

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

PROGRAMMATIC QUESTIONS

ELIGIBLE COSTS

Can late fees or termination fees be covered by the payment?

The eligible expenses are focused on the costs incurred to provide service to the customer. Late fees do not meet the intent of the program and should be waived by the utility. Termination fees should also be waived when issued as a result of the customer waiting for financial assistance through this program. Utilities should assess their own administrative capabilities toward meeting these expectations and make adjustments when they apply the payments wherever possible.

Our utility's water/sewer/garbage/recycling/landfill/storm sewer charges are all combined into one bill. Will this program pay for all combined city services or single out just water?

The RUDP will pay for all reasonable fees included in a customer's water bills. Water, sewer, garbage, recycling, landfill, and storm sewer charges are all considered reasonable. Other included charges may also be eligible.

Our utility's electric and water services are combined, can they submit one application?

Yes. If your utility provides a combine service type (electric/natural gas, electric/water), the applicant can submit one application.

Our utility also bills for cable and internet. Can applicants include those costs in their application?

No, cable and internet are not considered reasonable costs for this program and are therefore ineligible. If an applicant's bill includes these charges, they will need to remove those line items from their application.

PAYMENT PLANS, DISCONNECTION AND LIHEAP

We have customers who are under threat of disconnection, can they apply?

Yes. On the application, there is a question specifically regarding disconnection notices received by applicants. Additional information about the timing of disconnections and application processing can be emailed to homeenergysupport@iowaeda.com.

Does an application to the residential program protect a customer from disconnection for non-payment?

No, an application to the Residential Utility Disruption Prevention Program does not protect a customer from disconnection. However, IEDA is hopeful that utilities will take a pending application into account when considering disconnection.

If the customer accrued the debt during the covered time-period and has entered into a Payment Agreement would they be able to apply?

Yes, IEDA will accept applications that include payment plans that cover debt accrued during the eligible timeframe (March 17 through the date of application). If the payment plans include debt outside of that timeframe, only the debt incurred during the eligible timeframe will be eligible. If a utility receives an award that appears to cover debt outside of the eligible timeframe, they should only apply the award to the covered debt and return any overage.

If a customer is also determined to eligible for LIHEAP, can the funds received from the RUDP be applied to same debt?

No. As both LIHEAP and RUDP are federal funds, the two cannot be used to cover the same debt. For example: If an applicant applies and is approved for LIHEAP monetary assistance and the award covers the entire debt owed to the utility, the applicant cannot apply for RUDP. If the award from LIHEAP does not cover the entire debt, and RUDP funds will be utilities to cover the remaining debt, they can apply for assistance.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

Is there a way for an applicant to receive assistance in completing their application?

Yes, if an applicant requires assistance with completing their application online due to an inability to access the application portal, they can call the RUDP helpline and request a proxy service. The helpline will take their information and send it to our proxy service who will then contact them to gather the necessary documents and schedule a time to complete the application.

We service a high percentage of non-English speakers. Do you offer translation services?

Yes, when applicants call our helpline, there is an option for additional languages and translation services. Also, if an applicant requires a proxy service for completing an application, a translation service is available to help complete their application via the proxy.

PORTAL QUESTIONS

COMMUNICATION

Will the utility be able to confirm if a customer has applied for the program?

Yes, utilities will be provided with twice weekly emails which will include the names of customers who have applied, been approved, and been denied. These emails will be specific to the utility and will be sent on Monday and Thursday afternoons. If the emails do not have sufficient information, utilities may email homeenergyrecovery@iowaeda.com to inquire about an individual and whether they have applied but due to email volume in the program, it may take a few days to provide a response. Please see the additional questions in the section for information regarding read-only access to the application portal.

PORTAL ACCESS/USE

Is there, a way for utility representatives to view all applications that have been submitted, approved, or denied for their own utility?

Yes. There is a read-only access to the application portal specific to the utility contact's customers. Individuals receiving emails as a representative of their utility in the portal have access. Email homeenergysupport@iowaeda.com for a link to the portal.

How do I log into the Portal for the first time?

Enter your email address for your username, click on the trouble signing in link, and then create a new password. In this portal, you will see application amounts and their status, but due to potential adjustments along the way in the review process, you should only count the assistance as being approved when the entire application shows as approved.

I can see that one of my customers has completed an application that is currently in review. Can we be sure that the amount of assistance the applicant applied for is the amount that will be approved?

No, the approved and paid amounts may differ from the request amount depending on how the applicant filled out the online form. We have noticed, for example, that some applicants have not included payment plan amounts in their past due amount or are using their current amount due for both the past due amount and the current amount due. When these mistakes occur, the review team may alter the amount of the assistance requested.

STATUS QUESTIONS

What does the “in-review” status mean?

This status means that the application has been assigned to a member of our review team for review. Once it has been reviewed, it will move to either approved or denied status, before finally moving to a paid status. The statuses before “paid” may not be that informative to utility partners, so our team suggests looking for this status when checking on approval amounts for specific customers.

In the portal, an application’s status says both “denied” and “in-review”. What does that mean?

When an applicant submits an application, the application is divided into three smaller sections for review: electric, natural gas, and water. As the application moves through the review process, one or more of these sections may be approved or denied, while the others are still in review. Utilities should only count the assistance as being approved or denied when the entire application shows as approved or denied.

PAYMENT QUESTIONS

How will payments be made?

Payments will be made as a one-time payment to utility. You will receive an email with the applicant information and the amount of the payment. The utility then must apply this payment to the customer’s account to cover the debt amount. If the customer has combined utility services of more than one type, the utility can split the payment to cover the charges in each category according to their records. If this payment results in a credit that is in excess of any late fees or charges that are waived due to program requirements, the utility will need to send the overage back to IEDA. Please note that payment notification emails will be sent to the email provided when you completed the utility survey. If this email needs to be sent to another member of your team, please notify us as soon as possible.

Will we receive a separate payment for each individual application that is approved for our utility?

If a utility has multiple applications that are approved and paid on the same day, the utility may receive payments that cover more than one application. In addition to the payment, you will receive an email from the portal, which will provide guidance about the award amount tied to each applicant.

When will payments be made?

IEDA and their subcontractors are working through applications and will process payments as quickly as possible once applications are approved.

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**A payment received from RUDP has resulted in an overage on a customer's account.
What should we do?**

When possible, utilities should strive to return the overpayment to IEDA. To facilitate this return, please contact homeenergysupport@iowaeda.com and put "Return Payment" in the subject line. IEDA recognizes that the return of these overages is not always possible, due to billing mechanisms and the application of funds received. If it is not possible to return the overages, but it is administratively possible to hold them separately, IEDA will allow the funds to be reserved by the utility for application to other customers who did not apply for the program, but are encountering difficulty paying their utility bills. If the utility elects to utilize the funds in this manner, they will need to track the overages and provide a report by 12/31 detailing how the funds were spent.