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VIA ELECTRONIC FILING

Matthew Homsher, Secretary
Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission
Commonwealth Keystone Building
400 North Street, 2nd Floor North
P.O. Box 3265
Harrisburg, PA 17105-3265

**Re: Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania, Inc.
to Proposed 2024-2028 Universal Service and Energy
Conservation Plan
Docket No. M-2023-3039487**

Dear Secretary Homsher:

Enclosed for filing on behalf of Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania, Inc. (“Columbia”) is the Customer Education & Outreach Plan Annual Update. This filing is made pursuant to the Public Utility Commission’s Order dated April 4, 2024, in the above docket, at Ordering Paragraph No. 9.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Very truly yours,

Candis A. Tunilo

cc: Parties of Record
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COLUMBIA GAS OF PENNSYLVANIA, INC.

2025/2026 Customer Education and Outreach Plan

The following document summarizes Columbia’s outreach and education efforts in 2025 and expected outreach and education and areas of focus for 2026. Columbia’s menu of programs is designed in a coordinated effort to cost-effectively provide the greatest benefit to all eligible customers in need of assistance. Highlighted in this document are internal and external strategies Columbia utilizes to promote assistance programs throughout its service territories.



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2025 CUSTOMER OUTREACH & EDUCATION RECAP

- [Department of Human Services Data Sharing Program](#)
- [CAP Outreach](#)
- [Domestic Violence Policy Review](#)
- [2025 Event Summary](#)

[Department of Human Services \(“DHS”\) Data Sharing Program](#)


In preparation for the DHS data sharing program, Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania, Inc. (“Columbia” or “Company”) developed three processes to simplify its Customer Assistance Program (“CAP”) reverification and enrollment:

- To expedite and simplify reverification for existing CAP customers.
- To allow for enrollment in CAP for customers who complete an application online or by phone.
- To offer a streamlined application for customers who have not completed a CAP application.

In the 2024-2025 heating year, 502 customers received assistance from Columbia after agreeing to share their information through the DHS data sharing program.

In the 2025/2026 program year, it is necessary for the Company to review each account shared through DHS’s data sharing program to verify that the information is useful. For example, DHS files report gross income, yet the Company does not include Medicare supplemental income for those that receive social security and accepts some deductions for customers that are self-employed. Therefore, without the Company deducting this income from the income provided by DHS, the customer’s payment could be as much as \$12.00 per month higher than it should be or they may appear ineligible. There can also be discrepancies between the number and name of occupants provided by DHS and Company records. If the ratepayer is not listed as an occupant from DHS, the customer cannot be enrolled in CAP. If DHS provides less household members than identified on Company records, it can affect their payment. The Company continues to use the data shared by DHS to enroll and recertify customers despite this time-consuming manual process.

CAP Outreach



THE COLUMBIA GAS CUSTOMER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (CAP) IS AVAILABLE

Struggling to pay your gas bill?
Columbia Gas has a program to help lower your monthly gas bill and erase past debt!

How CAP Helps You:

Lower Monthly Bill – You'll pay a fixed, CAP payment each month based on your income as soon as you're enrolled.

Debt Forgiveness – When you enroll, your debt is frozen. Every CAP payment you make, your debt is lessened. If you make 36 months of payments, your debt will be completely forgiven!

If you left CAP before, you can join again!

Your original debt balance will not continue to grow while you're in the program.

HOW IT WORKS:

REGULAR GAS BILL YOU PAY	WITH CAP YOU PAY	YOUR SAVINGS
\$150	\$60	\$90 each month

Each month, you only pay your CAP payment. If you make CAP payments over 36 months, the debt you owed will be reduced to \$0, completely forgiven. The above is an example of how this works.

Debt Forgiveness Example:
If you make your payments every month, your entire balance will be forgiven in 36 months. If you owe \$1,800 when you enroll, we will forgive \$50 with each CAP payment you make.

How to Apply:

- Check if you qualify** – Look at the income chart and include total income before taxes of all adult (18 and over) household members.

HOUSEHOLD SIZE	MONTHLY INCOME	ANNUAL INCOME
1	\$1,856	\$23,475
2	\$2,644	\$31,725
3	\$3,331	\$39,975
4	\$4,019	\$48,225

*2025 Federal Income Guidelines, 150% Federal Poverty Level. For large households, please call 1-800-537-4731. Reminder – child support payments do not count as adult income.

