

Continuing to work toward Utility Justice

Through the collective action of many over the years, the George Wiley Center has won dozens of victories in the fight for Utility Justice. However, we know **there is still a utility access crisis in Rhode Island when roughly 20,000 RI households are put through the stress and public health burden of having utility service terminated.** We find these numbers unacceptable and continue to push for longer term solutions.

We believe that RI utility and energy policy must include:

- A **Percentage of Income Payment Plan (PIPP)** that would make utilities affordable for low-income Rhode Islanders
- **Public-centered policies** for utility and energy services
- **Increased public input** on issues of public utilities that affect us all
- Organizing so **people who are directly affected have a say** in decisions
- **Utility corporation transparency and accountability**
- **Stopping utility shut-offs on low-income households**
- **Utility systems that are affordable and sustainable** for people and planet
- **The right of all people to live in a home with utility service for water, light, heat, cooling, food, health, safety, and other basic needs**



Push for PIPP in Rhode Island!

(Percentage Income Payment Plan)



The George Wiley Center amping up our **Push for PIPP** (Percentage Income Payment Plan), as part of ongoing organizing for Utility Justice

Why support PIPP?

Recognizing utility service as a basic need and an essential element of adequate housing, PIPP programs help make sure all have access to affordable utility service. Under a PIPP, low-income households pay a fixed percentage of their income for utility bills based on the Federal Poverty Level of that household. Each year over 20,000 RI households are put through the trauma of utility termination due to unaffordable bills. Many go weeks or months without access to basic needs. A PIPP would make utility bills more affordable for low-income households and help stop the shut-off crisis in RI.

Has PIPP worked before?

Yes! Rhode Island was one of the first states in the country to implement a PIPP in the late 1980's. It lasted successfully for several years before being phased out due to cuts in federal LIHEAP funding. Currently, over a dozen states such as Ohio, New Jersey, and Maine have effective PIPP programs. In Illinois, for example, a PIPP lowered 90% of elderly customers' heating bills—more than any other utility assistance plan did.

What can I do to support PIPP?

Sign the petition (online at <https://tinyurl.com/pipprhodeisland>), share your story, spread the word! Educate others about PIPP, contact decision-makers, schedule a presentation. Please get in touch to be a part of this grassroots effort pushing toward Utility Justice, we welcome allies new and old!