

122:5-3-02

**Criteria for customer eligibility.**

- (A) Customer of a participating utility. An individual must be a residential customer of an electric distribution utility or a participating electric cooperative or municipal electric company to participate in the PIPP plus program.
- (B) Household income
- (1) Compared to federal poverty guidelines. Any customer whose annual household income is one hundred ~~fifty-seventy-five~~ per cent or less than the federal poverty guideline for the corresponding household size shall be eligible to participate in the PIPP plus program. A customer will be considered to meet the income eligibility requirement if the customer's documented household income for the thirty days prior to enrollment, if annualized, is one hundred ~~fifty-seventy-five~~ percent or less than the federal poverty guideline for the corresponding household size, provided, however, if the customer's actual household income for the thirty days prior to enrollment is not reflective of their annual income, documentation of their annual household income is required. The customer will be considered to meet the income eligibility requirement if the documented annual household income is one hundred ~~fifty-seventy-five~~ per cent or less than the federal poverty guideline for the corresponding household size.
  - (2) Sources of income. For purposes of determining eligibility for low-income customer assistance programs, "household income" includes all sources of income except sources of income expressly excluded. The director shall review sources of income annually and publish specific exclusions from household income as part of the annual LIHEAP plan. After such public hearings as required by federal law for the annual LIHEAP plan, the director shall publish exclusions from household income in the annual energy assistance guidelines, which the director shall make available through various publication channels throughout the state, including at local agencies, by request to the office of community assistance and by publication on the development services agency website. To assist local agencies and potential PIPP plus customers, the director may also compile and publish with the exclusions a non-exhaustive list of items included in the determination of household income.
- (C) Commitment to participate in a payment plan program. Any customer who enrolls in the PIPP plus program must be willing to participate actively in the program and contribute in a meaningful way to the cost of their electric service. A customer will satisfy this eligibility requirement by paying a monthly PIPP plus installment calculated as provided in these rules, but not less than ten dollars. Any overpayment of PIPP plus or Graduate PIPP plus payments shall be applied to future PIPP plus or graduate PIPP plus payments once any default balance has been paid.

- (D) Participation in other energy assistance programs. Any customer enrolling in the PIPP plus program shall also apply to participate in any other energy assistance program for which such customer may be eligible for those programs that do not require a payment from the PIPP plus customer. If a customer is determined to be eligible for energy assistance through other programs, then as condition of continuing eligibility for the PIPP plus program such customer shall actively participate in any such energy assistance programs that do not require payment from the customer as a condition for participation.
- (E) Participation in energy efficiency and weatherization programs. Any PIPP plus customer who is the owner of a residence for which energy efficiency and weatherization services are offered by the director shall be required to accept such services as a condition for continuing eligibility for the PIPP plus program for those services that do not require a payment from the PIPP plus customer. If a customer fails to actively participate in any such energy assistance programs that do not require payment from a customer as a condition for participation, the director may give thirty days prior written notice of termination of the customer's continued participation in the PIPP plus program. If a PIPP plus customer resides in a rental property and energy efficiency and weatherization services are offered by the director for such rental property, such PIPP plus customer shall be required to accept such services as a condition for continuing eligibility for the PIPP plus program unless the residence owner refuses consent for energy efficiency and weatherization services. Department-authorized service providers that perform energy efficiency and weatherization services will solicit consent from rental property owners as further described in paragraph (C) of rule 122:5-3-08 of the Administrative Code. A PIPP plus customer shall not be required to accept energy efficiency and weatherization services that require payment by the customer. The obligation of a PIPP plus customer to accept energy efficiency and weatherization services as provided in this rule shall continue as long as the PIPP plus customer continues to participate in the PIPP plus program.
- (F) Payment reminders. The director, through the office of community assistance, a local agency, or other agent or contractor, may (but shall not be required to) send reminders to PIPP plus customers in advance of bill due dates to make on-time payments, and receipt of any such payment reminders that may be given shall be considered a condition for participation in the PIPP plus program. Payment reminders may be given by telephone, mail, electronic mail or any other communications method selected by the director. The director will not send past due notices to PIPP plus customers nor take any action on behalf of utilities to collect past due amounts.
- (G) Participation in consumer education programs encouraged. PIPP plus customers shall be encouraged by the office of community assistance and local agencies to participate in any consumer education programs, including programs about energy conservation and demand reduction, made available to customers at their local agencies, readily

accessible in their local communities, or offered locally by their electric distribution utility.

(H) Eligibility following account default or disconnection by a utility.

(1) Account default.

