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April 27, 2021

**VIA ELECTRONIC FILING**

Ms. Kimberley A. Campbell  
Chief Clerk  
North Carolina Utilities Commission  
4325 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-4300

**Re: Duke Energy Carolinas, LLC and Duke Energy Progress, LLC's Joint  
Response  
Docket Nos. M-100, Sub 158; E-7, Sub 1236; E-2, Sub 1228; and G-9,  
Sub 767**

Dear Ms. Campbell:

Enclosed please find Duke Energy Carolinas, LLC and Duke Energy Progress, LLC's Joint Response for filing in the above-referenced docket. Exhibits D and E of the Joint Response contain specific confidential customer and employee information and are being filed under seal.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Kendrick C. Fentress

Enclosure

cc: Parties of Record

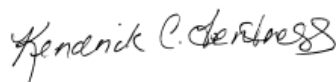
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Apr 27 2021

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I certify that a copy of Duke Energy Carolinas, LLC and Duke Energy Progress, LLC's Additional Joint Response, in Docket Nos. M-100, Sub 158, E-7, Sub 1236, E-2, Sub 1228, and G-9, Sub 767, has been served by electronic mail, hand delivery, or by depositing a copy in the United States Mail, 1<sup>st</sup> Class Postage Prepaid, properly addressed to parties of record.

This the 27<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2021.



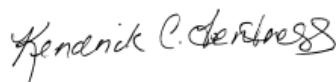
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**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
UTILITIES COMMISSION  
RALEIGH**

DOCKET NO. M-100, SUB 158  
DOCKET NO. E-2, SUB 1228  
DOCKET NO. E-7, SUB 1236  
DOCKET NO. G-9, SUB 767

BEFORE THE NORTH CAROLINA UTILITIES COMMISSION

In the Matter of:

Investigation of Necessary and	)	
Appropriate Responses to the Novel	)	
Coronavirus COVID-19	)	
	)	
In the Matter of:	)	<b>JOINT RESPONSE OF DUKE</b>
	)	<b>ENERGY PROGRESS, LLC, AND</b>
	)	<b>DUKE ENERGY CAROLINAS, LLC</b>
Application of Duke Energy Carolinas,	)	
LLC, Duke Energy Progress, LLC, and	)	
Piedmont Natural Gas Company, Inc.	)	
for Expedited Approval of Waivers	)	

NOW COME Duke Energy Progress, LLC (“DEP”) and Duke Energy Carolinas, LLC (“DEC”) collectively, the “Companies”) and, pursuant to the Commission’s *Order Reinstating Limited Residential Disconnection Moratorium*, issued on April 5, 2021 in the above-captioned dockets (“*Limited Moratorium Order*”), to provide a response to the Commission’s concerns regarding the Companies’ Customer Service Representatives (“CSR”) conveying clear customer accounts, repayment options, and available assistance programs to customers. The Companies have been both diligent and innovative in trying to be flexible in working with customers during this difficult time, and they provide additional details on the specific efforts of the CSRs below.

## BACKGROUND

1. On March 10, 2020, Governor Roy Cooper issued Executive Order (“EO”) No. 116 declaring a State of Emergency in North Carolina to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus. The EO stated it was effective immediately and “shall remain in effect until rescinded.” EO No. 116 at § 25.

2. On March 13, 2020, DEC, DEP, and their North Carolina affiliate, Piedmont Natural Gas Company, Inc. announced that they had voluntarily suspended disconnections for nonpayment due to the hardships imposed on their customers as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

3. On March 19, 2020, in response to EO No. 116, the Commission issued an *Order Suspending Utility Disconnections for Nonpayment, Allowing Reconnection, and Waiving Certain Fees* in Docket No. M-100, Sub 158 (“*Public Utility Waiver Order*”).

4. On March 31, 2020, Governor Cooper issued EO No. 124. In pertinent part, EO No. 124 required public utilities to report implementation information weekly to the Commission.

5. On May 30, 2020, Governor Cooper issued EO No. 142, which extended the May 30, 2020 expiration date of EO No. 124 to midnight on July 29, 2020 and required public utilities to continue to report implementation information to the Commission on a monthly basis.

6. On July 29, 2020, the Commission issued an *Order Lifting Disconnection Moratorium and Allowing Collection of Arrearages Pursuant to Special Repayment Plans* (“*July 29, 2020 Order*”) in Docket Nos. M-100, Sub 158, E-2, Sub 1228, E-7, Sub 1236, E-22, Sub 583, G-5, Sub 617, and G-9, Sub 767.

7. On September 9, 2020, the Commission issued an *Order Finalizing COVID-19 State of Emergency Monthly Reporting Form* (“September 9, 2020 Order”), which requires that on a monthly basis or until further order of the Commission, all jurisdictional electric, natural gas, water, and wastewater public utilities, excluding resellers and Class C water and wastewater public utilities, shall submit the mandatory COVID-19 State of Emergency Monthly Reporting Form on or before the fifteenth day of the month following the reporting period. The reporting made pursuant to the *September 9, 2020 Order* is ongoing, and the Companies recently submitted their information for the month of March on April 15, 2021.

8. On February 11, 2021, DEP, DEC, and Piedmont Natural Gas Company, Inc. (“PNG”) made an informational filing in Docket Nos. M-100, Sub 158, E-2, Sub 1228, E-2, Sub 1258, E-7, Sub 1236, E-7, Sub 1241, and G-9, Sub 767 stating their intent to broaden eligibility for the winter disconnection moratorium, established pursuant to Commission Rules R12-11(l)(6) and R12-10(h)(6), by extending eligibility to include all Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (“LIEAP”) and Crisis Intervention Program (“CIP”) beneficiaries. Additionally, the Companies stated they will grant eligible customers a 12-month payment arrangement on an opt-out basis for their outstanding balances prior to their April 2021 bill (for DEP and PNG) or their May 2021 bill (for DEC).

9. On February 23, 2021, the Commission issued an *Order Suspending Disconnections and Providing for Extended Special Repayment Plans for Certain Vulnerable Residential Customers and Requiring Door Hanger Notices* (“February 23, 2021 Order”), which is applicable to DEP, DEC, PNG, as well as Virginia Electric and Power Company, d/b/a Dominion Energy North Carolina (“DENC”), Public Service

Company of North Carolina, Inc. (“PSNC”), Carolina Water Service, Inc. of North Carolina (“CWS”), and Aqua North Carolina, Inc. (“Aqua”). The *February 23, 2021 Order* required these utilities to cease residential customer disconnections due to nonpayment of utility bills, except where disconnection is necessary as a matter of safety or where requested by the customer, where the residential customer can establish that the customer is unable to pay for such service in full and that the customer’s household is eligible to receive assistance (whether funds are then available or not) from LIEAP, CIP, or the North Carolina Housing Opportunities and Prevention of Evictions (“NC HOPE”) Program (“Limited Residential Disconnection Moratorium”) through March 31, 2021. The *February 23, 2021 Order* further required that DEC, DEP, DENC, PNG, PSNC, CWS, and Aqua place a service disconnect door-hanger at all residences within 24 to 36 hours prior to disconnection, advising residential customers of their options to avoid disconnection.

10. On March 24, 2021, the Commission issued an Order Extending Door Hanger Notice Requirement (“*March 24, 2021 Order*”) through June 30, 2021.

11. Additionally, several customer advocates, including the North Carolina Justice Center (“NCJC”), Legal Aid of North Carolina (“Legal Aid”), the Public Staff of the North Carolina Utilities Commission (“Public Staff”), and the North Carolina Attorney General’s Office, have filed comments or letters at the Commission, requesting that the Commission extend the limited residential disconnection moratorium provided by the *February 23, 2021 Order* through June 30, 2021. I

12. Specifically, on March 29, 2021, the Public Staff filed Additional Comments in which they noted the work that the Companies had done to assist customers through arranging meetings with customer assistance agencies, such as NCJC, Legal Aid,

the North Carolina Attorney General's Office to establish clear lines of communication so that if one of those agencies received a customer complaint or question, they would directly and quickly contact Duke Energy representatives to address the issue. The Public Staff also referenced the Companies voluntarily expanding the winter moratorium on disconnections for nonpayment to more customers.

13. On March 31, 2021, DEP, DEC, and PNG filed a letter advising the Commission of their intention to further assist their vulnerable customers by voluntarily extending the Limited Residential Disconnection Moratorium through June 30, 2021.

14. On April 5, the Commission issued its *Limited Moratorium Order* commending the Companies on the decision to voluntarily extend the Moratorium and reinstating the Limited Residential Disconnection Moratorium through June 30, 2021. Additionally, the Commission stated that it was concerned by the allegations that, on some occasions, DEC and DEP CSRs may be failing to convey clear and accurate information about customer accounts, repayment options, and available assistance programs to customers. The *Limited Moratorium Order* required DEP and DEC to file comments addressing these allegations, detailing internal findings on the allegations, and stating all actions taken to correct any identified issues to ensure that CSRs are properly trained with respect to the Commission's latest requirements, including informing customers regarding applicable assistance programs which may be available to help customers with their arrearages.

## RESPONSE

15. Since the start of the pandemic in 2020, and, as demonstrated by the timeline in Paragraphs 1-13, the Companies have both: (i) diligently followed the Commission's



orders with respect to disconnections, payment arrangements, and providing information on assistance from government and third-party agencies in paying bills, and (ii) voluntarily and proactively offered customers innovative and flexible ways to avoid disconnection for nonpayment and establish deferred payment arrangements beyond what the Commission has mandated. In fact, in its Additional Comments, filed March 29, 2021, the Public Staff specifically “commends DEC, DEP and Piedmont for their decision to broaden the winter disconnection moratorium to include all LIEAP and CIP beneficiaries.” *Additional Comments* at 10. The Public Staff further noted that DEC and DEP were “working on another proposal, which would further extend its disconnection moratorium with respect to certain customers.” The Companies shortly thereafter notified the Commission that they would proactively and voluntarily continue to extend protections against disconnections for nonpayment from April 1, 2021 until June 30, 2021 to approximately 86,000 customers that had previously benefitted from the Companies’ voluntary extension of the winter moratorium.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, the Companies take very seriously the concern expressed by the Commission and the Public Staff that the Companies’ CSRs may not consistently convey clear and accurate information about customer accounts, repayment options, and available assistance programs to customers. Therefore, to address the Commission’s concern, the Companies discuss herein how their CSRs play a key role in the Companies’ overall efforts during this unprecedented time to provide customers assistance, flexibility, and options to make payments, set-up payment arrangements, seek financial assistance from assistance agencies, understand the expansion and extension of the Companies’ winter moratorium, and ensure that disconnection for nonpayment remains a last resort.

