

Utility Service Protection Program Annual Report

Heating Season 2025-2026

Pursuant to
§7-307 of the Public Utilities Article
Annotated Code of Maryland

September 23, 2026



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES	i
LIST OF FIGURES	ii
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
STATUTORY HISTORY	2
DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS	4
PROGRAM PARTICIPATION.....	5
SUPPLEMENTAL PAYMENTS AND ARREARAGES	14
EQUAL PAYMENT PLAN ARREARAGES AND PROGRAM COMPLIANCE.....	17
TERMINATIONS.....	23
HIGH ENERGY CONSUMPTION	26
PRIMARY HEAT SOURCE	28
MEAP GRANTS	30
CONCLUSION	32
APPENDIX A1: Utilities Reporting Basic Information in 2025-2026 Heating Season..	33
APPENDIX A2: 2025-2026 Data Request	34

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1: 2025-2026 USPP PARTICIPATION COMPARED WITH MEAP AND TOTAL CUSTOMERS	6
TABLE 2: NUMBER OF USPP CUSTOMERS AND ELIGIBLE NON-PARTICIPATING CUSTOMERS BY POVERTY LEVEL	9
TABLE 3: USPP PARTICIPATION AS A PERCENT OF TOTAL ELIGIBLE FOR EACH POVERTY LEVEL FOR 2024-2026	11
TABLE 4: PERCENTAGE OF 2025-2026 USPP PARTICIPANTS WHO ALSO PARTICIPATED IN THE PROGRAM DURING THE PRIOR HEATING SEASON	12
TABLE 5: PERCENTAGE OF USPP CUSTOMERS MAKING SUPPLEMENTAL PAYMENTS, THE AVERAGE DOLLAR AMOUNT OF THOSE PAYMENTS, AND THE AVERAGE ARREARAGE REQUIRING PAYMENTS BY BENEFIT LEVEL.....	15
TABLE 6: PERCENTAGE OF USPP PARTICIPANTS, MEAP-ELIGIBLE CUSTOMERS, AND NON-MEAP CUSTOMERS IN ARREARS BY PL	19
TABLE 7: ARREARAGE BALANCE FOR USPP PARTICIPANTS, MEAP-CERTIFIED NON-USPP PARTICIPANTS, AND NON-MEAP CUSTOMERS IN ARREARS BY POVERTY LEVEL	20
TABLE 8: PERCENTAGE OF USPP PARTICIPANTS WHO COMPLIED WITH PROGRAM PROVISIONS BY BENEFIT LEVEL	22
TABLE 9: USPP PARTICIPATION AND SERVICE TERMINATION.....	23
TABLE 10: 2025-2026 USPP TERMINATION BY UTILITY.....	24
TABLE 11: NUMBER OF WINTER HEATING SEASON TERMINATIONS	26
TABLE 12: PERCENTAGE OF USPP PARTICIPANTS WHO CONSUMED MORE THAN 135% OF SYSTEM AVERAGE ENERGY DURING THE MOST RECENT HEATING SEASON	27
TABLE 13: PERCENTAGE OF PARTICIPANTS, MEAP-CERTIFIED NON-USPP PARTICIPANTS, AND NON-MEAP CUSTOMERS WHOSE PRIMARY HEAT SOURCE IS PROVIDED BY THE UTILITY BY BENEFIT LEVEL	29
TABLE 14: AVERAGE MARYLAND ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM GRANT FOR USPP PARTICIPANTS BY POVERTY LEVEL FOR THE LAST TWO HEATING SEASONS	31

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1: USPP PARTICIPANTS BY HEATING SEASON	5
FIGURE 2: USPP ENROLLMENT BY UTILITY FOR PAST THREE HEATING SEASONS.....	7
FIGURE 3: USPP PARTICIPATION COMPARISON BY BENEFIT LEVEL FOR THREE-CONSECUTIVE HEATING SEASONS	10
FIGURE 4: USPP CUSTOMERS REPEATED ENROLLMENT IN TWO CONSECUTIVE HEATING SEASONS BY UTILITY FOR THREE YEARS (2023 – 2026)	13
FIGURE 5: STATEWIDE RATE OF USPP CUSTOMERS ENROLLED IN TWO-CONSECUTIVE HEATING SEASONS SINCE 2011-2012 HEATING SEASON	14
FIGURE 6: AVERAGE MONTHLY SUPPLEMENTAL PAYMENT BY USPP PARTICIPANTS BY POVERTY LEVEL FOR 2024-2026.....	16
FIGURE 7: AVERAGE SUPPLEMENTAL ARREARAGE BALANCE BY BENEFIT LEVEL FOR 2024 – 2026	17
FIGURE 8: AVERAGE USPP ARREARAGE BALANCE BY BENEFIT LEVEL FOR THREE CONSECUTIVE HEATING SEASONS FOR CUSTOMERS MAKING EQUAL PAYMENTS	21
FIGURE 9: USPP TERMINATION RATE BY HEATING SEASON	24
FIGURE 10: SERVICE TERMINATIONS BY POVERTY LEVEL FOR THE RECENT THREE HEATING SEASONS	25

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During the 2025–2026 winter heating season, 25,057 customers were enrolled in the Utility Service Protection Program (“USPP”) which was a 0.3% increase from the 24,977 participants enrolled in the prior season. This continues a steady but low trend in enrollment which has hovered between twenty and thirty thousand for the past four years. Baltimore Gas and Electric Company (“BGE”) remained the utility with the largest number of USPP recipients serving 13,192 customers. Together with Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative, Inc. (“SMECO”), Potomac Electric Power Company (“Pepco”), and Delmarva Power and Light (“DPL”), the four utilities accounted for 93% of all participants statewide.

The number of customers making supplemental payments rose to 7,123, up 58% from last season. However, arrearages remain elevated. The average USPP customer owed \$597, down slightly from \$615 in 2024–2025. Service terminations, of which BGE accounted for 72%, almost halved to 570 statewide, down from 920 last year and 1,285 the year before.

A key factor in the program’s effectiveness has been whether the utility provides a household’s primary heating source. In 2025–2026, 56% of USPP customers received their primary heat from the reporting utility, which has dropped from around 62% in the past two years. On the other hand, the portion of USPP customers with high energy usage has increased with 45% of USPP customers consuming more than 135% of the system average, which is up from 39% during the previous season but below a high of 59% during the year before.

This year’s financial assistance to participants, via Maryland Energy Assistance Program (“MEAP”) grants, has moderated its sharp decline over the past two years which dropped from the post-pandemic high of \$650 in 2021–2022 to just \$249 last winter. This winter’s average grant was \$347. This trend reflects the Office of Home Energy Programs’ (“OHEP”) strategy of reducing individual benefits to stretch resources and ensure more households receive support. As in previous years, lower-income households (Poverty Level 1) received the highest average benefits.

STATUTORY HISTORY

On March 1, 1988, the Maryland Public Service Commission (“Commission”) issued Order No. 67999 in Case No. 8091,¹ which established the USPP, as required by Article 78 §54K of the Maryland Code. This has since been recodified as §7-307 of the Public Utilities Article (“PUA”), *Annotated Code of Maryland*. PUA §7-307 directs the Commission to promulgate regulations relating to when, and under what conditions there should be a prohibition against or a limitation upon the authority of a public service company to terminate, for nonpayment, gas or electric service to low-income residential customers during the winter heating season. Regulations governing the USPP are contained in the Code of Maryland Regulations (“COMAR”) 20.31.05.

The USPP is available to utility customers who are eligible and have applied for a grant from MEAP which is administered by OHEP. The USPP is designed to protect eligible low-income residential customers from utility service termination during the winter heating season which extends from November 1 through March 31. The USPP is intended to help low-income customers avoid the accumulation of arrearages which could lead to service terminations by requiring timely equal monthly utility payments for participants, also known as “budget billing plans,” based on the estimated cost of annual service to participating households. The USPP allows customers in arrears to restore service by accepting an equal payment plan and by requiring that any outstanding arrearages be lowered to no more than \$400 prior to the beginning of the winter heating season. The USPP encourages the utilities to establish a supplemental monthly payment plan for customers with outstanding balances to reduce those arrearages. Maryland’s gas and electric utilities are required to publicize and offer the USPP prior to November of each year. For more information, see COMAR 20.31.05.03C.

