

Be UtilityWise²⁰²⁵



Embracing Collective Solutions: Empowering Stability in Our Communities

September 29, 2025

Mohegan Sun - Conference Center
1280 Highway 315
Wilkes-Barre, PA

Embracing Collective Solutions: Empowering Stability in Our Communities

Registration 8 – 8:30 a.m.
Welcome Video & Special Remarks 8:30 – 8:35 a.m.

Scams All Around Us: Don't Take the Bait
8:35 – 9:15 a.m.

Utility Assistance Programs: Check Your Knowledge
9:15 – 10:15 a.m.

BREAK
10:15 – 10:30 a.m.

2025-26 LIHEAP Update
10:30 – 11 a.m.

One Crisis Away: The Hidden Reality of Modern Poverty
11 – 11:30 a.m.

Impact of Energy Insecurity
11:30 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Lunch & Networking
12 – 1 p.m.

Conservation and Weatherization Programs
1 – 1:30 p.m.

State Veteran Services and Programs
1:30 – 2 p.m.

Domestic Violence Services
2 – 2:30 p.m.

Immigration Services and Resources
2:30 – 3 p.m.

Complete Evaluations, Raffle, Closing
3 – 3:30 p.m.

AGENDA



8 – 8:30 A.M.

REGISTRATION

8:30 – 8:35 A.M.

WELCOME & SPECIAL REMARKS

Christina Chase-Pettis – PA PUC Senior Communications Specialist

8:35 – 9:15 A.M.

SCAMS ALL AROUND US: DON'T TAKE THE BAIT

Many consumers, especially seniors, possess homes, income, and savings, making them prime targets for criminals. Scammers impersonate government officials, businesses, and even loved ones to exploit vulnerabilities. AARP Consumer Advocate Mary Bach will provide awareness and offer tips on recognizing and protecting yourself from scams. Remember, if you can spot a scam, you can stop it!

KEYNOTE SPEAKER:

Mary Bach – AARP Pennsylvania Volunteer, Chair, Consumer Issues Task Force

9:15 – 10:15 A.M.

**UTILITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS:
CHECK YOUR KNOWLEDGE**

Join us for an engaging session focused on the Utility Assistance Programs. Utility representatives will share valuable insights and assistance resources and answer questions about their offered programs. This session will feature an interactive Q&A game designed to enhance your understanding of Utility Assistance Programs and guidelines. Get ready to learn and engage!

PRESENTERS:

Kristen Kelly – Regulatory Programs Manager, PPL

Virgil Kennedy – Business Analyst Human Services, FirstEnergy

Kathy Iglar – Manager, Universal Service Programs, UGI

Dorothy Grill – Customer Assistance Program Specialist, PA American Water Company

10:15 – 10:30 A.M.

BREAK

10:30 – 11 A.M.

2025-26 LIHEAP UPDATE

Representatives from the Department of Human Services (DHS) will provide in-depth updates on the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) for the upcoming LIHEAP season. This session will deliver the latest program guidelines, eligibility requirements, application process updates and any changes to benefits to ensure understanding and access to LIHEAP.

PRESENTERS:

Erin McNulty – LIHEAP Coordinator, Luzerne County Assistance Office
Kimberly Hillard – Income Maintenance Administrator 1,
Department of Human Services

11 – 11:30 A.M.

ONE CRISIS AWAY: THE HIDDEN REALITY OF MODERN
POVERTY

This presentation provides an overview of current poverty trends in Pennsylvania, illustrating how quickly financial stability can deteriorate for working families. Using 2024-25 data and real-world scenarios, we will explore the modern face of poverty – that extends far beyond stereotypes – and highlight the vulnerability of middle-class families to economic shocks. The presentation will also discuss income volatility and the “asset poverty” phenomenon. Specific challenges facing seemingly stable utility customers will also be addressed. This session aims to equip utility professionals and consumer advocates with a better understanding of the financial difficulties faced by customers across the Commonwealth.

PRESENTER:

Dr. Megan Loftus – President and CEO, Friends of the Poor

11:30 A.M. – 12 P.M.

