



**UGI Utilities, Inc.**  
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November 20, 2020

VIA FIRST-CLASS MAIL

The Honorable Gladys Brown Dutrieuille  
Chairman  
Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission  
Commonwealth Keystone Building  
400 North Street  
Harrisburg, PA. 17120

**RE: 2020 Prepare Now Campaign**

Dear Chairman Brown Dutrieuille,

Please accept this letter as UGI's commitment to support the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission's (PUC) 2020 "Prepare Now" customer education campaign. UGI commends the PUC for its annual "Prepare Now" campaign efforts. The campaign has provided a worthwhile service to Pennsylvania energy consumers with limited or fixed incomes by urging them to "Call Now" if they need assistance paying their utility bills.

We concur with the PUC's opinion that the "Prepare Now" campaign is more critical this heating season than it has been in earlier heating seasons. With so many experiencing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the PUC's "Prepare Now" letter focus on informing utility customers-in-need that they should call their utility company about available Company assistance programs will provide them with information on several enhanced and expanded customer assistance programs offered by UGI. For your information, we have already commenced a number of initiatives aimed at providing information to qualifying customers about our assistance programs.

As you are aware, UGI launched its Emergency Relief Program designed to assist our Pennsylvania natural gas customers who have been financially impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and are struggling to make timely natural gas bill payments. The ERP consists of two components to help qualifying customers with their outstanding energy bills: an Installment Plan for both residential and business customers that will allow qualifying customers to spread their outstanding UGI balance over a period of time; and a One-Time Grant for residential customers up to \$400 to eligible customers with a past due balance. Eligible customers include those who qualified for the Federal CARES Act Economic Impact Payment or who filed for unemployment benefits after March 13, 2020. The ERP is designed for customers who do not qualify for other UGI's Customer Assistance Programs. This program is being extensively promoted through direct outreach to potential qualifying customers, traditional advertising, social media, and news channels.

In addition, UGI once again will continue targeted outreach campaigns through the Fall of 2020. This outreach effort provides information to customers and is designed to increase enrollments into UGI's assistance programs. Our programs and resources include: funds available through the federal Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP); the UGI Customer Assistance Program (CAP); Operation Share, UGI's fuel fund; our Customer Assistance and Referral Evaluation Services program (CARES); and our Low Income Usage Reduction Program / Weatherization Program (LIURP).

Regarding referrals of low-income consumers to CAP, participation as of the end of October 2020 is 27,287 UGI customers enrolled. This is a year-over-year increase of almost 20% due to UGI's efforts to expand participation in this important program. Other efforts aimed at linking qualifying customers to information and programs that can help them restore and maintain service include: a UGI website feature allowing customers to enter income updates to determine if they qualify for CAP; regular interaction and collaboration with UGI's CBOs through targeted campaign periods; and an Operation Share automated referral process to assist UGI's participating agencies in soliciting our qualifying customers-in-need. In addition to the above-mentioned programs, UGI offers budget billing and provides a third-party notification program. UGI also offers customers several convenient ways to pay their bills, including electronic bill-pay and a mobile device bill payment App. In addition, UGI allows fee free credit and bank card payments which removes the burden of these fees at the time of payment.

For your information, UGI launched our LIHEAP outreach campaign on November 2<sup>nd</sup> for this heating season. We began by conducting our annual LIHEAP training session for all Company Call Center representatives. This training included an overview of this year's LIHEAP information and the directive to provide information and promote awareness of LIHEAP during a customer contact call.

UGI's Outreach Team and the Company's Community Relations Team also collaborated in conducting customer information programs across the Company service territory. These information programs, which include the PUC's Be Utility Wise events, promote awareness of assistance programs, energy conservation, the safe use of energy, and the proper maintenance of fuel-burning appliances in the home. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Be Utility Wise events were held virtually in 2020.

In addition, we are conducting our usual extensive outreach efforts including advertising, media announcements, bill inserts, outbound telephone campaigns and special mailings. We are also utilizing digital tools such as updates posted to our website and social media sites that include a special link for customers to use to print a LIHEAP application for submission.

UGI operates its own hardship fund for qualifying customers experiencing difficulty in paying their utility bills. This fund is called Operation Share and has been in place for more than 30 years assisting UGI's customers-in-need. UGI donates corporate funds to Operation Share, and solicits donations from our customers, employees and others in the community. UGI increased its annual corporate donation to the Operation Share fund in 2020 from \$165,000 to \$665,000 to help support our customers in need during this heating season. This year due to COVID-19, UGI worked with stakeholders to provide an additional \$2 million in funding to help support customers during these difficult times. UGI promotes Operation Share via WARM events, customer inserts, direct

communications with qualifying customers and online check through the UGI website at: <https://www.ugi.com/customerassistance>. UGI provides information on its customer assistance programs in English and Spanish language versions.