- Apply** – Click [Here](#) ([hardshiptools.org/myapp](#)) or call Dollar Energy Fund (Columbia's partner) at 1-888-282-6816.
- Need other assistance?** – If CAP isn't the right fit, other programs may help. Call Columbia Gas at 1-888-460-4332 or scan the QR code.



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In 2025, new initiatives were undertaken to increase outreach to potential CAP customers. For several months, the company worked with its Universal Service Advisory Council to create a new flyer promoting CAP. The chart below summarizes these efforts and the results achieved to date.

	2025 # Mailings sent	2025 # Customers enrolled in CAP	% of customers enrolled in CAP	2026 # Mailings Sent YTD	2026 # customers enrolled in CAP	% of customers enrolled in CAP
balances over \$300 - October & March	2896	42	1.45%	to be mailed in March 2026		
Dormant Survey Packets	1302	63	4.84%	To be delivered in Fall 2026		
Charged a Security Deposit	4966	79	1.59%	1094	15	1.37%
Enrolled in level 1 Payment plan	6526	178	2.73%	940	28	2.98%

Domestic Violence Policy Review

In 2025, the Company attended several events and conducted outreach with domestic violence service agencies throughout various counties in our service territory. This will remain a focus in 2026. The Company will continue to display the flyer below during tabling events in 2026. In 2025 there was an increase in CARES referrals related to domestic violence and financial abuse, which can be attributed to our increased focus on raising awareness of available assistance. In

2026, we updated our database to more concisely collect data on how many events occur that directly impact the education of those experiencing domestic violence.



Did you know there is help for Columbia Gas customers who are experiencing Domestic Abuse?

Please Ask or Call 1-800-537-7431 if you would like to learn more about measures Columbia Gas can take to assist with customer accounts.

2025 Event Summary

The chart below displays the number of events attended by quarter. Columbia participated in 204 outreach and education events during 2025. These events are estimated to have reached thousands of people with information about all available programs.

Quarterly Outreach by County:

January 2025 to March 2025		April 2025 to June 2025		July 2025 to September 2025		October 2025 to December 2025	
County	Number of Events	County	Number of Events	County	Number of Events	County	Number of Events
Allegheny	9	Allegheny	4	Allegheny	5	Allegheny	9
Beaver	6	Armstrong	1	Beaver	6	Beaver	1
Clarion	1	Beaver	3	Bradford	1	Butler	2
Fayette	10	Butler	1	Clarion	1	Fayette	9
Lawrence	3	Fayette	11	Fayette	8	Greene	12
Multiple	10	Greene	4	Greene	1	Lawrence	2
Somerset	3	Lawrence	1	Lawrence	3	Multiple	4
Washington	7	Multiple	7	Multiple	13	Washington	5
Westmoreland	5	Somerset	1	Washington	10	Westmoreland	3
York	2	Washington	2	Westmoreland	12		
		Westmoreland	4	York	1		
		York	1				
	56		40		61		47

2026 CUSTOMER EDUCATION & OUTREACH INITIATIVES

Columbia’s menu of programs is designed in a coordinated effort to provide the greatest benefit to all customers in need of assistance in a cost-effective manner. Therefore, most outreach opportunities promote more than just one program, to more than just one target demographic. Columbia promotes its suite of Universal Service programs and engages in external outreach opportunities throughout its service territory. In addition, the Universal Service Department conducts internal outreach activities to inform employees and create additional ambassadors of the Universal Service programs.

Columbia adjusts outreach tactics at minimum yearly, based on current need, review of past results and consideration of new opportunities as they are presented. Customers eligible for one program are encouraged to apply for all programs for which they qualify.

In each county Columbia serves, we prioritize populations who would benefit from participating in the Company’s customer assistance program. The chart below is our updated list of target audiences.

