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Amy E. Hirakis
Senior Counsel
Legal Department

June 15, 2020

VIA E-File

Rosemary Chiavetta, Secretary
Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission
Commonwealth Keystone Building
400 North Street
Harrisburg, PA 17210-3265

**Re: COVID-19 Customer Service, Billing, and Public Outreach Provisions
Request for Utility Information
Docket No. M-2020-3020055**

Dear Secretary Chiavetta:

Enclosed for filing please find one (1) original copy of Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania, Inc.'s Response to the Secretarial Letter Dated May 29, 2020.

If you have questions, please call me at 717-210-9625 or e-mail me at ahirakis@nsource.com.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Very truly yours,


Amy E. Hirakis

Enclosures

cc: Sarah Dewey; Bureau of Consumer Services (sdewey@pa.gov)
Tom Charles; Office of Communications (thcharles@pa.gov)

**BEFORE THE
PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION**

COVID-19 Customer Service, Billing, and :
Public Outreach Provisions Request : Docket No. M-2020-3020055
for Utility Information :

**Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania, Inc. Response to
the Secretarial Letter Dated May 29, 2020**

In response to the Secretarial Letter dated May 29, 2020, Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania, Inc. (“Columbia” or the “Company”) submits the following information:

I. COVID-19 Utility Consumer Service and Billing Policies and Procedures

Describe and report efforts to support customers through initiatives in customer service and billing policies and procedures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the ensuing recovery period. Explain how these initiatives differ from normal operations:

Company Response:

The Company has adapted its policies and procedures, as well as implemented additional initiatives, in an attempt to assist all customers affected by the pandemic. Many of these actions are included in the content below. However, as a summary of all efforts, the Company has:

- Suspended all termination activity and delayed all late payment fees
- Relaxed reconnection guidelines on restoration quotes to assist customers needing hot water and heat during the pandemic
- Initiated Senior Wellness check phone calls to customers over 70 years old whose records indicate live alone
- Relaxed Hardship Fund and CAP guidelines to reduce barriers to enrollment
- Ceased all company removals from the CAP program including non- payment, failure to re-verify income and failure to cooperate with weatherization.
- Increased communication about operations, payment assistance and programs including the LIHEAP recovery CRISIS program
- Offered additional payment plan options for those customers seeking a non-budget plus payment plan

Termination of Utility Service:

- *After the Commission's Emergency Order on Terminations at Docket No. M-2020-3019244 ends, how soon does the utility plan to begin termination of service for nonpayment?*
 - *How does the utility plan to implement terminations and will it start the process with new termination notices?*

Company Response:

Columbia, in recognition of the critical needs of its customers during the COVID-19 pandemic emergency, has voluntarily developed a two-phased plan for collection activity. The first phase includes sending reminder letters to customers advising of account balances, offering flexible payment arrangements, and referrals to energy assistance programs. The second phase, which is expected to occur no earlier than September 4, 2020, the Company will resume termination notices with the intent to shut off for nonpayment starting with a new 10 day termination notice.

- *Broken out by customer class, how many customer accounts may be subject to termination if the Commission's Emergency Order prohibiting terminations is rescinded and how does this number compare to the same time period in 2019?*
 - *Provide these figures for all utility confirmed low-income customers, including Lifeline and Customer Assistance Program (CAP) customers.*
 - *Provide future projections if available.*

Company Response:

Columbia is not sending out termination notices to customers at this time and therefore cannot quantify how many or which customers would have received a termination notice to make a comparison to the same time period in 2019. Further, due to the credit delays Columbia has placed on all accounts during the pandemic, the traditional report that the Company uses to report arrears on accounts has been impacted. As a result, the Company is unable to compare numbers using the arrears reported on the USRR report in 2019 at this time. The Company can provide a snapshot of all customers who have a balance on their account. However, the Company is unable to disaggregate by low income and CAP. As of May 31, 2019, there were 91,264 accounts with arrears totaling \$26,361,897. As of May 31, 2020, there were 71,570 with arrears totaling \$ 28,275,438. The number of customers in debt has decreased, however the average arrears has increased by 7%.

The Company recorded 8,491 CAP customers that were billed in a delinquent status in May, 2019. In May, 2020, the Company billed 8,923 CAP customers in a delinquent status. However, a deeper look at the 8,923 revealed that 3,447 customers owed less than one CAP payment and would not receive a termination notice under non-moratorium circumstances. Rather, 5,476 customers would be in jeopardy of

termination under those conditions. The Company is unable to provide the same information for CAP customers from 2019

The Company is not able to predict the number of customers that will be in arrears in the future.

- *Is the utility currently assessing a “reconnection fee” to restore service? If yes, how is the fee billed and/or collected? Will this fee apply to customers reconnected under the Commission’s Emergency Order that wish to pay any arrearage and stay connected?*

Company Response:

Columbia’s normal policy is to waive the \$24 reconnect fee for customers identified as having a household income of less than 150% of the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines. During the COVID-19 pandemic, customers who contacted the Company to have service restored and were identified as payment troubled also had their reconnect fees waived. Columbia restored 41 accounts from March 13 through June 4, 2020. Of those 41 accounts, 23 customer accounts had the reconnect fee waived. The Company requires the reconnect fee prior to connection; however, the Company has used discretion to bill the reconnect fee on the first bill after reconnection, if the customer expresses a hardship with an upfront payment.