PUA §7-307 requires the Commission to submit an annual report to the General Assembly addressing terminations of service during the previous winter heating season. To facilitate the compilation of this report, the Commission directs all gas and electric utilities to collect specific data under COMAR 20.31.05.09. This includes but is not limited to the number of USPP participants, USPP eligible non-participants among MEAP certified customers, total utility

¹ *In the Matter of Regulations Governing Terminations of Gas or Electric Service to Low Income Residential Customers During the Heating Season.*

customers, return participants, primary heating source, arrearages, terminations, and MEAP grants. For more information on the data request issued by Commission Staff, please see *Appendix A*.

Utilities serving residential customers in Maryland submitted data for this report.² The Commission's April 2026 data request for the 2025-2026 heating season was similar to previous USPP data requests.³ This report provides an analysis of the utility responses and a summary of that information.

² The data request was issued to Baltimore Gas and Electric Company ("BGE"), Chesapeake Utilities ("CUC"), Columbia Gas of Maryland, Inc. ("Columbia"), Delmarva Power & Light Company ("DPL"), Easton Utilities Commission ("Easton"), Hagerstown Municipal Electric Light Plant ("Hagerstown"), Mayor and Council of Berlin ("Berlin"), Potomac Electric Power Company ("Pepco"), Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative, Inc. ("SMECO"), The Potomac Edison Company ("PE"), Thurmont Municipal Light Company ("Thurmont"), UGI Utilities, Inc. ("UGI"), Washington Gas Light Company ("WGL"), and Williamsport Municipal Light Plant ("Williamsport").

³ The USPP Data Request was expanded in 2007 and several small changes were made in 2018 in the interests of clarity.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Fourteen companies submitted 2025-2026 heating season USPP reports to the Commission. Note that municipal utilities and gas and electric utilities smaller than 5,000 customers are not required to provide all the requested data which also leads to some data variations.

Among these companies, three companies did not participate in the USPP. Hagerstown does not participate in the USPP program but implements a Commission-approved alternate program while UGI and CUC⁴ did not have USPP enrollments during 2025-2026. Additionally, three small municipal companies—Berlin, Thurmont, and Williamsport—did not participate. The data provided to the Commission by the eight remaining companies have slight variations such as data not being differentiated by all five benefit levels or was unavailable for various other reasons. The basic information for all responding utilities is contained in *Appendix A*. Each USPP customer's benefit level is determined by OHEP. The data in this report provides information for Benefit Levels 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 ("PL1, PL2, PL3, PL4, and PL5"), as applicable. Data for Benefit Levels 6 and 7 was not requested but was still provided by some utilities, causing additional data variations which may be observed in utility totals. Customers are grouped by household incomes measured against the federal poverty level ("FPL") guidelines as follows:

Benefit Level Classification

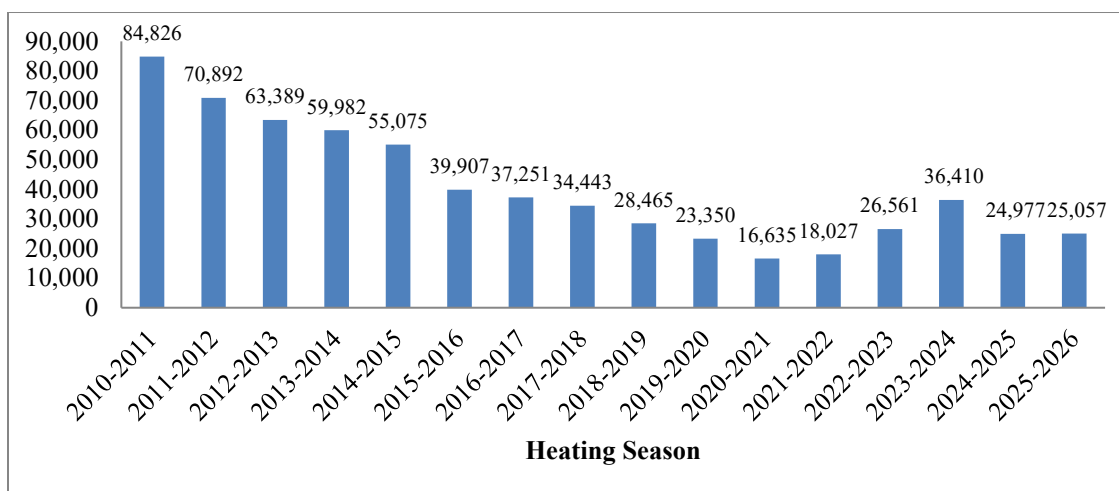
Benefit Level	Household Income
Benefit Level 1	0%-25% of the FPL
Benefit Level 2	26%-50% of the FPL
Benefit Level 3	51%-100% of the FPL
Benefit Level 4	101%-150% of the FPL
Benefit Level 5	151%-200% of the FPL
Benefit Level 6	MEAP Subsidized Sub-metered Dwellings (SNAP Recipients)
Benefit Level 7	Other

⁴ In April 2025 during Case No. 9722 proceedings, Chesapeake Utilities merged together its Sandpiper, Elkton Gas, and Maryland divisions. Chesapeake Maryland was itself created from a merger between its Citizens Division and Cambridge division prior to 2025.

PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

During the 2025-2026 winter heating season, 25,057 customers participated in USPP. Customer enrollment in the USPP during this winter increased by 80 participants, or approximately 0.3% from the 24,977 USPP participants in the 2024-2025 heating season. The USPP participation during the 2020-2021 heating season was 18,027 which was the lowest ever and was attributable to the Governor's and Commission's orders which prevented disconnection during the COVID-19 pandemic.⁵ When comparing the three most recent heating seasons, the current 25,057 enrollments reflect the plateauing of a decade-long decline in enrollment which is seen in *Figure 1* below.

Figure 1: USPP Participants by Heating Season



At the utility level, six utilities reported a decrease of 1,816 participants in 2025-2026 while three utilities reported an increase of 1,896 USPP participants from the previous heating season. Five utilities reported zero change in enrollments, notably some of the non-participating investor-owned and municipal companies. Thus, the net increase in USPP participants was 80 from the previous season.

⁵ On March 16, 2020, Governor Larry Hogan issued an Executive Order prohibiting the termination of residential utility services and the imposition of late fees during the COVID-19 state of emergency. This prohibition was set to expire on August 1, 2020. On July 31, 2020, Governor Hogan extended the utilities' termination restrictions on residential customers to September 1, 2020. The Commission initiated *PC53: Impacts of COVID-19 Pandemic on Maryland's Gas and Electric Utility Operations and Customer Experiences* and issued five orders in PC 53 on August 31, 2020. Together the five orders prohibited the public utilities from terminating service to residential customers through November 15, 2020. The order required a 45-day notice to customers prior to service disconnection.

Table 1 provides each utility’s USPP participants, MEAP-certified customers, and total customers, as well as each utility’s USPP enrollment as a percentage of MEAP, and total residential customers served. Of the utilities listed, DPL, at approximately 61%, had the highest USPP enrollment rate among its MEAP customers. The rest of the utilities had an enrollment rate below 50% with the statewide average at 26%.

Using USPP enrollment as a percentage of total customers as a metric, two of the utilities (DPL and PE) reported an increased USPP enrollment rate while seven utilities (BGE, Columbia, Easton, Berlin, Pepco, SMECO, and WGL) reported a decreased USPP enrollment rate. Notably, BGE experienced a large increase in MEAP customers from 12,018 to 57,579 which lowered their USPP participation rate despite slightly increased USPP enrollments from 11,657 to 13,192. Five utilities, CUC, Hagerstown, Thurmont, UGI, and Williamsport, reported no change in their USPP enrollment rate from the previous heating season.