IMPACT 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:

Ria Pereira, Esq. – Supervising Attorney, PA Utility Law Project
Patrick Cicero – Of Counsel, PA Utility Law Project

12 – 1 P.M.

LUNCH

1 PM – 1:30 P.M.

CONSERVATION AND WEATHERIZATION PROGRAMS

Learn low cost - no cost ways to save energy around your house. You can share these energy-saving tips with the clients that you serve!

PRESENTER:

Joe Calore – Weatherization Director, Commission on Economic Opportunity

1:30 – 2 P.M.

STATE VETERANS 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:

Karen Olson – Veteran Services Specialist, Northeast PA Region, PA Department of Veteran Affairs Project

2 – 2:30 P.M.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES

This session focuses on the impact of domestic violence and the survivors when dealing with utilities. An explanation of services and options will be given on how utility companies will assist in overcoming the barriers of abuse and daily survival.

PRESENTER:

Tammy Rodgers – Training and Education Specialist, Domestic Violence Service Center

2:30 – 3 P.M.

IMMIGRATION SERVICES AND RESOURCES

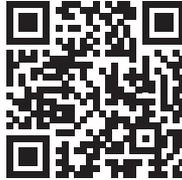
This session will focus on the recent changes for eligibility for means-tested benefits like SNAP and Medicaid that could impact the immigrant community, potentially leading to loss of support for many families. The presenter will discuss how these changes affect resources and solutions will be provided to help navigate these challenges. During this session you will explore real-life scenarios to illustrate the effects of these changes on families.

PRESENTER:

Shetierra Edwards – Bilingual Outreach Paralegal, Community Justice

3 – 3:30 P.M.

COMPLETE EVALUATIONS, RAFFLE, CLOSING



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

Our Keynote Speaker

MARY BACH



Mary Bach is a long-time, nationally recognized, independent Consumer Advocate. As a volunteer, she is also Chair of the AARP Pennsylvania Consumer Issues Task Force.

A former high school teacher, Mary was elected Murrysville Councilwoman for four years, and then elected Franklin Regional School Board Member for eight years. She has numerous television and radio credits, including appearances on the "Today Show," "Good Morning America," "Donahue," and "Dateline," as well as many segments on local TV programs and talk-radio shows. She has been a featured speaker or workshop presenter at numerous state, national, and international conferences on a wide variety of consumer issues. She appears monthly on ABC27's "GoodDayPA" in Harrisburg, PA, providing the FraudWatch segments, and weekends doing the "FraudWatch Minute." She is also a frequent guest on "Focus on Aging Adults" on PCN-TV.

Mary has been on the forefront of telemarketing issues, from the consumer's perspective. She is Vice President of the Scanning Certification Advisory Board, helping to set industry standards for retail pricing accuracy at the checkout. She has had Governor's appointments to three statewide committees. She is now in her third term as a member of the PUC's Consumer Advisory Council, representing the general public. She was honored as 1999 National Consumer of the Year at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., and also has received the Jefferson Award Bronze Medal. In 2004, she was awarded AARP's prestigious Andres Award, the organization's highest honor for community service. In 2006, the Pennsylvania Association of Weights and Measures named their annual consumer award after her, "The Mary Bach Consumer of the Year Award," for her efforts in promoting marketplace fairness. In 2016, she received the AARP "Ethel Award for Community Outreach." In 2018, she was honored by AARP nationally as one of 12 "Superstar Volunteers" and was the recipient of the AARP 2018 National Trailblazer Award. In 2019, she was honored with the Westinghouse SURE Lifetime Achievement Award. Mary is the mother of two, and the grandmother of four. She resides in Murrysville, PA.



2025 Committee Members

Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission

Christina Chase-Pettis
Shari Williams

Met-Ed/FirstEnergy

Virgil Kennedy
Shadia Maurtua
Shelby Bartman

PPL Electric Utilities

Kristen Kelly
April Petras

Pennsylvania American Water

Dorothy Grill
Nancy Smeltz

UGI

Myrna Rivera
Abby Scott

Scranton Area Community Foundation

Brad Reid

CareerLink

Christine Jensen

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