



## Kentucky should...

establish standards to protect children and their families from utility disconnection during extreme weather

In recent years, Kentucky has experienced record-high temperatures and a rise in extreme weather with more than 18 state of emergency declarations for severe weather since 2020. Rising temperatures and fluctuating weather patterns impact the cost of utilities for families, and household energy prices have increased significantly since 2020.

***One in three households in Kentucky struggle to afford the cost of basic utilities, making it harder for families to keep up with their bills and increasing their risk of utility disconnection.***



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. These financial strains can prompt recurring utility shut-offs and even eviction.

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

- Hospitalizations
- Respiratory conditions, such as asthma
- Depression and anxiety
- Experiencing negative health outcomes, developmental delays, and toxic stress associated with Adverse Childhood Experiences
- 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

**Kentucky can join over 40 states that already have weather-related disconnection protections in place for families.**

### **Blueprint for Kentucky's Children Policy Solution:**

Place common sense standards around utility disconnections to prevent households from losing service during extreme weather.