

# Energy Burden and COVID-19 Voices of Georgians



Since March, Georgia Watch has recorded more than a dozen stories from consumers unable to pay their energy bills due to the ongoing COVID-19 crisis. Below are some of their stories.

## SABRINA C.

Sabrina hasn't been working due to COVID-19 and didn't receive her stimulus check. She and her husband both have medical conditions that require the utilities to be on. Her utility provider, Southern Rivers, was one of the first companies to lift shut off moratoriums and has threatened to turn the power off unless she pays fees that she says are 3x higher than what others in the neighborhood are paying.



## TIANA S.

Tiana was happy to finally get a job during the COVID-19 crisis, but Gas South still shut off the power before she received her first paycheck because she owed \$177. She lives near Coastal Georgia with her three boys and has no hot water and no way to cook or eat.

## KENNETH P.

Kenneth is diabetic, has had a couple strokes, and has been having trouble making ends meet since the COVID-19 crisis began. He finally was able to catch up on rent payments, but the City of Griffin turned his power off when he was unable to pay his bill. His power has been off for over two weeks and he's unable to refrigerate his insulin or use the AC during the hot Georgia summer. He's unable to cook or keep food refrigerated and is tired of eating Spaghettios out of a can. He's frustrated because the usual assistance programs have been overwhelmed and put him on a waiting list.

## JEFFERY S.

Jeffery stopped working before COVID-19 due to a blood clot in his lung. He's on disability and lives with his diabetic elderly mother. After the pandemic began, the City of Commerce threatened to cut his utility off unless he paid \$600. They offered a 3 day extension if he could come up with 75% of the bill.



## OLIVIA S.

Ms. Stillwell is a senior citizen struggling to pay her \$850 electric bill. She reached out to us seeking assistance about how to negotiate with the City of East Point to lower the bill. She was able to make payment arrangements, but the bill was still too high.

These stories were gathered through our Consumer Hotline and compiled into this document by Georgia Watch.