

BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF MISSOURI

In the Matter of a Working Case for)
Commission Review and)
Consideration of Utility Assistance)
Programs and Special Alternative)
Residential Customer Rates)

File No. OW-2026-0085

ORDER REQUESTING RESPONSES AND SCHEDULING WORKSHOP

Issue Date: March 26, 2026

Effective Date: March 26, 2026

The Commission opened this working case to review currently existing utility assistance programs and further gather information on how best to implement the special alternative residential customer rates or bill discounts contemplated by Section 393.1680, RSMo. The Commission directed regulated utilities to provide information regarding their utility assistance programs. Commission Staff conducted follow up meetings and additional information was filed in the case.

The Commission now finds it would be helpful to receive information from other stakeholders, including stakeholders who administer utility assistance programs. The Commission is including a series of questions and information requests with this order and is providing the opportunity for stakeholders to respond.

The Commission will also schedule a workshop meeting in this matter for stakeholders to attend. The workshop meeting will be held on June 2, 2026, in Room 450 of the Governor Office Building. More information about registration and the agenda for the workshop meeting will be filed in this case.

As this is not a contested case, anyone may file a response or comment without legal counsel and without ex parte constraints. Intervention requests are not necessary to submit comments or view documents.

The public is welcome to submit comments online, by email, in writing or by telephone. All comments should reference related submission number OW-2026-0085. Electronic comments may be submitted through the Commission's website at <https://psc.mo.gov>. (Click on the Submit Comments link on the upper right side of the page.) Comments in hard copy should be addressed to the Commission, Attn: Consumer Services Unit, at P.O. Box 360, Jefferson City, Missouri, 65102. E-mailed comments may be sent to pscinfo@psc.mo.gov and telephone comments may be made by calling 1-800-392-4211¹.

The public can view the contents of the file by accessing the Commission's E-Filing system (EFIS) on the Commission's website at <https://psc.mo.gov>.

THE COMMISSION ORDERS THAT:

1. Stakeholders are invited to provide responses and comments to the questions and information requests in Attachment A no later than April 27, 2026.
2. The Commission will schedule an in-person only workshop meeting on June 2, 2026, in the Governor Office Building, Room 450, 200 Madison St., Jefferson City, MO 65102.
- 3 This order shall be effective when issued.

¹ TTY: 1-866-735-2460. Relay Missouri: Dial "711" and ask for 1-800-392-4211.



BY THE COMMISSION

Nancy Dippell

Nancy Dippell
Secretary

Ronald D. Pridgin, Deputy Chief
Regulatory Law Judge,
by delegation of authority pursuant to
Section 386.240, RSMo 2016.

Dated at Jefferson City, Missouri,
on this 26th day of March, 2026.

Part A: Provider Information Request

If you or your organization helps or has previously helped administer a utility assistance program (weatherization, LIHEAP, PAYS, Keeping Current, Dollar Help, Dollar More, ERPP, Critical Needs, Low-Income Assistance Programs, Payment Partner Program, etc.) please provide your name and the name of your organization. Please include the following:

1. List the name of each assistance program that you help/helped administer and include your utility partner (i.e., Ameren, Evergy Metro and/or West, Missouri-American Water, Summit Gas, Liberty Utilities (Empire), Spire Gas). If you work directly with a state agency, please list the state agency.
 - a. If your organization is a current program administrator, please provide the initial date of the contract for each program. If your organization no longer assists with the administration of a utility assistance program, please provide the timeframe in which you were contracted to administer the program(s).
 - b. How many employees from your organization perform or performed intake and approval for each program? Please break down the duties for each employee assigned to processing applications.
 - c. For each program, please provide the average number of applications that are processed each month. If there are seasonal changes or other factors that increase or decrease the number of assistance requests, please explain.
2. Does your organization conduct internal surveys or evaluations to gauge the effectiveness of the programs that you help or helped administer? If yes, please explain the process and indicate whether the results are shared with utility partners and/or state agencies.
3. Based on your experience and feedback from customers that participate in assistance programs, what are the strengths and weaknesses of each program that you help or helped administer? If you have empirical and/or anecdotal support for your comments, please provide them as well.

