



## 2019-2020 Winter Protection Brochure

State, Federal and Company Assistance is  
available for you!

**ALPENA POWER COMPANY**  
401 N 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Alpena, MI 49707  
989-358-4900  
or toll free 1-866-358-4900

[www.alpenapower.com](http://www.alpenapower.com)

To help ensure that all Michigan residents have adequate heat throughout the winter of 2019-2020, state and local agencies and utilities have joined in a cooperative effort to provide Michigan residents with information about energy assistance & conservation programs.

**Remember**....you are encouraged to call your utility company as soon as you know you will be unable to pay your bill, please don't wait until you receive a shut off notice. Company representatives can advise you about available payment plans and assistance programs, and any additions or expansions to the programs highlighted here.

Contact Alpena Power Company immediately, at 989-358-4900, if you have a payment problem. Our collection department will work out satisfactory payment arrangements with you.

## ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

### State Emergency Relief Program (SER)

State Emergency Relief is a crisis intervention program that provides assistance for energy-related expenses such as heating fuel, electricity and home repairs. SER is supported by the Federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).

Eligibility is based on one of the following:

- Demonstration of immediate need (past due/shut off notice)
- Declared need for a deliverable fuel
- Verified need for energy-related home repair
- Income
- Assets

Apply online at MI Bridges:

<http://michigan.gov/mibridges>

For help with applying:

<https://newmibridges.michigan.gov/s/isd-find-community-partners>

### Michigan Energy Assistance Program (MEAP)

Once a State Emergency Relief (SER) application has been submitted, additional assistance can be sought through agencies that provide MEAP energy assistance programs that include services that will enable participants to become or move toward becoming self-sufficient, including assisting participants in paying their energy bills on time, budgeting for and contributing to their ability to provide for energy expenses, and assisting participants in being energy efficient.

Need help applying for State Emergency Relief? Contact 2-1-1 or find a MI Bridges Navigator near you: <https://newmibridges.michigan.gov/s/isd-find-community-partners>

MEAP is supported by the state's Low-Income Energy Assistance Fund (LIEAF). An electric utility that chooses not to collect for the LIEAF shall not shut off service to customers for non-payment between November 1 and April 15.

For a list of electric providers that opt-out of collecting the LIEAF, go to:

[www.michigan.gov/mpsc](http://www.michigan.gov/mpsc)

### LIFELINE

Contact: Local Landline Telephone Company  
Contact your local telephone company for details.

## Home Heating Credit

Contact: Michigan Department of Treasury

Apply for a Home Heating Credit (HHC) for the 2019 tax year to help pay winter heating bills if you meet the listed household income guidelines and exemptions. You may claim an exemption for yourself, spouse, and other dependents. Additional exemptions may also be available. HHC is supported by the Federal LIHEAP.

Forms are generally available in mid-to-late January wherever forms can be found. Call Treasury at (517) 636-4486, or visit the website at [www.michigan.gov/treasury](http://www.michigan.gov/treasury). Some local agencies or utility companies may provide assistance in completing the form, due no later than **September 30<sup>th</sup>** of each year. To find an agency that assists with tax preparation, **contact 2-1-1**.

Customers of utilities regulated by the MPSC receive protection from shutoff of their heating fuel service from the time of filing of HHC form with Treasury until the time Treasury issues the credit. However, you must contact your utility company to let them know you filed for the HHC. Keep a copy of the HHC form you file with the number of exemptions claimed and the amount of the credit to use when requesting the status of your application. You will still be required to pay for the electric and natural gas services used during the shutoff protection period.

#### INCOME GUIDELINES 2019 - 2020

Number of Exemptions	110% of Federal Poverty Income Ceiling
0-1	\$ 13,739
2	\$ 18,601
3	\$ 23,463
4	\$ 28,325
5	\$ 33,187
6	\$ 38,049
7	\$ 42,911
8	\$ 47,773

Add \$4,862 for each additional exemption

### United Way 2-1-1

2-1-1 is a one-stop, around-the-clock free phone and online service that links people with information or agencies that can help with utility assistance and other needs such as rent payment help, child and elder care, emergency shelters, job training, counseling, etc. Simply dial 2-1-1 on your phone or visit [mi211.org](http://mi211.org) and click Search Resource Database to get connected to available services.