2026 Target Audiences	
Cash Checking Store Customers	College/University Students and Staff
Community Agency Staff/Social Workers	Company Service Techs
Culturally & Linguistically Diverse Populations	Customers below 50% FPIG
Customers with Heating Emergencies	Faith Based Organizations
Food Bank Participants	Head Start Participants
Housing Authority Residents	Landlords
People with Disabilities	New Customers/Home Buyers
People experiencing Domestic Violence	People Experiencing Unemployment
School Districts	Seniors
Single Head of households	Veterans
Housing Authority Residents	Visting Nurses/Hospitals

CONNECTING WITH TARGET AUDIENCES



Columbia believes in a connection-based approach to education and outreach. In addition to focusing on target audiences, we prioritize becoming a part of the communities we serve throughout our service territory. Columbia's service territory includes the following 26 counties: Adams, Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Bedford, Butler, Centre, Clarion, Clearfield, Elk, Fayette, Forest, Franklin, Fulton, Greene, Indiana, Jefferson, Lawrence, McKean, Mercer, Somerset, Venango, Warren, Washington, Westmoreland, and York.

The Company shares service territory with other utilities and refers individuals who need assistance with other utility bills, as needed. Collaboration between utilities is part of our CEOP. Pictured on this page is a major outreach collaboration held annually, Be Utility Wise which brings together utilities, the Public Utility Commission and community members.

Columbia's Universal Service staff prioritize outreach and education efforts in the areas with the highest number of customers with the lowest income.

Collaboration with community agencies and events is imperative to reaching customers. Pictured is one of Columbia's Cares Representatives distributing CAP information at a drive-thru food distribution. Universal Service staff participate in initiatives throughout the 450 communities that Columbia serves to make sure customers learn about programs and have the opportunity to ask questions to our knowledgeable Universal Service staff.

NEW INITIATIVES FOR 2026

Income Screening

No later than June 2026, The Company will affirmatively ask all customers to provide income when they call to connect or transfer service as well as on all non-emergency calls. The purpose of this is to determine if a customer is confirmed low income and if so, to provide information related to programs for which they may be eligible.

New LIHEAP Social Media Campaign

Columbia has historically paid for social media ads to promote the LIHEAP program. New ads were unveiled during this heating season, offering a fresh new approach to reach out to eligible customers.



CARES Celebration of 40 years

Columbia is proud to have provided Customer Assistance and Referral Evaluation Services (“CARES”) for the past 40 years. CARES has allowed Columbia to assist our most vulnerable customers. During 2026, the Company will use the anniversary as an opportunity to reach different audiences to promote programs through social media platforms and other media sources.

Poster Distribution

Featured is our CAP poster, which will be displayed at key locations throughout the communities we serve. Our team has partnered with community agencies to display posters at their office locations. In addition, we have identified other key locations, such as prominently located gas stations, community grocery stores, post office bulletin boards and schools, to hang the poster. Internally, these posters are also prominently displayed at various Company locations to remind all employees to make appropriate referrals.

CONNECTING YOU
HELP WHEN IT MATTERS MOST

Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania

Please note: Energy Assistance must be applied for annually. If you applied last program year, whether you received assistance or not, you must reapply this year.

HELP When you need it most
Columbia Gas offers a variety of customer assistance programs. You can increase your home's energy efficiency, enroll in an affordable payment plan, or apply for assistance for overdue balances. To find out which programs fit your needs, scan the QR code or visit ColumbiaGasPA.com/Assistance. Eligibility for assistance may be easier than you think.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY	AFFORDABLE PAYMENT PLANS	ASSISTANCE WITH OVERDUE BALANCES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• WarmWise Low Income Usage Reduction Program• WarmWise Audits and Rebates• WarmWise Energy Efficiency Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Customer Assistance Referral & Evaluation Services (CARES)• Customer Assistance Program (CAP)• Budget Payment Plan• Budget Plus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)• CRISIS Program• Homeowner's Assistance Fund (PAHAF)• Dollar Energy Fund

NOT ELIGIBLE?
Even if you aren't eligible for these energy assistance programs, you may be eligible for one of our flexible payment plans. Call 1-800-537-7431.

