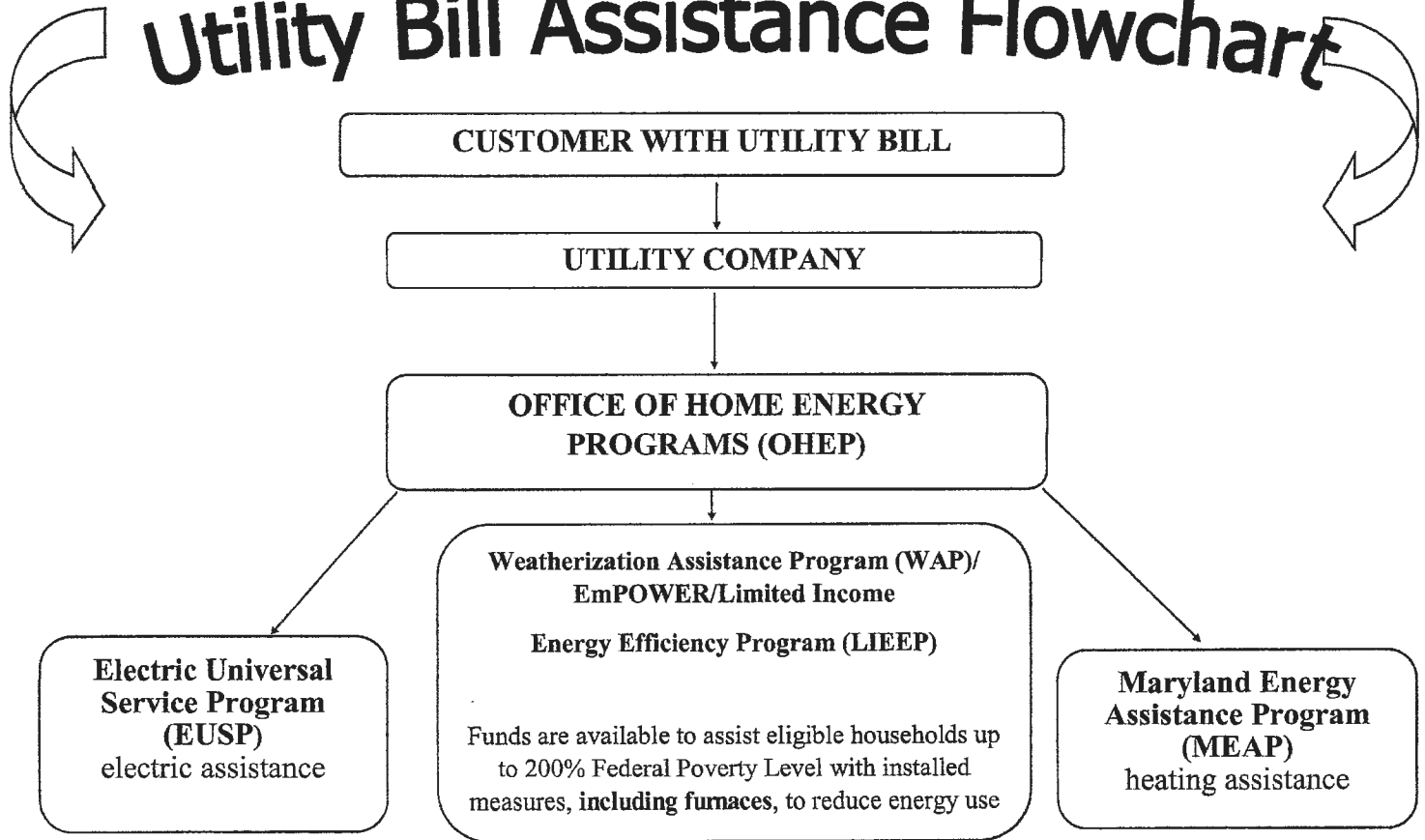
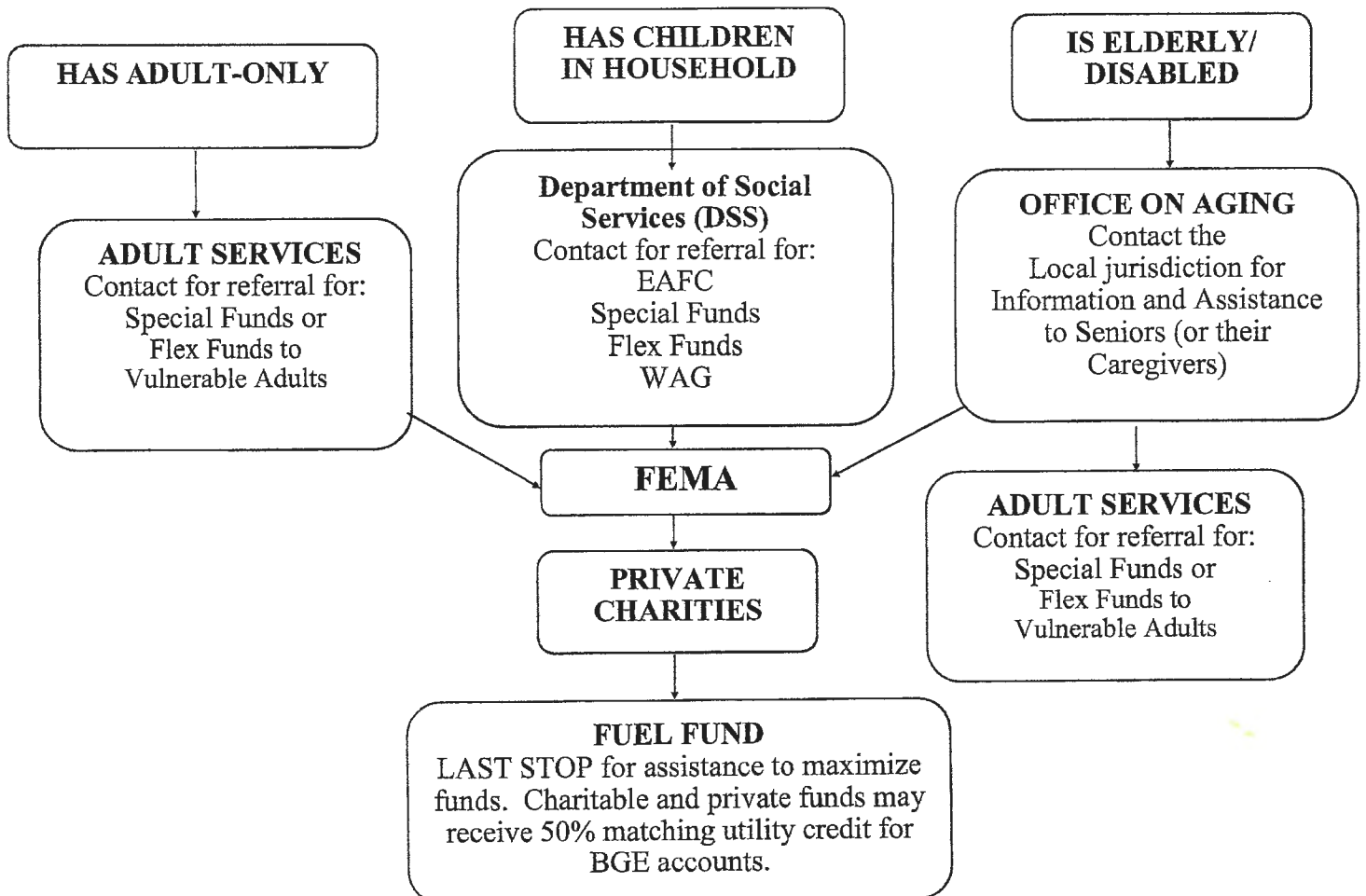