Universal Service Programs:

- *Is the utility currently removing customers from CAP for non-payment or failure to recertify?*

Company Response:

No. Columbia is not removing any customers from CAP unless they send us information verifying they are no longer eligible, they move from our service territory or they request to be removed in writing.

- *What are the utility’s current Hardship Fund payment requirements to qualify low-income customers for grants (e.g., waiving payment history “good faith payment”, or CAP participation criteria) and have these requirements been revised due to the pandemic?*

Company Response:

The Company has made the following changes to existing Hardship Fund guidelines in order to assist customers through the pandemic:

- Waiver of the requirement of a sincere effort of payment. No payment is required.

- All low income customers are eligible regardless of CAP status so long as they have arrears on their account.

The Company has made the following changes to the CAP program as a result of the pandemic:

- Customers are not being removed from CAP, as stated above.
- The additional \$600 per week from Unemployment Compensation is not being counted as income since the income is short term.
- Any “stimulus” income is not being counted as income.
- Proof of income is not required at this time for CAP for those unable to provide income.

Further, the Company is actively promoting the LIHEAP Recovery CRISIS program and is participating in the Department of Human Services Utility File Transfer component. The Company is making outbound calls to eligible previous LIHEAP recipients to obtain permission to apply to the program on their behalf. In addition, Columbia is sending out applications to customers upon request.

Columbia Gas LIURP was closed on March 16th and reopened on June 8th for in home appointments

Other Assistance Initiatives:

- *Describe any policies/procedures the utility has updated to assist customers impacted by the pandemic that go beyond provisions in PUC policies or regulations.*

Company Response:

In addition to Columbia’s normal budget plus payment plan offered to its customers based on financial information and household size, Columbia has also determined to provide an alternative payment plan option as a result of the COVID -19 Pandemic. For both Residential and Commercial customers with arrears of more than \$90 and less than \$600, a 6 month payment plan is negotiated with customers. This payment plan option is intended for customers who are normally not payment troubled and financial information is not required. Customers can enroll in this alternative payment plan via Columbia’s website or by contacting the Company’s call center as of May 22, 2020. This information will be delivered through bill messaging, website notices, reminder letters, and customer representatives at the company’s Customer Care Centers, along with the Company proactively reaching out to individual customers by phone.

- *Describe any proposed or anticipated changes in programs/practices/policies to assist customers impacted by the pandemic after the Governor’s Emergency*

Proclamation and the PUC Emergency Order on Terminations expire or are lifted.

Company Response:

In addition to the modified collections activities described above, the Company will continue to promote programs to all residential customers, and do targeted outreach for specific income eligible programs, such as outbound calling to LIHEAP Recovery CRISIS program eligible customers. Examples are included below.

The Company has also designed a temporary customer grant program called the Reduced Income Grant Program (“RIGP”) for residential customers who are not eligible for Columbia’s low income customer programs. The RIGP would provide customers with grants up to \$400 to reduce arrears and offer credit counseling. On April 24, 2020, the Company filed a petition with the Commission seeking approval of the Company’s proposed funding source for the RIGP and this petition is currently pending before the Commission at Docket No. P-2020-3019578.

II. Consumer Education and Outreach

- *Descriptions and/or examples of how the utilities are educating their customers about their rights and responsibilities, assistance programs, energy efficiency and conservation, and/or COVID-19 recovery.*

Company Response:

Columbia is using all available resources to educate customers regarding the Company’s current collection practices, available assistance programs and COVID-19 recovery.

Examples include:

- Social media posts on Facebook & Twitter;
- Targeted outbound calls for LIHEAP recovery CRISIS program;
- E-mails to customers that may be eligible for the LIHEAP recovery CRISIS program;
- E-mails to customers regarding current collection practices;
- Updated information on its website regarding available programs;
- Announcement on its website that the Company has suspended all terminations for non- payment;
- Bill Inserts;
- Customer Newsletter.

Please see Attachment A for samples of all materials.

- *Efforts to reach all utility consumers with information about income-qualified programs and resources and about non-income-qualified educational services, tools, and resources.*

Company Response:

The Company will conduct an outreach campaign to inform customers of available resources for payment assistance. Outreach promotions include:

- CPA website updates on programs, such as the LIHEAP Recovery CRISIS Program;
 - Emails to customers how have received LIHEAP funding and to other eligible low-income customers;
 - Social media posts on CPA social media channels (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn);
 - Article in the quarterly customer newsletter;
 - Bill insert in customers' July bills;
 - Facebook ads in targeted zip codes throughout the campaign;
 - Tele-town hall event with third parties to explain the programs and services available.
- *Methods that utilities are using to make their customers aware of important proceedings that may include telephonic public input hearings and allowing consumers to be able to make their voices heard.*

Company Response:

The Company will be holding two telephonic public input hearings as part of its current rate case proceeding. The Company will use several methods to advise customers of the two telephonic public input hearings, including putting notice of the hearings on Columbia's website, using social media, specifically Facebook and Twitter, using newspaper publications, and emailing customers with email addresses on file with the Company.

