

Be ²⁰²⁵ UtilityWise

OFFICIAL PROGRAM



**Embracing Collective Solutions:
Empowering Stability in Our Communities**

September 18, 2025

Hilton Garden Inn Pittsburgh/Southpointe

1000 Corporate Drive

Canonsburg, PA 15317



Embracing Collective Solutions: Empowering Stability in Our Communities

General Sessions - Parlors A & B			
Registration 8 – 8:45 a.m. Welcome Video & Special Remarks 8:45 – 9 a.m.			
The Effects of Energy Insecurity 9 – 10 a.m.			
Empowering Access to Healthcare Assistance 10 – 10:45 a.m.			
BREAK 10:45 – 11 a.m.			
Powering Relief: Dollar Energy, LIHEAP and Utility Assistance Programs 11 a.m. – Noon			
Lunch & Networking Noon – 1 p.m.			
Breakout Sessions 1 & 2 1– 1:55 p.m.			
Parlor C		Parlor D	
Breakout 1	Take Control of Your Financial Future	Breakout 2	
		Surviving Poverty The Reality Check	
Breakout Sessions 1, 2 & 3 2 – 2:55 p.m.			
Parlor C		Parlor D	Allegheny Room
Breakout 1	State Veteran Services and Programs	Breakout 2	Breakout 3
		Pathway to Housing Assistance Programs and Services	Weatherization Programs & Ways to Save Energy
Evaluations, Raffle and Closing - Parlors A & B 3 – 3:30 p.m.			

AGENDA



8 – 8:45 A.M. REGISTRATION

GENERAL SESSION - PARLOR A & B

8:45 – 9 A.M. WELCOME VIDEO & REMARKS

Christina Chase-Pettis – PA PUC Senior Communications Specialist

9 – 10 A.M. THE EFFECTS OF ENERGY INSECURITY

This session will explore how Pennsylvania’s energy and utility policies intersect with economic security for low-income households, emphasizing the need for affordable and reliable service. The presentation will focus on the causes of energy insecurity as well as the consequences of loss of service and utility debt. The presenters will also discuss the legal and regulatory tools available to protect vulnerable consumers.

PRESENTERS:

Patrick Cicero – PA Utility Law Project, Of Counsel

Jeffrey Braun – Neighborhood Legal Services, Managing Attorney for Intake

Jenn Schuchart – United Way, Director of Meeting Basic Needs

10:15 – 10:45 A.M. EMPOWERING ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE ASSISTANCE

This presentation explores affordable healthcare options for Southwestern Pennsylvania residents, focusing on free services. Attendees will learn about Pennie, Pennsylvania’s health insurance marketplace, which assists individuals and families in obtaining low-cost coverage. The session will also cover the essential services provided by the Catholic Charities Free Health Care Center, offering high-quality medical and dental care to the uninsured and underinsured. Key resources, eligibility criteria, and access methods will be discussed.

PRESENTERS:

Scott Yeager – Outreach Manager with Pennie, Department of Human Services

Samantha Rivalsky – Chief Health Service Officer, Catholic Charities Free Health Care Center

10:45 - 11 A.M. BREAK

11AM -12 PM **POWERING RELIEF: UTILITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS, LIHEAP AND DOLLAR ENERGY**

Join us for an engaging session with representatives from utility companies, the Dollar Energy Fund, and the Department of Human Services as they provide an overview of their assistance programs. This panel offers participants a comprehensive look at the available resources and highlights how these partners collaborate to address customer needs. Get ready for a knowledge check, as the presenter will engage you in an interactive follow-up Q&A session to test your understanding!

PANELISTS:

Amanda Messmer –Dollar Energy Fund, Program Manager

Sandy Zelesnik – Department of Human Services, Human Services Analyst

Lynda Krivoniak – FirstEnergy, Assistant Business Analyst

Jennifer Ervin – Duquesne Light, Universal Services Analyst III

Alexa Mapstone – Columbia Gas, Outreach and Education Coordinator

Danielle Stelzer – Peoples Gas, Community Assistance Programs Specialist

Stephanie Vaughan – PA American Water, Sr. Compliance Analyst Customer Assistance Programs

Sarah Viszneki – Pittsburgh Water, Pgh20 Cares Coordinator

NOON - 1 P.M.