Table 1: 2025-2026 USPP Participation Compared with MEAP and Total Customers⁶

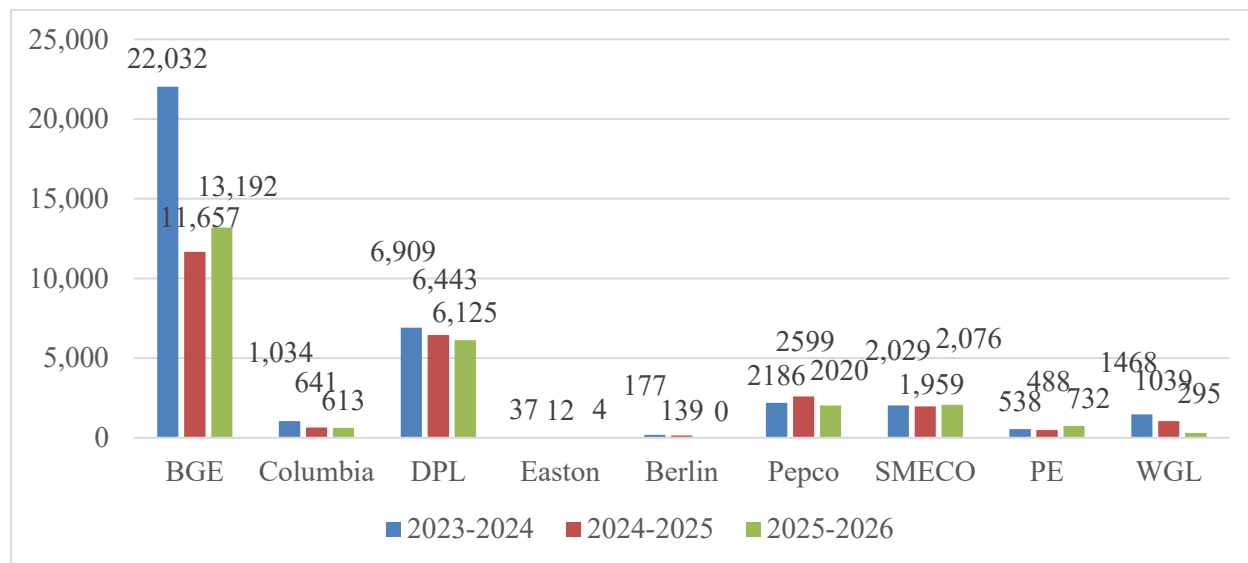
UTILITY	USPP Participants	MEAP Customers	USPP Participants as a Percentage of MEAP Customers	Total Customers	USPP Participants as a Percentage of Total Customers
Baltimore Gas & Electric	13,192	57,579	23%	1,825,898	0.72%
Chesapeake Utilities	-	1,050	0%	28,812	0.00%
Columbia Gas of Maryland	613	2,882	21%	27,865	2.20%
Delmarva Power & Light	6,125	10,069	61%	183,256	3.34%
Easton Utilities	4	518	1%	8,653	0.05%
Hagerstown	-	1,121	0%	13,802	0.00%
Mayor & Council of Berlin	-	0	0%	2,250	0.00%
Potomac Electric Power Company	2,020	10,826	19%	549,886	0.00%
Southern Maryland Electric Power	2,076	5,270	39%	154,481	1.34%
The Potomac Edison Company	732	3,870	19%	240,808	0.30%
Thurmont	-	33	0%	2,878	0.00%
UGI Utilities, Inc.	-	0	N/A	480	0.00%
Washington Gas Light Company	295	4,390	7%	481,419	0.06%
Williamsport	-	32	0%	836	0.00%
Grand Total	25,057	97,640	26%	3,521,324	0.71%

⁶ N/A indicates that a company did not participate in USPP. 0% indicates that the company reported 0% enrollment for USPP data so the calculation for this table resulted in 0% participation.

During the 2025-2026 heating season, the rate of USPP participants compared to the total utility customers statewide remained about the same at 0.71% compared with 0.70% during the previous season. In years prior, USPP-to-total participation has ranged from 1.02% during the 2023-2024 heating season to 0.75% in the 2022-2023 season, 0.52% in the 2021-2022 season, and 0.48% in the 2020-2021 season. At the utility level, DPL reported the highest USPP participation rate among the utilities at 3.34%, followed by Columbia at 2.20% and SMECO at 1.34%. The remaining utilities each had a participation rate below one percent of their residential customer base.

Figure 2 provides a three-year comparison of the USPP enrollment by utility. The changes among the three heating seasons varied for each of the reporting utilities but generally showed decreases. BGE has consistently maintained the highest nominal participation of 11,657 USPP customers. Together with DPL, Pepco, and SMECO, the four utilities account for 93% of the statewide total USPP participants.

Figure 2: USPP Enrollment by Utility for Past Three Heating Seasons



During the latest winter season, the MEAP eligible population increased significantly above the positive trend established by categorical eligibility and automatic enrollment.⁷ This resulted in a USPP participation rate of 26% out of the 97,640 statewide eligible MEAP customers –

⁷ Maryland Department of Human Services. Report on the Status of Implementation of Categorical Eligibility. January 15, 2025. [https://dlslibrary.state.md.us/publications/JCR/2024/2024_156-157_2024\(rev\).pdf](https://dlslibrary.state.md.us/publications/JCR/2024/2024_156-157_2024(rev).pdf).

approximately 21 percentage points lower than the 47% observed during the previous winter season and 32 percentage points lower than the 59% participation rate observed during the 2023-2024 heating season. *Table 2* shows the number of USPP participants and USPP eligible non-participants for each utility broken down by benefit level (formerly known as poverty level) during the 2025-2026 heating season.⁸

⁸ The USPP participants are a subset of MEAP certified customers. Another subset of MEAP certified customers are non-USPP participants. The Terms “USPP eligible non-Participant,” “MEAP eligible non-USPP Participant,” and “MEAP certified non-USPP customer” are used interchangeably in this report. These persons represent the customers who are eligible to receive a MEAP grant and are, therefore, eligible to enroll in USPP but who do not participate in the USPP program.

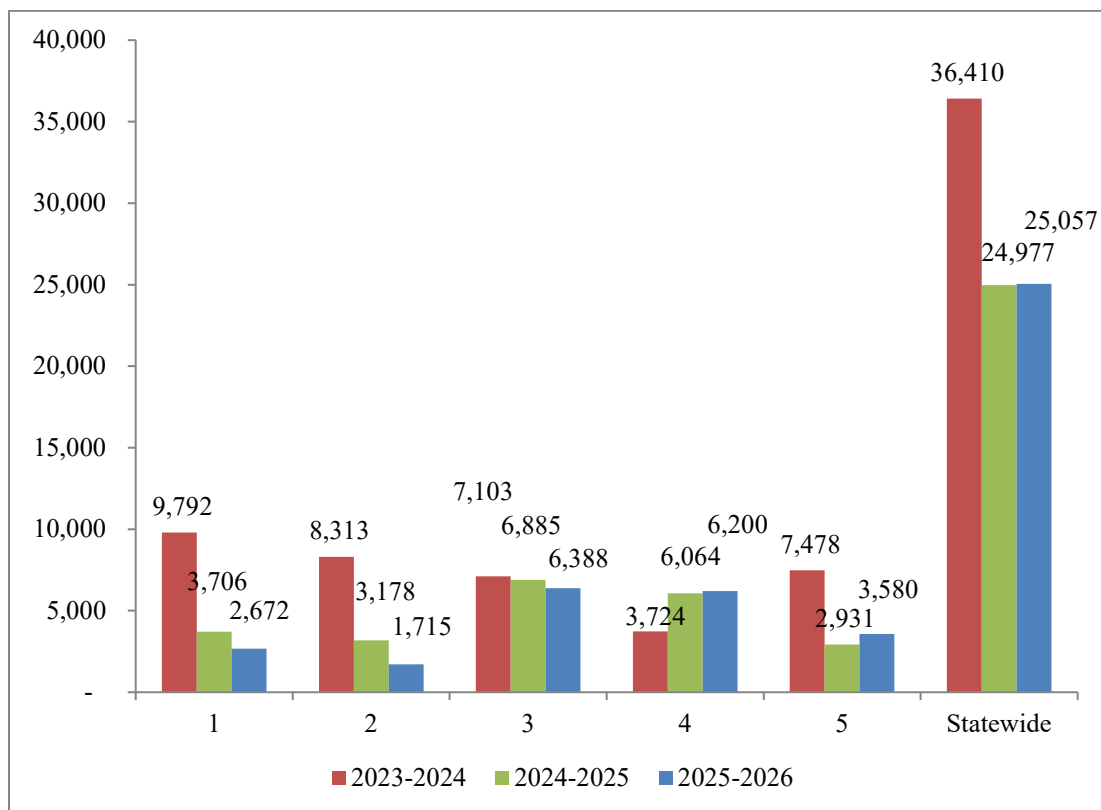
Table 2: Number of USPP Customers and Eligible Non-participating Customers by Poverty Level⁹

