

# Payment Assistance Programs

## BERKSHIRE GAS PROGRAMS

### Payment Methods

Berkshire Gas provides a variety of payment methods for the convenience of our customers including mail, automatic payment and a variety of walk-in locations.

### Payment Locations

<i>Berkshire County</i>	<i>Franklin/Hampshire County</i>
<b>Berkshire Gas</b> 115 Cheshire Road, Pittsfield	<b>Berkshire Gas</b> 40 Mill Street, Greenfield
<b>Bill's Pharmacy</b> 362 Main Street, Great Barrington	<b>Foster's Supermarket</b> 70 Allen Street, Greenfield
<b>Moulton's General Store</b> 77 Main Street, North Adams	<b>People's Bank</b> Hampshire Mall, Hadley

### "BG Direct" Automatic Payments

"Berkshire Gas Direct" is a free service that allows customers the convenience of having the monthly gas bill automatically deducted from their checking or savings bank account twenty (20) days from the billing date. It's a check-free, stamp-free and worry-free way to pay your gas bills. To learn more, call our Customer Care Center at (800) 292-5012 or visit [www.berkshiregas.com](http://www.berkshiregas.com) and click on the link to "Payment Assistance Programs" under the "Your Account" menu.

### Budget Payment Plans

Budget payment plans allow customers more affordable payments by averaging higher winter bills with lower summer bills. This helps to spread the cost of winter heating over the entire year. To learn more and find out if you are eligible, please call our Customer Care Center at (800) 292-5012.

### Installment Payment Plans for Overdue Balances

Customers may enter into an installment payment plan to pay overdue charges. Berkshire Gas will allow a minimum of four months for the customer to pay overdue balances. A down payment may be required. To learn if you are eligible for a payment plan and the specific details of the plan, please call our Customer Care Center at (800) 292-5012.

### Low-Income Discount Rate

Discounted non-heating and heating delivery charges are available to low-income residential customers that:

Qualify for any means-tested public benefit program; OR

Are eligible for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) or its successor program; AND the household's gross income does not exceed 200% of the federal poverty level.

Please call our Customer Care Center at (800) 292-5012 for more information.

### Financial Hardship

Financial Hardship is certified when residential customers meet the income eligibility guideline for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).

Please call our Customer Care Center at (800) 292-5012 for more information.

### Protection from Disconnection

Protection from disconnection of gas service due to non-payment is provided when:

All members of the household are sixty-five years of age or older. Gas service may be disconnected with the approval of the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities (MDPU), OR

The customer cannot afford to pay the overdue utility bills because of financial hardship; AND

- The customer heats the home by natural gas. Protection from disconnection

of service is only provided during the winter period of November 15 to March 15.

- A member of the household has a physician-certified serious illness.
- A child under twelve months of age resides in the home.

Please call our Customer Care Center at (800) 292-5012 for more information.

### Berkshire Gas Residential Arrearage Management Program (RAMP)

RAMP provides financial assistance to eligible low-income residential customers with active accounts that are past due. Program participants receive credits on their past due gas utility bills up to \$3,000 once all program requirements have been met. (Some restrictions may apply.)

**To apply November 1 to April 30:** Customers approved for fuel assistance are automatically eligible and referred to Berkshire Gas for the RAMP program by the local community action agency.

**To apply May 1 to October 31:** Customers may apply for the RAMP program at their local community action agency.

## OTHER FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE RESOURCES

### Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

LIHEAP is a federally funded program to assist eligible low-income households pay a portion of home winter heating bills. LIHEAP is available to both homeowners and renters. Eligibility and payment amount is determined by family size and gross annual household income.

### Heating Emergency Assistance Retrofit Task Weatherization Assistance Program (HEARTWAP)

This grant program provides low-income, fuel assistance-eligible homeowners with assistance for:

Heating system repair/replacement services

Heating system cleanings

Free energy, health and safety audit

Free attic and/or side-wall insulation, air sealing, weather-stripping and other winterization energy repairs

**LIHEAP and HEARTWAP are available through your local community action agency:**

### COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCIES

**Berkshire Community Action Council (BCAC)**

Pittsfield (413) 445-5671, North Adams (413) 663-3014 or Great Barrington (413) 528-1947

**Community Action of the Franklin, Hampshire and North Quabbin Regions**

Franklin County (413) 774-2318, Hampshire County (800) 370-0940 or North Quabbin (978) 544-5423

### Good Neighbor Energy Fund (GNEF)

The Good Neighbor Energy Fund provides electric, gas, or oil heating assistance to Massachusetts residents with gross household income between 200% and 275% of Federal Poverty Income Guidelines. This program is funded by Massachusetts utilities and utility customers. There is a maximum \$275 benefit per household.

**The Good Neighbor Energy Fund is administered by the Salvation Army.**

Amherst (413) 586-5243, Great Barrington (800) 262-1320

Pittsfield (413) 442-0624, North Adams (413) 663-7987 or

Greenfield (413) 773-3154

