



California Public Utilities Commission  
505 Van Ness Ave., San Francisco

---

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Media Contact: Terrie Prosper, 415.703.1366, [news@cpuc.ca.gov](mailto:news@cpuc.ca.gov)

**PRESS RELEASE**

Docket #: R.18-07-005

## **CPUC Launches Innovative Pilot Program Empowering Consumers to Clear Utility Bills and Regain Financial Stability**

SAN FRANCISCO, Feb. 15, 2024 – In a significant move toward assisting energy consumers and addressing service disconnections, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) today launched a pilot program that utilizes community-based organizations (CBOs) to help those who are behind in paying their utility bills.

The new Arrears Case Management Pilot Program is aimed at reducing residential energy service disconnections for customers of Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E), Southern California Edison (SCE), San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E), and Southern California Gas Company (SoCalGas).

### **Key Highlights**

- **Community-Based Assistance:** Utilities will contract with CBOs to provide case management services. These services will assist up to 12,000 customers in managing their unpaid bills, enrolling in energy assistance and energy efficiency programs, and arranging bill payment plans.
- **Contract Awards:** Within 180 days, the utilities must award contracts to CBOs for the provision of assistance to eligible customers.
- **Program Duration:** The pilot program is slated to conclude in 790 days, offering an extended period for CBOs to make a meaningful impact on reducing energy service disconnections.

“Today’s decision creates a pilot program that will support community-based organizations in providing case management services for customers struggling to pay their energy bills,” said Commissioner Darcie L. Houck. “It creates pathways for trusted community organizations to assist customers in managing

their energy bills through energy assistance, energy efficiency programs, and bill payment plans that will provide options to vulnerable customers that may otherwise be at risk of disconnection.”

This decision builds upon the CPUC’s ongoing efforts to address residential disconnection rates across California’s electric and natural gas investor-owned utilities. Originating from a prior CPUC decision and Senate Bill 598 (Hueso, 2018), the overarching goal of this proceeding is to reduce residential disconnections and enhance reconnection processes.

The CPUC has adopted a phased approach, resulting in the immediate implementation of rules to mitigate residential disconnections. Initiatives such as the Arrearage Management Payment Plan program and the Percentage of Income Payment Plan pilot programs have already been introduced. The approval of the CBO Arrears Case Management Pilot Program further demonstrates the CPUC’s commitment to exploring innovative solutions for enhanced consumer service. This dedication is reinforced by the recent approval of residential disconnection protections for small and multi-jurisdictional energy utilities.

The proposal voted on is available [here](#).

Documents related to the proceeding are available [here](#).

###

### **About the California Public Utilities Commission**

The CPUC regulates services and utilities, protects consumers, safeguards the environment, and assures Californians access to safe and reliable utility infrastructure and services. Visit [www.cpuc.ca.gov](http://www.cpuc.ca.gov) for more information.