

January 2026

## **Consumers Energy Bill Assistance**

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

[Payment Plans and Assistance | Consumers Energy](#)

**Q: If participants enrolled in the Consumers Affordable Resource Energy (CARE) Program cannot keep up with payments within the 24-month period, how long is the waiting period to get re-enrolled?**

A: If customers are removed from the CARE program due to non-payment, then they would need to wait until the next fiscal year to re-enroll which begins October of each year. However, in the meantime, customers may be eligible for one-time bill assistance through [State Emergency Relief](#) if the individual cap amount has not already been reached.

If removed from CARE due to completion of the 24-month program, then they can start the process to re-submit application.

**Q: Are there any programs and products available for free to customers, like the carbon monoxide (CO2) detectors, LED lightbulbs, or other efficiency products?**

A: The best way to get access to free energy efficiency upgrades and products unique to your needs is to start with a [Home Energy Analysis](#).

**Q: Do you have programs available for seniors, Veterans, or with life-threatening medical conditions?**

A: Yes, visit our [Payment Plans and Assistance | Consumers Energy](#) page to view all available programs. We offer Shut-Off protection for income qualified customers, active duty, and winter protection for seniors. We also have financial support programs like Senior Citizen Bill Credits, MI Veterans Trust Fund, and medical assistance support including medical emergency protection.

**Q: How can we support customers who are unable to get service when they move into a new location because there are past due balances under multiple members of their household?**

A: Switching account names under various family members to avoid past due balances is considered a form of fraud. However, there is a path forward. Consumers Energy takes a people-centered approach to helping customers navigate resources and get the fraud classification removed from their account and past due balance addressed.

# Income Qualified Customer Programs

Consumers Energy Count on Us®

January 2026

**Q: Customers on a budget plan have arranged an affordable balance monthly, but with extra energy use charges added to the overall total owed. If they miss one payment, then the total balance is due all at once and delivered with a shut-off notice. Those total amounts can be so high that support agencies have trouble paying the cost with available resources. How can agencies help customers navigate these circumstances?**

A: Consumers Energy is revisiting our processes to help direct customers to non-profit organizations first before delivering shut-off notices. Non-profit partners can then help customers secure other available resources (like free food) to allow customers to allocate that money to other expenses like utilities.

**Q: My client's furnace went out, and it's extremely cold outside. Can you help with emergency replacement?**

A: We understand that a loss of heat during extreme cold is an emergency and can create serious safety risks for households. Our **Income-Qualified Energy Waste Reduction (EWR) Program** can sometimes support emergency "no heat, no water" situations **through our established partner agencies**—those who are already enrolled in our program portal and able to process rebates on behalf of clients. However, **not all nonprofits are set up as program partners**, so available options depend on your agency's level of participation.

**Additional information:**

**If your organization is an existing program partner**

Your agency can use our **Emergency "No Heat, No Water" form** to request support. Please log into the partner portal for the form and instructions or contact your program representative if you need assistance.

**If your organization is not an established partner**

While we cannot directly process emergency furnace replacements through the EWR program outside of our partner network, we **still want to make sure your client gets immediate help**. We recommend the following:

1. **Refer the client to their local LIHEAP or Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP)**  
These programs specialize in crisis heating situations and may be able to provide emergency repair or replacement.
2. **If you are interested in becoming a program partner**  
We welcome nonprofits who want to participate more formally in our income-qualified EWR offerings. Becoming a partner enables your organization to access tools like the emergency form and to provide direct rebate-eligible services. We can share onboarding information upon request.
3. **If your client has no heat and is in immediate danger**  
Encourage them to contact local emergency services or community action agencies that handle urgent heating needs.