UGI's Low Income Usage Reduction Program (LIURP), also known as Weatherization, offers free energy conservation measures to high usage, low income households to help make energy bills more affordable. UGI is continuing to offer the Weatherization program called the Rehabilitation Program. This program allows UGI to contribute funding to a qualifying community organization for the installation of approved energy efficiency measures at the time of new home construction, or when rehabilitation work is performed on an existing property. Information about the UGI LIURP program and the Rehabilitation Program is available to customers on the Company website, through UGI service territory social agency partners, WARM events and by contacting the UGI Call Center.

UGI's Cold Weather Survey is underway in accordance with 52 PA Code Section 56.100(h) and Section 56.100(i). As recommended by the PUC, UGI utilizes a series of letters, phone calls, and field visits to complete this survey. UGI's field technicians are trained to identify the vacancy status of the premise being visited as part of the CWIP process and understand the importance of providing the special materials and information to properties still without service.

UGI works to leverage funds, whenever possible, to reduce a customer's restoration payment. UGI works diligently with customers who are making a good faith effort to pay their bills. For those customers whose service is off, we accept any combination of LIHEAP and Operation Share funds to re-establish service. UGI Call Center staff attempt to update the customer's household and financial information and review all options with them. These options may include: a re-negotiated payment agreement, a referral or enrollment into CAP, a review of other assistance programs, and explanations of the Medical Certification process, Protection from Abuse rights, and the option to call the PUC if the customer is not satisfied.

Regarding home heating safety, UGI issues regular media releases and social media postings throughout the year regarding safety, proper appliance and chimney maintenance, and carbon monoxide (CO) awareness. Since the onset of cooler weather this Fall, UGI has:

- Issued multiple news releases encouraging residents to take safety and energy efficiency steps to ensure safe and reliable operation of appliances
- Issued multiple carbon monoxide (CO) awareness public service announcements (PSA's) promoting awareness of the signs and symptoms signaling the presence of CO in homes or businesses
- Issued a news release on the opening of this year's LIHEAP Program
- Included Customer Assistance information in recent editions of Firstline, a UGI newsletter delivered to elected and appointed officials in Harrisburg and across the Commonwealth
- Posted all of the above items on UGI's website and social media channels.

UGI also uses traditional bill inserts to provide safety information to customers. In addition, the <https://www.ugi.com/> website has an extensive section devoted to safety-related topics. UGI also continues to offer an "Energy Safe Kids" section on our website to provide age-appropriate information on the safe use of energy to children and youths. For

customers that have been red tagged, UGI provides information to the customers in a follow up red tag letter notice that provides the customer with their local code enforcement office contact information. In addition, UGI has an HVAC contractor finder which can be found at [www.ugi.com/contractor](http://www.ugi.com/contractor) that displays contactors servicing the specific customers service area. UGI also does cross referrals to Community and Economic Development for customers that are eligible and are in need of furnace repair/replace.

Concerning the PUC's recommendation to provide information to consumers regarding efforts they can undertake to reduce heating costs, UGI sponsors weather-related television and digital advertising, and provides a wide range of information on its website. Regarding Customer Choice, UGI provides a number of resources to customers on our website. Information is provided on such topics as:

- Choosing a supplier
- How Choice works
- Identifying 'Price to Compare'
- Tips for shopping for a supplier
- Frequently asked questions, and Glossary of terms

As you can see from the information provided in this letter, UGI fully supports the PUC in its effort to increase customer awareness of winter heating costs, explore ways to reduce energy usage, educate customers about the availability of low income assistance programs, and increase awareness of the safe use of energy in the home.

Please do not hesitate to contact me or others at UGI with any questions or comments you may have. Listed below are the names and contact information of the UGI employees who can readily respond to any urgent "hardship" account concern, or any question you or a member of the PUC staff may have regarding payment or service issues.

Sincerely,



Hans G. Bell  
President

Matthew Irizarry  
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Rose Williams  
Supervisor, Regulatory Compliance, (610) 736-5519  
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Director, Customer Service, (610) 736-5393

cc: Hon. John F. Coleman, Jr., Commissioner (via First-Class Mail)  
Hon. David W. Sweet, Commissioner (via First-Class Mail)  
Hon. Ralph Yanora, Commissioner (via First-Class Mail)  
Rosemary Chiavetta, Secretary (via First-Class Mail)  
Joseph Magee, Bureau of Consumer Services (Via E-mail and First-Class Mail)  
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