



## NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Customers urged to act now, apply for CARES Act funds**

*Millions of dollars available until 12/31 to assist with utility bills, other costs*

**HONOLULU, Sept. 15, 2020** – Customers challenged by the financial impact of COVID-19 are urged to apply now for utility bill assistance from government and nonprofit sources. Millions of dollars in federal CARES Act funding are available only until the end of the year.

Customers also should take advantage of Hawaiian Electric's special payment arrangement plans to help keep past due balances manageable. Go to [www.hawaiianelectric.com/paymentarrangement](http://www.hawaiianelectric.com/paymentarrangement) to learn more about the interest-free plan options for residential and business customers.

"It's critical for customers to apply for assistance if the COVID-19 pandemic has caused financial strain for their household or business. The time to act is now. It helps everyone in Hawai'i when these federal funds are injected into our local economy," said Shelee Kimura, Hawaiian Electric senior vice president of customer service. "We're also offering special payment arrangement plans to help ease the burden for customers – but we need to hear from you in order for us to help."

Deadlines for some assistance programs are fast-approaching while others are nearing their funding limits. It's important for customers to apply while assistance is still available. Eligibility requirements vary. Go to [www.hawaiianelectric.com/COVID19](http://www.hawaiianelectric.com/COVID19) for a listing of programs. Among them:

- **City & County of Honolulu - \$25 Million CARES funding**
  - COVID-19 Hardship Fund – up to \$2,000 per month for six months for rent, mortgage or utilities
  - Administered by Aloha United Way, Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement and Helping Hands Hawai'i
- **Maui County - \$5 Million CARES funding**
  - Hawai'i Emergency Laulima Partnership (H.E.L.P.) Program - \$500 to \$1,250 per household up to three times to assist with utilities, mortgage, rent, insurance, or childcare
  - Administered by Maui Economic Opportunity Inc. (MEO)
- **Hawai'i County - \$1.5 million CARES funding**
  - COVID-19 Utility Bill Support – Provides up to \$500 utility (gas, electric or non-government water) bill assistance per month for eligible households
  - Administered by the Hawai'i County Economic Opportunity Council (HCEOC)

- more -

- Additional **CARES funding** is available for households in need of utility payment help that meet the 60 percent state median gross annual income limit (individual, \$30,767, and for a family of four, \$59,167). Applicants who meet income requirements may be eligible for up to \$1,000 in **LIHEAP COVID-19 Disaster Energy Crisis Intervention Assistance**.

Visit agency websites for details: Honolulu Community Action Program (HCAP) [www.hcapweb.org](http://www.hcapweb.org); Maui Economic Opportunity (MEO) [www.meoinc.org](http://www.meoinc.org); or Hawai'i County Economic Opportunity Council (HCEOC) [hceoc.net](http://hceoc.net)

- Small businesses may also apply for **CARES funding** through the Honolulu Small Business Relief and Recovery Fund; the Kokua Maui County Small Business Recovery & Relief Fund; and the Holomua Hawai'i County of Hawai'i Small Business Relief & Recovery Fund.

Hawaiian Electric service disconnections for nonpayment have been suspended through Dec. 31, 2020. The company suspended its collection efforts in March to ensure customers' electric service would not be disrupted while many were staying home.

The Public Utilities Commission in August extended the moratorium to the end of the year and said in its order that "customers should continue paying their bills to the extent possible during this time, noting that customers will still ultimately be responsible for paying Utility service billings accrued during this suspension."

Customers who are having trouble paying their electric bill are encouraged to contact Hawaiian Electric to set up a payment plan.

Go to [www.hawaiianelectric.com/paymentarrangement](http://www.hawaiianelectric.com/paymentarrangement) for the link to a payment arrangement request form; the form can be emailed to our customer care team. Submitting the form is the quickest way for customers to start the process.

The company's walk-in payment centers remain closed until further notice, but there are several payment methods available to customers.

Go to [www.hawaiianelectric.com/paymentoptions](http://www.hawaiianelectric.com/paymentoptions) for available payment methods. Customers who prefer to pay in person may do so at no charge at Western Union payment locations at retailers throughout the company's service territory. The company website lists the locations.

For assistance managing energy costs, Hawai'i Energy is a trusted resource for tips and rebates to help offset the costs of energy-saving equipment and services. Visit <https://hawaiienergy.com/tips> for more information.

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