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State of New Jersey

BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES

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**Commissioner**

May 17 2021

Dear Legislator,

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, many of our residents have struggled to pay their utility bills. As you know, the State’s moratorium on utility shut-offs expires on June 30, 2021. There are several utility assistance programs available to provide residents the financial relief they need. To that end, the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (NJBPU) is launching “**Utility Assistance Week” - May 17-21, 2021**. I appreciate anything you can do to help get the word out to your constituents that if they are behind on their bills, they should not wait to reach out for help.

This week, NJBPU along with the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) and the utility companies will be *amplifying* our existing collective outreach efforts to help spread the word about available assistance programs, namely:

* [Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program](https://www.nj.gov/dca/divisions/dhcr/offices/hea.html) (LIHEAP)
* [Universal Service Fund](https://www.nj.gov/dca/divisions/dhcr/offices/usf.html) (USF)
* [Payment Assistance for Gas and Electric](https://njpoweron.org/page/) (PAGE)
* [Emergency Rental Assistance](https://njdca.onlinepha.com/), which covers utilities included in rental costs
* Deferred Payment Agreements through the utilities
* The [Utility Customer’s Bill of Rights](https://www.nj.gov/bpu/assistance/rights/)
* [2-1-1](https://www.nj211.org/) as a 24/7 referral source for utility assistance as well as other helpful programs

For your convenience, we have provided a **Utility Assistance Week Communications Toolkit** below, which includes coordinated messaging, hashtags, and graphics for your use.

Please feel free to share these resources across your municipal website, newsletters, and social media. If your communications staff needs additional social media resources, please contact [Tina.Notaro@bpu.nj.gov](mailto:Tina.Notaro@bpu.nj.gov) (609-610-3328) or [Gina.Trish@dca.nj.gov](mailto:Gina.Trish@dca.nj.gov).

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| **UTILITY ASSISTANCE WEEK COMMUNICATIONS TOOLKIT** | |
| ***Post Copy*** | ***Suggested Graphics (***[***click here to download***](https://www.nj.gov/bpu/images/library/Communications%20Toolkit_UAWeek%202021.zip)***)*** |
| Are you struggling to pay your #utility bills? You may be newly eligible for financial assistance programs from the State of New Jersey.  Don’t wait, apply for #UtilityHelpNow using the @NJDCA screening tool: [www.nj.gov/dca/dcaid](http://www.nj.gov/dca/dcaid) | C:\Users\notaro\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\INetCache\Content.Word\_Square FB Ad - v1.png |
| Desconexión de servicios de utilidades están suspendidos hasta junio 30. Si necesita ayuda para pagar su factura de electricidad o gas, llame a su compañía de utilidades lo más pronto posible y pida información sobre programas de asistencia y planes de pago. #AssistanceNJ  ***Translation:*** *Utility disconnections are suspended until June 30. If you need help paying your electric or gas bill, call your utility company as soon as possible to ask for information on assistance programs and payment plans. #AssistanceNJ* | Copy of  Square FB Ad - Spanish |
| If you’re one of the many New Jerseyans who is behind on their utility bills, your service may be disconnected after June 30. Contact your utility ASAP to enroll in a Deferred Payment Agreement (DPA) to lower your monthly payment and keep your service on.  #UtilityHelpNow #AssistanceNJ | Utility Assistance Week 2 Utility Assistance Week 1 |
| If COVID-19 hit your wallet, you may be newly eligible for utility bill financial assistance. New Jersey offers income-based programs that can provide financial relief for you and your family. Don’t wait, apply today. [www.nj.gov/dca/dcaid](http://www.nj.gov/dca/dcaid)  #UtilityHelpNow #AssistanceNJ |  |

I appreciate any help you can offer in amplifying the Utility Assistance Week efforts.

Sincerely,



Joseph L. Fiordaliso

NJBPU President