

**Yes, there is help for your energy bills.**



**BRANCH COUNTY**

Department of Human Services . . . . .517-279-4200

**CALHOUN COUNTY**

Department of Human Services . . . . .269-966-1284

**HILLSDALE COUNTY**

Department of Human Services . . . . .517-439-2200

**LENAWEE COUNTY**

Department of Human Services . . . . .517-264-6300

**MONROE COUNTY**

Department of Human Services . . . . .734-243-7200

**MUSKEGON COUNTY**

Department of Human Services . . . . .231-733-3700

**OTTAWA COUNTY**

Department of Human Services . . . . .616-394-7200

**ST. JOSEPH COUNTY**

Department of Human Services . . . . .269-467-1200

**VAN BUREN COUNTY**

Department of Human Services . . . . .269-621-2800

**Additional Resources**

Additional energy assistance may be available through your local Salvation Army, Community Action Agency or Veteran’s Service Organization.

**FREE MGU PROGRAMS**

MGU offers no-cost billing and payment options that can make paying your energy bills a little easier, including:

- **Budget Billing** – Spread your higher winter natural gas bills out evenly over the next 12 months, so you can budget now.
- **Automatic Payment** – Save time, money and postage by having your financial institution automatically pay your monthly natural gas bill from your checking, savings or share draft account when due.

Additionally, if you have a past-due balance, use our online **Payment Arrangements** option to schedule monthly payments and bring your account up to date.

**MORE HELP ONLINE**

If you have internet access, visit [michigangasutilities.com](http://michigangasutilities.com) for additional resources to help you use less energy and reduce your bill. Here are just a few of the energy-saving tips you’ll find there:

- **Lower your thermostat.** Lowering the thermostat by as little as 1°F can make a difference. A thermostat setting of 68°F is often recommended.
- **Switch to a programmable thermostat.** A programmable thermostat automatically lowers the temperature when no one is home, as well as overnight. This could save you as much as 20% on heating costs.
- **Tune up your heating system.** Have your heating system tuned and inspected by a service professional annually.
- **Clean your furnace filter monthly.** A clean filter helps your furnace run more efficiently.

**LET’S SOLVE THIS TOGETHER**

When paying your MGU bill becomes a problem, the faster we hear from you, the faster we can solve it together.

Don’t wait another minute ...  
**call us 24-hours-a-day at 800-401-6402.**

**It comes from your energy partner.**

If winter’s weather is leading to energy bills you can’t pay, Michigan Gas Utilities understands. And we want to help. Call us at **800-401-6402** and we’ll discuss the many options that can make all the difference.

# ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Living in Michigan gives you access to public and private programs that can help you pay your bills. Talk to us and we'll give you more information on:

## Winter Protection Plan

Contact Michigan Gas Utilities at 800-401-6402.

The Winter Protection Plan protects eligible senior and low-income customers from service shutoff and high utility bill payments during the winter months (November 1 through March 31). You may enroll in the Winter Protection Plan anytime between November 1 and March 31.

If you're an eligible low-income customer who participates in the Winter Protection Plan you will not have service discontinued during the winter months if you pay at least 7% of your estimated annual bill each month, plus 1/12 of any past due bills.

If you're an eligible senior citizen customer who participates in the Winter Protection Plan you are not required to make specific payments between November 1 and March 31 to ensure that your service will not be shut off. However, seniors are encouraged to pay whatever they can during the winter so they will not have large, unmanageable bills when the protection period ends.

When the protection period ends (March 31), you will need to pay the full monthly bill plus a portion of the amount owed from the winter months.

You qualify for the plan if you meet one of the following requirements:

- Are age 65 or older
- Receive Department of Human Services cash assistance
- Receive Food Stamps
- Receive Medicaid
- Have a household income at or below 150% of poverty level (See Income Guidelines)

To apply, fill out a **Michigan Winter Protection Plan Application** and mail it to the address listed on the form, or drop it off at your local office.

## Annual Income Guidelines (2010-2011)

Number of Household Members	150% of Poverty Level
1	\$16,245
2	\$21,855
3	\$27,465
4	\$33,075
5	\$38,685
6	\$44,295
7	\$49,905
8	\$55,515

Add \$3,740 for each additional household member.

## 2010 Home Heating Credit

Contact Michigan Department of Treasury at 517-636-4486 or <http://www.michigan.gov/treasury/>.

You can apply for a Home Heating Credit for the 2010 tax year if you meet the income guidelines listed below.

If you qualify, the Home Heating Credit (HHC) provides assistance to help pay for your winter heating bills. Eligible customers must meet the standard credit income guidelines or alternate guidelines based on household income, exemptions and heating costs.

Exemptions	Income Ceiling
1	\$11,443
2	\$15,415
3	\$19,386
4	\$23,329
5	\$27,301
6	\$31,242

For each exemption over 6, add \$3,971.

You may claim an exemption for yourself, your spouse and other dependents. Additional exemptions are available for seniors, disabled customers or customers with 50% or more of their income from unemployment compensation.

The Home Heating Credit claim form must be filed with the Michigan Department of Treasury before September 30, 2011. Forms are generally available wherever other tax forms are provided. You can also call the Michigan Department of Treasury at 517-636-4486 or visit them at <http://www.michigan.gov/treasury/>.

## 2010 Earned Income Credit

The Earned Income Credit (EIC) is a refundable federal income tax credit for low-income working individuals and families who meet certain requirements and file a tax return. Those who qualify will owe less in taxes and may get a refund. Even a person who does not generally owe income tax may qualify for the EIC, however they must file a tax return to do so. If they are married, they must file jointly to qualify. To file, fill out **Form 1040** or **1040A** and attach the EIC.

If you were raising a qualifying child in your home in 2010, you may also be able to receive part of the credit in your paycheck during the year with Advance EIC. You will need to get form **W-5** from your employer or call **800-TAX-FORM**.

## Weatherization Program

The Weatherization Program helps qualified individuals and families make their homes more energy efficient—lowering bills and easing payments. Services include: wall insulation, attic insulation and ventilation, foundation insulation, air leakage reduction, smoke detectors and dryer venting. If you rent, weatherization services must be coordinated with your landlord. Contact your local Community Action Agency for more information.

## State of Emergency Relief (SER)

This program provides temporary financial help to needy persons faced with emergency situations that (1) threaten health and safety, and (2) can be resolved with the SER payment. Payments are made for the minimum amount necessary to resolve the emergency. For more information, please contact your local Department of Human Services.

### ALLEGAN COUNTY

Department of Human Services . . . . .269-673-7700

### BARRY COUNTY

Department of Human Services . . . . .269-948-3200

### BERRIEN COUNTY

Department of Human Services . . . . .269-934-2000