Utility Bill Assistance Flowchart



If customer needs further assistance and,



MONTGOMERY COUNTY RESOURCE GUIDE

1-2-3 Utility Bill Assistance

1. Apply for energy assistance.

Income eligible customers may qualify for Maryland state energy assistance programs that can help pay their utility bills. A detailed description of these programs are provided in this packet. There is one application for all Maryland state energy assistance programs.

Maryland Energy Assistance Program (MEAP) distributes funds for gas, oil, electricity and other home heating and cooling bills to income eligible individuals and families.

Electric Universal Service Program (EUSP) is a program that helps income eligible electricity customers pay their electric bills. It provides both assistance with future bills and past due electric bills. Some customers who are not eligible for MEAP are eligible for EUSP.

Gas Arrearage Retirement Assistance (GARA) is a program that helps income eligible gas customers with past-due gas bills.

Enrollment in these programs is not automatic. You must meet eligibility requirements and apply with a local assistance agency. Local assistance offices are listed in this guide. For locations in other counties, contact the Maryland Office of Home Energy Programs (1-800-332-6347).

2. Ask about other energy assistance funds.

Supplementary assistance may be obtained from a local Fuel Fund, state or local programs, and faith based organizations. Information about some of these programs is included in this packet and can be obtained from your local energy assistance office. You may also consider calling 2-1-1 for information on other utility resources in your community.

3. Try to work out a payment arrangement.

If you still owe money to the utility after applying for energy assistance, or did not qualify for assistance, you should contact your utility to work out a reasonable payment arrangement for the past due amount.

