



Triple Threat: COVID, Rate Hikes, Power Outages

With the combined crises of COVID-19, electric rate hikes, and the extended power outages from this summer's Tropical Storm Isaias, Operation Fuel is seeing a dramatic increase in calls for help.

In addition to job losses and reduced hours due to coronavirus, many residents also faced loss of food after the storm's power outages which added to their families' financial woes.

And with COVID-19, energy use is up because more people are at home – early analysis of energy use shows an increase in home energy use of up to 20%.

Even before COVID-19's devastating financial impact, the United Way found that more than 400,000 low- and moderate-income Connecticut families were at risk of not being able to pay their utility bills.

Now, families who have never needed emergency energy assistance before are desperately seeking help to keep their power on and their water running.

Online Help Portal's Timely Launch

In July, Operation Fuel debuted our new Home Energy Assistance Application Program, which has proven effective in providing quick, safe help for residents who can now apply online 24/7.

The online system provides an important alternative to in-person appointments to request help. Applying is now more convenient for people who work outside 9-5 business hours, do not have transportation, have limited mobility, or are responsible as caretakers for children or adult family.

The assistance portal can be found online at operationfuel.org/gethelp

New operationfuel.org Website: Get Help, Give Help, Get Info

Be sure to visit Operation's Fuel's new website for a more modern, seamless user experience.

OPERATION FUEL
power for good

GET HELP GIVE HELP f in t y u @

ABOUT NEWS CONTACT DONATE

Latest News: Operation Fuel Fact Sheets: Electric Rates, Energy Efficiency, Shutoff Protection

Powering People, Powered by You

Year-round energy and utility assistance across Connecticut

New Features:

- Online application portal
- News posts
- Advocacy section



**How You've
Helped
Power Families**

Highlights from fiscal year 2020,
which ended June 30, 2020:

6,164

households helped with utility
bills and energy costs

14,457

individuals benefitted from
emergency help

\$2.5m

distributed to families for
emergency grants



**MDC's Jellison Joins
Operation Fuel Board**

Operation Fuel's Board of Directors
elected Scott Jellison, CEO of The
Metropolitan District, to its governing
body in September.

Thank You to Funders, Foundations, Friends

Operation Fuel was humbled to receive a recent legacy gift from a longtime donor, James P. McNulty, who passed away earlier this year. In his will, Mr. McNulty gave Operation Fuel \$400,000 from his estate in the names of his sister Anne B. McNulty and Operation Fuel's co-founder Father Thomas Lynch. We extend our deepest condolences to Mr. McNulty's loved ones and are touched beyond description by his generosity. If you are considering legacy and estate giving, please contact Dana Barcellos-Allen, director of development, at dana@operationfuel.org. Thank you, Mr. McNulty, for using your #PowerForGood to continue to bring warmth and light to thousands of Connecticut residents.

We are grateful for the support of these most recent funders:

- Hartford Foundation for Public Giving \$50,000
- Edward and Mary Lord Foundation \$10,000
- Virginia De Lima, Victor Dufault \$10,000
- Victor Dufault \$10,000
- The Carl Marks Foundation \$6,500
- George H.C. Ensworth Memorial Fund \$6,500
- Katherine Matthies Foundation \$6,400
- Main Street Community Foundation \$6,000
- Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut, \$5,000
- Community Foundation of Middlesex County \$5,000
- Farmington Bank Community Foundation \$5,000
- Jackson-Batchelder Family Fund \$5,000
- Iroquois Gas Annual Customer Meeting Attendees \$5,000
- TD Bank Charitable Foundation \$5,000
- Vernon D. and Florence E. Roosa Family Foundation Memorial Fund \$5,000
- Thomaston Savings Bank Foundation \$4,000
- McPhee Foundation \$3,000
- The David N. Lane Trust for Aged & Indigent Women \$3,000
- George A. & Grace L. Long Foundation \$3,000
- Travelers Championship \$2,721
- Energy Federation Incorporated \$2,500
- Susan Surova \$2,500
- Ruth Woodford \$2,000
- Hauss Family Charitable Fund \$2,000
- Eastern Savings Bank Foundation \$1,000

Every year, on GivingTuesday, we mobilize millions of people across the globe to show up, give back, and change their communities. The goal is to create a massive wave of generosity that lasts well beyond that day, and touches every person on the planet.