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<sup>1</sup> Letter from Duke Energy to Kimberley Campbell, Chief Clerk of the North Carolina Utilities Commission, filed on March 31, 2021 in the above-captioned dockets.

Specific Responses to Public Staff's Additional Comments

16. In their Additional Comments, the Public Staff stated that:

The Public Staff has determined through its review of complaints from DEC and DEP customers *that in a few cases*, Duke's CSRs have at times not provided correct information to customers, relating to disconnections and payment plan arrangements, and often refer customers to the Public Staff's Consumer Services Division when they determine the company cannot resolve a situation.

Additional Comments at 9 (emphasis added). The Public Staff also stated that:

DEC and DEP customers contact the Public Staff Consumer Services Division before or after being disconnected when they need to modify their payment arrangements made with DEC or DEP either because they simply need a few extra days to pay due to when they expect a paycheck or when they expect funds from assistance agencies... The Public Staff echoes the Commission's Door Hanger Order in recommending that the Companies' CSRs make extra efforts to modify payment arrangements without customers having to contact the Public Staff's Consumer Services Division before they are disconnected, especially during periods of extremely cold or hot weather. The Public Staff believes that many of the complaints it receives could be eliminated if utilities ensure that their CSRs convey clear and accurate information about customer accounts, repayment options, and available assistance programs to the customers.

*Id.*

17. It is not the Companies' practice to discourage a customer from contacting the Public Staff's Consumer Services Division, but it is also not their practice to direct customers to contact the Public Staff regarding modification of payment arrangements. The Companies have reiterated this to CSRs. The Companies' goal is to resolve a customer's issue, and the Companies regret any time they are unable to do so. However, the Companies note that when customers do call the Public Staff for consumer assistance, the Companies have been able to work with the Public Staff to resolve the issue. For context, in a recent informal data request, the Public Staff requested the Companies investigate three specific customer complaints where the customers indicated they were

directed to the Public Staff or that their issue was not resolved by the CSR. Below are summaries of how the Companies responded to the concerns raised by the Public Staff – customer names and other details are not provided here to protect from disclosing non-public information.

Investigation 1:

The communication on December 4, 2020 with the customer indicated that the customer was satisfied with the Company before directly reaching out to Public Staff on December 9, 2020. The customer was not disconnected for nonpayment related to COVID and, as of February 17, 2021 the payment arrangement was current. The review of the customer's account on February 17, 2021, was based on the inquiry from the Public Staff at that time. Please see the attached confidential Duke Energy Exhibit E for detailed information.

Investigation 2:

The Company continually worked with the customer to grant additional time to pay as requested by the customer while waiting for NC HOPE funds to be disbursed. The customer was never disconnected and received a NC HOPE pledge on January 8, 2021. Please see the attached confidential Duke Energy Exhibit E for detailed information.

Investigation 3:

The Company was not able to locate the call record in which the customer was directed to contact the Public Staff. Based on the Public Staff's Consumer Affairs review, it was believed that the CSR referred the customer to the Public Staff based on the customer negotiating the extension of the deferred payment arrangement ("DPA"). The Company did confirm that the customer has not been disconnected for nonpayment related to COVID and as of February 17, 2021 was current on his or her payment arrangement terms, which had been modified on February 15, 2021. CSRs were reminded at the time of the Public Staff inquiry that customers are not to be routed to the Public Staff for DPA modifications. Please see the attached Confidential Exhibit Duke Energy Exhibit E for detailed information.

18. As acknowledged by the Public Staff in its Additional Comments, the Companies set up a meeting with the NCJC, Legal Aid, the Attorney General's Office and the Public Staff to discuss customers that had reached out to those entities with questions

or concerns. The Companies reported that they had resolved all of the issues and had assisted the customers. Additionally, the Companies took the opportunity during that meeting to request that those entities reach out directly and quickly to the Companies and the Companies' legal counsel, should customers contact those entities seeking assistance. The Companies' first focus in those situations was rectifying any error or miscommunication on behalf of the customer. To the extent CSRs had been unclear or had not followed the Companies' COVID-assistance policies, the Companies corrected or coached those CSRs regarding their performance.

19. CSRs are trained to provide clear and accurate information regarding customer accounts, repayment options, and available assistance programs to the customers. The Companies review calls monthly to ensure adherence to policies, procedures, and quality expectations. Generally, CSRs serve customers appropriately, but, regrettably, at times human performance errors can arise.

20. As outlined in response to several Public Staff data requests, the Companies have adapted to a virtual environment and acted swiftly to assist customers and CSRs throughout this unusual time. In situations where a call interaction is reviewed and incorrect behavior or information impacted a customer, supervisors take appropriate follow-up actions to ensure necessary resolution for the customer. Additionally, feedback, coaching, and more training are provided to the CSR to avoid future occurrences.

21. DEC and DEP appreciate the Public Staff's concerns regarding the experiences our customers are having in resolving their issues. The Companies recognize the economic impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic are both widespread and deep and that full recovery will take time. Thus, the Companies agree with the increased need for

flexibility with its customers. To those ends, the Companies have made extra efforts to communicate with and train their CSRs throughout the pandemic to ensure they are aware of policy changes as they have occurred.

#### Training for CSRs

22. In general, the Companies' approach to training CSRs to handle customer inquiries utilizes various methods. Initial training for a new hire is an instructor led program, now virtual, which consists of instructor delivered content, electronic delivered content, demonstration, and practice activities. When process, technology or regulatory changes take place, training on these changes are delivered in planned training sessions or team huddles. The information from New Hire training and designated training sessions are available on demand in our knowledge management system so specialists understand the current policies impacting customers. In addition to this, there are daily leadership meeting touch points, outline any emergent issues that require reinforcement during one-on-one coaching sessions or stand-down meetings.

#### Specific Training for CSRs to Assist Customers in Pandemic

23. When the Companies proactively and voluntarily suspended disconnections for nonpayment of utility bills on March 13, 2020, CSRs were notified and provided key messages and talking points. Anticipating the influx of customer calls to discuss options for accounts in arrears, the Companies took steps to increase capacity to address customer call volume. The Companies also built upon a model used during major storm events, training volunteer employees from all areas of the Companies to take specific call types – allowing more complex calls to be handled by more experienced CSRs. For the return to “normal” billing activities, the Companies developed a new technology application that

allows employees to take calls from their homes for customers requesting extended payment plans. The application presents options appropriate for the customer, and volunteer employees set up the payment arrangement through the tool itself. More complex issues and questions can be transferred back to CSRs dedicated to supporting the volunteers.

24. In September 2020, the Companies began proactively contacting customers with past due balances to offer them the opportunity to enroll in a payment arrangement of up to 14 months, two months more than the 12 months required by the Commission, in advance of any return-to-normal operations. The Companies also delayed resuming disconnections more than a month beyond the time the Commission required in its *July 29, 2020 Order*. This additional time allowed the Companies to provide additional communications and time for customers to respond.

25. Additionally, the Companies recognized that the impacts from the pandemic would increase call volumes to the call centers as more customers needed support. Accordingly, CSRs needed to be prepared to assist customers in this trying time. To provide that support, the Companies enhanced and refreshed their soft skills training to include a greater focus on empathy as a reminder for how to support customers who are experiencing hardships. For example, see attached Exhibit C.

26. Moreover, although there was a moratorium on disconnections, customers were requesting to set-up payment arrangements from the onset of the moratorium. To deliver on customer needs, the Companies defined a new process and implemented a new tool to allow volunteer employees from all areas of the Companies to respond to customers' payment arrangement requests. Additionally, the Companies provided a job

aid to CSRs to help them assist customers with these questions during the pandemic. In DEP and DEC, more than 265,000 payment plans have been accepted by customers since mid-September 2020 through April 1, 2021. Please see attached Exhibit A for information related to initial communications and training during the disconnection moratorium.<sup>2</sup>

27. When the Commission issued its *July 29, 2020 Order*, the Companies contacted their CSRs advising that, even though the disconnection moratorium was being lifted, the Companies would voluntarily maintain the moratorium on disconnections until November to provide customers time to prepare, discuss options, and set-up payment arrangements. See attached Exhibit B (Page 1 of 16), “Email Expiration of Order.” In other words, after the *July 29, 2020 Order*, the Companies again quickly adjusted to the new Commission requirements and the evolving needs of their customers. Specifically, training, which was reflective of COVID business policies, then occurred throughout September, ahead of resuming disconnections for nonpayment and preparing CSRs to assist in establishing payment arrangements. The Companies proactively delayed resumption of disconnections for nonpayment for residential customers, even though allowed to do so by the Commission, until November, in part to allow for this additional communication, training and preparation for their CSRs and customers.

28. Notably, the Commission directed in the *July 29, 2020 Order* that deferred payment arrangements commencing at the end of the moratorium should extend at least 12 months. Realizing that the Commission’s *July 29, 2020 Order* gave them flexibility to offer their customers the option of a payment plan over *more* than 12 months, DEC and DEP

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<sup>2</sup> Exhibit A provides examples of information provided to CSRs during the disconnection moratorium, and Exhibit B provides examples of information provided to CSRs after July 29, 2020 when the moratoriums were lifted.

voluntarily allowed for a 14-month payment plan option for customers seeking deferred payment arrangements. This additional two months was intended to provide more options for customers to pay off arrearages accumulated during the disconnection moratorium.

