



# OPERATION FUEL

*Powering Connecticut Households Since 1977*

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**News Release**

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## **With Unpaid Utility and Energy Bills Piling Up, Operation Fuel Urges Public to Apply for Help**

***New 24/7 Online Assistance Portal at [operationfuel.org/gethelp](https://operationfuel.org/gethelp)***

HARTFORD, Conn. (December 22, 2020) – Operation Fuel is encouraging Connecticut residents who are struggling with utility and energy bills and unpaid balances to seek financial assistance through its new online assistance portal at [operationfuel.org/gethelp](https://operationfuel.org/gethelp)

“Even though utility shutoff protections are in place for now, the unpaid bills continue to stack up and these high balances aren’t going away,” said Brenda Watson, executive director of Operation Fuel. “Thanks to our very generous supporters, help is available, and we hope residents will reach out now to help reduce unpaid balances.”

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, residents who have never needed emergency energy assistance before are desperately seeking help. Already this fiscal year, Operation Fuel has seen a 20% increase in requests for help with electric, gas, oil, water, and other energy costs.

Since July, residents have been able to apply for help online with Operation Fuel’s Home Energy Assistance Program, a 24/7 web-based portal that provides a safer alternative to in-person appointments during the pandemic. The online system also offers easier access for people who have mobility issues, limited transportation, child or elder care responsibilities, or jobs during typical business hours.

**ABOUT OPERATION FUEL:** Operation Fuel is the only year-round emergency energy assistance program in Connecticut, providing help with electricity, water, natural gas, oil, and other energy bills to residents across the state. Thanks to supporters and donors, Operation Fuel is able to flip the switch for families, helping seniors, children, and people with medical conditions stay warm, keep the lights on, power devices for cooking and refrigeration, and have access to running water for drinking, hygiene, and laundry. If you need help, visit [operationfuel.org/gethelp](https://operationfuel.org/gethelp). To help power families, visit [operationfuel.org/give](https://operationfuel.org/give) and donate or text OPFUEL to 44321

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