UTILITY	USPP Participants						% of USPP Total	USPP Eligible Non-Participants						US PP + MEAP Total
	Poverty Level							Poverty Level						
	1	2	3	4	5	Overall		1	2	3	4	5	Overall	
Baltimore Gas & Electric	1,135	658	2,506	2,717	1,747	13,192	53%	7100	3074	9523	9425	5631	44,387	57,579
Chesapeake Utilities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%	1,050	0	0	0	0	1,050	1,050
Columbia Gas of Maryland	64	56	198	204	88	613	2%	236	190	681	747	394	2,269	2,882
Delmarva Power & Light	691	502	2,055	1,861	950	6,125	24%	445	329	1311	1156	603	3,944	10,069
Easton Utilities	3	0	1	0	0	4	0%	53	28	172	175	86	514	518
Hagerstown	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%	149	116	414	318	105	1,121	1,121
Mayor & Council of Berlin	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%	0					-	0
Potomac Electric Power Company	349	196	619	540	312	2,020	8%	1607	625	2133	1839	1321	8,806	10,826
Southern Maryland Electric Power Coorpe	325	226	666	532	327	2,076	8%	489	313	1051	859	482	3,194	5,270
The Potomac Edison Company	59	53	254	253	113	732	3%	341	205	1101	961	530	3,138	3,870
Thurmont	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%	33					33	33
UGI Utilities, Inc.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%	0					-	0
Washington Gas Light Company	46	24	89	93	43	295	1%	734	352	1161	1115	733	4,095	4,390
Williamsport	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%	32					32	32
Grand Total	2,672	1,715	6,388	6,200	3,580	25,057	100%	12,269	5,232	17,547	16,595	9,885	72,583	97,640

⁹ Does not display data from Poverty Level 6 and Poverty Level 7, however Poverty Level 6 and 7 are included in Overall Totals.

Looking across all utilities, *Figure 3* illustrates USPP participation by benefit level for the most recent three heating seasons.

Figure 3: USPP Participation Comparison by Benefit Level for Three-Consecutive Heating Seasons



Enrollment levels remained similar inside poverty levels compared to the previous heating season, though PL1, PL2, and PL5 in particular have seen drops in participation.

Table 3 compares USPP participation as a percentage of the total number of MEAP-certified customers, broken down by benefit level, for the 2025-2026 and 2024-2025 heating seasons. A customer must be MEAP-certified to participate in USPP. This measure is normally an indicator of MEAP-certified customers who need energy assistance and need USPP protection to spread unpaid balances over the winter season to avoid service termination.

Table 3: USPP Participation as a Percent of Total Eligible for each Poverty Level for 2024-2026¹⁰

UTILITY	2025-2026 Participation						2024-2025 Participation					
	Poverty Level						Poverty Level					
	1	2	3	4	5	Overall I	1	2	3	4	5	Overall I
Baltimore Gas & Electric	14%	18%	21%	22%	24%	23%	95%	98%	97%	97%	96%	97%
Chesapeake Utilities	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Columbia Gas of Maryland, Inc.	21%	23%	23%	21%	18%	21%	23%	30%	25%	24%	21%	24%
Delmarva Power & Light	61%	60%	61%	62%	61%	61%	65%	68%	58%	56%	53%	59%
Easton Utilities	5%	0%	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	5%	4%	2%	2%	3%
Hagerstown	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Mayor & Council of Berlin	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	54%	80%	90%	100%	0%	84%
Potomac Electric Power Company	18%	24%	22%	23%	19%	19%	26%	49%	29%	25%	22%	26%
Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative	40%	42%	39%	38%	40%	39%	43%	46%	42%	40%	92%	46%
The Potomac Edison Company	15%	21%	19%	21%	18%	19%	14%	18%	15%	14%	11%	15%
Thurmont	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
UGI Utilities, Inc.	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Washington Gas Light Company	6%	6%	7%	8%	6%	7%	11%	15%	15%	12%	13%	13%
Williamsport	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Statewide	16%	25%	27%	27%	27%	26%	41%	57%	46%	45%	46%	47%

¹⁰ BGE did not provide an explanation for the observed drop in USPP participation. Berlin did not provide detailed USPP data this year.

The statewide USPP participation rate of MEAP-certified customers for the 2025-2026 heating season was 26% which has dropped every year since 2022 from 60% to 59% to 47% and now 26%. More than 60% of MEAP-eligible customers enrolled in USPP in the DPL service territory. SMECO also realized a higher percentage of eligible MEAP customers' enrollment in USPP at 39%. All other utilities had USPP enrollments of MEAP eligible customers below 25%. Generally speaking, USPP enrollments significantly dropped from their post-pandemic levels.

Table 4 shows the percentage of customers who were USPP participants in the 2025-2026 heating season and also participated in the 2024-2025 heating season. Overall, approximately 38% of the USPP customers who participated this year also enrolled last year.

Table 4: Percentage of 2025-2026 USPP Participants who also participated in the Program during the prior Heating Season¹¹

UTILITY	Poverty Level					Overall
	1	2	3	4	5	
Baltimore Gas & Electric	31%	37%	39%	39%	31%	38%
Chesapeake Utilities	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Columbia Gas of Maryland, Inc.	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Delmarva Power & Light	36%	42%	48%	47%	41%	45%
Easton Utilities	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Hagerstown	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Mayor & Council of Berlin	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Potomac Electric Power Company	32%	43%	38%	33%	33%	35%
Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative	27%	33%	74%	31%	24%	43%
The Potomac Edison Company	8%	23%	15%	15%	14%	15%
Thurmont	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
UGI Utilities	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Washington Gas Light Company	13%	8%	15%	19%	12%	15%
Williamsport	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
TOTALS	30%	37%	43%	38%	32%	38%

¹¹ 0% indicates that the company reported 0% enrollment for USPP data so the calculation for this table resulted in 0% participation.

This statewide enrollment rate in the previous season (2024-2025) was 49% and this figure has fluctuated in seasons before, being 34% in 2023-2024, 28% in 2022-2023, 34% in 2021-2022, and 45% in 2020-2021.

Figure 4 shows three years of repeat enrollments by the utilities. All utilities with data show a decreasing trend for repeat enrollment, except for SMECO which jumped to 43%.

Figure 4: USPP Customers Repeated Enrollment in Two Consecutive Heating Seasons by Utility for Three Years (2023 – 2026)

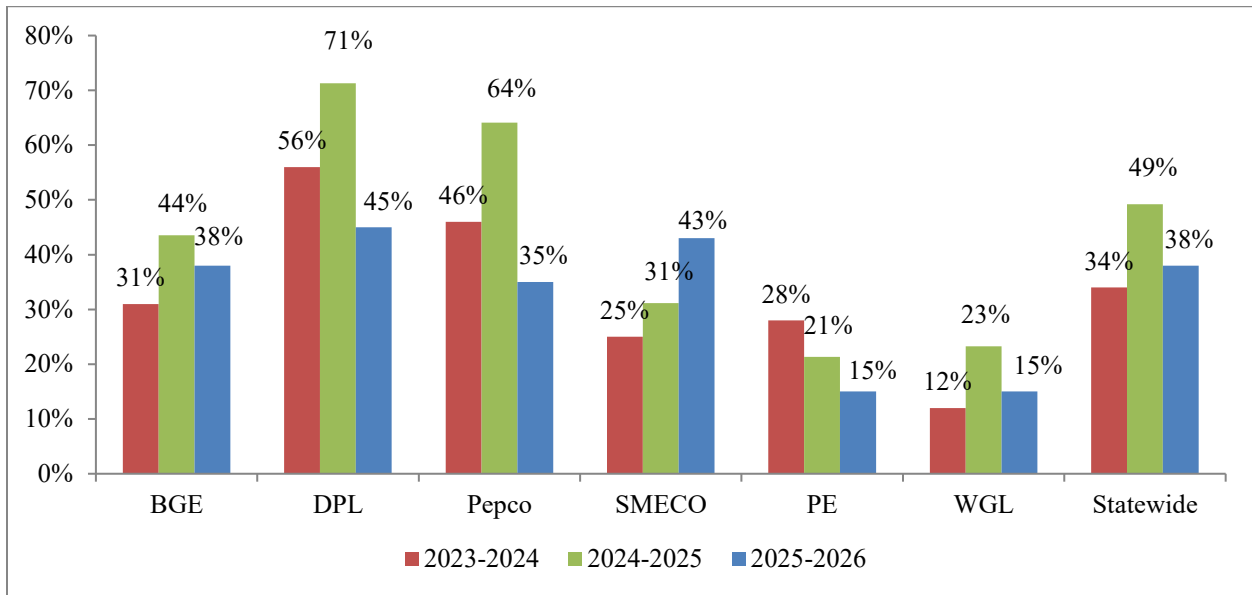
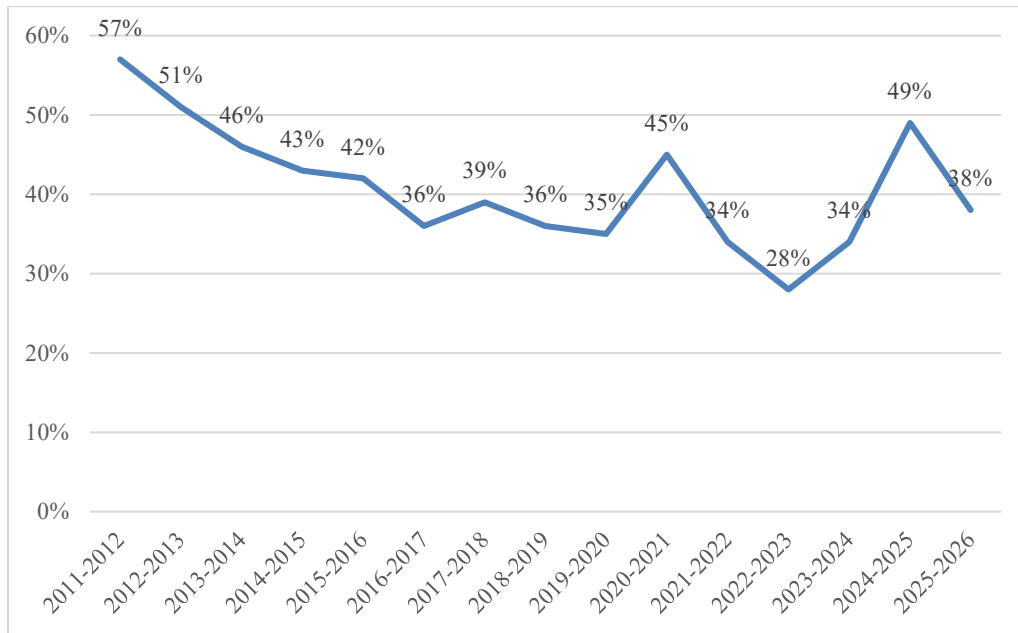