29. The Companies took a multi-prong approach to training CSRs on these new business policies. Expecting that the resumption of more “normal” billing practices and operations would be complicated, the Companies utilized the following approaches to train CSRs:

- Virtual training
- Tutorials via video
- YouTube (a private channel for vendors to access training content)
- Supervisor-led meetings
- e-Learning modules in the Company’s internal learning management system

30. The Companies continually updated policy materials, conducted team huddles, and shared communications with existing CSRs, new hires, and vendor CSRs as COVID-related changes were implemented. Daily team huddles are led by supervisors, and periodic communications via email serve as reminders to keep these new processes top of mind. The Companies’ knowledge management tool, The Source, includes all updated policy information and additional frequently asked questions (“FAQs”) for CSRs to utilize to assist with customer questions.

31. Ongoing bulletin communications with updates and process reminders were sent to CSRs at least twice a week throughout the third and fourth quarters of 2020. Bulletins are a primary communication tool for the Companies when communicating changes to its CSRs. See attached Exhibit B (Page 1, 14, 15 of 16), Exhibit A (Page 12 of 13), and Exhibit C (Page 7 of 7) for examples of these reminder emails reiterating business policies. Key dates were also included in training communications, so CSRs were able to



give customers advanced notice and to offer information about accessing assistance before customers faced disconnection. These communications to CSRs included links to the Return to Normal training documents centrally housed for reference on demand. See Exhibit B (Page 16 of 16) for a list of resources available to specialists. COVID business policies were also incorporated into New Hire training materials for new specialists.

32. In sum, since the *July 29, 2020 Order*, when situations arise where customers need additional support, CSRs are prepared to offer assistance, such as providing extended payment arrangements, promoting 211 as a resource, and providing agency contact information as shown in the image of what the CSRs view from the knowledge management tool attached as Confidential Exhibit D. In cases where CSRs cannot address a customer's concerns and agency references are not sufficient, CSRs are trained to escalate the case to their team lead or supervisor. From August – November 2020, the Companies implemented the COVID Resource Sharing Line staffed by Customer Care Operations Supervisors to work with these customers to fully resolve their concerns to the best of the Companies' abilities.<sup>3</sup>

#### Training for Agency Assistance Inquiries

33. Because of the significance of agencies that provide financial assistance to the Companies' customers during this pandemic, training CSRs how to handle agency commitment calls remains vital. As customer needs for assistance rose, agencies served as a critical channel for the Companies' customers to receive support. The Companies realized that a more tailored experience was needed and dedicated a new team to support assistance

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<sup>3</sup> Due to low call volume, the COVID Resource Sharing Line was closed in November 2020.

agencies. The team was built to be the single point of contact for utility assistance agencies to streamline and efficiently apply pledges to customers' accounts and ensure the exchange of required information is provided quickly to secure assistance. As mentioned above in Paragraph 17, the NCJC brought to the Companies' attention a few customer concerns regarding NC HOPE funds. In November 2020, the Companies partnered closely with the North Carolina Office of Recovery and Resiliency ("NCORR"), and diligently worked, on a daily basis, to establish a mutually agreed upon process for how to verify and then distribute NC HOPE funds, given there was not an existing one in place with this agency prior to the pandemic. When looking at NCJC customer concerns, the Companies realize, in some cases, customer needs could have been addressed differently. Therefore, the process was modified and implemented to allow CSRs accept verbal and e-mailed pledges, in addition to formal acceptance letters, to help avoid any potential future NC HOPE eligible customers from experiencing disconnection for nonpayment.

34. When an agency pledge is received, delinquency is suspended on the customer's account for 30 days for DEP and 45 days for DEC, allowing time for the agency to submit the pledged amount. Information regarding this work process is available to CSRs on demand.

35. The Companies respectfully state that their work with agencies seeking to assist their customers has benefitted their customers. With respect to the NC HOPE program, for example, the Companies worked with NCORR to facilitate transfer of the list of potential recipients of the funds from the agency to the Companies. The Companies were then able to suspend delinquency on the affected customers' accounts for 30 days for DEP

and 20 days for DEC<sup>4</sup> at the time, allowing time for the agency to submit the pledged amount.

#### Pilot Program

36. As referenced by the Public Staff, DEP piloted an outreach program from January 20, 2021 – March 5, 2021 for customers that remained disconnected for more than two days, but the account was not yet final billed. DEP initiated the pilot to ensure that there was not a communications gap related to the receipt of delinquency or disconnection notifications. This pilot tested whether additional touch points were necessary to assist disconnected customers in resuming their electric service through enrolling in DEP's flexible payment arrangements or having help finding agency assistance.

37. DEP sent communications via text and phone call to nearly 1,900 disconnected customers, and approximately 31 customers reconnected for a success rate of roughly 1.6%. Approximately 4.6% of the customers contacted DEP in response to the text message and/or phone call. Due to the low reconnection rates experienced in the pilot, it was determined the Companies' existing communications process was effective, and the program would not need to be rolled out broadly to all North Carolina customers.

#### DEC's and DEP's Additional Efforts to Assist Customers During Pandemic

38. In addition to the specific efforts described above, the Companies continue to help customers access resources to assist and provide additional information that can help reduce their bills to avoid disconnection due to the financial impacts of the pandemic. The Public Staff's Additional Comments also noted that DEC and DEP customers accounted for most of their complaints from customers regarding disconnections, payment

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<sup>4</sup> The 20-day timeframe for DEC is prior to the Customer Connect deployment.

plans, and assistance agencies; however, the Companies respectfully note that DEC and DEP combined serve by far a greater number of customers than the other North Carolina utilities listed, making the total number of customer complaints for a utility an inappropriate metric. The ratio of complaints to total customers would be a more appropriate metric. For the Companies, complaints to total customer ratio for January and February was less than 0.01%.<sup>5</sup> Every utility aspires to keep the number of complaints close to zero. However, with an unprecedented pandemic and an unprecedented moratorium of disconnection being lifted, it was anticipated that customer inquiries would increase, which can lead to complaints, particularly when combined workplaces are restricted and workload is increasing. The Companies recognize that the Public Staff has also seen its workload increase as its workplace is restricted. Nevertheless, the Companies are working constantly to clearly inform customers of their options. The Companies have continued to provide updates on the Duke Energy COVID-19 website linked to duke-energy.com. The Companies sent emails, bill inserts, credit notification inserts, and bill messages to customers so that they would understand their options given the resumption of billing practices, including payment arrangements and how to contact assistance agencies. The Companies continue to urge eligible customers to take advantage of available financial support through the LIEAP funds managed by statewide community action agencies.

39. In addition to direct-to-customer communications, the Companies also created information sheets, social media posts, and digital ads in both English and Spanish that were sent to municipal leadership, community stakeholders, Chambers of Commerce,

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<sup>5</sup> For comparison, the total complaints to total customers ratio for January & February for other utilities listed in Exhibit A to the Public Staff's Additional Comments are similar and, in some cases, even higher.

and state agencies for the purpose of having these entities share through their networks and websites the resources available to help customers. The Companies also contacted organizations, such as food banks and churches, that are already helping the Companies' most vulnerable customers, to include pre-printed, bilingual flyers in assistance packages. The approaches have been varied and cast broadly with the overall goal to find ways to communicate the message that "Duke Energy is here to help. Please reach out to us."

40. In response to the Public Staff's recommendation that utilities consider other creative ways to assist customers, specifically low-income customers that the pandemic has impacted most adversely, the Companies note that they continue to provide bill pay assistance through shareholder programs such as Share the Warmth (DEC) and Energy Neighbor Fund (DEP). On March 31, 2021 and April 16, 2021, the Commission issued Orders in Docket Nos. E-7 Sub 1214 and E-2 Sub 1219 approving the Companies' commitment to increase shareholder funding into these two programs. The Companies committed to contribute \$6 million in shareholder funds over two years to the Helping Home Fund to provide energy- and cost-saving measures to NC customers; and \$5 million over 2 years to the Share the Warmth and Energy Neighbor programs to provide billing assistance to low-income customers.

41. With regards to customer deposit accrued interest, DEC and DEP have historically treated accrued deposit interest releases differently. DEC released accrued deposit interest on a regular schedule automatically while DEP only released accrued deposit interest at the customer's request. Additionally, DEP began releasing accrued deposit interest to North Carolina customers in 2020 to align with DEC's process and to begin preparing for the Customer Connect implementation. Customer Connect is designed

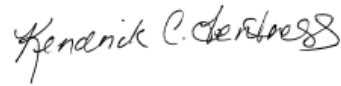
to automatically release accrued interest annually regardless of the customer's payment history.

42. Additionally, significantly, both DEC and DEP will convene a low-income collaborative to assess opportunities to assist eligible customers. The Companies believe that establishment of this low-income collaborative presents a timely and comprehensive opportunity to further address such programs, including an evaluation of whether customer-funded assistance programs are a more sustainable and equitable solution.

### **CONCLUSION**

The Companies remain dedicated to providing their customers accurate and helpful information regarding their accounts and potential payment plans and options for financial assistance. The Companies appreciate the dedication and collaboration of the Public Staff and other agencies and organizations that have assisted customers throughout the pandemic. The Companies respectfully state that they have worked diligently to assist their customers in a number of ways throughout the pandemic and will continue to do so. To that end, the Companies will continue to train and work with their CSRs. The Companies are further proud of their proactive and voluntary efforts to assist customers beyond what has been required by the Commission, and they will continue to look for ways to aid and provide flexibility to their customers to avoid disconnection, which is always as last resort.

Respectfully submitted, this the 27<sup>th</sup> day of April 2021.



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Kendrick C. Fentress  
Associate General Counsel  
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Customer  
Care  
Operations

# Process Alert



March 13, 2020

## COVID-19 Update: Duke Energy Suspends Disconnects for Nonpayment

Duke Energy posted the following message via social media this afternoon, March 13:

**COVID-19 Update:** As a part of your community and a provider of an essential service, we are here to support you during this uncertain time. Since many of our customers may be facing unusual financial hardship, we are suspending disconnection for nonpayment effective immediately. This applies to all home and business accounts in Florida, Indiana, Kentucky, North Carolina, Ohio, South Carolina and Tennessee. We will continue to look for ways to support customer needs during the pandemic. Thank you.