FOR ALL THE CURRENT PROGRAMS AND INFORMATION AVAILABLE, VISIT ColumbiaGasPA.com/Assistance CALL 1-800-537-7431



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EXTERNAL OUTREACH METHODS

2026 External Outreach	
Program	List of Outreach Initiatives
All Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sponsorship and participation in senior fairs and legislative events • Representation on local community assistance boards and task forces • Participation and coordination of Be Utility Wise events • Provision of all program information on Columbia’s website • Promotion of programs through multiple Company social media channels and Next Door • Semi-annual Universal Service Advisory Council meetings • Customer Care Center referrals • Press Releases at the start of the winter heating season & throughout the year • Promotion of programs to Community Engagement partnering agencies • Targeted agency training • Community-sponsored events such as trunk or treats, school fairs and resource expos • Food Bank Distribution sites • School District information dissemination • Posters displayed in prominent community locations
CAP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination with electric utilities to solicit CAP customers for re-verification • Coordination with the Dollar Energy Fund Grant Program for re-verification • Solicitation of targeted groups • Streamlined application for those participating in DHS data sharing • Specific targeting of customers below 50% of FPIG • Application processing for vulnerable customers • Inactive account customers (Cold Weather Survey packets) • Customers with balances more than \$300 • Customers charged a security deposit • Customers entering a level 1 payment plan
Hardship Funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual bill inserts requesting contributions • Monthly solicitation on bills to all non-CAP residential customers with current accounts • Participation in multiple fundraising events • Link to donate to all customers receiving e-bills

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Media posting of fundraising events • Social Media posting of how to access funds • Application processing for vulnerable customers
LIHEAP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Press releases • Social Media paid ads • Newspaper/Community Magazine ads • Ads in Spanish in certain geographic areas • Bill inserts promoting LIHEAP • Mail applications upon request or referred by a customer service representative • Application completion for vulnerable customers • Inserts promoting CRISIS in eligible termination notices • Outbound calls to previous recipients reminding them to apply • Outbound calls to identified eligible customers and CAP customers • Operation of a toll-free hotline for inquiries and assistance with applications • Outbound emails to CRISIS-eligible customers as part of Direct Referral Process
WARMWISE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reciprocal referrals between programs depending on eligibility • Social Media ads promoting programs • Target property owners

Outreach categorized by Target Audience	
Target Audience	List of Outreach Initiatives
Culturally and Linguistically Diverse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach to existing Hispanic/Latino and other diverse populations • Media buys in Spanish • Materials & program specific letters provided in Spanish • Website is available in multiple languages • CARES one-on-one intervention
Check Cashing Store Customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flyer distribution and other outreach implementation to Check Cashing Stores in low-income neighborhoods
College/ Universities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In person and virtual outreach to social service college/university staff • Table at events on campuses/universities
Company Service Techs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trainings hosted at sites with field employees • Materials distributed to Service techs with CARES info • Posters about programs located at offices

Community Agency Staff / Social Workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train the Trainer Presentations at community agencies • Enrolling new agencies to complete CAP & Hardship Fund applications • Attend Community Agency Events • Host days where CARES representatives are at agencies and advertise to inform participants, we will be there to answer questions
Customers with heating emergencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous communication with social service agencies so they are comfortable referring to CARES • Trained Service representatives on programs to make referrals
Faith Based Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtual outreach in Columbia’s service territory • Table at faith-based events and resource fairs • Mail physical flyers to locations
Food Banks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit food banks and distribute car to car/ person to person information on customer assistance programs • Distribute information through meals on wheels and other mobile food markets
Head Start Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host train the trainer events to Head Start staff • Host training to Head Start parents • Attend Head Start events
Housing Authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend events held at housing authorities • Present information to housing authority staff
Landlords	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brochure designed to explain LIURP sent to all landlords during LIURP referral process • letter to explain audit findings and expected measures to be installed • Outreach to landlord affiliations and rental agencies
New Customers/ Home Buyers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present to home buyer classes • Attend events and distribute information
People experiencing Domestic Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representation on Universal Service Advisory Council (“USAC”) • Partnerships with Domestic Violence Services Agencies in service territory • CARES involvement with all identified victims of domestic violence • Confidential access and storage of records • Protection of accounts from traditional collections activities
People experiencing Unemployment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend resource events targeted to employment opportunities • Collaborate with agencies who assist with employment/placement

People with Disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend events held by agencies who specialize in services for those with disabilities • Mail information to social service agencies • Hold train the trainer events for staff of such agencies
School Districts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email school districts in low-income areas in service territory and encourage eblast, mail physical copies for guidance staff and/to distribute paper copies to students to take home to parents • Attend events in low-income school districts or held by schools with high percentage of low-income students
Seniors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representation at Senior Fairs/Legislative events • On air presence with local radio news • Senior Groups/Training • Representation on USAC • Collaborate with agencies who service seniors
Single Head of Household	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach with targeted organizations • Representation on USAC • Trainings for services and agencies such as Head Start, Beverly's Babies, etc.
Transitional Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend events held by transitional service agencies • Train the trainer for transitional service staff
Veterans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach with targeted organizations • Representation on USAC • Trainings for Veterans Services and like agencies
Visiting Nurses/Hospitals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send physical copies of customer assistance information to staff to have on hand for clients • Communicate with visiting nurse agencies to educate and update on customer assistance programs

EXTERNAL OUTREACH MATERIALS

Columbia tailors handouts for each target population and access point. Information is available through physical or digital communications and translates from computer screens to smartphones. Columbia offers information at all touch points.

