



**Hawaiian  
Electric**

## NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Hawai'i Island renters behind on utility bills urged to seek financial help through new County program starting Monday** *Moratorium on disconnections for nonpayment set to end May 31*

**HILO, April 8, 2021** – Millions of dollars in federal assistance to households behind on rent and electric bills will be available through the Hawai'i County Emergency Rental Assistance Program starting Monday, April 12.

Disconnections for nonpayment and collections activities have been suspended for more than a year as part of Hawaiian Electric's effort to help households affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The moratorium is set to end on May 31.

The County of Hawai'i is leveraging millions in federal funds for rent and utility assistance. The program will provide rent and utility grants to an estimated 3,400 qualifying households for up to 12 months. It is administered by Hawai'i Community Lending through six nonprofit partners.

To qualify, renters must be Hawai'i Island residents at least 18 years old with lost income due to COVID-19. Renters must be earning at or below 80 percent of annual median income for the number of members in their household. Priority will be given to households at or below 50 percent of annual median income with household members who have been unemployed for at least 90 days from the date of application.

To apply, contact any of the following partners starting April 12:

- **HOPE Services Hawai'i**  
[hopeserviceshawaii.org](http://hopeserviceshawaii.org), [ERAP@hopeserviceshawaii.org](mailto:ERAP@hopeserviceshawaii.org), (808) 935-3050
- **Hawai'i First Federal Credit Union**  
[hawaiifirstfcu.com](http://hawaiifirstfcu.com), [empower@hawaiifirstfcu.com](mailto:empower@hawaiifirstfcu.com), (808) 933-6600
- **Neighborhood Place of Puna**  
[neighborhoodplaceofpuna.org](http://neighborhoodplaceofpuna.org), [ERAP@neighborhoodplace.org](mailto:ERAP@neighborhoodplace.org), (808) 965-5550
- **Habitat for Humanity Hawai'i Island**  
[habitathawaiiisland.org](http://habitathawaiiisland.org), [rmap@habitathawaiiisland.org](mailto:rmap@habitathawaiiisland.org), (808) 843-0071
- **The Salvation Army**  
[hawaii.salvationarmy.org](http://hawaii.salvationarmy.org), [hilo.ERAP@usw.salvationarmy.org](mailto:hilo.ERAP@usw.salvationarmy.org), (808) 935-1277
- **Hawai'i County Economic Opportunity Council**  
[hceoc.net](http://hceoc.net), [ERAP@hceoc.net](mailto:ERAP@hceoc.net), (808) 932-2714

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While the end of the moratorium won't trigger immediate disconnections, disconnections cannot be suspended indefinitely. Customers having difficulty paying their bill are urged to apply for the federally funded rent and utility assistance while it is available. For additional assistance, customers should submit a payment arrangement request to ensure uninterrupted service. Go to [hawaiianelectric.com/paymentarrangement](http://hawaiianelectric.com/paymentarrangement) to submit a request. About 13 percent of the residential customers who are past due by more than 30 days are currently on a payment arrangement.

"Our goal is to ensure that every Hawaiian Electric customer stays connected," said Shelee Kimura, Hawaiian Electric senior vice president of customer service. "To do this, we are working collaboratively with government and community partners to support customers still dealing with the financial toll of the pandemic, and we have made our most flexible payment options available to even more customers. Please contact us so we can help."

Hawaiian Electric is reaching out to residential and business customers who have fallen furthest behind. Residential and smaller commercial customers with a past due balance are being offered deferred and 4-, 8- or 12-month payment arrangement options (no interest or late fees).

For the latest information on available financial assistance, go to [hawaiianelectric.com/COVID19](http://hawaiianelectric.com/COVID19).

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 [hawaiienergy.com/tips](http://hawaiienergy.com/tips) for more information.

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