- *Description of utility outreach methods that could be used to inform eligible Pennsylvanians about changes related to COVID-19 in the Lifeline Program for Telephone and Broadband Internet Service.*

Company Response:

The Company was provided graphics by the PUC Communications Department to promote Lifeline and Broadband Internet Service. The Company used these graphics to promote the programs through Facebook and Twitter social media channels. Please see Attachments B for snapshots of the promotions.

Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania COVID-19 & Customer Assistance Social Media Content Log

Facebook 

Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania
Published by Hootsuite [?] · May 29 at 8:30 AM · 🌐

Additional LIHEAP funds are available for customers who are in need. Eligibility guidelines are the same as those used during the 2019-20 LIHEAP season. To learn more and apply, please visit: www.compass.state.pa.us



1,305 People Reached **46** Engagements [Boost Post](#)

👍❤️ 7 9 Shares

Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania
Published by Hootsuite [?] · April 6 · 🌐

We've voluntarily suspended shutoffs for nonpayment and we're offering our most flexible payment plans. We are also suspending late payment charges until May 1. Call us at 1-888-460-4332 to discuss options if you're experiencing an impact or hardship as a result of COVID-19.



1,698 People Reached **80** Engagements [Boost Post](#)

👍 9 1 Comment 10 Shares

Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania
Published by Sarah Perry NiSource [?] · April 30 · 🌐



1 Number of benefits allowed per household **TO APPLY:** Contact Your Service Provider Visit www.lifesupport.org Or Call 1-800-934-9743 **\$7.25** Average discount on monthly basic service

Program Discounts		
Effective Date	Voice (Fixed & Mobile)	Broadband (Fixed & Mobile)
11/1/2019	12-15	10-15
11/1/2020	15-15	10-15

Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission
April 15 · 🌐 [Like Page](#)

Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania
Published by Hootsuite [?] · May 22 at 12:19 PM · 🌐

Additional LIHEAP funds are available for customers who are in need. Eligibility guidelines are the same as those used during the 2019-20 LIHEAP season. To learn more and apply, please visit: www.compass.state.pa.us



1,537 People Reached **62** Engagements [Boost Post](#)

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Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania
Published by Hootsuite [?] · March 13 ·

We know that the COVID-19 pandemic may cause financial hardship for our customers. We have suspended shutoffs for nonpayment until further notice. This applies to residential, commercial and industrial customers.
<http://ow.ly/s8FS50yLBIH>



COLUMBIAGASPA.COM About this website

Columbia Gas to Suspend Shutoffs for Non-Payment During COVID-19 Pandemic

3,376 People Reached 1,626 Engagements [Boost Post](#)

4 Comments 366 Shares

Twitter

ColumbiaGasPA @ColumbiaGasPA · May 29

Additional LIHEAP funds are available for customers who are in need. Eligibility guidelines are the same as those used during the 2019-20 LIHEAP season. To learn more and apply, please visit: compass.state.pa.us



1

ColumbiaGasPA @ColumbiaGasPA · May 22

Additional LIHEAP funds are available for customers who are in need. Eligibility guidelines are the same as those used during the 2019-20 LIHEAP season. To learn more and apply, please visit: compass.state.pa.us



1

You Retweeted **PA PUC** @PA_PUC · Apr 15

PUC highlights the Lifeline Program so consumers at risk of isolation can stay connected through their voice & internet service during these challenging times
puc.pa.gov/about_puc/pres...



Program Discounts		
Effective Date	Voice (Fixed & Mobile)	Broadband (Fixed & Mobile)
12/2019	\$7.55	\$5.55
12/2020	\$5.55	\$5.55

11 12

ColumbiaGasPA @ColumbiaGasPA · Apr 6

We've voluntarily suspended shutoffs for nonpayment and we're offering our most flexible payment plans. We are also suspending late payment charges until May 1. Call us at 1-888-460-4332 to discuss options if you're experiencing an impact or hardship as a result of COVID-19.



1 2 4

You Retweeted

The Salvation Army WPA @SalArmyPGH · Apr 6






A huge thank you to @ColumbiaGasPA for helping us serve 1,750 meals to families and individuals impacted by #Covid19. We are so thankful for our corporate partners who step up during a time of crisis to serve our neighbors in need. #DoingTheMostGood



  2  3 

ColumbiaGasPA @ColumbiaGasPA · Mar 13





We know that the COVID-19 pandemic may cause financial hardship for our customers. We have suspended shutoffs for nonpayment until further notice. This applies to residential, commercial and industrial customers. ow.ly/oN4C50yLBIF

  2  5  

You Retweeted

UW Laurel Highlands @UnitedWayLaurel · Apr 6

Thank you @ColumbiaGasPA and NiSource Foundation for your \$1,000 contribution to the Emergency Impact Fund! Your pledge will be able to help many individuals in need of health and human services in Somerset County during the COVID-19 pandemic!