All physical outreach materials are available in English and Spanish. Other language interpretations are accessed through a dropdown box located on the Company's website, which allows customers to select from various languages in which information is translated. If communities have a high concentration of a population speaking a certain language, Columbia will provide physical outreach materials in that language, if needed. Other inclusive actions include using larger fonts.

QR codes are utilized for customers who would like to explore program options by inputting their information into an eligibility calculator to determine the programs for which they qualify. The QR code links to this webpage: [Eligibility Calculator - Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania](#)

External outreach materials, among others, that are featured below, are displayed during outreach events, mailed to agencies, referenced during trainings, and distributed during interactions with customers.


The Company's website also educates customers. The website highlights Audits and Rebates ("A&R"), CARES, CAP, Emergency Repair Program ("ERP"), Hardship funds, LIHEAP/Crisis, medical certificates, Security Deposit Assistance Fund ("SDAF"), and all Warm Wise programs, including the Low-Income Usage Reduction Program ("LIURP").

This redesigned brochure provides detailed information on all programs. The Company uses this brochure at all tabling events, train the trainer events and outreach to seniors.

In 2026, our team created a poster to display at partnering agencies in high traffic areas.


Columbia also uses PowerPoint for external training for agency and customers. The PowerPoint is not featured here but uses several of the brochures below.

Examples of Materials



CUSTOMER PROGRAMS
CONNECTING YOU WITH THE SERVICES AND SUPPORT YOU NEED

Columbia Gas
A NiSource Company



THE COLUMBIA GAS CUSTOMER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (CAP) IS AVAILABLE

Struggling to pay your gas bill?
Columbia Gas has a program to help lower your monthly gas bill and erase past debt!

How CAP Helps You:
Lower Monthly Bill – You'll pay a fixed, CAP payment each month based on your income as soon as you're enrolled.
Debt Forgiveness – When you enroll, your debt is frozen. Every CAP payment you make, your debt is lessened. If you make 36 months of payments, your debt will be completely forgiven!
 If you left CAP before, you can join again!
 Your original debt balance will not continue to grow while you're in the program.

How to Apply:

1. **Check if you qualify** – Look at the income chart and include total income before taxes of all adult (18 and over) household members.
2. **Apply** – Click [Here](#) (harsh@book.ora.ny.us) or call **Dollar Energy Fund** (Columbia's partner) at **1-888-282-6816**.
3. **Need other assistance?** – If CAP isn't the right fit, other programs may help. Call Columbia Gas at **1-888-460-4332** or scan the QR code.

HOUSEHOLD SIZE	MONTHLY INCOME	ANNUAL INCOME
1	\$1,956	\$23,475
2	\$2,644	\$31,725
3	\$3,331	\$39,975
4	\$4,019	\$48,225

*2021 Federal Income Guidelines, 150% Federal Poverty Level. For larger households, please call 1-800-537-4331. Remainder – child support payments do not count as adult income.


HOW IT WORKS:

REGULAR GAS BILL YOU PAY	WITH CAP YOU PAY	YOUR SAVINGS
\$150	\$60	\$90 each month

Each month, you only pay your CAP payment. If you make CAP payments over 36 months, the debt you owed will be reduced to \$0, completely forgiven. The above is an example of how this works.

