



MCCD Urges Utility Customers Impacted By COVID-19 To Apply For Bill Payment Assistance

June 9 2020 9:04 AM

ALTON – Madison County Community Development is encouraging Madison County customers who are having difficulty paying their Ameren Illinois utility bills to apply for financial assistance from a state energy grant program.

MCCD is the designated community action agency that administers the Illinois Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), a federally-funded program that provides utility bill payment assistance to families and individuals who meet income-eligibility guidelines. Additional funding for the LIHEAP program was allocated under the federal CARES Act passed by Congress earlier this year to address challenges arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.

One-time energy assistance grants are available through June 30 and available on a first-come, first-served basis.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has caused severe economic hardship for many residents in our community and many are having difficulty paying their energy bills,” said Trudy Bodenbach, Administrator, Madison County Community Development. “Individuals who would not normally meet LIHEAP's income qualifications may now be eligible for bill payment assistance because they were laid off or their jobs were furloughed. We want Ameren Illinois customers to know that funds are available, but they have to act soon to apply.”

In March, Ameren Illinois suspended service disconnections and waived fees for late payment. However, past-due energy bill amounts continue to accrue and will increase as more customers work from home and the summer cooling season begins.

“Individuals from all walks of life have been impacted by COVID-19, including many who have never missed a bill payment of any kind,” said Richard J. Mark, Chairman and President, Ameren Illinois. “Many of our customers have probably never heard of LIHEAP, but it is an invaluable resource that can help them on the road to recovery. We cannot stress enough the need to take urgent action while these funds are available.”

The best way to initiate the LIHEAP process is to contact MCCD directly at 618.692.8940. An agency representative will explain the steps and verify income eligibility.

For customers who do not meet income requirements for LIHEAP, Ameren Illinois is offering several alternative utility bill payment options designed to alleviate financial burdens during COVID-19. Visit [AmerenIllinois.com/recovery](https://www.AmerenIllinois.com/recovery) or speak to a customer service representative at 800.755.5000 for more details.