

How to Get Help with Your Utility Bill

May 2021

This document will give you step-by-step instructions on how to get help with your gas/electric utility bill. If you run in to problems or get stuck, you are welcome to call OPC.

Step 1: Apply to the Office of Home Energy Programs

You may consider applying for financial assistance from the Office of Home Energy Programs (OHEP). OHEP is a state run program that helps income eligible households pay their energy and fuel bills. You do not need a turn-off notice to apply. There are four ways you can apply.

- 1) Apply online: You will need to set up an account to put in your application. Make sure to attach all required documents to your online application. mydmthink.maryland.gov
- 2) Apply in person: Some local OHEP offices are open to the public. Call before you go to make sure they are seeing people in person. Make sure to bring all required documents. [Click here for a list of local OHEP offices.](#)
- 3) Mail in: You can mail your completed application to your local OHEP office. I have included an OHEP application. Make sure to mail in copies of all of the required documents. [Click here for a list of local OHEP offices.](#)
- 4) Email in: You can email your completed application to your local OHEP office. Make sure to attach all required documents to the email you send. [Click here for a list of local OHEP offices.](#)

You must include copies of all of the required documents. Missing documents will hold up the process. Do not turn in an application with missing documents, you will be denied.

List of documents you need to apply to OHEP

A complete OHEP application includes all of the following:

NO EXCEPTIONS

- Completed and signed OHEP application
- Copy of your most recent utility bill
- Copy of the ID of the person whose name is on the OHEP application
- Copy of social security cards for everyone listed in the household
- Proof of income for all household members listed on the application over the age of 18. If they do not have income, but are over 18, you must include a “Zero Income Declaration Form” This form and others can also be found online at <https://dhs.maryland.gov/office-of-home-energy-programs/>

Choosing which grants to apply for on the OHEP application

In your application it will ask what grants you want to apply for. OHEP will only screen you for the boxes you check.

- EUSP (Electric Universal Service Protection) is for electricity assistance. You must sign up for budget billing when you chose this option.
- MEAP (Maryland Energy Assistance Program) is for assistance with any type of fuel you use to heat your home (gas, coal, wood, oil, etc.).
- The other two grants are for old bills that have built up over time.

Video for assistance

If you have access to the internet, there is a toolkit online with more information including instructional videos.

<http://www.opc.maryland.gov/Home/Energy-Assistance-Tool-Kit>

Step 2: Contact your utility

If you are behind on your utility bills, immediately contact your utility. Things to consider to talk to your utility about:

- Request a payment plan. Your utility is offering 12-month payment plans with \$0 down payment to everyone. If you have a shut-off notice, this will stop your shut-off by entering into a payment plan.
- Tell the utility if you have applied to OHEP.
- Explain why you may be behind and your plan to catch up.
- Inform the utility if there are any medical issues in the home.
- Inform the utility if there are any virtual learners in the home.

Step 3: Wait to hear from OHEP

Check the status of your application at www.myohepstatus.org. The status of your application should appear on this website 15-20 business days after OHEP receives your application. If you do not see an updated status on this website call and email your local OHEP and request a status update. Keep checking your mail, email, and voicemail for information from OHEP. They will attempt to connect with you if there is any issue with your application.

Step 4: Look for other funding

If you are denied from OHEP or need more funding to cover the costs of your utility bill there may be other options.

Fuel Fund of Maryland is a private non-profit that may be able to help pay your gas/electric/bulk fuel costs once you have applied to OHEP. Fuel Fund is an income eligible program that serves the following needs/areas.

- All gas/electric/bulk fuel for BGE customers
- Bulk fuel assistance for the entire state

You can apply for the Fuel Fund in two ways:

- 1) Call them at 410-235-9080
- 2) Apply online at www.fuefundmaryland.org

— OPC —
OFFICE OF PEOPLE'S COUNSEL
State of Maryland

211MD is a 24/7/365 helpline that provides information and referrals to other financial assistance resources in your area. You can contact them in three ways:

- 1) Dial 2-1-1 or 800-685-0185
- 2) Search for resources online at www.211md.org
- 3) Email them at info@211md.org

If you run into any issue or have questions, please feel free to contact us Monday-Friday, 8AM-4:30PM at 410-767-8150 or email through opc@maryland.gov.