- At this time the suspension is effective for 30 days; we will continue to evaluate as current events change.
- Assure customers that this information is not a scam.
- Our A/R partners have provided credit arrangement information effective March 16.
- Corporate Communications is preparing talking points to assist with customer inquiries.
- The credit information and talking points will be posted in The Source, DE All - COVID19 Coronavirus Response.
- Check information in The Source frequently in the coming days for updates.

**Expert:** *Be the solution to our customers' needs.*

**Appreciation:** *Recognize and value our Customers.*

**Safety:** *Ensure customer and co-worker safety.*

**Easy:** *Clear the path to resolution – be easy to do business with.*



Customer  
Care  
Operations

## Important Information



March 13, 2020

**What:** Effective immediately, Duke Energy and Piedmont Natural Gas are suspending Disconnects for Non-Pay until further notice.

**When:** **Effective Immediately**

**COVID-19 Update:** As a part of your community and a provider of essential services, we are here to support you during this uncertain time. Since many of our customers may be facing unusual financial hardship, we are suspending disconnection for nonpayment effective immediately. This applies to all home and business accounts in Florida, Indiana, Kentucky, North Carolina, Ohio, South Carolina and Tennessee. We will continue to look for ways to support customer needs during the pandemic. Thank you.



**CCS Actions:**

- ❖ Thoroughly review the customer's account before providing information

- ❖ Review S2K billing screens and account notes
- ❖ Show empathy when speaking to your customers
- ❖ Ask probing questions to help you determine how to assist with their billing needs
- ❖ Use your resources and tools – utility assistance agencies

For future reference, please remember to access [SharePoint for all CIA Communications](#). If you should have additional questions regarding this process, send questions via email to your supervisor.

*Web-Customer Contact Center*

**COVID-19****Key Messages / Talking Points**

To allow for consistent messaging, our corporate communications and social media partners provide us with their responses to inquiries made via our digital platforms. This information is produced in collaboration with several organizations, including Customer Care. CCO specialists may reference this information to address inquiries as needed.

**Note:** This information is updated frequently, and we encourage users to check back often.

**Main message:**

- We're prepared. As a part of this community and as a provider of an essential service, we are determined to continue delivering the reliable power you need while helping to protect the health and safety of our employees, neighbors and everyone around us.

Find the latest info at [dukeenergyupdates.com](https://dukeenergyupdates.com)

**How is Duke Energy protecting the energy grid?**

- We're proactively taking steps to help ensure the stability and continuity of our operations, including resource and supply chain planning. Delivering reliable power is our responsibility – and our commitment to you.

**What is Duke Energy doing for people who can't work/can't pay their bills?**

- Since many of you may be facing unusual financial hardship, we are suspending disconnections for nonpayment effective immediately. This applies to all home and business accounts in Florida, Indiana, Kentucky, North Carolina, Ohio and South Carolina.
- This is a difficult time. We get that. That's why we're suspending disconnections for those unable to pay, effective immediately. You can take care of most customer service issues online or using our app. Find more at [dukeenergyupdates.com](https://dukeenergyupdates.com)
- As always, we are committed to serving you and your community. That means delivering reliable power and working together to face the challenges we are all experiencing. If you are having trouble paying your bill or facing disconnection, please contact us so we can work out a plan.

**I can't get through to Customer Support/The phone lines are busy**

- I'm sorry! That sounds frustrating. You may find it easier to reach us online or via our mobile app. These are also good ways to stay up-to-date with the latest information from our company as this situation unfolds.

### **Suspended Disconnections**

- We suspended disconnections for nonpayment on March 13. We haven't yet made a decision on how long this will be in effect since the situation with COVID-19 is still evolving. But we will continue to closely monitor and adapt our policies to support you and the community. Stay healthy and safe.
- Disconnections for nonpayment were suspended on March 13. Decisions about how long this will be in effect haven't been made yet -- but please know that we'll continue to look at this and adapt to help support you and the community during this unprecedented time.
- Yes, this is true! We suspended disconnections for nonpayment on March 13.
- Suspending disconnections means that we're giving you more time to pay if you need it. If you are in an unusual situation and need assistance, we'll work with you on an extension. We will continue to read meters and send bills, so it's best to pay what you can to avoid building up a large balance that will be harder to pay off later.
- No, it's not a scam! We suspended disconnections for nonpayment as part of our efforts to support you and the community at this difficult time.
- We apologize. If you received any sort of disconnection notice, please disregard. We are not disconnecting for nonpayment during the COVID-19 emergency. We do encourage you to pay what you can now to avoid a balance for later. Sorry again for the confusion and thank you for your understanding!

### **Payment Arrangements, Late Payments, Fees, Credit Card payments**

- We are relaxing our usual timelines for payment arrangements and we are happy to work with you to revise your current deferred payment plan. We are not disconnecting for nonpay right now but please contact our call center if you need adjustments to your current payment plan.
- I understand! This is an extremely challenging situation. We are relaxing our usual timelines for payment arrangements so please call our call center if you need to make adjustments.

- Sorry we don't have an answer for how long we'll be waiving fees at this time. But please know that we'll continue to monitor this situation and adapt or extend our policies as needed to help support you and our communities.
- Effective March 21, we began waiving all fees for late payments and returned checks, and for credit or debit card payments for residential accounts. It's part of our efforts to help you and the community during this unprecedented time.
- Yes, we are waiving all fees for late payments and returned checks, effective March 21. We are also waiving fees for credit and debit card payments for residential accounts effective the same date. And we'll keep looking for ways to help you navigate these difficult times. Stay healthy and safe.

### **Fees, Payment Fees, Residential vs. Business, Convenience Fees**

- Convenience fees do not go to Duke Energy. Those fees go to outside vendors who process those payments.
- If your account is for residential service, then you will not have to pay a credit or debit card fee to make a payment starting March. 21. That's because we are waiving these fees during this difficult time. We hope this helps you and anyone else who may be unable to leave home during this pandemic.
- If you have a business account with us, then credit card fees do still apply. However, we do have several other free electronic payment options for businesses, such as electronic fund transfer. You can find out more about these on our website or our app. Thank you!
- I understand! It's a confusing time and there's a lot going on for everyone. Here's the situation: As of March 21, we're waiving all fees for late payments and returned checks. We're also waiving fees for credit or debit card payments for residential accounts only. If you have a business account, I suggest you go to our website where you can find some free electronic payment methods. Thank you and stay well.
- This is an extremely challenging time. To help residential customers who may not be able to leave home or use their usual payment methods, we are waiving fees for credit or debit card payments effective March 21. If you have a business account, please go to our [website](#) to find alternative payment methods for you. Thank you.

### **Customer still seeing a fee on the webpage, troubleshooting web**

If you're still seeing a fee associated with your electronic payment, please try clearing your browser history (cache) and reloading the page. You can get more troubleshooting help at <https://www.duke-energy.com/customer-service/browser-troubleshooting>.

### **Payment Reimbursements, Fee Reimbursements**

- I understand that's frustrating. But unfortunately, we cannot reimburse payments that have already been processed and applied. Thank you.
- If you have questions about fees you've already paid, please contact the call center. Thank you.

### **Why not waive fees before March 21**

- That's a great question. The issue is that there are many complicated systems that must work together, including those from outside our company, to make this possible. We are making this change as quickly as we can. Thank you for your patience.
- If you have questions about fees you've already paid, please contact the call center. Thank you.

### **Returned Checks, DNAC, Bank Fees**

- We are waiving fees for returned checks effective March 21. And we'll continue to look for other ways to help you and the community cope with the effects of COVID-19.
- If you write a check that fails to process due to insufficient funds, your account will be handled in the same manner as always *except* we will not charge a return check fee (although your bank might) and your service will not be in danger of disconnection (due to our suspension of disconnections during this time.)
- At this time, we have not made any decisions about changing or removing DNAC status. But please know that we are closely monitoring this situation and will adapt as this situation evolves.
- We are waiving our fees for returned checks effective March 21 but we don't have control over fees instituted by banks and credit unions. You will need to check with your individual institution. Thank you!

### **Service connection, Deposits, Reconnections**

- Good question. At this time, the majority of our standard connection timelines are not affected. However, extra precautions may be taken for any homes or businesses that may require entry to access a meter. These instances are rare, but when encountered, may require additional screening and extra precautions before the work can be done. Thank you and stay well.

- Generally speaking for the current situation, if you were recently disconnected and your account has not been final billed, we will waive the reconnection fee and not charge a deposit. You will need to set up a deferred payment plan. Please contact the call center to discuss the specifics of your particular situation.
- If your service was disconnected before our announcement on March 13, please contact the customer call center to discuss your individual situation. Thank you.

**Deposits on NEW Accounts:**

- We have not changed our standard timelines and policies for setting up new service, including the need for deposits. Please check [dukeenergyupdates.com](https://dukeenergyupdates.com) for the latest information about any changes to our regular policies or practices. Thank you!

**Meter Reading:**

It's possible that, due to social distancing requirements or government ordinances, we may not be able to read certain meters – for example, those located indoors that cannot be read remotely. In this unusual situation, we will still issue a bill with an estimated amount based on historical usage. Once COVID-19 restrictions are lifted, we will resume reading these meters and issue a new bill based on actual usage. This will include any adjustments necessary between what you've paid and what you've actually used. To avoid building up a large balance or a multi-month bill, we encourage customers in this situation to pay what they can now, even if it's not the total estimated amount.

**Payment Plans, Payment Plans After COVID-19**

- We understand that after this period passes, many people will still be coping with the financial effects. That's why we will continue to closely monitor this situation and make decisions to help support you and the community. Please check back with us.
- We are relaxing our usual timelines for payment arrangements and we are happy to work with you to revise your current deferred payment plan. Please contact our call center if you need to make adjustments to your current payment plan.

