



Collection Talking Points

June 24, 2020

Eau Claire Energy Cooperative has been responding to COVID-19 by taking the following actions to assist members with financial hardships:

- ❖ Temporarily suspending disconnecting electric service and waiving late payment fees during Wisconsin's Health Emergency declaration period.
- ❖ Offering payment arrangements to give members in need additional time to pay on their electric bill and encouraging members to pay at least a portion of their electric bill to help avoid a large multi-month balance when disconnection actions resume.
- ❖ Assisting members to find resources available to help with payment on their electric bill. This information is available to members through mailed communications, Cooperative website, and staff/member interactions.
- ❖ Encouraging members to take steps to maximize energy savings at their home or business. An energy savings example is adjusting the thermostat one degree lower when heating or one degree higher when cooling to help reduce energy use.
- ❖ \$1.4 million in capital credits retired early in response to COVID-19 (July 2020).

Now that the Wisconsin Health Emergency has expired, Eau Claire Energy Cooperative is easing back into normal collection actions for the following reasons:

- ❖ The above actions in response to COVID-19 are/were not bill waivers. Consumers with financial hardships are expected to become current with their electric bill in a reasonable amount of time.
- ❖ The Cooperative is not-for-profit business that works to keep energy costs as low as possible and has limited ability to sustain high rates of nonpayment.
- ❖ Sustaining high rates of nonpayment becomes a cost to the membership at large; this is not fair or equitable to members that have maintained a current electric bill status.