



Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance

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General Information System (GIS) Message

Section 1

Transmittal:	20 TA/DC100 Upstate and New York City
Date:	October 30, 2020
To:	Subscribers
Suggested Distribution:	Commissioners, TA Directors, SNAP Directors, WMS Coordinators, Medicaid Directors, Child Support Coordinators
From:	Jeffrey Gaskell, Deputy Commissioner Employment and Income Support Programs
Subject:	Utility Moratorium on Terminations and Disconnections during the COVID-19 Pandemic
Effective Date:	Immediately
Contact Information:	Temporary Assistance (TA) Questions – TA Bureau 518-474-9344 or otda.sm.cees.tabureau@otda.ny.gov .
Attachments:	Attachment 1 - COVID-19 Utility Shut off Guidelines Fact Sheet

Section 2

The purpose of this General Information System (GIS) message is to provide direction to social services districts (districts) regarding applications for emergency assistance for utility terminations or disconnections during a moratorium on terminations or disconnections of residential utility (natural gas or electricity) services for customers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

A moratorium on terminations or disconnections of residential utility services has no bearing on whether an applicant/recipient (A/R) may receive emergency energy assistance. Districts must not deny an application for an emergency payment for a utility termination or disconnection solely based upon an existing moratorium. Termination and disconnection notices are still being issued by utility providers; an A/R may still be eligible for emergency energy assistance if there is a threat of a utility termination or disconnection. A/Rs must still pursue, accept and use any available resource such as: cash, Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP), negotiation of a deferred payment agreement (DPA), or relocation to viable housing to resolve a utility energy emergency.

Districts wishing to suspend the enforcement of previous and new repayment agreements may do so in accordance with [09-ADM-17](#), "Changes to the Utility Arrears Repayment Agreement Terms and Enforcement Option." Districts may also elect to suspend the enforcement of previous and new repayment agreements between November 1, 2020, through April 15, 2021, during the utility cold weather period.

Districts also have the ability to request waivers of regulations as outlined in GIS [20 TA/DC078](#). An example of such a waiver would allow individuals who have an outstanding utility arrears repayment

agreement to receive a new utility arrears payment outside of the utility cold weather period if otherwise eligible.

For additional information on meeting emergency/immediate needs please see [02 ADM-02](#). For information on DPAs, the suspension of utility arrears repayment agreements during the cold weather period, and other issues regarding the payment of utility arrears with TA funds, please see [GIS 19 TA/DC051](#).

Attached is a COVID-19 Utility Shut off Guidelines Fact Sheet issued by the New York State Department of Public Service. Districts may wish to share this document with A/Rs as the information provided may prove useful to those economically affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.