If you try to work out a reasonable payment arrangement and are not successful, contact the Public Service Commission (PSC).

Make a complaint online at

www.psc.state.md.us. Call 410-767-8028 to request a complaint form. The PSC complaint form is enclosed in this packet.

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Electric and Natural Gas Utilities

Electric

POTOMAC ELECTRIC POWER CO. (PEPCO)

701 Ninth Street, NW
Washington, DC 20068
202-833-7500
Report an outage: 1-877-737-2662
www.pepco.com

WASHINGTON GAS LIGHT CO. (WGL)

6801 Industrial Road
Springfield, VA 22151
1-800-752-7520
www.washgas.com

POTOMAC EDISON

(formerly Allegheny Power)
10435 Downsville Pike
Hagerstown, MD 21740
1-800-686-0011
Report an outage: 1-800-544-4877
www.alleghenypower.com

Gas and Electric

BALTIMORE GAS & ELECTRIC (BGE)

P. O. Box 1475
Baltimore, MD 21203-1475
1-800-685-0123
Credit & Collections: 1-800-685-2210
Report an outage: 877-778-2222
www.bge.com

Electric & Gas Utility Programs

BUDGET BILLING (EVEN MONTHLY PAYMENTS).

Utilities offer Budget Billing (an even monthly payment plan) for customers. This allows a customer to pay the same amount every month based on their expected annual usage. This amount may change periodically if you use more or less gas or electricity than expected. The program does not eliminate monthly charges on the bill, but it does even them out. The program is especially helpful if a customer wants to maintain a fairly fixed amount of expenses throughout the year.

BILL EXTENDER PLAN.

Utilities are required to adjust a customer's bill due date if they receive monthly income through Social Security or another government-sponsored assistance program. This can help avoid late payment fees, since a customer can pay the bill after receipt of their monthly income.

UTILITY SERVICE PROTECTION PROGRAM (USPP).

The USPP program is designed to protect households from utility service terminations during the winter and may waive reconnection and security deposit fees for off-service customers. The program is only available to MEAP recipients who enroll in the company's Budget Billing program.

PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS WITH THE UTILITY.

Customers who are having difficulty paying their gas or electric bills should ask the utility about a payment plan to pay past-due bills over time. A deferred payment plan should take a customer's individual circumstances into account, including other available assistance, income, and the amount owed. If the utility will not work with the customer to establish reasonable payment arrangements, the customer should contact the Public Service Commission's Consumer Assistance Division immediately to file a complaint.

DISPUTES WITH THE UTILITY.

Customers should contact the utility first to request information or resolve a dispute. If it is not resolved, a customer may file a complaint with the PSC. You can file a complaint online at www.psc.state.md.us or request a complaint form by calling 410-767-8028. The form is also included in this packet.

CONSUMER ASSISTANCE DIVISION

6 St. Paul Street, Suite 1501
Baltimore, MD 21202-3486
Phone: 410-767-8028, press "1" at prompt
Toll-free: 1-800-492-0474
Fax: 410-333-6844
Website: www.psc.state.md.us

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Department of Social Services (DSS) - Energy Assistance

Each local DSS agency has discretion to allocate the funds described below in different ways. If a customer is not currently receiving services through DSS (e.g. TCA, TEMHA), he or she can still contact the local DSS agency for possible assistance with housing and energy emergencies. Please note that all of these grants are highly discretionary and based on funding availability.

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE TO FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN (EAFC)

EAFC is an emergency grant program that may be accessed once every 24 months. The grant may be used for household emergencies, including utility bills. It is available to families with one or more children under the age of 21, who are related to (and reside with) the applicant. A person does not have to be receiving any state assistance to apply for an emergency grant. However, he or she must document individual circumstances.

FLEX FUNDS

Flex Funds may be available for households in order to maintain or reunify children with their families. These monies are available for a variety of needs, but the goods and services purchased must be related to the child's or family's needs. These funds may also be available for vulnerable adults in households without children depending on the situation and need.

WELFARE AVOIDANCE GRANT (WAG)

A WAG grant provides cash assistance to avoid the need for TCA and/or other benefits. Payment is made on behalf of a family with children for immediate and limited work-related needs. This is not an entitlement program. Funding is limited and can only be used for needs directly related to obtaining or maintaining employment such as vehicle repairs and job-related equipment. Persons who receive a WAG cannot receive TCA benefits for a specified time period.

"SPECIAL" OR "LOCAL" FUNDS

"Special" or "local" funds are charitable or local funds available for household emergencies. Local jurisdictions set eligibility criteria and grant amounts. Funds are intermittent and limited and allocated based upon a household's income and level of need.