## Michigan Veterans Trust Fund Emergency Grant Program

Contact: MI Veterans Trust Fund at  
(517)284-5299 or [www.michiganveterans.com](http://www.michiganveterans.com)  
The Fund provides temporary assistance to veterans and their families facing a financial emergency or hardship including the need for energy assistance.

## AFFORDABLE RENTAL HOUSING

Customers looking for affordable rental housing may use the free Michigan Housing Locator at [www.michiganhousinglocator.com](http://www.michiganhousinglocator.com)

## Low Income Home Interest Loans

Contact: MI State Housing Development Authority  
MSHDA offers qualified low-income households low interest home improvement loans of 4% to 8%, depending on income. Loans of 8% are also available to qualified property owners. Homeowners can borrow up to \$25,000 to add insulation, replace the furnace, install energy efficient windows, and pay for other eligible energy improvements. For more details visit the MSHDA website at [www.michigan.gov/mshda](http://www.michigan.gov/mshda) or call (517)373-8370.

## Low-Income Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP)

Contact: NE MI Community Service Agency (989)  
358-4700 • 2375 Gordon Rd • Alpena  
Michigan's Weatherization Assistance Program is a federally funded, low-income residential energy conservation program providing free home energy conservation services to eligible homeowners and renters with a household income at or below 200% of the federal poverty level. You are also eligible if you participate in the Department of Health and Human Services Family Independence Program or receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI). These weatherization services can help reduce energy use and lower utility bills.

If you qualify, a trained inspector will assess your home and determine which measures will be the most beneficial for you. Measures may include adding caulk and weather stripping; wall, basement, and attic insulation and ventilation; and smoke detectors. Contact your local Community Action Agency or go to:

[mcac.memberclicks.net/agency-locator-map](http://mcac.memberclicks.net/agency-locator-map)

For more information or to find the community action agency in your area. For additional information on saving energy and money, visit: [www.energy.gov/energysaver](http://www.energy.gov/energysaver)

## **SHUTOFF PROTECTION PROGRAMS**

### **WINTER PROTECTION PLAN**

Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC)  
November 1, 2019 – March 31, 2020  
Contact: **Alpena Power Co:** (989)358-4900  
401 N. 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Alpena

The Winter Protection Plan (WPP) protects enrolled seniors (age 65 and older) and low-income customers whose annual household income is at or below 150% of the federal poverty level, from service shutoffs and high utility bill payments during the heating season (November 1 – March 31). You may also enroll if you receive any of the following services:

- **MDHHS cash assistance including**
- **Supplemental Security Income (SSI)**
- **Food Assistance or**
- **Medicaid**

If you are low-income, you must pay at least 7% of your estimated **annual** bill each month during the protection period. If an arrearage exists at the time you apply for shutoff protection, you must pay the arrearage in equal monthly installments between the date you apply and the start of the next heating season.

If you are low-income **and** your utility service was shut off before you applied for shutoff protection, the utility cannot require a fee, a security deposit or an amount greater than 1/12 of your arrearage in order to restore service or participate in the program.

All customers 65 or older are eligible regardless of income. However, you are responsible for all service used. At the end of the protection period, all customers must arrange to pay the outstanding bills before the next heating season. If you are a senior citizen whose utility service may have been shut off before applying for WPP, the utility must restore your service during the heating season, without any payments. Although no specific payments are required during the heating season, you are encouraged to pay what you can to avoid large payments when the protection period ends.

**Participation does not relieve you from the responsibility for paying for electricity,** but does prevent a shut off during the winter months. At the end of the protection period (March 31), both low-income and seniors participating in the plan

must arrange with their utility to pay any money owed before the start of the next protection period.

**Note:** Winter shut off protections do not apply to customers that are shut off, or who had a pending shut off for unauthorized utility service within the past 2 years at the customer's current address, until all charges are paid or the customer makes satisfactory payment arrangements with the utility company.