Part B: Stakeholder Information Request

All interested stakeholders are invited to submit responses to any or all of the following questions. To ensure submissions are as helpful as possible, respondents are encouraged to provide specific information and data relevant to circumstances experienced in Missouri, "lessons learned" from other jurisdictions, and citations.

1. Please provide information on the adequacy of any existing programs in reducing disconnections and arrearages for high-burden households. Specifically:

- a. The degree to which current programs improve long-term household stability (e.g., reduction in "repeat" shutoffs) versus providing one-time crisis relief,
 - b. The specific program features (e.g., predictable monthly payments, income-based caps, arrearage forgiveness, and hardship protections) demonstrated to be most effective at stabilizing households and preventing "repeated cycles" of late payments,
 - c. The customer categories (e.g., irregular income, medical debt, unbanked) currently underserved or excluded by these programs,
 - d. The primary factors limiting the effectiveness of current designs, such as funding caps, restrictive eligibility windows, or administrative barriers, and
 - e. The specific modifications or alternative models (e.g., income-based caps or automatic enrollment) that could close identified gaps.
2. What criteria and mechanisms should be used to determine program enrollment? Please provide any information or suggestions on the following:
- a. Principles that should be used to establish eligibility criteria (e.g., need, administrative feasibility, accuracy, and alignment with household need) and how to prioritize access to assistance when resources are limited,
 - b. Income thresholds, vulnerability indicators, or energy burden metrics for determining program eligibility,
 - c. Effectiveness of automatic enrollment,
 - d. Risk-management practices (e.g., random audits, post-enrollment verification, data-matching) that are effective without creating undue burden for applicants, and
 - e. Program design elements that prevent fraud, collecting duplicate benefits, or mismanagement while maintaining accessibility for eligible households.
3. Please describe:
- a. Administrative practices that reduce customer burden and streamline application, verification, and recertification processes (e.g., short-form applications, online portals, single-point-of-entry systems),
 - b. Program design elements that reduce administrative workload while maintaining accurate eligibility determinations, and
 - c. Strategies from other jurisdictions that have effectively reduced verification or recertification barriers.
4. Please identify and provide any information on the following:
- a. Metrics that should be used to evaluate program performance, measure impacts, and assess cost-effectiveness,
 - b. Metrics for evaluating the effectiveness of marketing, education, and outreach efforts,
 - c. Customer-experience metrics that should be used to evaluate program accessibility, clarity, and ease of navigation, including the application, verification, and enrollment processes,
 - d. Metrics for evaluating whether verification requirements are appropriately calibrated to risk, and

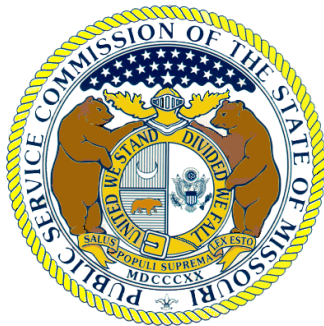
- e. Metrics that should be used to assess whether programs improve long-term household stability, reduce arrearages, prevent disconnections, and support energy-efficiency or weatherization investments.
5. Please identify and evaluate:
 - a. The relationship between utility rate structures and the success of assistance programs.
 - b. How the following rate design elements affect households with limited or no income flexibility:
 - i. fixed charges
 - ii. seasonal usage and rates
 - iii. time-variant pricing
 6. Identify specific program elements that have demonstrated the greatest success in reducing reliance on crisis assistance. (e.g., offering 1/12th debt forgiveness in exchange for on-time payments, offering levelized billing)
 7. Describe the implementation challenges that should be anticipated when launching new assistance programs.

STATE OF MISSOURI

OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

I have compared the preceding copy with the original on file in this office and I do hereby certify the same to be a true copy therefrom and the whole thereof.

WITNESS my hand and seal of the Public Service Commission, at Jefferson City, Missouri, this 26th day of March 2026.



Nancy Dippell

Nancy Dippell
Secretary

MISSOURI PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

March 26, 2026

Case No: OW-2026-0085

MO PSC Staff

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Enclosed find a certified copy of an Order or Notice issued in the above-referenced matter(s).¹

Sincerely,



**Nancy Dippell
Secretary**

¹

Recipients listed above with a valid e-mail address will receive electronic service. Recipients without a valid e-mail address will receive paper service.