LUNCH & NETWORKING - PARLORS A&B

1 - 1:55 P.M. AFTERNOON BREAKOUT SESSIONS 1 & 2

BREAKOUT 1 – PARLOR C

TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR FINANCIAL FUTURE

Join the Allegheny Financial Empowerment Center (AFEC) to learn how to manage your budget, improve your credit, reduce debt, and explore our new legacy planning services. AFEC now offers guidance on preparing a will, setting up power of attorney, and creating healthcare directives—essential steps to ensure financial stability for your loved ones beyond your lifetime.

PRESENTER:

Amber Book – Allegheny Financial Empowerment Center Program Director

BREAKOUT 2 – PARLOR D

SURVIVING POVERTY – THE REALITY CHECK

Experience the difficult choices families face when resources are limited. Through an interactive simulation, participants will step into the roles of families and service providers, navigating tradeoffs in housing, utilities, food, and transportation. This exercise highlights the real challenges of poverty and the importance of collective solutions to empower stability in our communities.

PRESENTERS:

Jennifer Ervin – Duquesne Light, Universal Services Analyst

Joy Price – Duquesne Light – Duquesne Light, Learning Associate

2– 2:55 P.M. AFTERNOON BREAKOUT SESSIONS 1, 2 & 3

BREAKOUT 1 – PARLOR C

STATE VETERAN SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

A representative from the Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (PA DMVA) will outline the benefits and resources available to veterans, service members, and their dependents, including financial assistance. The session will also cover the PA VETConnect program that connects veterans with resources and services they need.

PRESENTER:

Susan Meighen – Chief Division of Outreach, PA Department of Military & Veteran Affairs

BREAKOUT 2 – PARLOR D

PATHWAY TO HOUSING ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

This presentation provides an overview of housing programs, including emergency shelters, transitional housing, permanent supportive housing, and rapid rehousing. We will explain the Continuum of Care's (CoC) role in coordinating local services and cover rental assistance resources, access methods, and connections to local housing providers. Additionally, we'll highlight the housing and support services offered by Catholic Charities, including case management, financial assistance, and long-term support.

PRESENTERS:

Allyson Rose – Director of Integrated Services, Butler County Human Services,
Kimberly Furka – Program Director, Catholic Charities
Dan Carney – Executive Director, Union Mission

BREAKOUT 3 – ALLEGHENY ROOM

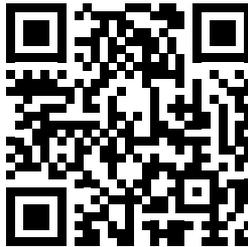
WEATHERIZATION PROGRAMS & WAYS TO SAVE ENERGY

What does weatherization really mean? Don't miss this opportunity to expand your understanding! Join us to learn more through engaging visuals and practical advice. Discover the essentials of weatherization in this informative session. Columbia Gas will discuss their weatherization programs, followed by Duquesne Light sharing their program initiatives rebate portal, and electric use tools.

PRESENTERS:

Anthony Saccamango – Columbia Gas, Quality Assurance Coordinator
Dave Defide – Duquesne Light, Senior Manager Customer Programs
Kimberly Squair – Duquesne Light, Customer Program Associate

3– 3:30 P.M. COMPLETE EVALUATIONS, RAFFLE & CLOSING



***Please complete your evaluation.
Your feedback is important to us!***



2025 Committee Members

Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission - Christina Chase-Pettis and Shari Williams

Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania - Alexa Mapstone

Peoples Gas - Danielle Stelzer

FirstEnergy - Lynda Krivoniak and Virgil Kennedy

Duquesne Light - Dave Defide and Jennifer Ervin

Advantage Credit Counseling - Heather Murray

Holy Family Institute - Gretchen Hartman

Dollar Energy Fund - Jody Robertson

Pennsylvania American Water - Stephanie Vaughan

Catholic Charities - Eden Safar

Pittsburgh Water & Sewer Authority - Sarah Viszneki

Special Thanks to Our Generous Partners

