

Kentucky should...



establish standards to protect children and their families from utility disconnection during extreme heat or cold events

When families struggle to afford basic household utilities, children are at higher risk for:

- Respiratory conditions, such as asthma
- Depression and anxiety
- Experiencing negative health outcomes and toxic stress associated with Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), such as food insecurity and housing instability
- Experiencing heat related illness or death, particularly for young children, the elderly, and those needing access to medical equipment

Who is most impacted?

- Families with children under 5 years of age
- Low-income households
- Households of color
- Households with an individual who relies on electronic medical devices
- Individuals living in poor, inefficient housing conditions

How sweeping is the problem?

The monthly cost of utilities in Kentucky has increased by 33% since 2017, and more than **one in four U.S households** struggle to afford the cost of basic utilities. When utility costs exceed 6% of a household's income, it can make it harder for families to keep up with their bills and make utility disconnections more likely.

Once disconnected, utility services are not typically restored until the debt is cleared or a payment plan is established. Households can incur various penalties, such as disconnection fees and reconnection charges, that can make repayment difficult. Utility shut-offs and these financial strains can prompt recurring shut-offs and even eviction.

Blueprint for Kentucky's Children Policy Solution:

Place common sense standards around utility disconnections and create avenues for families to get reconnected quicker.

Kentucky can follow the lead of other states by:

- Establishing temperature-related standards to prevent households from utility disconnection during extreme temperatures.
- Establishing parameters for disconnection times and days.
- Removing barriers to reconnecting utility services.