To more information or to apply for any of these DSS funds, contact:

**MONT. CO. DEPT. OF
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES**
1301 Piccard Drive, 2nd Floor
Rockville, MD 20850
Phone: 240-777-0311
Mon.— Fri. 8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

ASSISTANCE FOR SENIORS

Senior Citizens (or their caregiver) with a utility emergency should call for information and assistance at:

**MONT. CO. AREA AGENCY ON
AGING Div. of Aging and Disability
Services**

401 Hungerford Drive, 3rd Floor
Rockville, MD 20850
Phone: 240-777-3000
Fax: 240-777-1495

Email:

Odile.brunetto@montgomerycountymd.gov

If you have questions or concerns with DSS, call:

DHR CONSTITUENT SERVICES
Toll-free: 1-800-332-6347

MONTGOMERY COUNTY RESOURCE GUIDE

Private Charities & Other Funds

FUEL FUNDS

Local Fuel Funds are non-profits that offers financial assistance to income eligible households whose utility service is off, if they have a turn-off notice, or are in need of bulk fuel. Generally, all Fuel Funds use the 200% of Poverty Income Guidelines (see the EmPOWER income guidelines in this packet) for eligibility and require applicants to exhaust all other funding sources. Most, if not all, Fuel Funds partner with the local utility companies.

The local Fuel Fund will determine the maximum dollar amount/bulk fuel they can provide to each household. Fuel Fund assistance is only available once in a 12-month period. You must complete an OHEP application before applying.

You can apply online at Fuel Fund of Maryland

www.fuelfundmaryland.org/apply
or by calling 410-235-9080

To apply for the **Fuel Fund** or other non-profit funding sources contact the following agencies:

2-1-1 Maryland
Dial: 211;
email: INFO@211MD.ORG

FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (FEMA) FUNDS

Each year, FEMA (the Federal agency responsible for providing disaster relief) distributes certain emergency funds to the state. These funds are available in certain local jurisdictions throughout the State of Maryland, and may be used for utility emergencies.

For more information or to apply for charitable assistance call:

WASHINGTON AREA FUEL FUND SALVATION ARMY

20021 Aircraft Drive
Germantown, MD 20874
Phone: 301-515-5354
Fax: 301-515-7253

Mon-Fri 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Call for an appointment.

Interfaith Works (Provides family, Housing and Homeless Services)

Administrative Offices

114 W. Montgomery Avenue
Rockville, MD 20850
Phone: 301-762-8682
Fax: 301-762-8773

****ALERT****

If you have trouble contacting any Fuel Fund agencies on this page please contact 2-1-1 for assistance.

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Water Bill Assistance WSSC Customer Assistance Program

Households in Montgomery County receive water and sewer service from the **Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC)**. Residential customers who are enrolled in the Office of Home Energy Program's energy assistance programs are eligible to receive financial assistance for their WSSC water bills through the **WSSC Customer Assistance Program (CAP)**. **Contact OHEP at 301-277-6103.**

CAP-approved customers will only be charged for actual water and sewer usage, and not for distribution services or infrastructure investments. WSSC will post a credit on their water and sewer bills equal to the Account Maintenance Fee (AMF) and Infrastructure Investment Fee (IIF). The average annual savings for CAP customers will be approximately \$28/quarter or \$112/year.

CAP customers also are automatically eligible for an exemption from the \$15/quarter (\$60/year) Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund (BRF).

CAP approved customers will receive the WSSC CAP credit automatically upon approval by OHEP. WSSC will send a notice to the customer. CAP status also can be checked at <https://www.wsscwater.com/cap>

BRF Hardship Exemption Program

Customers who are not approved for OHEP programs may still request a hardship exemption if they meet 2 of the 4 following criteria:

- Received assistance from the WSSC Water Fund within the last 12 months
- Received public assistance or SNAP (food stamps)
- Received Veteran's Disability or SSD benefits
- Meet OHEP income criteria based on current tax return

Customer can obtain the application at <https://www.wsscwater.com/bayexempt> or by calling WSSC at 301-206-4001 or by email request to cust-services@wsscwater.com.

Salvation Army – Water Fund

The Salvation Army provides grants of up to \$500 annual for financial hardship in paying WSSC bills. The contact number is 301-515-5354.

Eligibility: You must be the account-holder, live in the county, and provide a picture ID and proof of income (up to 200% of the federal poverty level)

Other assistance programs

Assistance with water bills may be available from local Department of Social Services (DSS), if service is threatened (see p. 9) or with a referral from 2-1-1 Maryland: Dial 211 or email INFO@211MD.ORG