



AN OVERVIEW FOR UTILITY PROVIDERS

HOPE Program

The Housing Opportunity and Prevention of Evictions (HOPE) Program is a new statewide initiative that provides rent and utility assistance to eligible low- and moderate-income renters experiencing financial hardship due to the economic effects of COVID-19. The new program will help prevent evictions and utility disconnections in order to promote housing stability during the ongoing pandemic. HOPE is an initiative of the NC Office of Recovery and Resiliency, a division of the North Carolina Department of Public Safety.

ELIGIBILITY

Renters are eligible for the HOPE Utility Assistance Program if:

- Their household income is 80% of the area median income or lower,
- The rental property is their primary home,
- The coronavirus pandemic has affected their ability to pay utilities, and
- They are behind on their utilities when they apply.

WHO CAN APPLY AND HOW TO GET HELP

Utility providers cannot apply to the HOPE Program, but they can refer distressed customers to **2-1-1** for eligibility screening and referral. Customers can also apply online at nc211.org/hope.

PAYMENTS

The HOPE Program community partner will provide payments to utility providers on behalf of participating customers. A community partner agency may contact you if a customer qualifies for HOPE assistance to confirm amounts past due and provide payment.

COVERED COSTS

The program may cover up to six months of past due utility costs. The program can pay eligible expenses back to April 1, 2020. Applicants must be behind on their utility bill when they apply to the program.

ESSENTIAL UTILITIES

The following are the HOPE Program's essential utilities, which are eligible for utility assistance payments:

- Electricity
- Water
- Sewer/wastewater
- Natural gas and propane delivery services, including routine safety checks

INELIGIBLE UTILITIES include telecommunications, internet, entertainment services, recreational utilities (example: propane for grills or tanks), annualized utilities or those collected with property tax, yard/lawn fees, trash collection fees and recycling fees.

PAYMENT PLANS

Customers that are on a payment plan to pay past due bills over an extended time are still eligible to have their past due amounts paid. Payments to utilities are determined on a utility by utility basis.

Additional information about the HOPE Program can be found at nc211.org/hope.