  1  4 



View in Browser

Committed to keeping you safe

The health and safety of our customers, communities and employees is our highest priority. We continue to monitor current events and want to update you on the proactive steps we have been taking in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Financial assistance available

We know this could be a time of financial hardship. So, **we've voluntarily suspended shutoffs for nonpayment** in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, we're offering to customers who indicate either an impact or hardship as a result of COVID-19 our most flexible pay plans, and we will suspend late payment charges until May 1.

You also can easily manage your Columbia Gas account online at ColumbiaGasPA.com or over the phone at **1-888-460-4332**.

Stopping some work

To do our part to help protect our customers, employees and those most vulnerable, we will stop some types of work until further notice. By doing this, we'll be able to put all our focus on the most essential work to ensure that our system remains safe and reliable.

Most work that customers request will remain available.

Safety precautions

For any work that does continue and requires our employees to enter your home, you may notice we're taking a few additional precautions.

- We will ask for anyone in your home with a contagious illness to please keep their distance as we're working so we can help prevent spreading illnesses and continue to provide service to you and all of our other customers.
- We won't shake your hand. We promise, it's not you. It's another way to keep everyone safe.
- You may notice our gloves, shoe coverings, disinfectant wipes or other protective gear; don't be alarmed. Our team carries these items to preserve the condition of your home and the homes of other customers.

Thank you for your patience

These changes may inconvenience some customers, and we apologize in advance. We look forward to resuming normal operations when it is safe to do so.

Please check our [website](#) and social media for updates. We'll do our best to keep you informed.

Looking for the latest COVID-19 information? [We recommend the CDC's website.](#)



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Our employees are hard at work

We know that you rely on us for the energy that heats your home, cooks your food, provides hot water and more. During this time of uncertainty, our employees continue to work to ensure you have the safe, reliable natural gas service that you need throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

We are taking appropriate precautions to maintain the health and safety of our customers, communities and employees. We are ensuring that our system is safe and, if an outbreak would occur in our service territories, have plans in place to suspend all non-emergency work if necessary.

Putting all of our focus on the most important work

To do our part to help protect our customers, employees and those most vulnerable, we will stop some types of work until further notice. By doing this, we'll be able to put all our focus on the most essential work to ensure that our system remains safe and reliable.

Most work that you would request, such as starting and stopping service, will continue to be available. But we may not be able to complete other types of requests. If you have already scheduled work that we will not be able to complete, we will contact you.

Scammers may try to target you

Scams are on the rise. We will never call you directly to ask for account or payment information. We also never demand payment through a prepaid debit card.

[Learn How to Spot Impostors](#)

Reminders about bills and payments

We know this could be a time of financial hardship. So, we've voluntarily suspended shutoffs for nonpayment in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, we're offering to customers who

indicate either an impact or hardship as a result of COVID-19 our most flexible payment plans, and we will suspend late payment charges until May 1. We are here to help you, so please call to discuss all available options when you receive your monthly bill.

[Learn More](#)

Managing energy use

More time at home during the COVID-19 pandemic, might mean higher energy use this month. Don't forget that there are a variety of ways to save energy at home.

[Get Home Energy Tips](#)

Get more information

You can get updates on our website at ColumbiaGasPA.com/COVID-19.

Looking for the latest COVID-19 information? [We recommend the CDC's website.](#)



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We're continuing to suspend late payment charges until June 1

We know this could be a time of financial hardship, so we're doing what we can to help. Late payment charges will be suspended until June 1.

We've also voluntarily suspended shutoffs for nonpayment and we're offering our most flexible payment plans to customers who indicate either an impact or hardship as a result of COVID-19.

We have a variety of socially distant payment options available. You can call us, pay online or pay by mail. Remember, with more people at home, utility bills could be higher. Check out our tips to help you save energy.

Learn more at ColumbiaGasPA.com/COVID-19.

Additional resources are available

You may qualify for assistance for a number of human services. The CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security) Act has allocated additional funding to programs like the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program and the Community Services Block Grant.

These programs can help individuals and families cover costs related to energy bills, employment, education, transportation, food, housing and more.

Find out if you may be eligible using our [income eligibility calculator](#) or reach out to your local community action agency for more information.

Partnering to support families impacted by COVID-19

We're committed to helping our communities and one way we're doing so is by partnering with the American Red Cross, a longtime partner who shares our focus on safety and helping people in the most trying of times. Through the NISource Charitable Foundation, we've pledged \$110,000 to local American Red Cross chapters throughout Pennsylvania to support families impacted by COVID-19.

An additional \$31,000 will be donated throughout Pennsylvania and Maryland to help fund local food banks for the purchase of food and needed supplies.

We're continuing to provide essential services

You can rest assured. We will continue to do the work necessary to provide you with safe and reliable service including answering your calls, responding to emergencies and supplying gas to our customers.

Continue to get updates about our response to the coronavirus pandemic at ColumbiaGasPA.com/COVID-19. Looking for the latest COVID-19 information? We recommend the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website, [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov).

We're taking proactive steps to protect customers and employees

If we need to come to your home or business for essential work, please know our employees are practicing social distancing and will minimize time spent inside to what is needed to accomplish the task.

Our employees could wear personal protective equipment appropriate for the situation and the job, such as gloves, face coverings, etc. They will politely avoid handshaking or any other physical contact.