Debt Forgiveness Example:
If you make your payments every month, your entire balance will be forgiven in 36 months. If you owe \$1,800 when you enroll, we will forgive \$50 with each CAP payment you make.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION
Call us at 1-888-537-4331
Visit ColumbiaGasPA.com/Assistance
Contact us on Facebook, Twitter or Nextdoor

Columbia Gas
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Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania offers a variety of customer assistance programs. You can increase your home's energy efficiency, enroll in an affordable payment plan, or apply for assistance with overdue balances. To find out which programs fit your needs, SCAN THE QR CODE on this page to enter your information into the eligibility calculator or CALL US AT 1-888-537-4331.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY	AFFORDABLE PAYMENT PLANS	ASSISTANCE WITH OVERDUE BALANCES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WarmWise Low Income Usage Reduction Program • WarmWise Audits and Rebates • WarmWise Energy Efficiency Information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Assistance Referral & Evaluation Services (CARES) • Customer Assistance Program (CAP) • Budget Payment Plan • Budget Plus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LHEAP) • CRISIS Program • Homeowner's Assistance Fund (PAHAF) • Dollar Energy Fund

Columbia Gas
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CONNECTING YOU TO HELP WHEN IT MATTERS MOST

Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania

Please note: Energy assistance must be applied for annually. If you applied last program year, whether you received assistance or not, you must reapply this year.

HELP When you need it most. We understand that winter weather and those most in need are seeking financial relief for their utility bills. Support is available through a variety of programs. Qualifying for assistance may be easier than you think. Apply today!

2025-2026 CAPA
2025-2026 Annual Household Federal Income Guidelines
150% Federal Income Level

HOUSEHOLD SIZE	ANNUAL INCOME
1	\$23,475
2	\$31,725
3	\$39,975
4	\$48,225
5	\$56,475
6	\$64,725

For family size of more than 6, add \$8,250 per year for each additional family member.

LHEAP
2025-2026 PROGRAM DATES:
NOVEMBER 3, 2025 TO APRIL 19, 2026
You may be eligible to receive assistance to help pay your Columbia Gas bill from the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LHEAP). LHEAP helps eligible households maintain utility service during winter months. Furthermore, if you allow the sharing of your household information with Columbia Gas or your LHEAP application, you may be eligible to participate in other energy assistance programs to assist with your home heating costs without the requirement to submit income documentation. You can apply online via the state's Department of Human Services website at <https://www.crisis.pa.gov>. For more information, call our Energy Assistance hotline at 1-800-272-2714.

LHEAP CRISIS
2025-2026 PROGRAM DATES:
NOVEMBER 3, 2025 TO APRIL 19, 2026
If you face shut-off due to lack of payments or service emergencies stemming from responsible heating equipment, you could get a grant. These federally funded crisis grants may be applied to accounts where service has been shut off for safety or non-payment, and may be used to halt a pending shut-off during the winter months. For more information, call our Energy Assistance hotline at 1-800-272-2714.

DOLLAR ENERGY FUND
You could get a grant to pay off past-due bills or restore service. This program is available if you have exhausted all other available assistance programs. To find out if you qualify for a grant, call us at 1-800-537-4331 or apply online at harsh@book.ora.ny.us.

FOR ALL THE CURRENT PROGRAMS AND INFORMATION AVAILABLE, VISIT
ColumbiaGasPA.com/Assistance
CALL 1-888-460-4332

CUSTOMER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (CAP)
This program offers affordable payment plans for income-eligible customers. CAP can help with long-term solutions to chronic bill payment challenges. To get started, call us at 1-888-460-4332 or apply online at gasbook.ora.ny.us.

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INTERNAL OUTREACH METHODS

Our Internal Outreach initiatives recognize the value of employee ambassadors for promoting programs to customers, neighbors, family and community groups. The Universal Service team engages in multiple activities to promote programs internally through training and meetings across departments and partners.

Training Content

- Call Aid Scripting for Customer Service Representatives (“CSRs”)
- Detailed explanation of each program including guidelines, application process and benefits
- Reminders to refer to programs at appropriate points in the scripting such as reconnects, payment arrangement requests, high bill complaints
- Up to the minute dates, income guidelines, eligibility guidelines, agency partners hours and contact information

Departments and Contracted Agencies

- CSRs
- Administrators and screening agencies
- Service department personnel
- Construction services personnel

Meetings

- Monthly team meeting with CAP administrators
- Universal Services Staff monthly meeting
- USAC Bi-Annual meeting
- Monthly meetings between Customer Care Center staff and Universal Services to provide updates and discuss current trends/concerns
- Monthly meeting with A&R, ERP and LIURP post inspection staff

EDUCATION ON PROGRAMS

The best form of promotion is to educate customers to understand the benefits and how to access a program. Columbia communicates expectations and procedures of programs to customers. However, there are specific educational components to specific programs. Below are specific components with coinciding programs.