- (a) A PIPP plus customer who has ceased to be an active PIPP plus customer as a result of voluntarily leaving or being dropped from the PIPP plus shall be ineligible to participate in the PIPP plus program until such customer pays any past due monthly PIPP plus installment amounts while active on PIPP plus and for any months while not enrolled in PIPP plus, but service was maintained, up to the customer arrearage at the time the customer left the PIPP plus program, less any payments made by the customer as a condition to re-enroll in the PIPP plus program up to twelve months. Any remaining usage charges incurred while the customer was not enrolled in the PIPP plus but utility service was maintained (less payments made) will be rolled into the customer's arrearage. This rule is not intended and should not be interpreted to prevent any customer from taking advantage of any commission rule or order otherwise available to the customer to maintain or reconnect electric service by paying less than the delinquent amounts and reconnect charges.
- (b) If the customer is dropped or voluntarily leaves the PIPP plus program and is subsequently disconnected from service, in order to re-enroll in the PIPP plus program, the customer must pay any missed PIPP plus installments while active on the PIPP plus and for any months while not enrolled in the PIPP plus but service was maintained up to the customer's arrearage at the time the customer left the PIPP plus program and less any payments made by the customer up to twenty-four months. For months not a customer of the utility provider, the customer is not responsible to make a payment.
- (c) To be eligible to continue in the PIPP plus program for the subsequent twelve months, the PIPP plus customer must be current on his/her PIPP plus installment on his/her anniversary date.

If the customer is not current on his/her anniversary date (they have missed two payments and/or have made a minimum of two partial payments), the electric distribution utility will issue a notice on the customer's bill, and the customer will have one billing cycle after the date of the notice to pay past due monthly PIPP plus installment amounts. If such amounts are not timely paid, the electric distribution utility will drop

the customer from the PIPP plus program, and such customer will cease to be an active PIPP plus customer.

- (2) Disconnection for fraud, tampering, or theft. If a utility disconnects electric service to the residence of a PIPP plus customer as permitted by commission rules due to any fraudulent act to obtain service, tampering, or theft of service by the customer or any consumer who is a member of the customer's household, the customer shall cease to be eligible to participate in the PIPP plus program, for that utility, while such fraud, tampering, or theft continues and until the customer completes the actions required to reconnect service as provided in applicable commission rules. No charges for electric service accrued during any period that the customer is ineligible to participate in the PIPP plus program pursuant to this rule and none of the costs described in paragraph (E)(3) of rule 4901:1-18-03 of the Administrative Code or any other commission rule providing for reconnection of service following disconnection for fraud, tampering, or theft shall be charged to or paid from the fund. This rule is not intended and should not be interpreted as creating new or different standards or procedures for utility response to fraud, tampering, or theft or as involving the development services agency in any determination that any fraudulent act to obtain service, tampering, or theft of service has occurred. This rule addresses only the effect of fraudulent acts to obtain service, tampering, and theft, as those acts may be defined by commission rules, on eligibility to participate in the PIPP plus program and reflects that households that participate in fraudulent acts to obtain service, tampering, or theft of service should not benefit from ratepayer funded assistance until corrective action as prescribed by applicable commission rules, if any, has been completed.
- (I) Removal from PIPP plus for fraudulent enrollment. In the event that there is an allegation of fraudulent enrollment regarding a PIPP plus applicant, the director, through the office of community assistance, may investigate such allegation. In the event the director finds that a PIPP plus applicant is enrolled in the PIPP plus program or continues to participate in the PIPP plus program as a result of fraudulent enrollment, the director shall terminate such applicant's enrollment in the PIPP plus program with immediate effect, demand that the applicant make restitution of all payments made from the fund for the benefit of such applicant during the period the applicant was fraudulently enrolled in the PIPP plus program, and reverse any arrearage credits received by such applicant during the period that the applicant was fraudulently enrolled in the PIPP plus program. In addition, any such applicant found to have fraudulently enrolled in the PIPP plus program shall be ineligible to participate in the PIPP plus program for twenty-four months and until any demand for restitution is satisfied.

(J) Removal from PIPP plus or modification of benefits for non-compliance. In the event that there is an allegation of non-compliance regarding a PIPP plus applicant, the director, through the office of community assistance, may investigate such allegation. In the event the director finds that a PIPP plus applicant is enrolled in the PIPP plus program or continues to participate in the PIPP plus program as a result of non-compliance, the director may modify benefits the applicant receives, or terminate such applicant's enrollment in the PIPP plus program with immediate effect, demand that the applicant make restitution of all payments made from the fund for the benefit of such applicant, and reverse any arrearage credits received by the applicant during the period that the applicant was non-compliant in the PIPP plus program. Any such applicant terminated for non-compliance in the PIPP plus program shall be ineligible to participate in the PIPP plus program for twenty-four months and until any demand for restitution is satisfied.

Effective: 7/27/2022

CERTIFIED ELECTRONICALLY

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Certification

07/27/2022

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Date

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