**Planned Outages**

- We recognize that this is an especially inconvenient time for planned outages since so many people are home during the day. That's why we are limiting these types of outages to those that are essential for continuity of service. Above all, we want to ensure reliable service during this difficult and challenging time. Occasionally that

requires a temporary interruption to remove a hazard or replace equipment to strengthen the grid. Thank you for your understanding.

### **Why bill at all**

- The generation and distribution of electricity is not paid for by tax payers. There are significant costs to produce and deliver electricity to homes and businesses. Duke Energy and other utilities across the nation are doing what they can to help their communities while still providing an essential service during this unprecedented crisis.

### **Fees added to bills later?**

- The fees are being waived temporarily in an effort to help the customers most vulnerable and hardest hit by the impacts of COVID-19. We will address these fees and other impacts of the pandemic at a later time.

### **Contract employee safety, critical employee safety**

- Thank you for asking about our employees and contractors. We're working hard to help protect them at all locations, including our critical operational facilities, where we use additional screenings, restrictions and other rigorous policies. Above all, we are focused on the health and safety of our teammates and on our commitment to deliver reliable power throughout this challenging time.
- Our contractors and contingent workers follow all the same protocols as those for our employees. Together, we are all focused on protecting the health and safety of our teammates and the larger community while continuing to deliver the reliable power you need during this difficult time.
- Our employees and contractors are taking many additional steps to help protect the team's health and safety – and our ability to generate and deliver reliable power. These extra measures include new restrictions on visitors and access, additional cleaning and disinfecting, screenings at critical facilities, splitting operations for critical functions and much more. Above all, we are determined to continue delivering the reliable power you need.

### **Scammers**

- Sadly, you do need to be on the lookout for scammers! Scammers continue to target customers, threatening disconnection of service and asking for immediate payment over the phone. Remember that Duke Energy never asks for personal information over the phone and never demands payment using money orders or gift cards. If you are unsure if a call or visit is legitimate, hang up or decline service and call our customer call center.



- If we do need to visit your home or business right now, we will follow increased safety protocols, including wearing enhanced protective equipment and following strict social distancing practices. All employees and representatives conducting work on behalf of Duke Energy will display the appropriate identification. If you are unsure if a call or visit is legitimate, hang up or decline service and call our customer call center.

**Apology/explanation of Smart Meter installations and ongoing work:**

We apologize for the inconvenience. We are currently continuing our work to improve your service by installing smart meters. Our workers are wearing appropriate equipment and maintaining a safe distance from the public. Thank you for your understanding.

**Answer to inquiries about us donating PPE equipment:**

Unfortunately, we do not have extra safety masks or equipment at this time. The health care industry is rightfully receiving first priority from manufacturers. We are temporarily discontinuing any nonessential work requiring in-person interactions. And we are using our existing safety equipment to protect customers and employees as we continue any work necessary to deliver safe, reliable electricity.

**Medically Essential:**

Our Medically Essential program is designed for customers with special medical needs. While participation does not provide priority restoration from outages caused by storms or other adverse events, it does help ensure the careful handling of accounts where the disconnection of electric service would adversely affect the well-being of someone in the household. If you'd like to learn more, you can look on our website at [duke.energy.com](http://duke.energy.com) or call customer service.

**Medical Alert:**

Our Medical Alert program is designed for customers with special medical needs. While participation does not provide priority restoration from outages caused by storms or other adverse events, it does help ensure the careful handling of accounts where the disconnection of electric service would adversely affect the well-being of someone in the household. If you'd like to learn more, you can look on our website at [duke.energy.com](http://duke.energy.com) or call customer service.

**How is Duke Energy protecting employees?**

- We're closely monitoring the guidance from the World Health Organization and the Center for Disease Control, and from our industry peers and government agencies. Based on their input, we're implementing preventative measures to help keep our employees and others as safe as possible from the spread of the virus. Our employees

who interact with customers will be maintaining a safe distance or may turn to virtual forms of communication.

**Contract employee safety, critical employee safety, workers in the field:**

- We are working hard to help protect our employees and contractors at all locations, including our critical operational facilities, where we use additional screenings, restrictions and other rigorous policies. Above all, we are focused on the health and safety of our teammates and on our commitment to deliver reliable power throughout this challenging time.
- Our contractors and contingent workers follow all the same protocols as those for our employees. Together, we are all focused on protecting the health and safety of our teammates and the larger community while continuing to deliver the reliable power you need during this difficult time.
- Our employees and contractors are taking many additional steps to help protect the team's health and safety – and our ability to generate and deliver reliable power. These extra measures include new restrictions on visitors and access, additional cleaning and disinfecting, screenings at critical facilities, splitting operations for critical functions and much more. Above all, we are determined to continue delivering the reliable power you need.
- For their safety and yours, please avoid approaching any of our workers you may see in the field. Their work is helping us continue to deliver reliable power to our customers and communities. They are practicing social distancing and will maintain a distance of 6 feet at all times. If you need assistance, please visit our website, download our mobile app or call us.

**Time Of Use – TOU (Also Flex Savings Option rate)**

We recognize that some customers on this rate may not be able to shift their energy use to off-peak hours at this time -- especially if under a stay-at-home mandate. Customers may contact our customer service team to discuss your circumstance.

Specialists should follow guidance provided in The Source if the caller specifically mentions the Flex Savings Option Rate (DEC Only).

April 1, 2020

**From: Quentin Foger, Process Execution****Topic: DEC/DEP COVID-19 Update**

We understand during the COVID-19 pandemic, many customers may be facing unexpected financial hardships. To help, we have suspended disconnections for nonpayment for home and business accounts during this time.

Duke Energy is aware of Governor Cooper's Executive Order, and we are committed to helping customers experiencing hardships during this time in both North and South Carolina. On March 13, 2020, Duke Energy announced it would suspend the disconnection of service due to non-payment of electric bills until further notice. We will continue to read the customer's meter in most cases, and prepare the bill. **Be sure to encourage the customer to pay what they can to avoid building up a large balance that will be harder to pay off later.** If a customer needs to establish a payment arrangement, flexible options are available. See The Source for additional information ([DEC](#), [DEP](#)).

Please know Duke Energy is here to support our customers. In addition to suspending disconnections, we have also waived fees for credit and debit card payments for residential customers, as well as, waived late payment fees and fees for returned payments for all customers. We will continue to follow mandates at the state and federal level.

**Expert: *Be the solution to our customer's needs.***

**Appreciation: *Recognize and value our Customers.***

**Safety: *Ensure customer and co-worker safety.***

**Easy: *Clear the path to resolution – be easy to do business with.***

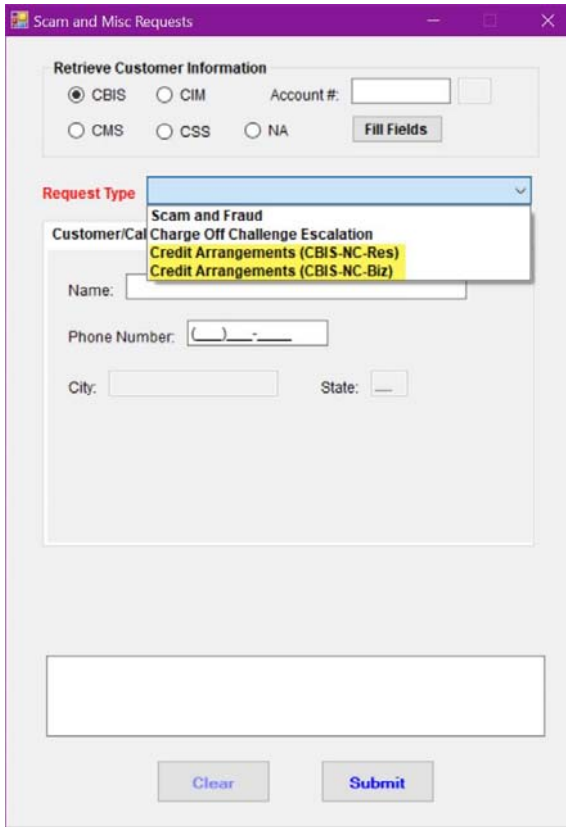
## Future DPA (Scam and Misc. Requests) - NC

### Overview:

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, some of our customers are being proactive with seeking assistance with their electric bill. Up until now, because of the NC Executive Order, we have been advising customers an arrangement is not needed. Going forward, we will assist these customers with an added option available in the Scam & Misc. Requests tool.

### Work Process:

1. If a North Carolina customer requests a payment arrangement, advise the customer we are not setting arrangements right now due to the executive order; however, we can take their information and create an arrangement when the order is lifted.
2. Access the Scam & Misc. Requests tool via the icon on the desktop
3. Select the appropriate billing system and enter the customer's account number
4. Click "Fill Fields" and the customers information will automatically populate
5. Select the appropriate Request Type based on the account type (residential or nonresidential)
6. Enter the customer's email address and mobile phone number
7. Click Submit
8. Advise the customer once the NC order is lifted and **their September bill has generated**, we will proactively email or text an offer and the customer must then set up the payment arrangement



Scam and Misc Requests

Retrieve Customer Information

☒ CBIS ☐ CIM Account #:

☐ CMS ☐ CSS ☐ NA

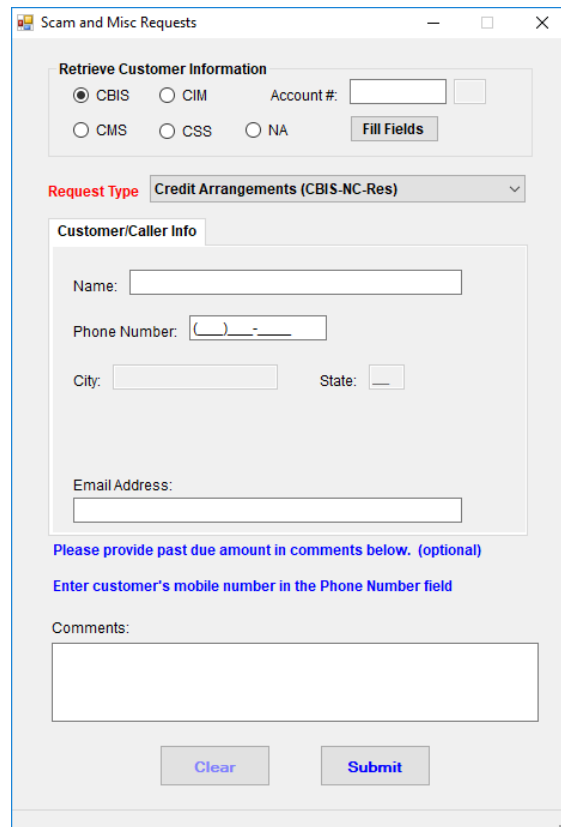
Request Type:

