

Bulletin 2020-19

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Utility Payment Deferral Program funding request details for electricity and natural gas service providers

The Utility Payment Deferral Program, announced by the government of Alberta on March 18, 2020, was put in place to support Albertans who are experiencing financial hardship directly related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Regulated service providers and non-regulated service providers implemented the program immediately.

Residential, farm and small commercial electricity customers who consume less than 250,000 kilowatt hours of electricity per year and residential, farm and small commercial natural gas customers who consume less than 2,500 gigajoules per year can request to defer payment of their electricity and natural gas bills from their service provider. Customers who defer between March 18, 2020 and June 18, 2020, will not be charged late payment fees, interest, or be disconnected or referred to a collection agency for non-payment.

On May 12, 2020 the *Utility Payment Deferral Act* came into effect. The act formally sets out government policy, establishes criteria for eligible customers, and provides definitions for various time periods in the program, parties involved in utility provision and the terms of financial backstops provided by the government, provincial agencies and companies.

The Alberta Utilities Commission is responsible for overseeing the program including reviewing and approving applications from electricity and natural gas service providers that request funding as a result of customers deferring the payment of utility bills. The AUC is now accepting applications from service providers under the Utility Payment Deferral Program.

The deadline for the first round of funding applications will be May 22, 2020. The Commission has developed a streamlined application review and approval process for service providers and is providing relevant materials on the AUC [COVID-19 impacts web page](#). Available on this page are:

- [Utility Payment Billing Deferral Program Manual](#), which includes:
 - A [How to file a billing deferral application using the eFiling System](#) document.
 - A [Utility Payment Billing Deferral Program application template](#) for applicants to follow.
 - A [Utility Payment Billing Deferral Program service provider application spreadsheet template](#).
 - A [sample senior officer's attestation letter](#).
 - A [sample electricity service bill](#) showing which components are eligible for funding.
 - A [sample natural-gas service bill](#) showing which components are eligible for funding.

The Commission's eFiling System will be the central repository for service providers' applications, decisions and related reporting documentation. The eFiling System has been set up such that each service provider's information is kept confidential.

For more information please contact Fino Tiberi or Andrea Laroia at regulatorypolicy@auc.ab.ca or review the documents found on the AUC [COVID-19 impacts page](#).

Douglas A. Larder, QC
General Counsel