

**March 25, 2021**

**\*\*\*CONSUMER ALERT\*\*\***

**ATTORNEY GENERAL RAOUL URGES CONSUMERS TO CONTACT UTILITIES TO PREVENT DISCONNECTIONS BEFORE MORATORIUM ENDS**

***Utility Consumers May be Disconnected Beginning April 1; Financial Assistance Available for Those Facing Financial Hardship***

**Chicago** — Attorney General Kwame Raoul today urged Illinois utility customers to be aware that state-regulated electric, natural gas, and utilities may begin to disconnect customers for non-payment beginning April 1. Raoul encourages residents who are behind on their bills to contact their utilities now to learn about assistance and repayment options to prevent disconnection.

“Utility costs have become unsustainable for many Illinois households, particularly as individuals and families continue to struggle due to the financial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic,” Raoul said. “Over 800,000 ratepayers have utility arrearages and are potentially subject to having their service cut off. Unfortunately, a disproportionate number of these households are located in predominately minority communities. My office successfully advocated for protections for customers with past due balances, however the financial assistance that is available is limited. I urge consumers to contact their utilities before they get disconnected to learn about bill assistance and repayment options.”

The annual winter moratorium on utility disconnections expires on March 31, and utility companies may begin to send disconnection notices to customers beginning on April 1. The Attorney General’s office worked in collaboration with the city of Chicago and other consumer advocates to obtain relief for customers with past due balances that will be in place until June 30, 2021. Consumers who are struggling to pay their utility bills should notify their utility provider that they are experiencing financial hardship and request information about assistance and repayment options. The Attorney General’s office has resources available for both [Illinois customers](#) and [Chicago customers](#) that detail their repayment and financial assistance options, which can be found on the [Attorney General's website](#).

Customers who need assistance may be eligible for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). Households with existing past due balances are encouraged to apply for financial assistance before they are disconnected. Funds are available on a first-come, first-served basis and are limited. Raoul encourages customers outside of Chicago to call the Illinois LIHEAP Hotline at 1-877-411-9276, or visit the [Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity's website](#) to determine whether they are eligible or to find an agency that can help with applications. Customers residing in the city of Chicago should call 800-571-2332 or visit [www.cedaorg.net](http://www.cedaorg.net). Chicago water customers can apply for the city of Chicago’s Utility Billing Relief program by calling the Customer Service Center at 312-744-4426 or [visiting their website](#).

In addition, federal rental and utility assistance is expected to become available soon. For more information please visit the [U.S. Department of the Treasury's website](#).

Residents who have questions can contact the Attorney General’s office at 1-800-386-5438 (Chicago), 1-800-243-0618 (Springfield), 1-800-243-0607 (Carbondale), or by [filing an online complaint](#).