Customer/Caller Info

Name:

Phone Number:

City:  State:



Scam and Misc Requests

Retrieve Customer Information

☒ CBIS ☐ CIM Account #:

☐ CMS ☐ CSS ☐ NA

Request Type:

Customer/Caller Info

Name:

Phone Number:

City:  State:

Email Address:

Please provide past due amount in comments below. (optional)

Enter customer's mobile number in the Phone Number field

Comments:

July 29, 2020

**Topic: Expiration of the NC Executive Order**

To assist our customers during the COVID-19 pandemic, Duke Energy paused many of its credit practices on March 13, 2020, including the suspension of non-pay service disconnections in order to align with the North Carolina Executive Order. Recently, municipalities (i.e. City of Concord) were informed the executive order will expire July, 29 and normal utility billing will resume July 30. This announcement only impacts municipalities and co-ops. Duke Energy is still adhering to the North Carolina Utility Commission order suspending disconnects.

**Important Reminders:**

- We will continue to encourage customers who are, understandably, behind in their payments, to pay what they can now to avoid large bill balances that may be difficult to manage later.
- Regardless of the timeline, all customers will have at least one full billing cycle after we announce the resumption of standard operations to prepare, discuss options for their situation and make payment arrangements.
- The financial impacts from this pandemic are far from over and our commitment to customers and solutions-focused care will continue.

See your supervisor or team lead if you have questions.

**Expert:** *Be the solution to our customer's needs.*

**Appreciation:** *Recognize and value our Customers.*

**Safety:** *Ensure customer and co-worker safety.*

**Easy:** *Clear the path to resolution – be easy to do business with.*



## DEC - Post COVID-19 Business Policies

### Overview

To assist our customers during the COVID-19 pandemic, Duke Energy paused many of its credit practices on March 13, 2020. Duke Energy's plan is to resume billing and payment policies for North and South Carolina customers October 1. Disconnections for nonpayment will not begin until mid-October. Fees for credit/debit card and walk-in payments will continue to be waived until further notice.

### North Carolina Key Dates:

Delinquency	Date to Resume
Disconnect Non – Pay Notice	10/1
Disconnect Non – Pay	10/19
Return Item Fee	10/19
Late Payment Charge	N/A *waived until further notice*
Walk- In Payment Location Fees	12/1
CC/Debit Card Fees	N/A *waived until further notice*

### South Carolina Key Dates:

Delinquency	Date to Resume
Disconnect Non – Pay Notice	10/1
Disconnect Non – Pay	10/19
Return Item Fee	10/19
Late Payment Charge	10/19
Walk- In Payment Location Fees	12/1

Review how to actively listen to customers and how to provide options our customers really want. Customers want to be offered **E.A.S.E.**

**E**xpert: Be the solution to our customer's needs

Payment arrangements may be offered for the maximum durations listed below. Customers have the option to enter into an agreement for less than the maximum allotted time.

### Deferred Payment Arrangement Options:

- North Carolina
  - 14-months – Residential and Non – Residential
- South Carolina
  - 6-months Residential and Non - Residential

Non-Residential customers who opt to enroll in the 14- month option in North Carolina **will not** be able to any changes to their agreement once enrolled.

### Transfer Service:

If a customer is on an active payment arrangement and requests to transfer service, follow the normal transfer process. There will be no payment required for the transfer and the agreement will transfer with them to the new account. Accounts Receivable will work this process behind the scenes and no additional action is needed from specialists. This process would apply to North Carolina only. Follow your normal process for South Carolina customers requesting a transfer.



## DEC - Post COVID-19 Business Policies

### Future Agreements (Scam & Fraud Tool):

Specialists should use the Scam & Fraud Misc. tool to schedule a future payment arrangement for North Carolina customers that request an arrangement, who have not received their September bill. If the customer has received their September bill, follow your normal process and create an agreement within the billing system.

### If an account has been disconnected for non-payment:

- The customer can pay their current charges to have service restored
  - If paid, cancel the disconnect order and/or restore service
- Reconnection fee should be billed upon reconnect (next bill)
- Once the reconnection has been issued the DPA should then be reset again in the billing system

*Note: This process is only in place until 12/1 and applies to residential customers only.*

**A**ppreciation: Recognize and value our Customers

### After the 'No Money Down' timeframe

**From October 2020 until March 2021, customers can call and restructure the arrangement (cancel the current and create a new arrangement) if they are able to pay the new charges on the current bill**

- We will accept payments larger than the current bill amount
- No limit on the number of times the arrangement can be restructured
- Customers can restructure their payment arrangements resulting from COVID debt, but they must pay their current balance

*Note: There is no limitation on how many times we will allow a customer to restructure their agreement if they can pay their new charges*

The process for restructuring payment arrangements applies to Residential customers only. Nonresidential customers cannot make any changes to agreements once enrolled.

### Returned Checks

- Customers with previous returned check flag on the account, CAN get an arrangement for six months after 'return to normal'
- This does not include current returned checks

**S**afety: Ensure customer and co-worker safety

Our goal is to find solutions that meet our customers' needs while protecting the company's interest by not allowing customer arrears to increase.

**E**asy: Clearing the path to resolution – Be easy to do business with

Now that you've had the chance to think through each of the elements of the delinquency key dates and payment arrangement options, review the caring skills below for a successful customer call. Let's look at how we can create positive events for our customers, and additional ways we can enhance their Duke Energy service experience.



## DEC - Post COVID-19 Business Policies

Customer May Ask...	Suggested Response...
I need an extension	<i>I'll be happy to assist you with entering a payment arrangement on your account. Let's review your current account balance and discuss when you can pay.</i>
I have a crazy question	<i>If I don't readily have the answer, we will find the answer together.</i>
How much do I have to pay today?	<i>I'll be glad to assist with answering all your billing questions. <b>*Review no money down timeframe and process.</b></i>
Seems I haven't paid a bill in a while. How much is my bill?	<i>Let's start by reviewing your bill and then we'll look at the options you have for getting it paid.</i>

### Quality Service After Hours

Customers accustomed to contacting Duke Energy's customer service during the day may put off to calling after hours. The *easy* answer is to advise the customers to call back the next business day. The *right* answer is to use caring skills to provide the best customer experience.

Don't forget—communication isn't just speaking. It's also practicing active listening skills.

Customer May Ask...	Suggested Response...
I need an extension	<i>That's a request that needs to be handled by our customer service experts. Please give them a call during the hours of 7am-7pm Mon-Fri. They will be happy to access your account, review it with you and enter an extension.</i>
I have a crazy question	<i>If I don't readily have the answer, I'll be happy to point you to right customer service department to be able to assist you during normal business hours.</i>
How much do I have to pay today?	<i>That's a request that needs to be handled by our customer service experts. Please give them a call during the hours of 7am-7pm Mon-Fri. They will be happy to access your account, review it with you and help you determine what you need to pay.</i>
Seems I haven't paid a bill in a while. How much is my bill?	<i>That's a request that needs to be handled by our customer service experts. Please give them a call during the hours of 7am-7pm Mon-Fri. They will be happy to access your account, review it with you and provide your bill balance.</i>





## DEP - Post COVID-19 Business Policies

OFFICIAL COPY

Apr 27 2021

### Overview

To assist our customers during the COVID-19 pandemic, Duke Energy paused many of its credit practices on March 13, 2020. Duke Energy's plan is to resume billing and payment policies for North and South Carolina customers October 1. Disconnections for nonpayment will not begin until mid-October. Fees for credit/debit card and walk-in payments will continue to be waived until further notice.

### North Carolina Key Dates:

Delinquency	Date to Resume
Disconnect Non – Pay Notice	10/1
Disconnect Non – Pay	10/12
Return Item Fee	10/19
Late Payment Charge	N/A *waived until further notice*
Walk- In Payment Location Fees	12/1
CC/Debit Card Fees	N/A *waived until further notice*

### South Carolina Key Dates:

Delinquency	Date to Resume
Disconnect Non – Pay Notice	10/1
Disconnect Non – Pay	10/12
Return Item Fee	10/19
Late Payment Charge	10/19
Walk- In Payment Location Fees	12/1

Review how to actively listen to customers and how to provide options our customers really want. Customers want to be offered **E.A.S.E.**

**E**xpert: Be the solution to our customer's needs

Payment arrangements may be offered for the maximum durations listed below. Customers have the option to enter into an agreement for less than the maximum allotted time.

### Deferred Payment Arrangement Options:

- North Carolina
  - 14-months – Residential & Non – Residential
- South Carolina
  - 6-months – Residential & Non – Residential

Non-Residential customers who opt to enroll in the 14- month option in North Carolina will not be able to any changes to their agreement once enrolled.

### Transfer Service:

If a customer is on an active payment arrangement and requests to transfer service, follow the normal transfer process. There will be no payment required for the transfer and the agreement will transfer with them to the new account. Accounts Receivable will work this process behind the scenes and no additional action is needed from specialists.



## DEP - Post COVID-19 Business Policies

### Future Agreements (Scam & Fraud Tool):

Specialists should use the Scam & Fraud Misc. tool to schedule a future payment arrangement for North Carolina customers that request an arrangement, who have not received their September bill. If the customer has received their September bill, follow your normal process and create an agreement within the billing system.