Figure 5 illustrates a trend line for the repeat participation rates from 2011 to the instant heating season. Repeat participation had been fluctuating since the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 5: Statewide Rate of USPP Customers Enrolled in Two-Consecutive Heating Seasons Since 2011-2012 Heating Season



SUPPLEMENTAL PAYMENTS AND ARREARAGES

The USPP requires an equal monthly payment plan for participation in USPP. If a low-income customer is unable to pay the charges for service, the utility attempts to negotiate a reasonable alternate payment plan to avoid termination and retire all outstanding charges to the utility.

The USPP encourages the utilities to offer customers the opportunity to place all or part of those arrearages in a special agreement to be paid off over an extended period. Although the deferred payment arrangements vary, all utilities provide enrollment in supplemental payment plans. For example, BGE requires that all USPP participants enroll in a Budget Billing Plan. Columbia allows USPP customers to make 12-, 24-, and 36- month-long equal monthly payments of existing arrearages according to their USPP customers' incomes. Placing outstanding arrearages in special agreements allows customers to enroll in USPP and be considered current in their utility payments as long as they continue to make their USPP equal monthly payments and their supplemental payments in a timely fashion.

Table 5 shows the percentage of USPP participants making supplemental payments (also known as alternate payments), the average monthly amount of those payments, and the average “supplemental arrearage” that led to those payments.

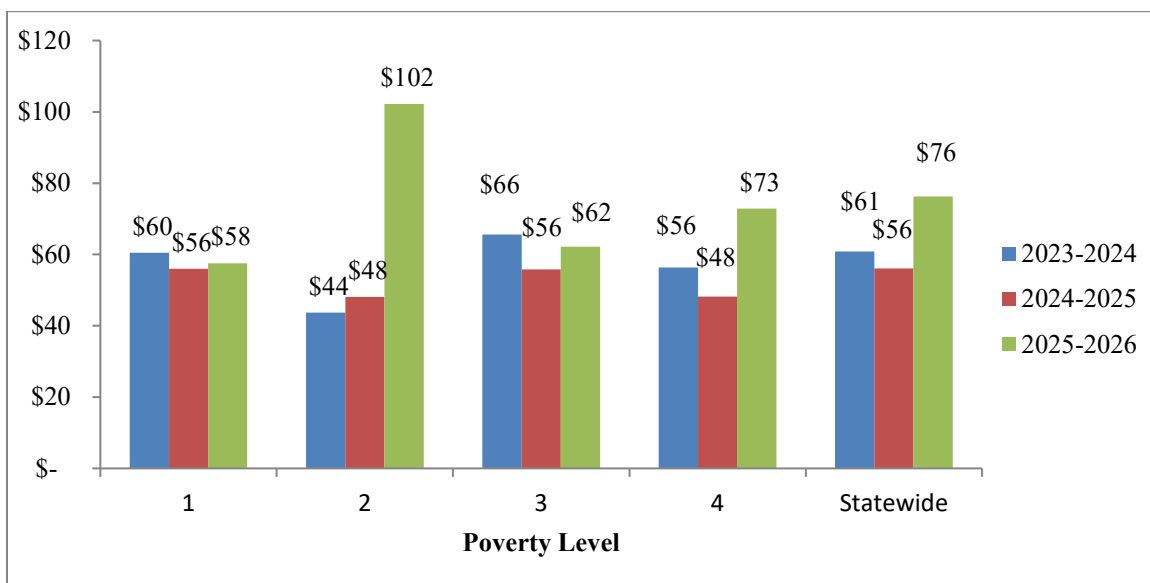
Table 5: Percentage of USPP Customers making Supplemental Payments, the Average Dollar Amount of those Payments, and the Average Arrearage Requiring Payments by Benefit Level

Utility	Percentage of USPP Customers Making Supplemental Payments						Average Monthly Amount of Supplemental Payments (\$)						Average Supplemental Arrearage (\$)					
	Poverty Level						Poverty Level						Poverty Level					
	1	2	3	4	5	Overall	1	2	3	4	5	Overall	1	2	3	4	5	Overall
Baltimore Gas & Electric	4%	5%	5%	7%	7%	6%	139	138	133	123	140	129	1804	1742	1598	1513	1807	1610
Chesapeake Utilities	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Columbia Gas of Maryland, Inc.	67%	66%	45%	53%	52%	53%	18	20	36	32	43	32	524	424	472	348	417	447
Delmarva Power & Light	69%	79%	54%	55%	73%	61%	145	173	133	131	138	151	1396	1343	1247	1109	1291	1252
Easton Utilities	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hagerstown	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mayor & Council of Berlin	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Potomac Electric Power Company	79%	86%	65%	67%	86%	73%	102	116	97	117	114	105	1398	1292	1127	1017	1208	1107
Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative	37%	43%	30%	36%	44%	37%	104	89	85	81	75	87	855	683	717	604	558	683
The Potomac Edison Company	0%	2%	4%	2%	4%	3%	0	445	116	191	143	179	0	445	266	444	331	297
Thurmont	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
UGI Utilities	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Washington Gas Light Company	17%	8%	19%	4%	14%	13%	68	42	22	53	47	47	381	226	302	418	368	339
Williamsport	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS	36%	43%	31%	30%	36%	28%	58	102	62	73	70	76	636	616	573	545	598	631

The number of customers who were participants in USPP and made supplemental payments in the 2025-2026 heating season jumped to 7,123. This figure has been increasing steadily since 2021, where it began at 1,486, and climbed each winter to 2,236, then 4,128, then 4,507, and now 7,123. The percentage of USPP participants making supplemental payments has similarly increased since 2020-2021 when it went from 11%, 8%, 11%, 18%, and now 28%.

A comparison by benefit level for the most recent three heating seasons shown in *Figure 6* reveals that the average monthly supplemental payments have fluctuated to their present current average monthly supplemental payment amount of \$76.