Support social distancing: Call 811 before you dig

Avoid service interruption, potential fines and reduce risk for us all.

Call 811 or submit a request online three business days in advance to have underground utilities marked and help maintain social distance. If your natural gas service is interrupted, our service technicians will need to enter homes and businesses as part of the restoration process. Every digging project should start with calling 811, even now.

[Submit a request online](#)

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Late payment charges suspended until further notice

We know this could continue to be a time of financial hardship, so we've suspended late payment charges until further notice. We've also voluntarily suspended shutoffs for nonpayment and are offering our most flexible payment plans to customers who indicate either an impact or hardship as a result of COVID-19. We are here to help. Contact us at the first sign you may have trouble paying your bill, so we can work with you. Remember, you don't need to leave home to manage your Columbia Gas account; you can manage your bill over the phone, online or by mail.

Looking for ways to manage your energy usage? Visit ColumbiaGasPA.com/COVID-19 for tips.

Please continue to stay safe as we weather this together.

We're continuing to perform essential work

You may wonder why you're still seeing our employees working in or around your neighborhood.

We're focused on ensuring that our system remains safe and reliable to provide the essential energy you need when it matters most.

Customers rely on us for the safe and reliable delivery of energy to their homes and businesses. Due to the nature of our work, not all of our employees have the ability to work from home. Know that we're following safety precautions recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). As a reminder, our employees and contractors wear their company IDs visibly. Feel free to ask to see their ID. If you're unsure, you can reach out to our customer care team.

You will see our employees
wearing face coverings or face

If we need to enter your home or business to complete essential work, please know our employees are following these guidelines from the CDC to keep themselves and our customers safe:

- Practicing good hygiene
- Practicing social distancing (maintaining six feet from others)
- Wearing personal protective equipment appropriate for the situation and the job, such as gloves, face coverings, etc.
- Avoiding touching their face, eyes, nose or mouth, handshaking and any other physical contact

Our employees are also minimizing time spent in customers' homes and businesses by only performing work that is essential to complete our tasks safely.

Columbia Cares

Many families are struggling, so we've partnered with local organizations that provide our most vulnerable neighbors with food and other basic needs. Through the NiSource Charitable Foundation*, we recently contributed \$136,500 to Pennsylvania non-profits to provide coronavirus (COVID-19) relief support, including \$110,000 to American Red Cross chapters. Pennsylvanians will get through this trying time by working together. We're proud to partner with organizations making a difference in our communities.

Learn more about our community giving at
ColumbiaGasPA.com/GivingBack.

** NiSource Charitable Foundation contributions are not funded by customers though utility service rates. Charitable contributions are primarily funded by shareholders as a core part of the company's commitment to support the communities and customers it serves.*



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Access energy assistance resources

You may qualify for assistance from a number of community action agencies. The CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security) Act has allocated additional funding to programs that can help individuals and families cover costs related to energy bills, employment, education, transportation, food, housing and more. You may be eligible if you have been laid off or had your hours reduced due to COVID-19.

Even if you have never been eligible before, you may be eligible now.

Find out if you may be eligible using our income-eligibility calculator or reach out to your local community action agency for more information.

[Learn More](#)

Late payment charges suspended until further notice

We know this could continue to be a time of financial hardship, so we've suspended late payment charges until further notice. We've also voluntarily suspended shutoffs for nonpayment.

We are here to help. Contact us at the first sign you may have trouble paying your bill, so we can work with you. Remember, you don't need to leave home to manage your Columbia Gas account; you can manage your bill over the phone, online or by mail.

Looking for ways to manage your energy usage? Visit [ColumbiaGasPA.com/COVID-19](https://www.columbiagaspa.com/COVID-19) for tips.

Please continue to stay safe as we weather this together.

We're continuing to perform essential work

Wondering why you're still seeing our employees working in your community?

We know you rely on us to deliver safe and reliable energy to your homes and businesses each day. To help keep everyone safe, we've adjusted the work we're doing to minimize the need to enter customers' homes or disrupt their service.

Beginning May 4, we will be resuming construction work on some pipeline replacement projects that had been paused due to COVID-19. If your natural gas service will be impacted by a Columbia Gas pipeline replacement project, you will receive a letter and a doorhanger outlining our safety procedures, and one of our employees or business partners will make contact with you before performing any in-home work. Please be sure to update your contact information on [our website](#), so that we have the most up-to-date information for you and can reach you easily.

At all times, please keep your distance (at least 6 feet), so our employees can keep working safely.



You will see our employees wearing face coverings

If we need to enter your home or business to complete essential work, please know our employees are following these recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to keep themselves and our customers safe:

- Washing their hands with soap and water or using hand sanitizer
- Practicing social distancing (maintaining six feet from others)
- Wearing personal protective equipment appropriate for the situation and the job, such as gloves, face coverings, etc.
- Avoiding touching their face, eyes, nose or mouth, handshaking and any other physical contact

Our employees are also minimizing time spent inside to what is needed to safely accomplish the task.

