



Renters: Ways to Reduce Your Utility Bills

FACT SHEET

April 2026

1.

Energy Assistance

If you qualify, based on your income, you can receive financial assistance to help pay your gas and electric bills through the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). Visit www.helpillinoisfamilies.com or call 1-833-711-0374 to see if you qualify.



2.

Monthly Discounts

If you qualify, based on your income, you can receive monthly discounts on your utility bills through low-income discount programs offered by ComEd and gas utilities Ameren Illinois, Nicor Gas, North Shore Gas and Peoples Gas. Contact your utility for more information.



3.

Community Solar

Are you curious about how to access solar energy living in an apartment? Illinois Solar for All: Community Solar can help renters support renewable energy and reduce their electricity bills without installing solar panels. Learn more by visiting www.illinoisfa.com.



4.

Be careful about alternative suppliers

Beware of low introductory fees that may increase after a short period of time, and read the fine print. It's likely that staying with your gas or electric utility is your best bet. Check your bill to make sure you are not overpaying with an alternative gas or electric supplier.



5.

Energy Efficiency (EE)

As a renter, you can save money by reducing gas and electricity waste in your home. On the second page of this fact sheet you will find energy efficiency tips for renters. Also, make sure to explore your utility's energy efficiency programs to save even more!



FIND MORE TIPS ON BACK PAGE!



MYTH:

As a renter, I don't have any options to save on my utility bills.

FACT:

Renters can save and keep their apartment comfortable without constantly raising or lowering the thermostat.

Winter energy efficiency tips to help you save money



- Set the thermostat to 68-70 degrees when you are at home and awake. You can lower it 7-10 degrees when you are asleep or away. If you need to keep it a bit warmer, do so. Please don't ever put your health at risk. Never set it below 55 degrees, as that can freeze the pipes.
- Find and seal air leaks on doors and windows (ask your utility company about free energy efficiency products to do this).
- Close your blinds at night to protect your home from the cold air. Open them in the day to let the sun warm and illuminate your home.
- To better distribute the heat, adjust the ceiling fan to rotate clockwise (from your position, looking up at it). Make sure to turn it off when you leave the room.

Summer energy efficiency tips to help you save money



- Set the thermostat to 76-78 degrees when you are at home and awake. (If you need to keep it a bit cooler, do so. Please don't ever put your health at risk.)
- Delay tasks that produce heat, such as washing dishes, cooking, or laundry, until the cooler evening or early morning hours.
- At night or on less humid days, open windows and use the window screens to give your air conditioner a break.
- Adjust the ceiling fan to rotate clockwise (from your position, looking up at it) to create a downdraft. Make sure to turn it off when you leave the room. Remember, ceiling fans help cool people, not rooms.

Energy efficiency tips to save year-round



- Install LED light bulbs, they use 75% less energy than incandescent bulbs.
- Purchase Energy Star-certified appliances, as they are more energy efficient.
- Unplug all appliances that are not in use to prevent "vampire" power from increasing your energy bills.
- In the kitchen: Clean the coils behind the refrigerator. When cooking on the stovetop, use lids on the pots. Check your food through the oven window. Keep the oven door closed.

Safety

- Space heaters: place them on a firm, level surface; keep them away from flammable objects; and do not leave them on overnight. Plug them directly into the wall outlet.
- Never use the oven/stove to heat your home: This increases the risk of fire or carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Tenants should make sure their smoke alarms have charged batteries, are working properly. Report any issues with safety equipment.
- Keep flammable liquids and other aerosol/cleaning supplies 3–6 feet away from the furnace or water heater.