LIURP

- The Company provides a welcome packet to enrollees that includes information about behavioral energy efficiency measures. It includes a pop-up house that can be used by auditors to demonstrate what will be done over the next few weeks to help reduce energy in the home. It is especially useful for customers that cannot walk through with the auditor. It also includes contact information and a summary of the LIURP process.
- The Company provides a written pamphlet to landlords explaining the benefits of the program.

CAP

- All CAP enrollees are provided a copy of their agreement form which includes all responsibilities and explanation of benefits of the CAP program.

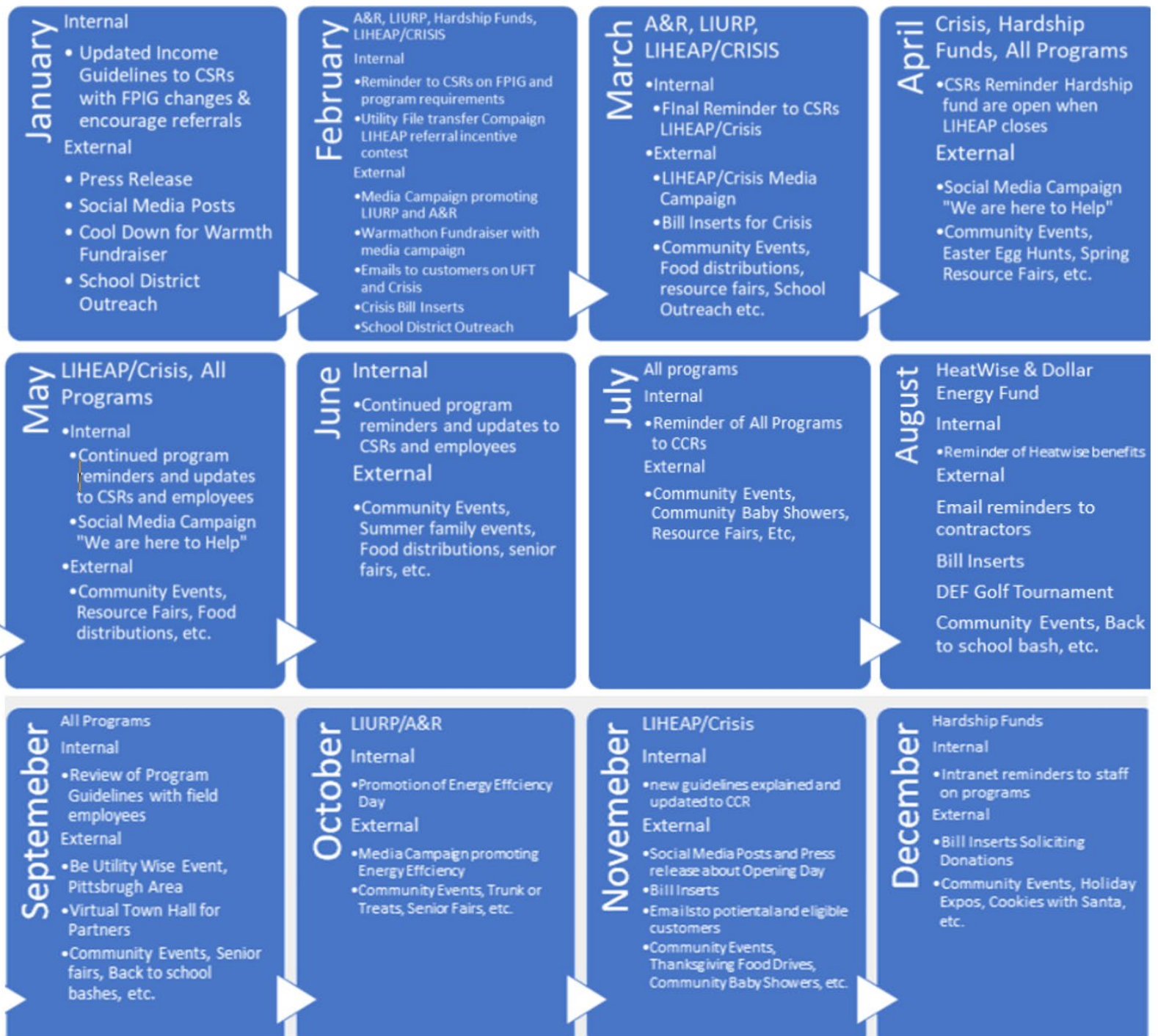
Customer Care Center

- Our Customer Care Center representatives help customers understand what programs would be the most beneficial for them and then guide them through the application process. These representatives are trained to identify and address any underlying payment problems in addition to the identified concern. The representatives also make referrals to community resources, as needed.