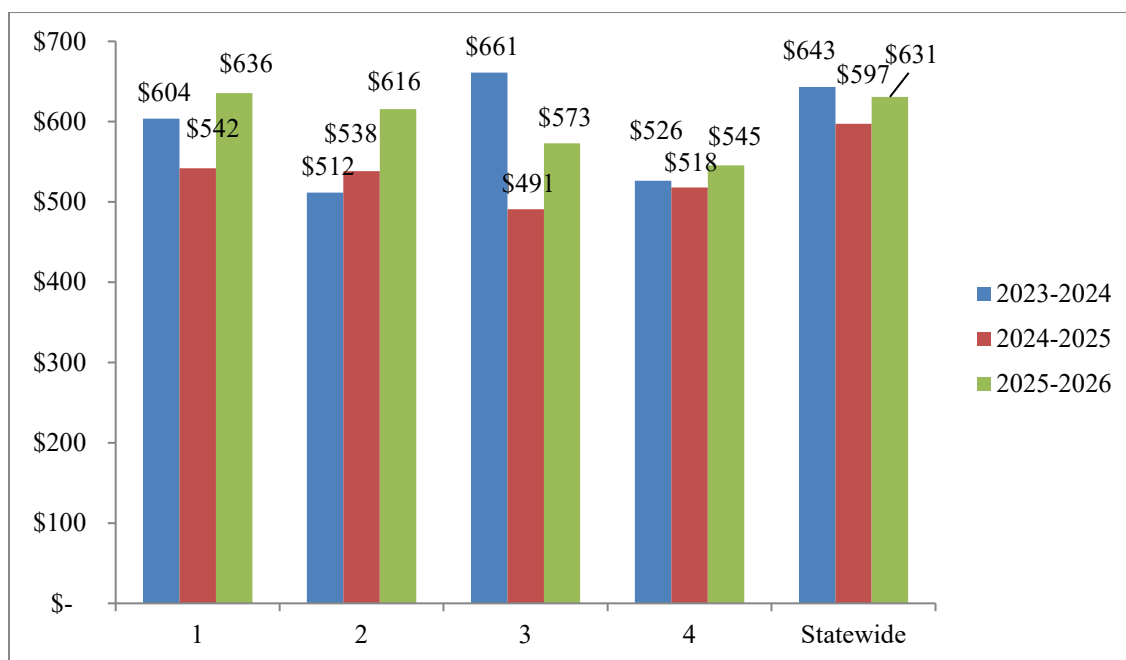
Figure 6: Average Monthly Supplemental Payment by USPP Participants by Poverty Level for 2024-2026



In the right-most section of *Table 5* on the page above is the average supplemental arrearage balance by benefit level and by utility. This balance is illustrated graphically in *Figure 7*. The 2025-2026 statewide average supplemental arrearage balance for USPP participants was \$631. This amount has fluctuated since 2022 from \$649 to \$643 to \$597 and has shown persistence which suggests that USPP and MEAP customers are having a hard time paying down high arrearages of \$1,254 incurred in the post-pandemic winter of 2020-2021. During the pandemic, many families lost their source of income, either through restrictions, unemployment, or loss of a

family member. Unpaid bills were deferred into the supplemental arrearages which snowballed from just \$373 in 2019.

Figure 7: Average Supplemental Arrearage Balance by Benefit Level for 2024 – 2026



EQUAL PAYMENT PLAN ARREARAGES AND PROGRAM COMPLIANCE

USPP’s equal monthly payment plans are different from supplemental or alternative arrearage plans discussed in the section above which are detailed by COMAR 20.31.01.08. Equal monthly payment plans are the default arrangement for USPP participants to avoid termination and pay down arrearages, while supplemental, or alternative, payment plans are arranged for those unable to make payments under the default scheme. Under COMAR 20.31.05.06, an equal monthly payment plan based on the estimated cost of average annual utility usage minus annual MEAP benefits payable to the utility shall be used as the basis to determine appropriate payments for participation in the USPP.

Table 6 presents the percentage of USPP participants, MEAP-certified non-USPP participants, and all other non-MEAP residential customers who were in arrears on their utility bills as of March 31, 2026. USPP participants were more likely to be in arrears than either MEAP-certified non-USPP

participants or non-MEAP customers of the utility in the winter heating season, though this can vary greatly based on poverty level.

For all data reporting utilities, the percentage of customers in arrears was 70% for USPP participants, 58% for MEAP-certified non-USPP participants, and 19% for non-MEAP-eligible customers. The proportion of USPP participants who were in arrears was about 19 percentage points higher than the 51% observed in the previous heating season and approximately 31% higher than the 39% observed in the 2023-2024 heating season.

Table 7 on the following page presents the average arrearage balance which is the average of the unpaid balance due for all of a utility's customers, for USPP participants, MEAP-certified non-USPP participants, and non-MEAP customers making equal payments (instead of supplemental payments). The current heating season shows an increasing trend. Currently, the average USPP participant arrearage is \$597, the non-USPP MEAP arrears average \$719, and non-MEAP customers average \$487. Although arrearage levels fluctuate, they remain elevated when compared to their pre-pandemic levels and are trending upward.

Table 6: Percentage of USPP Participants, MEAP-Eligible Customers, and Non-MEAP Customers in Arrears by PL^{12 13}

UTILITY	USPP Participants						MEAP-Eligible Non-Participants						Non-MEAP Customers
	Poverty Level						Poverty Level						
	1	2	3	4	5	Overall	1	2	3	4	5	Overall	
Baltimore Gas & Electric	68%	71%	58%	53%	62%	57%	60%	64%	53%	52%	58%	56%	17%
Chesapeake Utilities	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	57%	0%	0%	0%	0%	57%	25%
Columbia Gas of Maryland, Inc.	61%	46%	39%	36%	33%	40%	42%	44%	40%	33%	35%	37%	17%
Delmarva Power & Light	122%	120%	94%	93%	109%	101%	121%	109%	90%	91%	107%	99%	22%
Easton Utilities	67%	0%	0%	0%	0%	50%	38%	21%	19%	21%	28%	23%	16%
Hagerstown	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	18%	22%	14%	14%	17%	16%	27%
Mayor & Council of Berlin	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	45%
Potomac Electric Power Company	120%	123%	105%	109%	127%	114%	98%	94%	82%	90%	98%	90%	26%
Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative	53%	51%	45%	45%	54%	48%	49%	43%	35%	37%	45%	40%	21%
The Potomac Edison Company	41%	55%	23%	17%	16%	23%	41%	46%	24%	26%	30%	29%	13%
Thurmont	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	27%	0%	0%	0%	0%	27%	20%
UGI Utilities	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	27%
Washington Gas Light Company	4%	0%	11%	14%	14%	11%	34%	36%	29%	33%	37%	33%	22%
Williamsport	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	16%	0%	0%	0%	0%	16%	23%
Statewide	85%	86%	70%	67%	76%	70%	62%	65%	53%	54%	61%	58%	19%

¹² A USPP customer is considered in arrears if some monthly billing is past due on March 31, 2025.

¹³ DPL and Pepco reported data that exceeds 100%.

Table 7: Arrearage Balance for USPP Participants, MEAP-Certified Non-USPP Participants, and Non-MEAP Customers in Arrears by Poverty Level¹⁴

UTILITY	USPP Participants						MEAP-Eligible Non-Participants						Non-MEAP Customers
	Poverty Level						Poverty Level						
	1	2	3	4	5	Overall	1	2	3	4	5	Overall	
Baltimore Gas & Electric	\$ 1,341	\$ 1,516	\$ 1,276	\$ 1,213	\$ 1,284	\$ 1,277	\$ 1,141	\$ 1,264	\$ 1,150	\$ 1,155	\$ 1,166	\$ 1,179	\$ 655
Chesapeake Utilities	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 390
Columbia Gas of Maryland, Inc.	\$ 534	\$ 683	\$ 465	\$ 439	\$ 542	\$ 467	\$ 581	\$ 591	\$ 609	\$ 613	\$ 736	\$ 666	\$ 381
Delmarva Power & Light	\$ 1,118	\$ 1,220	\$ 959	\$ 944	\$ 1,073	\$ 1,066	\$ 1,066	\$ 1,064	\$ 984	\$ 879	\$ 1,019	\$ 1,021	\$ 793
Easton Utilities	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Hagerstown	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 602	\$ 702	\$ 575	\$ 509	\$ 402	\$ 516	\$ 413
Mayor & Council of Berlin	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Potomac Electric Power Company	\$ 1,231	\$ 1,268	\$ 1,006	\$ 957	\$ 1,142	\$ 1,103	\$ 1,002	\$ 1,064	\$ 914	\$ 888	\$ 928	\$ 985	\$ 581
Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative	\$ 936	\$ 853	\$ 789	\$ 646	\$ 740	\$ 793	\$ 250	\$ 251	\$ 242	\$ 247	\$ 263	\$ 251	\$ 644
The Potomac Edison Company	\$ 511	\$ 776	\$ 347	\$ 313	\$ 339	\$ 457	\$ 597	\$ 522	\$ 542	\$ 422	\$ 461	\$ 509	\$ 350
Thurmont	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
UGI Utilities	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Washington Gas Light Company	\$ 36	\$ -	\$ 484	\$ 317	\$ 983	\$ 364	\$ 483	\$ 506	\$ 482	\$ 433	\$ 496	\$ 480	\$ 367
Williamsport	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Statewide	\$ 571	\$ 632	\$ 533	\$ 483	\$ 610	\$ 597	\$ 670	\$ 746	\$ 687	\$ 643	\$ 684	\$ 719	\$ 487

¹⁴ Does not include analysis for Poverty Level 6 and Poverty Level 7.