Protect yourself from scams

Scams related to the COVID-19 outbreak are on the rise. Remember we will never call you to ask for account or payment information. We also never demand payment through a prepaid debit card. If someone comes to your home claiming to be a Columbia Gas representative and you are unsure:

- **Ask for ID** - Our employees and contractors wear their IDs visibly.
- **Call us** - If you are not sure about a phone call, email, program, offer or person claiming to be affiliated with Columbia Gas, please call our customer care team. You can find our number on your bill or our website.

Learn more about scams and how to spot impostors at ColumbiaGasPA.com/Scams.

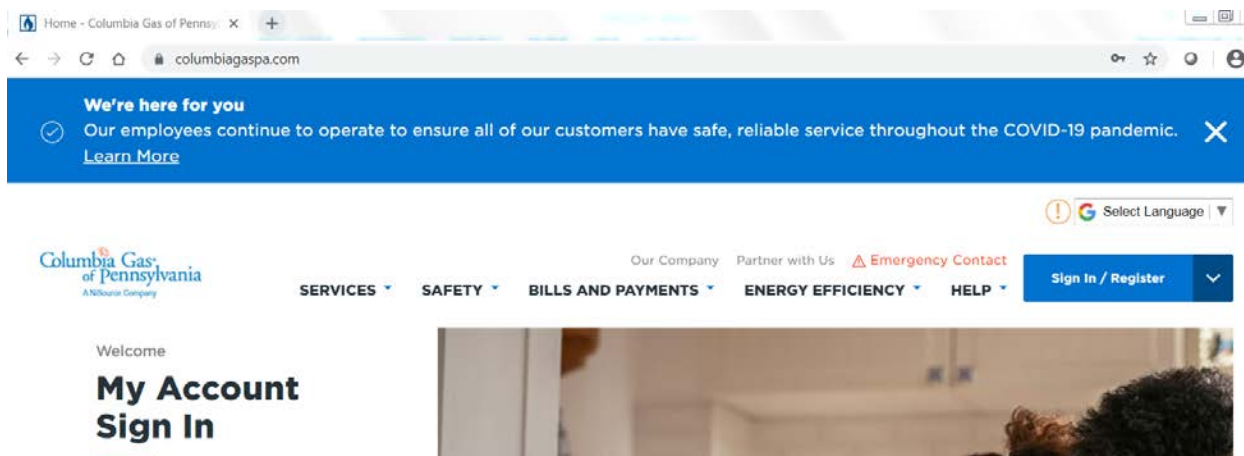


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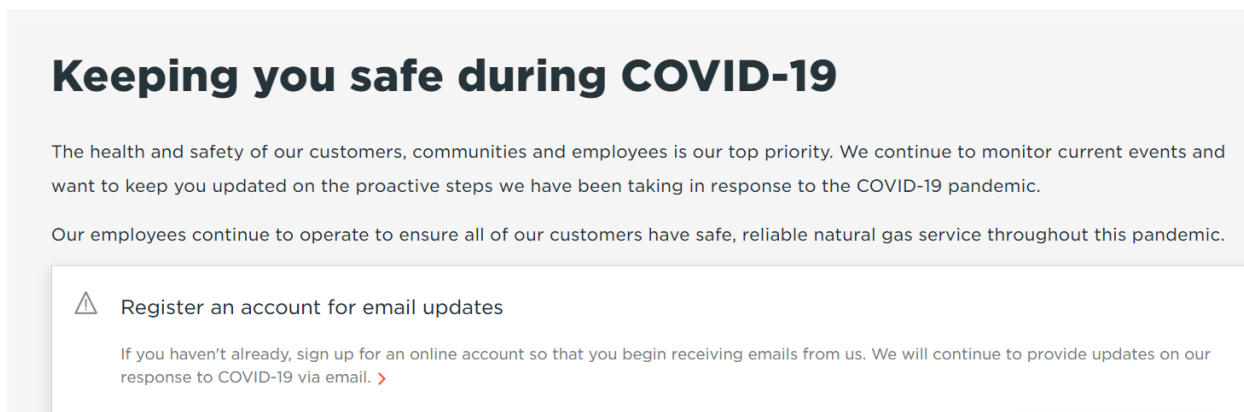
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Columbia Gas of PA website Home Page and link to COVID-19 Pandemic information



First paragraph of website after clicking Learn More



Bill Payment assistance in Pandemic section of Website

Managing bills and payments

We know this could be a time of financial hardship. So, we've voluntarily suspended shutoffs for nonpayment in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, we're offering to customers who indicate either an impact or hardship as a result of COVID-19 our most flexible payment plans, and we will suspend late payment charges until further notice.

[Learn More](#)

Other helpful information

Low Income Home Energy

LIHEAP recovery CRISIS program information on website

Other helpful information

Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program Recovery CRISIS Program


This program has been established to assist customers who may need help with their gas bills as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Customers with incomes at or below 150 percent of the federal poverty income guidelines may be eligible for additional assistance. Administered through the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, the program runs through August 31, 2020 or until funds have been exhausted. [Download an application](#) or call us at 1-800-272-2714 to request an application be mailed to your home.



[Aplicación en español.](#)

[Apply for LIHEAP](#)

Payment Options



Your payment options

We have a variety of socially distant payment options available for you during this time. You can call us, pay online, pay by mail and more.