Income Guidelines 2019-2020			
Number of Household Members	150% of Poverty Guidelines	Number of Household Members	150% of Poverty Guidelines
1	\$ 18,735	5	\$ 45,255
2	\$ 25,365	6	\$ 51,885
3	\$ 31,995	7	\$ 58,515
4	\$ 38,625	8	\$ 65,145

Add \$6,630 for each additional household member.

### **Senior Citizens**

The account holder who is an eligible senior citizen, age 65 and older, is protected from disconnection of service during the heating season (November 1 through March 31) at the customer's documented personal residence. The utility will restore service for the customer during the heating season without payment of the amount due, deposits, reconnection fees, or other charges. At the end of the heating season, the account will be placed on a payment plan and payment must begin immediately. Contact the utility directly to enroll on the WPP.

### **MEDICAL EMERGENCY PROTECTION**

*Contact: Alpena Power Company*

You can receive a medical hold preventing service from being shutoff for nonpayment on your natural gas and/or electric bill for up to 21 days if you or a member of your household has an existing medical condition that would be aggravated by the lack of utility service.

Your condition must be certified by a physician or public health office on an MPSC approved Medical Certification Form. The form must state the medical condition, medical equipment and specific time period a shutoff of utility service would make the medical condition worse.

If the shutoff of service occurred before a medical emergency is approved, the utility will restore service, at no cost to you, for 21 days. You can obtain an extension of the medical hold and a postponement of shutoff of service for a total of 63

days (three separate medical holds) in any 12 month period per household member. Annually, the utility is not required to grant shutoff extensions totaling more than 126 days per **household**.

Customers would be granted a three-business day grace period from shutoff of utility service for time to have the Medical Certification Form completed. A utility shall not require payment for an after-hours reconnect fee or a deposit as a condition of restoring service. The Medical Certification Form is available from your utility and on its website. It is also available at [www.michigan.gov/mpsc](http://www.michigan.gov/mpsc)

### **CRITICAL CARE PROTECTION**

*Contact: Alpena Power Company*

A customer or household can receive protection from disconnection or have services restored due to inability to pay if there is an identified critical care customer in the home and interruption of service would be immediately life threatening. A critical care customer is someone who requires home medical equipment or a life support system that must be certified by a physician or public health office on an MPSC approved Medical Certification Form.

Customers would be granted a three-business day grace period from shutoff of utility service for time to have the Medical Certification Form completed. You will be contacted by the utility when any scheduled service interruptions occur. The utility will also notify you before any remote shutoff of utility services. If critical care status changes, you, or a person in your household, must let the utility know of the status change. However, if a person's status does not change you must submit an updated Medical Certification Form to the utility on an annual basis. The Medical Certification Form is available from your utility on their website or at [www.michigan.gov/mpsc](http://www.michigan.gov/mpsc)

### **ACTIVE DUTY IN THE MILITARY**

*Contact: Alpena Power Company*

If you or your spouse is the utility company customer of record and either of you are called to full-time active military service, by the President of the United States or the Governor of Michigan, during a national or state emergency or war, you may apply for shut-off protection of your electric or natural gas service for up to 90 days. You may also reapply for extensions of this protection. Your utility company may request verification of active duty status. In addition, you must notify the utility company when your status changes. Contact the

utility company to set up a payment plan for all past due amounts to be paid within twelve months. You will still be required to pay for services used while in the program.

### **STATE EARNED INCOME CREDIT**

*Contact: Michigan Department of Treasury at [www.michigan.gov/treasury](http://www.michigan.gov/treasury)*

For the tax year a taxpayer may claim a Michigan earned income tax credit equal to a percentage of the federal earned income tax credit for which the taxpayer is eligible, if any. The Michigan credit assists working families struggling to keep up with rising costs. Watch for additional information in the Michigan income tax booklet or visit the website at [www.michigan.gov/treasury](http://www.michigan.gov/treasury)

### **EARNED INCOME CREDIT**

*Contact: U.S. Treasury Department, Internal Revenue Service at [www.irs.gov/EITC](http://www.irs.gov/EITC)*

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, but must file a tax return to do so. If you are married, you must file jointly to qualify. To file, fill out for 1040 or 1040A and attach the EIC form.