Figure 8: Average USPP Arrearage Balance by Benefit Level for Three Consecutive Heating Seasons for Customers making Equal Payments

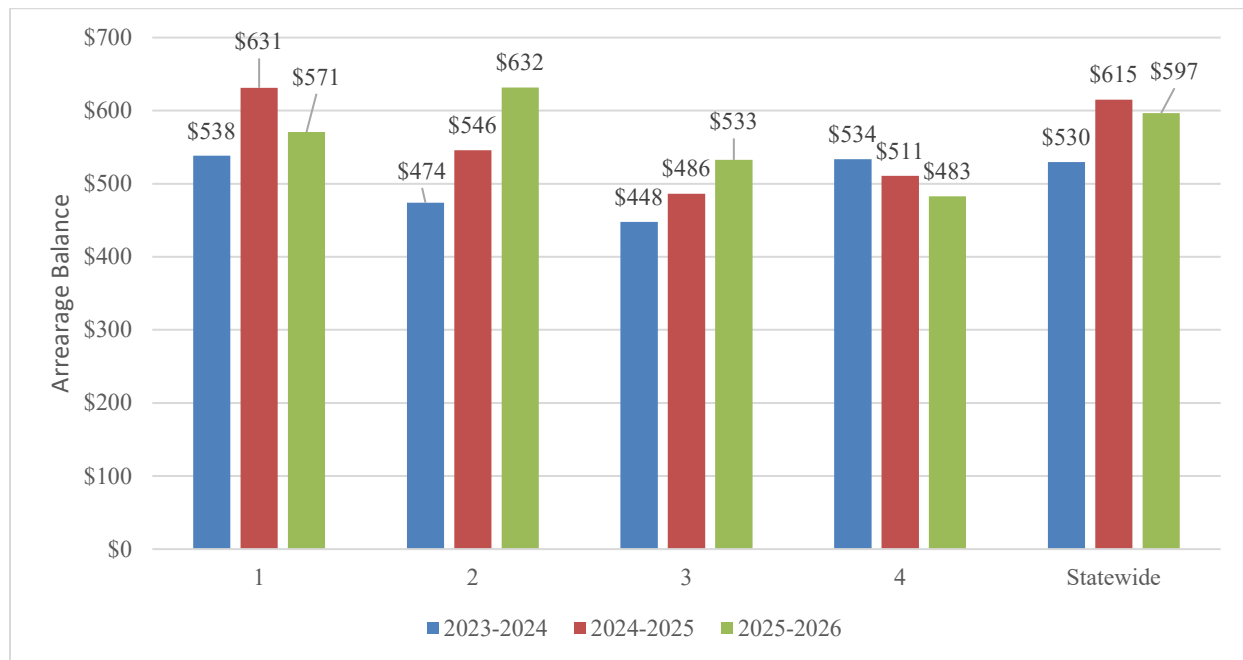


Figure 8 illustrates the trend in average arrearage balance borne by low-income USPP customers. According to the USPP provisions, a customer can be removed from the program and a customer's service may be terminated if the amount due on two consecutive monthly bills is not paid. As in previous years, BGE and Columbia reported that, as a matter of company policy, neither removed customers from the program if the customer did not comply with the USPP payment rules during the 2025-2026 heating season.

Table 8 presents the percentage of USPP participants who complied with the payment provisions of the program for the 2025-2026 heating season and compares those rates to the previous season's results. The statewide compliance percentage of approximately 88% shown in *Table 8* is comparable but lower than the proportion of customers who complied with the USPP payment provisions in the prior seasons where it has been 98% since 2021. Among major utilities, BGE, Columbia, and SMECO reported 100% compliance rates. Lower compliance rates were reported by Pepco, WGL, Delmarva, and PE. Easton Utilities reported a compliance rate of 50%.

Table 8: Percentage of USPP Participants who complied with Program Provisions by Benefit Level¹⁵

UTILITY	Compliance 2024-2025						Compliance 2025-2026					
	Poverty Level					Overall	Poverty Level					Overall
	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5	
Baltimore Gas & Electric	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Chesapeake Utilities	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Columbia Gas of Maryland, Inc.	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Delmarva Power & Light	80%	84%	82%	81%	81%	81%	55%	55%	71%	71%	69%	68%
Easton Utilities	0%	67%	100%	67%	100%	83%	67%	0%	0%	0%	0%	50%
Hagerstown	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Mayor & Council of Berlin	100%	100%	100%	100%	0%	100%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Potomac Electric Power Company	92%	93%	91%	89%	87%	91%	56%	54%	23%	73%	68%	52%
Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
The Potomac Edison Company	92%	81%	86%	83%	100%	85%	98%	96%	84%	87%	83%	87%
Thurmont	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
UGI Utilities	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Washington Gas Light Company	87%	88%	89%	89%	85%	88%	67%	75%	85%	84%	91%	82%
Williamsport	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
TOTALS	92%	93%	93%	93%	94%	98%	82%	81%	82%	88%	88%	88%

¹⁵ BGE and Columbia do not remove customers from USPP for failure to pay the amount due on two consecutive monthly bills. N/A indicates that a company did not participate in USPP or reported 0% so the calculation for this table resulted in not applicable.

TERMINATIONS

The primary purpose of the USPP is to minimize service terminations of low-income customers during the cold winter season. The number of USPP participants' services terminated this season was 570, a sizable decrease from 920 of the previous year and 1,285 of the year before. This season's statewide USPP termination rate was approximately 2.27%, the lowest it has been since the pandemic. *Table 9* summarizes the number of USPP participants and USPP terminations for the past 15 winter seasons from 2010 to 2026.

Table 9: USPP Participation and Service Termination

Reporting Season	USPP Participants	USPP Service Termination	Percentage of USPP Termination
2010-2011	84,826	819	0.97%
2011-2012	70,892	708	1.00%
2012-2013	63,389	2,208	3.50%
2013-2014	59,982	1,788	3.00%
2014-2015	55,075	1,721	3.10%
2015-2016	39,907	1,718	4.30%
2016-2017	37,251	1,323	3.55%
2017-2018	34,443	1,592	4.62%
2018-2019	28,465	1,913	6.72%
2019-2020	23,647	1,442	6.10%
2020-2021	16,635	86	0.52%
2021-2022	18,072	959	5.31%
2022-2023	26,561	1,249	4.70%
2023-2024	36,410	1,285	3.53%
2024-2025	24,977	920	3.68%
2025-2026	25,057	570	2.27%

The number of USPP participants is trending downward while the number of USPP terminations fluctuates greatly but trends down from a peak in 2013-2014. The lowest termination rate, 0.52% during the 2020-2021 season, is an outlier due to the COVID-19 pandemic termination moratorium. *Table 10* reports the terminations for each of the utilities during the 2025-2026 heating season.