*Note: Once a DPA is reached or restructured with the customer, specialists must ensure the collection activity is removed from the account to prevent an interruption in the service.*

### If an account has been disconnected for non-payment or pending to be disconnected:

- If the customer was on a DPA the previous month, they can pay their missed installment to stop disconnection or have service restored
  - If paid, cancel the disconnect order and/or restore service
- If the customer was not on a DPA the previous month, they can pay their current bill and enter into a payment arrangement for the remaining balance
- Reconnection fee should be billed upon reconnect (next bill)

*Note: This process is only in place until 12/1 and applies to residential customers only.*

**A**ppreciation: Recognize and value our Customers

### After the 'No Money Down' timeframe

**From October 2020 until March 2021, customers can call and restructure the arrangement (cancel the current and create a new arrangement) if they are able to pay the new charges on the current bill**

- We will accept payments larger than the current bill amount
- No limit on the number of times the arrangement can be restructured
- Customers can restructure their payment arrangements resulting from COVID debt, but they must pay their current balance

*Note: There is no limitation on how many times we will allow a customer to restructure their agreement if they can pay their new charges*

The process for restructuring payment arrangements applies to Residential customers only. Nonresidential customers cannot make any changes to agreements once enrolled.

### Returned Checks

- Customers with previous returned check flag on the account, CAN get an arrangement for six months after 'return to normal'
- This does not include current returned checks

**S**afety: Ensure customer and co-worker safety

Our goal is to find solutions that meet our customers' needs while protecting the company's interest by not allowing customer arrears to increase.

**E**asy: Clearing the path to resolution – Be easy to do business with

~~Confidential and Proprietary Information~~



## DEP - Post COVID-19 Business Policies

Now that you've had the chance to think through each of the elements of the delinquency key dates and payment arrangement options, review the caring skills below for a successful customer call. Let's look at how we can create positive events for our customers, and additional ways we can enhance their Duke Energy service experience.

Customer May Ask...	Suggested Response...
I need an extension	<i>I'll be happy to assist you with entering a payment arrangement on your account. Let's review your current account balance and discuss when you can pay.</i>
I have a crazy question	<i>If I don't readily have the answer, we will find the answer together.</i>
How much do I have to pay today?	<i>I'll be glad to assist with answering all your billing questions. <b>*Review no money down timeframe and process.</b></i>
Seems I haven't paid a bill in a while. How much is my bill?	<i>Let's start by reviewing your bill and then we'll look at the options you have for getting it paid.</i>

# DEC/DEP - Return to Standard Billing Practices

Description: To assist our customers during the COVID-19 pandemic, Duke Energy paused many of its credit practices on March 13, 2020. Duke Energy's plan is to resume billing and payment policies for North and South Carolina customers October 1, 2020. Disconnections for nonpayment will not begin until mid-October. Fees for credit/debit card and walk-in will continue to be waived until further notice.

## Work Process

 **NOTE:** *Credit/Debit Card fees and Late Payment charges* are **waived** for NC accounts **until further notice**.

## Deferred Payment Arrangement Options:

- North Carolina - 14 months Residential & Non-Residential
- South Carolina - 6 months Residential & Non-Residential

South Carolina customers who are unable to meet the terms of a 6-month arrangement, may be offered additional time not to exceed 9 months.

Payment arrangements may be offered for the maximum durations listed above. Customers have the option to enter into an agreement for less than the maximum allotted time.

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## Transfer Service

If a customer is on an active payment arrangement and requests to transfer service, follow the normal transfer process. There will be no payment required for the transfer and the agreement will transfer with them to the new account. Accounts Receivable will work this process behind the scenes and no additional action is needed from the specialists.

The transferal of DPA's will be for North Carolina only. For active residential customers transferring service without a DPA it is not necessary to collect the past due balance before transferring service in SC. The total balance due will transfer to their new account. When the new account is past due and eligible for disconnection, the customer can then set up a DPA.

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## If an account has been disconnected for non-payment or pending disconnect:

- The customer can pay their current charges to have service restored
  - If paid, cancel the disconnect order and/or restore service

- Reconnection fees should be billed upon reconnect (next bill)
- Once the reconnection has been issued, the DPA should then be reset again in the billing system


 *NOTE: This process only applies to residential customers*

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#### **After the "No Money Down" timeframe**

**From October 2020 through March 2021, customers can call and restructure the arrangement (cancel the current and create a new arrangement) if they are able to pay the new charges on the current bill:**

- We will accept payments larger than the current bill amount
- No limit on the number of times the arrangement can be restructured
- Customers can restructure their payment arrangements resulting from COVID debt, but they must pay their current balance

 *NOTE: There is no limitation on how many times we will allow a customer to restructure their agreement if they can pay their new charges*

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#### **Returned Checks**

Customers need to satisfy the returned payment amount before enrolling into a new deferred payment arrangement

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#### **Prepaid Advantage Customers**

We will assist our Prepaid Advantage customers by moving all negative balances into the deferred balance. This will allow customers to start paying off their debt while also establishing a positive current balance that funds future usage and avoids delinquency actions.

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#### **NC Housing Opportunities and Prevention of Evictions (HOPE) Program**

The Housing Opportunities and Prevention of Evictions (HOPE) Program may provide rent and utility assistance to eligible low and moderate income renters experiencing financial hardship due to the economic effects of COVID-19. The program will help prevent evictions and utility disconnections in order to promote housing stability during the ongoing pandemic.

For approved customers, the program may cover up to six (6) months of past due utility costs. Most of these customers who have applied are likely to be granted funds, but in some instances, payments may take until February to be issued.

If a customer states they have started this process:

- Continue to follow *Return to Standard Business* practices, and offer a deferred payment arrangement (DPA).
- Advise the customer once the payment has been received it will post to the account.

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[Frequently Asked Questions:](#)

***I see that Duke Energy is resuming their suspended credit activities. Does that mean they will begin disconnecting power for those that are behind?***

Duke Energy will continue to suspend service disconnections for nonpayment for an additional month beyond its required moratorium on disconnection for nonpayment. Customers who are experiencing financial hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic now have until Oct. 1 to pay overdue balances or make payment arrangements.

Duke Energy will begin proactive customer outreach in September to offer customers in need the opportunity to establish payment plans for up to than 14 months in length for North Carolina and up to 6 months in length for South Carolina. Down payments will not be required. Additionally, Duke Energy will continue to waive late fees until further notice.

***What does resumption of "Standard Business Operations" mean?***

To help minimize the spread of COVID-19, we suspended some of our field operations and non-emergency work inside customers' premises back in March. The company has been methodically resuming some activities, consistent with its commitment to safely and reliably serve customers. Many of those temporarily paused activities (interior smart meter installations/replacements, energy audits, etc.) have begun to recommence. Our field technicians will continue to practice social distancing and will carefully adhere to all CDC guidelines while performing their work – including the use of personal protective equipment where applicable.

For jobs that must be scheduled, operations will contact customers in advance to inform them of the nature of the work and the safety protocols that will be used. Customers will have the right to refuse and reschedule the service at a later date unless an identified safety concern exists.

***Can I make an extended payment arrangement online?***

Yes. The added convenience for customers to choose an extended payment arrangement that meets their needs is available online anytime. Visit <https://www.duke-energy.com/home/billing/special-assistance/payment-arrangements> for more information.

***What if my account is eligible to be disconnected or has been disconnected already?***

If the account was on a DPA the previous month, the customer can pay their missed installment to stop disconnection or have service restored. (If paid, cancel the disconnect order and/or restore service)

If the account was not on a DPA the previous month, the customer can pay their current bill and enter into a payment arrangement for the remaining balance

***What are standard billing and payment policies? What does that mean?***

When we reference regular business policies, we mean our normal, day-to-day billing, payment and credit practices. When we resume normal business practices, regular notifications around past-due bill balances and late payment fees will also resume. Anyone at risk of disconnection for nonpayment would begin to receive notices. Before any disconnections, customers will receive advance notice.

Ohio and Indiana will return to standard billing and payment practices in August, which means customers in arrears will receive notices about their past-due balances and the earliest possible date their service could be interrupted. That change may result in disconnections for non-payment under regular credit and notice timelines after September 16 for residential and non-residential customers with delinquent balances who do not request a payment arrangement.

The company urges customers to establish a payment plan to avoid disconnection.

***Still out of work; Where can I get assistance?***

We know the financial impact of the pandemic is far from over. Please visit [dukenergyupdates.com](https://dukenergyupdates.com) (Customer Assistance page) for resources. The company urges eligible customers to take advantage of available financial support through assistance agencies.

In addition, customers who need financial assistance are encouraged to visit [211.org](https://211.org) to locate available resources. The free service can help customers find local community agencies that provide assistance to meet a wide range of needs, including:

- Utility bills
- Housing, food and other essentials
- Child and elder care
- Medical expenses and health counseling

To get started, simply visit [211.org](https://211.org) or dial 211 from your phone.

***Why bill me at all? Why can't you just forgive this debt altogether?***

The generation and distribution of electricity is not paid for by tax payers. There are significant costs to produce and deliver electricity to homes and businesses. We are committed to doing what we can to help our customers and communities while still providing an essential service during this unprecedented crisis.

As financial assistance has become available for qualified customers, this the right time for customers to prepare. We will continue to help our customers access resources to assist and provide additional information that can help reduce their bills as we return to standard billing practices.

***What has Duke Energy done to assist customers during this crisis?***

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic in March, the company immediately launched a sweeping series of steps to help customers, including voluntarily suspending disconnections for non-payment, as well as late-payment fees and residential customer fees for credit card payments and other payment types.

The Duke Energy Foundation has contributed more than \$2.1 million in foundation and corporate funds to North Carolina not-for-profit organizations, focusing on food, bill assistance, and education needs of its customers and communities.

***Why are you doing this to your customers in the middle of a pandemic and when there are so many lost jobs? Why Now?***

As financial assistance has become available for qualified customers, this the right time for customers to prepare. We will continue to help our customers access resources to assist and provide additional information that can help reduce their bills as we return to standard billing practices.





