

# **Ameren Illinois Providing \$8 Million In Bill Payment Assistance For Qualified Customers With 'Fresh Start' Program**

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COLLINSVILLE - Ameren Illinois announced today it has allocated \$8 million in bill payment assistance to help qualified residential customers reduce or eliminate a past-due account balance. Under the "Fresh Start" program, up to \$700 is available for customers struggling to pay energy bills as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Since the program opened on July 9, nearly 5,000 Ameren Illinois customers have received bill payment assistance.

"This has been a very difficult stretch for many of our customers," said Richard J. Mark, Chairman and President, Ameren Illinois. "While we're seeing some indications that the economy is improving and people are getting back to work, the need for assistance remains high. We're glad to be in a position to provide additional financial support and offer a fresh start for customers who are most in need.

"The Fresh Start program is designed to help those customers impacted most by the coronavirus. Income-qualified Ameren Illinois customers with past-due account balances may be eligible for funding. For example: A family of four with a monthly income of up to \$4,367 may be eligible to receive up to \$400 for electric bills and up to \$300 for natural gas bills.

Customers in this income range must first receive assistance from the Illinois Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) before applying for Fresh Start funding. To apply for LIHEAP, visit [HelpIllinoisFamilies.com](http://HelpIllinoisFamilies.com) or call 877-411-9276.

If a past-due balance remains after LIHEAP assistance is received, apply for Fresh Start by calling Ameren Illinois at 1-800-755-5000, Monday through Friday between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m.

A family of four with a monthly income between \$4,367 and \$7,642 may be eligible to receive up to \$200 for electric bills and up to \$150 for natural gas bills. Fresh Start funds for past-due customers in this income range are administered by the Energy Assistance Foundation. See the list of participating agencies and apply by visiting [WarmNeighborsCoolFriends.org](http://WarmNeighborsCoolFriends.org).

Income Guidelines are on a sliding scale based on family size. Visit [AmerenIllinois.com/Recovery](http://AmerenIllinois.com/Recovery) for detailed income eligibility guidelines. Customers with an outstanding balance can work with Ameren Illinois to establish an extended payment schedule. Repayment terms may be extended up to 24 months.

Information on funding and other assistance being provided under Ameren Illinois' COVID-19 Economic Hardship Recovery program can be accessed at [AmerenIllinois.com/Recovery](http://AmerenIllinois.com/Recovery). About Ameren Illinois Ameren Illinois delivers energy to 1.2 million electric and more than 800,000 natural gas customers in Illinois. Our mission is to power the quality of life. Our service territory covers more than 1,200 communities and 43,700 square miles. For more information, visit [AmerenIllinois.com](http://AmerenIllinois.com), find us on Twitter @AmerenIllinois or Facebook.