**Unleash
Generosity**

December 1, 2020

**GIVING
TUESDAY**

**Plug Into Operation Fuel
on Your Social Media!**





Connecticut Water and Operation Fuel Partner On Water Assistance Program

Connecticut Water Company and Operation Fuel have announced a partnership that will streamline access to financial assistance programs to help Connecticut Water customers facing financial challenges with their water bills.

The partnership, which is an extension of Connecticut Water's existing H2O-Help 2 Our Customers assistance program, provides an additional option for Connecticut Water customers to access the information and application materials they need to apply for assistance.

Paying household utilities can be an issue for working families and individuals that Operation Fuel serves across Connecticut, particularly with the additional challenges related to COVID-19.

We appreciate Connecticut Water for proactively partnering with us so we can provide direct bill payment assistance to our neighbors in need.

Connecticut Water is the third water utility to partner with Operation Fuel, joining Aquarion Water Company, and The Metropolitan District.



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Why We Give ... Donor Testimonials

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We believe strongly in the ideals and the work your organization promotes and accomplishes. We want to do our part to show our support.”

– Chris, West Simsbury

Thank you for all you are doing for others during these difficult days. We stand with you in helping those who need special assistance.”

– Mary, New York, NY

We wanted to do something that could help local families and giving the gift of warmth and light seemed just right for the cold holiday season.”

– Michelle, Simsbury

'I Was Falling Through The Cracks' - One CT Senior's Story

My name is not important, but my story is ...

... because it is the story of hundreds of seniors in Connecticut — victims of consequence. Like many seniors in their 60s, I was put out to pasture following a company merger. From then on I was unemployable by age. And like many seniors, I learned to survive on a small fixed-income. That was 20-years ago.

When COVID-19 arrived in town I was working part-time for minimum-wage on the front lines in a supermarket. Because I am 81, I had to take a leave of absence. It was too dangerous for me to be facing the public in the middle of the pandemic. Soon my mortgage money dried up and the bills came raining down.



I was thankful for the meager unemployment benefits of \$66 a week. But my partial payments to the utility companies weren't keeping them happy. Notices of pending shut-offs came monthly. Soon I had to face the facts — like many other seniors struggling to remain self-sufficient and keep their homes, I was falling through the cracks.

I am blessed to have a service dog. He's now as old as I am, but he taught me to walk again after bilateral knee-replacement and a hip placement. He needs a cozy home. And it was because of him that I finally swallowed my pride and began talking to the utility companies about their COVID-19 and Hardship plans.

Unfortunately the monthly payment amounts they required, I couldn't make unless I was working. But I couldn't work. I was isolated at home.

I thought about just ignoring the bills and hunkering down for the winter. "Let Hell come with May," I thought, knowing shut-offs resume then. How many seniors

spend winter, the season of joy, terrified of losing their homes come spring? How many choose heat or light over medication or food?

Not knowing where else to go for help, I was becoming resigned to a difficult winter. But providence intervened. In an email I received a notice about the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority extending the COVID-19 payment program enrollment date. It was the program I couldn't afford, but within that announcement was a link to the Operation Fuel website.

I'd never heard of Operation Fuel. But I went to the website and applied for help with my UI bill. Over the scorching summer it had become unmanageable. I couldn't catch up—the delivery charges were twice what I was using in electricity.

“ Getting (my bill) paid off means a Christmas tree with lights this year and a turkey leg in the microwave. It means using two light bulbs instead of one to illuminate the dark of winter. It means someone cares.”

operationfuel.org/give

Within 24 hours I received an email from Operation Fuel. They were paying off my entire past-due electric bill within 30 days. I almost fell off my chair.

I really didn't expect anyone to help me. I'm always the one who doesn't qualify.

Seniors are somebody's grandmother or grandfather, too often alone by whatever twist of fate. They shouldn't have to endure the time they have left fearing energy cut-offs, shivering in cold showers or living under blankets. At our age we easily become victims of circumstance and we have to learn there is nothing wrong or shameful about asking for a little help.

At Operation Fuel, that help is funded by really special people who care about people—and our wrinkles don't mean a thing. A donation, however small, can make the life of a senior-in-need a little brighter, warmer, and filled with the joy of living again. For every donation, I say "Bravo." To every donor, I warmly, joyfully say, "Thank you for caring."