



For Immediate Release
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PUCO and ODSA remind Ohioans that heating assistance is available

COLUMBUS, OH (Nov. 19, 2015) – The Ohio Development Services Agency (ODSA) and the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) want to remind Ohioans that assistance is available if you have been disconnected or are threatened with disconnection from your utility service.

The Winter Crisis Program, a component of the Home Energy Assistance Program, provides assistance to eligible households that are threatened with disconnection, have been disconnected or have less than a 25 percent supply of bulk fuel. The gross income of eligible households must be at or below 175 percent of the federal poverty guidelines. For a family of four the annual income must be at or below \$42,437.50.

Individuals interested in receiving Winter Crisis Program assistance must have a face-to-face interview at their Winter Crisis Program provider. A list of providers by county can be found [here](#).

Ohioans also can call the ODSA toll-free hotline at (800) 282-0880, Monday through Friday (hearing impaired customers may dial (800) 686-1557 for assistance) or visit energyhelp.ohio.gov for more information.

The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio's Winter Reconnect Order allows residential customers the opportunity to have their service restored or maintained by paying the amount due or \$175, whichever is less. If the customer's service has already been disconnected, the customer must pay the \$175 and any applicable reconnection charge not to exceed an up front payment of \$36. If the company's reconnection charge is greater than \$36, the balance may be billed to the customer the following month. Customers may use the program once during the winter heating season between Oct. 19, 2015 and April 15, 2016.

There is no income eligibility requirement or sign-up required for the Winter Reconnect Order.

Several other state and federal programs are available to assist those who qualify. The PUCO encourages customers to explore all options including PIPP Plus, HEAP and the Home Weatherization Assistance Program (HWAP). More information about these programs and additional ways to save on home heating bills this winter are available at Ohio's Winter Heating Resource website www.winterheat.ohio.gov. Visitors to this site will also find information about budget billing, energy choice and energy conservation.

For more information about enrollment in the Winter Reconnect Order, payment plans or budget billing, customers should contact their electric or natural gas utility. Customers who have utility-related questions can call the PUCO's Call Center at (800) 686-PUCO (7826) or visit www.PUCO.ohio.gov