## DEC/DEP – Return to Normal

### Overview:

Delinquency actions have officially resumed for North and South Carolina customers. Customers who are in arrears will begin receiving notifications advising them of the earliest possible date they could be disconnected. Each state has different requirements when setting up a new DPA.

Payment arrangements may be offered for the maximum durations listed below. Customers have the option to enter into an agreement for less than the maximum allotted time. Be sure to offer the best option based on the state in which the customer resides.

### Deferred Payment Arrangement Options:

- North Carolina  
14-months – Residential and Non-residential
- South Carolina  
6-months Residential and Non-residential

### Key Reminders:

- North Carolina residential customers may transfer service and have their existing DPA transfer with them
- Although we are not transferring DPA's in South Carolina, customers are still able to transfer service without paying their existing balance
- Customers wanting to enroll in a DPA must have received a disconnect notice
- South Carolina Prepaid Advantage customers who have a negative balance, will have their balances moved to deferred, so it can be paid over time
- Non-residential customers cannot make any changes to agreements once enrolled

### If an account has been disconnected for non-payment:

- The customer can pay their current charges to have service restored (If paid, cancel the disconnect order and/or restore service)
- Reconnection fee should be billed upon reconnect (next bill)
- Once the reconnection has been issued, the DPA should be reset in the billing system
- The DNP process will be in place until December 1, 2020 for residential customers only
- After December 1, 2020 the full past due balance will be required to restore service

**From October 2020 until March 2021, customers can call and restructure the arrangement (cancel the current and create a new arrangement) if they are able to pay the new charges on the current bill**

- We will accept payments larger than the current bill amount
- There is no limit on the number of times the arrangement can be restructured
- The process for restructuring payment arrangements applies to Residential customers only

September 30, 2020

## Topic: DEC/DEP - Return to Standard Billing Practices & Business Operations

Earlier this year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, to better assist our customers, all collection activities were suspended. We have been working to gradually resume our billing/credit policies by proactively reaching out to customers to help them prepare. **Beginning Thursday, October 1, 2020**, delinquency actions will resume for North and South Carolina, meaning customers in arrears will start receiving notices detailing their past due balances and the earliest possible date their service could be interrupted.

North and South Carolina customers who are experiencing financial hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic, now have until October 18, 2020, to pay overdue balances or make payment arrangements. Disconnections for nonpayment will resume on October 19, 2020.

### Deferred Payment Arrangement Options (Special Agreements):

Payment arrangements may be offered for the maximum durations listed below. Customers have the option to enter into an agreement for less than the maximum allotted time.

- North Carolina  
14-months – Residential and Non – Residential
- South Carolina  
6-months – Residential and Non – Residential

### Key Messages:

- Duke Energy will continue assisting customers experiencing economic hardship from the COVID-19 pandemic as the company begins returning to standard billing and payment practices this fall.
- Duke Energy encourages customers to take advantage of the company's payment programs to help manage electric bills and avoid service disconnection.
- As financial assistance becomes available for qualified customers, we believe now is the right time to begin resuming traditional operations.
- Duke Energy will continue to help our customers access resources to assist them and provide additional information that can help reduce their bills.

Leading up to Return to Normal, we have been capturing information for customers who have not received their September bill, who requested a payment arrangement in the Scam & Misc. Request tool. Effective October 1, 2020, the future payment arrangement option will be disabled in the tool.

Additional information can be found in The Source, Return to Standard Billing Practices ([DEC](#), [DEP](#)).

See your supervisor or team lead if you have questions.



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*Every decision. Every time.*

October 7, 2020

**Topic: DEC/DEP - Return to Standard Billing Practices Reminders**

Delinquency actions have officially resumed for North and South Carolina customers. Customers who are in arrears will begin receiving notifications advising them of the earliest possible date they could be disconnected. Each state has different requirements when setting up a new DPA. Be sure to offer the best option based on the state in which the customer resides.

- North Carolina - 14-months – Residential and Non-residential
- South Carolina - 6-months – Residential and Non-residential

**Key Reminders:**

- North Carolina residential customers may transfer service and have their existing DPA transfer with them
- Although we are not transferring DPA's in South Carolina, customers are still able to transfer service without paying their existing balance
- Customers wanting to enroll in a DPA must have received a disconnect notice
- South Carolina Prepaid Advantage customers who have a negative balance, will have their balances moved to deferred, so it can be paid over time
- Non-residential customers cannot make any changes to agreements once enrolled

Additional information can be found in The Source, Return to Standard Billing Practices ([DEC](#), [DEP](#)).

See your supervisor or team lead if you have questions.



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The following are the training resources available as well:

- The Source
  - Online Knowledge Management system where communications, training content, job aids, quick reference guides, process and procedures are stored for reference during customer interactions to ensure guidelines are properly followed.
- CCO University
  - Online resource for training content, job aids, quick reference guides, process and procedures are stored for reference during customer interactions to ensure guidelines are properly followed.
- New Hire Training Agenda
  - Update made to New Hire training agenda 1/2021 to include revised DPA policy/process call handling procedures for Vendor New Hire training. This has been addressed for both Vendor and Internal.
- MyLearning/eLearning Modules
  - CR1 DPA Shield Payment Arrangement Tool. 20-minute self-paced eLearning training shows how to use the SHIELD tool to set up payment arrangements, short term extensions and take payments from customers.
- YouTube Channel
  - CR1 DPA COVID Response Training. With the unique training needs of one of our vendors, a YouTube Channel was developed as a virtual learning environment to upload training videos. The private YouTube Channel includes a 20-minute self-paced eLearning training showing how to use the SHIELD tool to set up payment arrangements and short-term extensions and take payments from customers.
- Quality Monitoring Observation feedback
  - Utilizing a checklist, QA Analysts listen to and evaluate the phone conversations taking place between CSRs and customers in order to determine the correct processes are being used to improve call handling via targeted feedback.

# Working as One across Teams

August 2020



It doesn't matter what we do, where we do it, or how well we deliver our service to our customers, we don't succeed without the right people on our teams. We believe you all are the right people.

Nobody succeeds in a silo. To survive and ultimately thrive we must effectively create partnerships with many around us and in different areas of the company.

Due to the impacts of COVID-19, our Teams will be experiencing a time of increased call volume. Since the moratorium will be lifted in some regions sooner, we want to be prepared to assist our Team Members with addressing our customers with the need to make payments.

Additional resources have been added to Midwest Region to assist with handling these calls to ensure our customers are not waiting to discuss their bills or process payments.

## Working as One across Teams

# 5 Tips for Customer Care and Agent Success

1. Understanding the importance of listening to determine the customer's needs
  - You cannot approach every customer the same way.
  - It is crucial to know your customer and tailor your conversation to fit their needs.
  - For example, you may receive a significant number of calls from customers who may seemingly have the same request:
    - The call from one customer may be more transactional while the call from another customer may be from someone that has a hardship and require you to show compassion and use empathy.

# 5 Tips for Customer Care and Agent Success

## 2. Letting the customer hear your SMILE – even on the phone

- People appreciate authenticity. Use positive language.
- Working as One means we are serving the same customers, use the terms “we” or “us” when appropriate.
- Be conscious of your tone and word choice. This goes along with tip number one; letting the customers hear your willingness to assist will help build that genuine connection.

## 3. Build trust by using all the tools available and solving customer’s problems before they know they exist

- Leverage the tools at your disposal.
  - Thoroughly review payment options and review all current documentation to ensure that you provide complete and accurate information.



# 5 Tips for Customer Car and Agent Success

4. Set expectations early on to make communication smooth throughout the entire interaction:

- When ensuring first call resolution, be sure to relay what you expect of them and what they can expect from you in your summary of each call.
- We definitely do not want any surprises for our customers, nor do we want them to call us back for clarification unnecessarily. By following through, you ensure their requests are processed correctly the first time.

5. Hang in there – we will be busy for a while

- Learning a new system to resolve customer requests can be a gradual process and there's no good way to rush it. Formulate a plan to get brilliant at the basics and stick to it.
- If you get three minutes with them, it must be the most impactful three minutes of the day. Spend time with each customer. When it comes to getting good at a new system and building your confidence, consistency is key.

# Process Alert



August 21, 2020

## Topic: DE All – New COVID-19 Resource Support Line (Escalations)

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought financial hardship to many of our customers. In addition to the suspension of disconnections for non-payment (DNP), we continue to explore other ways we can support our customers. As states are relaxing restrictions, and economies are rebounding in phases, we as a company are also beginning to slowly and strategically return to business as usual.

In response to the potential increase in escalated calls from customers seeking financial assistance, we have established a COVID-19 Resource Support Line (RSL) in each jurisdiction to specifically help with calls that may be more difficult due to financial stress.

Beginning August 24, 2020, these RSLs will be staffed with a rotation of CCO Team Leads.

### COVID Escalations

- Customer is irate or emotionally distraught with a financial issue related to credit, payments, financial assistance, or payment arrangements resulting from the pandemic.
- COVID escalations should be sent to the COVID RSL via the “COVID Hardship Escalation” entry in the Universal Directory

Existing escalations, not related to financial hardship due to COVID-19 (i.e. outdoor lighting concerns, extended outages or overdue service requests) should be handled by **following your normal escalation process**.

See your supervisor or team lead if you have questions.



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September 3, 2020

**Subject: DEP – DPA Proactive Offers Campaign**

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought financial hardship to many of our customers. In addition to the suspension of disconnections for non-payment (DNP), Duke Energy is exploring other ways to support our customers.

Starting today, September 3, 2020 Duke Energy will proactively reach out to 12,438 residential and non-residential customers in North and South Carolina through emails and text messages, informing them of several payment arrangement offers. Accounts receiving an offer or scheduled to receive an offer, will be documented.

Additional information can be found in The Source, [DEP - COVID-19; Deferred Payment Arrangements Campaign](#).

See your supervisor or team lead if you have questions.



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DOCKET NOS. M-100, SUB 158;  
E-7, SUB 1236; E-2, SUB 1228 and  
G-9, SUB 767

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