills, as we have been throughout the pandemic,” said Rick Walden, vice president of Customer Services, PSEG Long Island. “That commitment is not going away. We offer many programs to help people who are behind on their bills, including deferred payment agreements, low-income electric rates, and more.”

How customers can avoid a shutoff

- A deferred payment agreement, allowing qualified customers to pay down their outstanding account balance by as little as \$10 a month in addition to the current bill, protects customers from shutoffs.
- Low- and moderate-income customers who receive certain externally administered financial assistance benefits and enroll in PSEG Long Island's [Household Assistance Program](#) will be protected from shutoffs until Sept. 1.
- **New York State Electric and Gas Bill Relief Program** - Customers enrolled in PSEG Long Island's Household Assistance Program will automatically receive a credit toward their unpaid balance through May 1, 2022, via this new, state-run program. Currently, more than 14,000 PSEG Long Island customers will receive this credit. Customers who meet the eligibility requirements and have not yet enrolled in the Household Assistance Program have until Dec. 31 to enroll and receive this bill credit.
- Customers who have received a payment on their PSEG Long Island account through the [New York State-administered Emergency Rental Assistance Program](#) (ERAP) also qualify for the New York State Electric and Gas Bill Relief Program. As ERAP payments

continue to be received, the New York State Electric and Gas Bill Relief Program will remain open through Dec. 31.

Customers with unpaid account balances should call PSEG Long Island at 1-800-490-0025 to determine if they are eligible for these or other financial assistance programs, and to develop individualized payment agreements.

“It’s not too late. We know how hard it has been to manage household bills when your income has been affected,” Walden said. “We want to work with our customers, make sure they know about assistance programs, and help them set up individualized payment agreements that avert a shutoff, letting them pay what they can now to prevent them from getting too far behind.”

What to know about shutoffs:

- In March 2020, PSEG Long Island suspended all service shutoffs for nonpayment and continued this protection throughout the New York COVID-19 State of Emergency, which ended last summer.
- After the state of emergency ended, PSEG Long Island extended additional shutoff protections through the end of 2021.
- Following the practices of several electricity and gas providers across the state, PSEG Long Island will soon resume service shutoffs for accounts that do not respond to repeated efforts to establish a payment agreement.
- Shutoff of service for nonpayment is a last resort that only occurs after PSEG Long Island makes multiple efforts to contact and help the customer.
- Customers with unpaid balances who do not already have a deferred payment agreement should call 1-800-490-0025 so PSEG Long Island can assist them.
- If previous outreach efforts are unsuccessful, a PSEG Long Island representative will make a final attempt to contact the customer of record, in person, to accept a payment and avoid a shutoff.
- When service is terminated, a service suspension notice will be left at the location with instructions on how to work with PSEG Long Island to reconnect.

Customers are beginning to take action

PSEG Long Island continues to partner with social service agencies and perform outreach to customers who have fallen behind on their bills, including letters informing them in advance about the resumption of shutoffs for nonpayment.

For the past seven months, PSEG Long Island field representatives have been making customer visits, connecting one-on-one with residential customers who have past-due account balances to discuss payment methods, accept a payment or work out a payment plan to pay down balances over time. In that time, representatives have visited with more than 47,000 residential customers and 10,000 of those customers have entered into deferred payment agreements. PSEG Long Island representatives work with customers to find the best solution for the household.

PSEG Long Island’s Consumer Advocacy team also works year-round to provide customers with crucial information, utilizing email and social media, hosting educational webinars, and conducting proactive phone outreach. These outreaches also include energy efficiency tips, referrals for additional assistance for food insecurity and housing concerns, and help applying for the federally funded, statewide Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP).

When a new, state-administered program was established to provide eligible households up to \$10,000 in unpaid bill forgiveness in the fall of 2021, PSEG Long Island mobilized to inform as many customers as possible, hosting a series of webinars that connected with more than 1,000 customers. The Consumer Advocacy team made thousands of phone calls to encourage customers to apply.

The combination of PSEG Long Island's efforts and New York State's own outreach resulted in more than 7,000 PSEG Long Island customers benefiting from this unique program – receiving \$20 million of the \$150 million total utility aid that had been made available statewide.

Where to learn more about available assistance

For more information on PSEG Long Island financial assistance programs, visit <https://www.psegliny.com/myaccount/customersupport/financialassistance>. Programs available for customers, both internal and externally run, include:

- **Emergency HEAP.** \$90 million in federal funding through Emergency HEAP was made available to help low- and middle-income New Yorkers avoid having their home heating disconnected or exhausting their heating source amid fuel price increases. This benefit has been extended through Aug. 31. If you are experiencing an emergency, you can apply for this benefit by reaching out to your local Department of Social Services location, which you can find here: <https://otda.ny.gov/programs/heap/contacts/>
- For low-income households facing no-heat situations, the State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance is also accepting applications for its **heating equipment repair or replacement benefit**. Eligible homeowners can now apply for up to \$3,000 for repair or \$6,500 for replacement of a furnace, boiler or other direct heating equipment necessary to keep the household's primary heating source working. Additionally, eligible households can receive energy efficiency services, which includes the cleaning of primary heating equipment to allow for its safe and efficient operation. You can apply for this benefit by reaching out to your local Department of Social Services location, which you can find here: <https://otda.ny.gov/programs/heap/contacts/>
- **Household Assistance Program** – PSEG Long Island's Household Assistance Program provides a monthly credit on electric bills for customers who receive benefits from specific federal and state assistance programs. Enrollment is open, and if approved, is effective for 18 months. It is also renewable. For more information, contact PSEG Long Island's Consumer Advocacy group at consumeradvocacyLI@pseg.com or visit www.psegliny.com/myaccount/customersupport/financialassistance.
- PSEG Long Island's **Residential Energy Affordability Partnership (REAP)** program can help income-eligible customers save energy and lower energy bills. It starts with a free In-Home Energy Survey and potentially free efficiency upgrades. For more information, visit <https://www.psegliny.com/myaccount/customersupport/financialassistance/reap>

PSEG Long Island also has other tools to help customers cut their energy costs:

- Home Energy Analyzer – a do-it-yourself online tool that uses a simulation model to validate how energy is used in the home.
- My Energy Profile – an online suite of easy-to-use tools that can help a customer understand energy usage and how to conserve it. With this tool, customers can track energy efficiency efforts over time and see comparisons to similar homes in the area.

- Energy Efficiency Rebates – PSEG Long Island offers rebates on products including LED light bulbs, advanced power strips and major appliances such as dryers and heat pump water heaters.

For more information on HEAP and federal programs, visit <https://otda.ny.gov/programs/heap/>.

For more information on energy and money saving programs and tips, visit <https://www.psegliny.com/efficiency>.

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PSEG Long Island

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