[See All Payment Options](#)

Energy Efficiency Tips

Managing energy use

With more people at home, utility bills could be higher next month. Don't forget that there are a variety of energy efficiency tips that you can act on at home during the pandemic.

[Get Our Tips](#)



Scam alert message

Safety precautions

Our employees are taking all appropriate precautions to keep themselves and our customers safe. To help reduce the spread of COVID-19, until further notice, employees whose positions allow it are working remotely. For those critical employees who must report in person to complete their work, additional precautions are being taken to minimize the spread.

For any work that does continue and requires our employees to enter your home, you may notice we're taking a few additional precautions.

- ✓ We will ask for anyone in your home with a contagious illness to please keep their distance as we're working so we can help prevent spreading illnesses and continue to provide service to you and all of our other customers.
- ✓ We won't shake your hand. We promise, it's not you. It's another way to keep everyone safe.
- ✓ You may notice our gloves, shoe coverings, disinfectant wipes or other protective gear; don't be alarmed. Our team carries these items to preserve the condition of your home and the homes of other customers.

Scammers may try to target you

Scams related to the COVID-19 outbreak are on the rise. We will never call you directly to ask for account or payment information. We also never demand payment through a prepaid debit card.

[Learn More](#)





Customer Assistance Programs

Need Help Paying Your Gas Bill?

If you're facing a temporary or longer term hardship and can't afford to pay your gas bill, Columbia Gas can help. We offer a number of options to help you get back on track.

LIHEAP Recovery CRISIS Program

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) Recovery CRISIS Program has been established to assist customers that may need help with their gas bills as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Customers with incomes at or below 150 percent of the federal poverty income guidelines may be eligible for assistance of up to \$800 in grants.

Administered through the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, the Recovery CRISIS Program runs through August 31, 2020 or until funds have been exhausted. To apply, visit the department's COMPASS website at **www.Compass.State.PA.US**.

You also can download a paper application at **ColumbiaGasPA.com/Covid-19**.

Hardship Fund

Administered by the Dollar Energy Fund, this program provides up to \$500 to customers at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty income guideline. A local community agency can assist you in completing an application and if eligible, funds will be applied directly to your gas bill. Hurry, the program is only open while funds last. To apply, call **1-800-537-7431**.

Customer Assistance Program (CAP)

CAP offers affordable payment plans for customers with low incomes and long-term bill payment problems. To be eligible, a household income must fall at or below 150 percent of the federal poverty income guidelines and service must be for their personal residence. Customers who are interested in a more permanent solution may find CAP to be a valuable tool and resource. To apply for CAP call our toll free hotline: **1-800-537-7431**.

Flexible Payment Plans

Customers experiencing an impact or hardship as a result of COVID-19 may be eligible to enroll in one of our payment plans online. These plans help to spread the balance due over multiple months, so you can pay down a past due balance and continue to stay on track with upcoming payments. You'll need to register an online account to get started.

Not sure where to start? Call Columbia Gas at **1-888-460-4332** or visit **ColumbiaGasPA.com** to find out what programs or services might work best for you and your situation.

[View in Browser](#)

We're resuming more work

We're resuming some projects that were on hold. We will do our best to inform you of upcoming work in your area.

In light of COVID-19, we've prioritized work that is considered essential for safety and system integrity, including continuing work such as pipeline replacement projects, installing additional safety measures and completing federally mandated natural gas safety inspections.

To help keep our employees, contractor partners and customers safe, we've taken proactive steps to adjust the work we're performing to minimize the need to enter customers' homes and businesses during this time.

If we need to enter your home or business to complete essential work, please know our employees are following state orders and recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to keep themselves and our customers safe including:

- Washing their hands with soap and water or using hand sanitizer
- Practicing social distancing (maintaining six feet from others)
- Wearing personal protective equipment appropriate for the situation and the job, such as gloves, face coverings, etc.
- Avoiding touching their face, eyes, nose or mouth, handshaking and any other physical contact
- Minimizing time spent inside customer's homes or business to safely accomplish the task.



We're here to help

We have a variety of options available to support customers during the COVID-19 pandemic including our touchless payment options like paperless billing and online payment. We're offering our most flexible payment plans to customers who indicate either an impact or hardship as a result of COVID-19. We've also voluntarily suspended shutoffs for nonpayment and suspended late payment charges until further notice.

Customers experiencing an impact or hardship as a result of COVID-19 may be eligible to enroll in one of our payment plans online. These plans help to spread the balance due over multiple months, so you can pay down a past due balance and continue to stay on track with upcoming payments. You'll need to register an online account to get started.

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) **Recovery CRISIS Program** has been established to assist customers who may need additional help with their gas bills as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Customers with incomes at or below 150 percent of the federal poverty income guidelines may be eligible for additional assistance. This program is administered through the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services and will run through August 31, 2020 or until funds have been exhausted.

[Sign In](#)



Support social distancing: Call 811 before you dig

Don't make emergency responders respond to another emergency - call 811 before you dig or visit the [Pennsylvania 811 website](#) to submit an online locate request. If you damage a natural gas line, we may have to come into your home to make repairs. Let's make sure that doesn't happen.

