worklife PARTNERSHIP

What to do if you can't pay your utility bills

If you're struggling to pay your utility bill but find that you don't qualify for assistance in making that payment, it's time to think outside the box.

Here are a few things to try:

1

Ask for a month of forgiveness.

If you've been an excellent customer for many years, always paid on time, and never had a single issue, your utility company might offer abreak on a month of payments. It doesn't hurt to ask.

2

See if you can negotiate a payment plan.

If there is no possible forgiveness option, look to negotiate. Tell them what you can pay and ask if that might be enough. Or ask for apayment plan that will allow you to slowly pay what you owe while keeping the utilities on.

3

Consider cost-cutting measures.

Are there any other places in your home where you can cut down on the bills to pay the utilities? For instance, getting rid of cable or satellite can free up some extra money each month.

4

Look into government and organization financial assistance

If your local utility company doesn't have any programs, consider exploring state or county funded assistance or seeing if local agencies have any utility bill assistance. You can get started by calling 211 or by connecting with your Navigator.

5

Weatherize.

When you do use heating and cooling, make it count. Put weatherstripping around windows and doors, use plastic sheeting over old windows to keep out the cold, and make good use of fans during thesummer – they pull less energy than an air conditioner. Talk to your navigator to learn if there are any weatherization programs you might be eligible for in your area.

Email: navigator@worklifepartnership.org
Visit: askthenavigator.org