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FirstEnergy's Ohio Utilities Remind Customers of Available Assistance Programs to Help with Winter Electric Bills

FirstEnergy employees featured in video encouraging customers to seek assistance

AKRON, Ohio – FirstEnergy Corp.'s (NYSE: FE) electric companies in Ohio – The Illuminating Company, Ohio Edison and Toledo Edison – are urging residential customers experiencing financial hardship to contact their utility as soon as possible to establish an affordable payment arrangement or obtain assistance before shut-offs for nonpayment resume without winter season restrictions beginning April 15.

In a heartfelt message to customers, FirstEnergy employees are speaking out about personal experiences that fuel their passion to help customers who may find themselves seeking financial assistance for the first time. The video, [“We’re Customers Just Like You”](#) features four FirstEnergy Customer Service and Human Services employees who want customers to know they are dedicated to helping them get through challenging times.

“Many of our customers are unaware of the various utility bill assistance programs available to them, which often prevents them from taking advantage of income-based financial assistance for which they are eligible,” said Michelle Henry, senior vice president of Customer Experience at FirstEnergy. “Our dedicated Customer Service team is eager to walk customers through this process, and our hope is that customers will hear our employees’ stories and feel more comfortable reaching out to us for assistance.”

Programs in which FirstEnergy's Ohio customers may be eligible to participate include:

- **The Percentage of Income Payment Plan (PIPP):** Allows customers to pay a set percentage of their income toward their electric bill, regardless of the balance. Customers who pay on time and in full each month can have their outstanding balance eliminated in 24 months. To be eligible, customers must have a household gross yearly income at or below 150% of federal poverty guidelines and must meet other criteria. To apply, call 1-800-282-0880 or visit www.energyhelp.ohio.gov.
- **Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP):** Provides eligible customers with cash grants for home heating bills and emergencies through HEAP, which is available year-round, and Emergency HEAP Winter Crisis Program, which is available through March 31, 2022. Customers must have gross income below 175% of federal poverty guidelines. Call the Ohio Development Service Agency at 1-800-282-0880 or visit www.energyhelp.ohio.gov for more information.
- **2-1-1 Helpline:** This nationwide resource and information helpline identifies locally available programs that may assist customers with utility bills or other needs. For more information, dial 211, text your ZIP code to 898211 or visit the [211 website](#).

Specific customer assistance programs are also available for each utility:

The Illuminating Company

- **The Ohio Fuel Fund grant** is a company-funded program that provides a one-time annual benefit to an eligible customer's electric account. The grant can only be used for electric usage, security deposits and reconnection charges. Customers can apply at CHN Housing Partners at 2999 Payne Ave., Suite 134, or Step Forward in Greater Cleveland at 1801 Superior Ave., both in Cleveland, or call 216-350-8008 to learn more.
- **The CEI Co-Op Fuel Fund** is an emergency hardship fund designed to help residential customers restore or maintain electric service. The program funding is provided by The Illuminating Company customers and employees. Customers can apply at the

Cleveland Salvation Army, located at 2507 E. 22nd St. in Cleveland, or call (216) 861-8185 to speak with a representative.

Ohio Edison

- **Ohio Edison Project Reach** is an emergency hardship fund designed to help residential customers restore or maintain electric service. The program funding is provided by Ohio Edison customers and employees, and the distribution of funds is administered by Salvation Army offices located throughout Ohio Edison's service area. To find an agency, please visit www.firstenergycorp.com/ReachAgencies

Toledo Edison

- **Toledo Edison Neighbors Helping Neighbors** is an emergency hardship fund designed to help residential customers restore or maintain electric service. The program funding is provided by Toledo Edison customers and employees. Customers can apply at the Salvation Army office in Toledo, located at 620 N. Erie St. in Toledo, or call (419) 241-1138 to speak with a representative.

To apply or learn more about other utility bill assistance programs, visit www.firstenergycorp.com/billassist and click on "Search Assistance Programs." Residents are also encouraged to contact their utility's customer service team at 1-800-589-3101 (Illuminating Company), 1-800-633-4766 (Ohio Edison) or 1-800-447-3333 (Toledo Edison), Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

FirstEnergy Ohio utility residential customers also can manage their electric bills through the Equal Payment Plan (EPP). With EPP, customers can make consistent monthly payments to avoid seasonal highs and lows in their electric bills.

In addition to payment options, FirstEnergy offers a Medical Certification program. Customers with severe health problems may have a licensed physician certify in writing that a termination of electric service would be especially dangerous. The medical certification will postpone the termination of electric service for 30 days. The certification is designed to provide the customer with additional time to pay their past-due balance. The customer is still responsible for the past-due amount and will be given the opportunity to pay the balance in monthly installments. FirstEnergy also offers a program called Third Party Notification where a relative, friend, clergy or social service agency can be notified along with the customer if electric service is about to be disconnected. The third party is not obligated to pay the overdue bills but can help make payment arrangements for the customer who might have difficulty paying.

The Illuminating Company serves 750,000 customers across Ashtabula, Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake and Lorain counties. Connect with The Illuminating Company at www.illuminatingcompany.com, on Twitter [@IlluminatingCo](https://twitter.com/IlluminatingCo) and on Facebook at www.facebook.com/IlluminatingCo.

Ohio Edison serves more than one million customers across 34 Ohio counties. Follow Ohio Edison on Twitter [@OhioEdison](https://twitter.com/OhioEdison), on Facebook at www.facebook.com/OhioEdison, and online at www.ohioedison.com.

Toledo Edison serves nearly 315,000 customers in northwest Ohio. Follow Toledo Edison on Twitter [@ToledoEdison](https://twitter.com/ToledoEdison) or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/ToledoEdison.

FirstEnergy is dedicated to integrity, safety, reliability and operational excellence. Its 10 electric distribution companies form one of the nation's largest investor-owned electric systems, serving customers in Ohio, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, West Virginia, Maryland and New York. The company's transmission subsidiaries operate approximately 24,000 miles of

transmission lines that connect the Midwest and Mid-Atlantic regions. Follow FirstEnergy online at www.firstenergycorp.com. Follow FirstEnergy on Twitter: [@FirstEnergyCorp](https://twitter.com/FirstEnergyCorp).

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