If you're starting an outdoor project that requires digging, even now, it's important to call 811 or submit an online ticket three business days

in advance. Your local utility companies will send someone to mark their lines - and then you can dig safely. 811 is fast, it's free and it's the law.



Planning your next home improvement project?

Spending more time at home may have you designing your next home improvement project. If you plan to replace or add new natural gas appliances:

- Never attempt it yourself. Make sure a qualified professional performs all work on the natural gas lines and equipment inside your home.
- If you're removing an appliance, like a stove, range or dryer, make sure the natural gas is turned off to the appliance and that the natural gas line is properly capped. A qualified professional would also be able to cap the natural gas lines for you.
- If you have flexible appliance connectors, do not reuse them.

Visit ColumbiaGasPA.com/Installation for more information about safe appliance installation.



You might save a life

Construction season is in full swing. It's easy to get sidetracked by distractions in the road or in the car. That's why it's so important to be mindful while driving, especially around construction zones.

- Slow down - Speeding is one of the major causes of work zone crashes.
- Keep your distance - Keep a safe distance between you and the car ahead of you, and don't tailgate.
- Obey posted signs - Obey the posted signs until you see the one that says you've left the work zone.
- Obey flaggers - You can be cited for disobeying his or her directions.

Add this to your spring cleaning list

Now is the time to clear any debris, overgrown shrubs or landscaping near the gas meter on your property. Keeping your meter visible at all times makes it accessible for maintenance or in the event of an emergency.

Flooding and your natural gas service

Flooding can damage your natural gas lines and appliances, causing a safety hazard. In the event of a flood:

- If you smell natural gas after a flood, stop what you're doing, leave the area immediately and call 911 and us at [1-888-460-4332](tel:1-888-460-4332)
- Turn off electrical power to each appliance and leave it off.
- If the natural gas is shut off at the meter, call us to turn it back on for you.

Visit ColumbiaGasPA.com/Flooding to learn more about what to do in the event of a flood.

Shape the future

Make sure to complete your 2020 census. You can help shape funding and planning for new clinics, school lunch programs, emergency services and more. Visit 2020Census.Gov for more information.



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Account Summary

Previous Amount Due on 05/04/2020	\$ [REDACTED]
Payments Received by 04/10/2020 Thank You	-\$ [REDACTED]
<hr/>	
Balance on 05/08/2020	\$69.57
Charges for Gas Service This Period	+\$ [REDACTED]

Current Charges Due by 06/03/2020 \$ [REDACTED]

- For more information regarding these charges, see the Detail Charges section.

We know that the COVID-19 pandemic may cause financial hardship for our customers and the company has suspended shutoffs for nonpayment until further notice. This applies to residential, commercial and industrial customers. In addition, flexible payment plans are available to customers who indicate either an impact or hardship as a result of COVID-19. Any customer who is having trouble paying his/her bill should call 1-888-460-4332 to discuss payment arrangements and/or financial assistance programs.

Budget Payment Plan

Remember winter heating bills? Get a jump on next winter and spread the cost of heating more evenly over the year. Just pay \$77.00 for your natural gas service, which includes your past due balance, plus any charges for a security deposit, Optional Services, or Dollar Energy Fund contribution instead of the amount due this month, and you'll be enrolled in the Budget Payment Plan automatically.



Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania

Published by Sarah Perry NiSource [?] · April 30 ·



STAY CONNECTED

with Lifeline Telephone and Broadband Assistance Program

1
Number of benefits allowed per household

TO APPLY:
Contact Your Service Provider
Visit www.lifeline.org
Or Call 1-800-234-9743

\$7.25
Average discount on monthly basic service

Program Discounts

Effective Date	Voice (Fixed & Mobile)	Broadband (Fixed & Mobile)
12/1/2019	\$7.25	\$9.25
12/1/2020	\$5.25	\$9.25

Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission
April 15 ·

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Program Discounts		
Effective Date	Voice (Fixed & Mobile)	Broadband (Fixed & Mobile)
12/1/2019	\$7.25	\$9.25
12/1/2020	\$5.25	\$9.25


Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission Like Page
April 15 · 🌐

PUC highlights the Lifeline Program so consumers at risk of isolation can stay connected through their voice & internet service during these challenging times
http://www.puc.pa.gov/about_puc/press_releases.aspx...

398 People Reached **9** Engagements Boost Unavailable

👍 1

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PA PUC @PA_PUC · Apr 15

PUC highlights the Lifeline Program so consumers at risk of isolation can stay connected through their voice & internet service during these challenging times

puc.pa.gov/about_puc/pres...

The infographic features a central illustration of a laptop, a smartphone, and a tablet, with a stethoscope icon on the left and a family icon on the right. Below this are three colored boxes: a purple box with the number '1' and the text 'Number of benefits allowed per household', a green box with the text 'TO APPLY: Contact Your Service Provider Visit www.lifeline.org Or Call 1-800-234-9743', and a red box with '\$7.25' and 'Average discount on monthly basic service'. At the bottom is a table titled 'Program Discounts'.

Program Discounts		
Effective Date	Voice (Fixed & Mobile)	Broadband (Fixed & Mobile)
12/1/2019	\$7.25	\$9.25
12/1/2020	\$5.25	\$9.25



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