



Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel

Your Residential Utility Consumer Advocate

CONSUMER FACT SHEET

Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel

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CONSUMER ASSISTANCE FOR MILITARY FAMILIES



Many things must be arranged when preparing for and returning from active duty deployment. When a family member is deployed it may cause financial difficulty. Fortunately, there are programs in Ohio that help ensure that paying utility bills does not become a hardship. There are also organizations that can provide support and assistance for which military families may be eligible.

Contact your utility's customer service number to ask about any documentation that may need to be provided prior to deployment for active duty. Ask if there are any specific programs available for military families.

American Electric Power (AEP)
1-800-672-2231

Aqua Ohio
1-877-987-2782

Columbia Gas of Ohio
1-800-344-4077

AES Ohio (formerly DP&L)
1-877-468-8243

Dominion East Ohio
1-800-362-7557

Duke Energy Ohio
1-800-544-6900

First Energy:

- **Illuminating Company**
1-800-589-3101
- **Ohio Edison**
1-800-633-4766
- **Toledo Edison**
1-800-447-3333

CenterPoint Energy (formerly Vectren)
1-800-227-1376

The Patriot Plan

The Patriot Plan prevents electric and natural gas companies from disconnecting Ohioans deployed on active duty for nonpayment. After returning from active duty, the Patriot Plan requires utility companies to offer customers a time period equal to their deployment to pay any arrearages that may have accumulated. Utility companies are prohibited from charging any late payment fees or interest to qualifying customers during the period of deployment or repayment period. The Patriot Plan does not apply to career military customers serving their regular tour of duty. A longer repayment period may be possible if necessary. For more information about the Patriot Plan's benefits contact the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) at 1-800-686-7826.

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The Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel (OCC), the residential utility consumer advocate, represents the interests of 4.5 million households in proceedings before state and federal regulators and in the courts.

The state agency also educates consumers about electric, natural gas, telephone and water issues.

For more information, please visit the OCC website at www.occ.ohio.gov.



The Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel is an equal opportunity employer and provider of services.

Locating Assistance

There are organizations that offer financial assistance to veterans, reservists, and active duty personnel. Eligible customers can receive emergency financial assistance for a variety of needs, including utility assistance. Check with each organization regarding eligibility and the required documentation.

Operation Homefront is a national non-profit that assists military families with challenges inherent in military life and it offers a Critical Financial Assistance program for eligible active duty, deployed, veteran, wounded, ill, or injured service members. More information on Operation Homefront can be found at <https://operationhomefront.org/critical-financial-assistance/>. They can also be reached by phone at 1-877-264-3968 or by email at ohio@operationhomefront.org.

The **American Legion**, a non-profit veteran service organization, offers a Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA) program that can provide financial assistance grants for minor children of a qualifying veteran or current active duty member of the military. Contact the local post for more information. To find a local post visit their website at www.ohiolegion.com/posts/.

The **Veterans of Foreign Wars**, a nonprofit veterans service organization, offers an Unmet Needs program to assist qualifying military families with unexpected financial difficulties as a result of deployment or other military-related activity or injury. Contact the local post for more information, visit the website at www.vfw.org/assistance/financial-grants or call 1-866-789-6333. To find a local post in your area visit their website at www.vfw.org/find-a-post.

Troop and Family Assistance Centers (TFAC) can help all military families regardless of service affiliation find resources available to them. Visit their website at www.homefront.ohio.gov or call 1-800-589-9914 for more information.

Local County Veterans Service Offices (CVSO) are a resource that can provide short-term financial assistance for veterans and their families. A complete listing of CVSOs can be found on the Ohio Department of Veterans Services website at www.dvs.ohio.gov under Resources for Veterans.

Energy Assistance Programs

There are assistance programs available for all eligible Ohioans, not just those serving or who have served in the military. OCC offers fact sheets on each of the following programs at www.occ.ohio.gov/content/consumer-assistance-fact-sheets. Contact the local community action agency on how to apply or for more information. To find the community action agency in your area, select 'Find a local provider' at www.energyhelpohio.gov or call 1-800-282-0880.

- ▶ The **Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)** helps eligible Ohioans with winter heating costs.
- ▶ The **Winter Crisis Program**, also called E-HEAP, provides financial aid once per heating season to income-eligible Ohioans for electric or natural gas service or bulk fuels.
- ▶ The **Summer Crisis Program**, also called Summer HEAP, helps Ohioans pay an electric utility bill, and/or central air conditioning repair, and/or an air conditioning unit and/or fan.
- ▶ The **Percentage of Income Payment Plan (PIPP Plus)** is a payment arrangement to help eligible electric and natural gas customers pay their utility bills.
- ▶ The **Home Weatherization Assistance Program (HWAP)** helps Ohioans weatherize their homes to lower energy costs.
- ▶ **Utility-provided Assistance Programs-Fuel Funds** may be available from the utility company for help paying electric or natural gas bills for eligible customers.