CARES

- Columbia's Customer Outreach & Education Coordinators take CAP, LIHEAP and hardship fund applications. In addition, they assist all customers in applying for programs. Coordinators also provide referrals to community resources, as needed.

TIMELINE OF OUTREACH INITIATIVES



Customer Outreach & Education efforts exist throughout the year. The above outline depicts annual events and aligns with program opening dates. There is constant communication between community connections and Universal Services staff to ensure customers receive assistance when needed. Universal Services staff contact information is listed on websites and paper materials throughout partner agencies' portfolios. The calendar is tentative. As opportunities arise, the calendar will be updated.

As part of the approval of the Company's Universal Service and Energy Conservation Plan ("USECP") (Docket No. M-2023-3039487), the Company was directed to file an updated Customer Outreach & Education Plan annually, beginning March 1, 2025, and for the duration of its USECP. The Company was also directed to provide the following enhancements, for which Columbia provides updates:

A. More educational training webinars and workshops using virtual or hybrid and in-person events to keep community partners and interested stakeholders informed and updated about Columbia's universal service programs.

2026 planned activities include:

- Participation in three Be Utility Wise events across Columbia Service territory;
- Virtual presentations with United Way home buyers classes in Beaver County and other social service agencies;
- In-person trainings with seniors through Senior Centers;
- In-person trainings with social services agencies in Columbia's service territory;
- Conduct Train the Trainer trainings for Head Start, Area Agency on Aging and other social service agencies in Columbia's service territory.

B. Continue expanding its outreach efforts for households with incomes at or below 50% of the FPIG.

The Company uses information from the Department of Education to identify school districts with a high population of lower income customers. The Company prioritizes the highest population of low-income customers for grass roots outreach. Examples include:

- Trunk or Treats, baby showers, resource fairs and other holiday/seasonal community events in designated areas;

- Provide program materials to school districts and social service agencies in designated areas;
- Food Bank Distribution sites. Universal Services staff attend and hand out flyers to every car at least once per season in designated areas;
- Tabling events at universities and colleges;
- Tabling at legislative, senior and resource events.

C. Add an education component to inform customers about the importance of understanding their energy burden to foster customer awareness of how much their household is spending on energy.

The Company worked with its USAC to develop language to explain energy burden and included it in a CAP brochure used in the Fall of 2024. It is as follows:

Energy Burden – How do you compare?

$$Energy\ Burden = \frac{Monthly\ Bill}{Monthly\ Income}$$

An energy burden is the percentage of household income that goes towards energy costs. A high gas energy burden is defined as a household spending more than 6% of their income towards energy costs. If your energy burden exceeds the recommended 6% burden and you meet the eligibility requirements, Columbia assistance programs may help you lower your energy burden, resulting in lower gas bills.

The USAC provided feedback that this language is most helpful when promoting energy efficiency but may not be a high motivation for CAP enrollment. The USAC recommendation was to not include this language in future CAP outreach. The Company will continue to seek additional opportunities for placement of this language and continue to ask for and share feedback with its USAC.

- D. Continue to share its tools, outline approaches, and activities for the energy burden education components in future CEOPs and include the Commission educators as needed.**

The Company is working and will continue to work with its USAC to develop the right opportunities to educate customers on energy burden and will share with the Commission educators who are part of the USAC.

CONCLUSION

In closing, Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania, Inc.'s Customer Education and Outreach Plan summarizes internal and external strategies to inform customers on all assistance programs. We believe in becoming a part of the communities we serve by using a grass roots approach, which includes connecting with human service agencies and participating in community events. We also appreciate and utilize media outreach to reach as many customers as possible through our flyers, mailings, emails, social media platforms and coordination with other utilities. We will continue to seek additional opportunities to raise awareness about our available assistance for our most vulnerable customers.