Figure 9: USPP Termination Rate by Heating Season

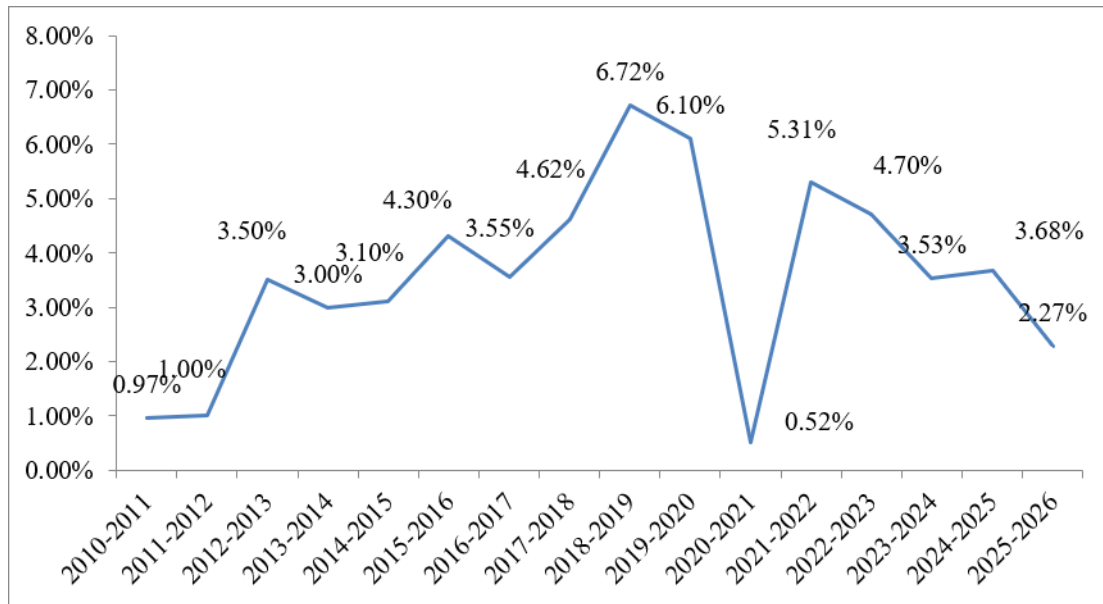


Table 10: 2025-2026 USPP Termination by Utility

UTILITY	USPP Participants	Termination	Termination Rate	Change in Terminations from Previous Heating Season
Baltimore Gas & Electric	13,192	412	3.1%	-52.9%
Chesapeake Utilities	-	-	0.0%	0.0%
Columbia Gas of Maryland	613	-	0.0%	0.0%
Delmarva Power & Light	6,125	108	1.8%	248.4%
Easton Utilities	4	-	0.0%	-100.0%
Hagerstown	-	-	0.0%	0.0%
Mayor & Council of Berlin	-	-	0.0%	0.0%
Potomac Electric Power Company	2,020	48	2.4%	433.3%
Southern Maryland Electric Power Cooperative	2,076	-	0.0%	0.0%
The Potomac Edison Company	732	2	0.3%	-66.7%
Thurmont	-	-	0.0%	0.0%
UGI Utilities, Inc.	-	-	0.0%	0.0%
Washington Gas Light Company	295	-	0.0%	0.0%
Williamsport	-	-	0.0%	0.0%
Statewide Total	25,057	570	2.3%	-55.6%

Although there were a total of 570 terminations, only four utilities terminated customers with the majority of terminations occurring in the BGE service territory. BGE serves the largest number of residential customers in the State and its terminations accounted for the largest total amount at 75% of all terminations across the State, though historically BGE has accounted for upwards of 90% of all statewide terminations. As in the previous heating seasons, some utilities observed no-termination policies, primary among those observing no-termination policies were the municipal utilities, which work with their customers to avoid termination.

Figure 10 illustrates the three heating seasons' terminations mentioned above by benefit level. While the highest amounts of terminations were concentrated in the Level 4 customers, this season has seen a significant decrease in Level 1 and Level 2 customers, which are the lowest income, being terminated.

Figure 10: Service Terminations by Poverty Level for the Recent Three Heating Seasons

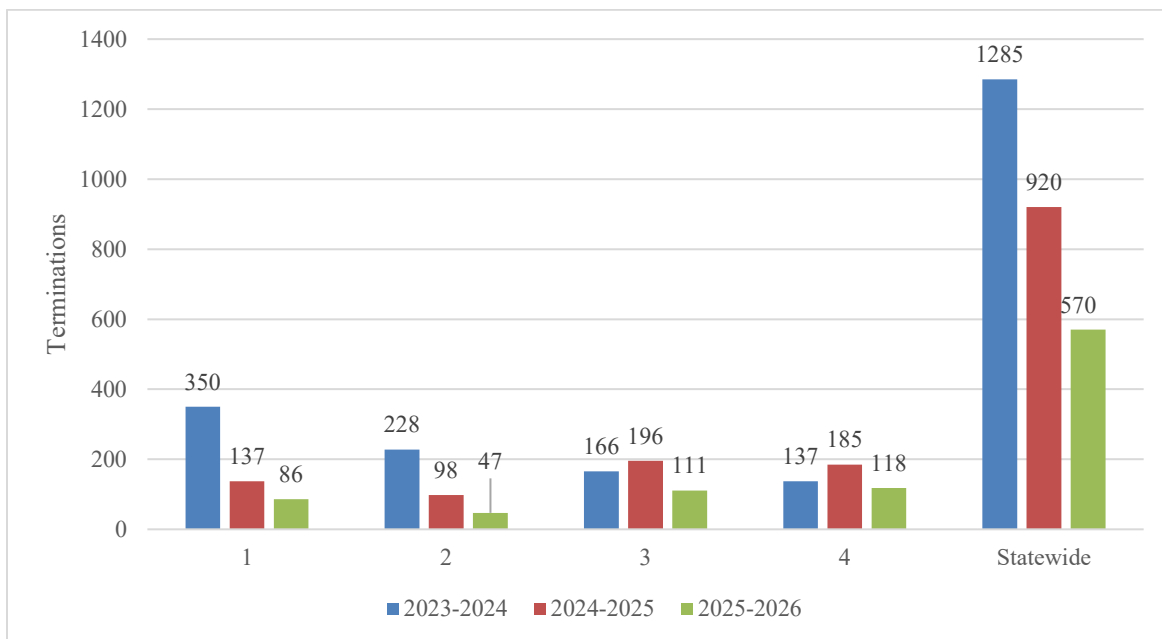


Table 11 presents the number of USPP participants, MEAP-certified non-USPP participants, and non-MEAP customers whose services were terminated during the winter heating season.

Table 11: Number of Winter Heating Season Terminations¹⁶

UTILITY	USPP Participants						MEAP-Certified Non-USPP Participants						Non-MEAP Customers
	Poverty Level						Poverty Level						
	1	2	3	4	5	Overall	1	2	3	4	5	Overall	
Baltimore Gas & Electric	51	30	71	80	59	412	269	121	254	236	201	1,378	8,447
Chesapeake Utilities	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Columbia Gas of Maryland, Inc.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	28
Delmarva Power & Light	26	11	29	24	14	108	18	5	20	21	7	75	1,195
Easton Utilities	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	2	-	4	15
Hagerstown	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mayor & Council of Berlin	-					-	-					-	-
Potomac Electric Power Company	8	6	11	13	10	48	5	3	10	7	9	35	6,044
Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	524
The Potomac Edison Company	1	-	-	1	-	2	-	1	-	-	1	2	37
Thurmont	-					-	-					-	-
UGI Utilities	-					-	-					-	-
Washington Gas Light Company	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Williamsport	-					-	-					-	-
TOTALS	86	47	111	118	83	570	294	130	284	266	218	1,494	16,290

HIGH ENERGY CONSUMPTION

Table 12 presents the percentage of USPP participants who consumed more than 135% of their utility system's average usage. Data in this table shows the proportions of USPP customers who consume higher-than-average levels of energy by poverty level. Due to this increased consumption, these customers will have higher-than-average heating bills. These higher bills may tend to generate greater arrearages, thereby creating a higher risk of defaulting on payment plans and a greater risk of termination. The energy usage data was not provided by all utilities. Utilities do not need to provide the data if they have fewer than 5,000 customers.

¹⁶ Note: Columbia and WGL each have a no-termination policy during the heating season.

Table 12: Percentage of USPP Participants who consumed more than 135% of System Average Energy during the Most Recent Heating Season¹⁷

UTILITY	Poverty Level					Overall
	1	2	3	4	5	
Baltimore Gas & Electric	56%	54%	58%	56%	59%	56%
Chesapeake Utilities	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Columbia Gas of Maryland, Inc.	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Delmarva Power & Light	38%	38%	30%	31%	40%	33%
Easton Utilities	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Hagerstown	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Mayor & Council of Berlin	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Potomac Electric Power Company	32%	47%	30%	35%	44%	35%
Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative	29%	26%	23%	33%	29%	28%
The Potomac Edison Company	58%	43%	43%	45%	44%	45%
Thurmont	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
UGI Utilities	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Washington Gas Light Company	41%	88%	80%	75%	100%	76%
Williamsport	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Statewide	43%	43%	40%	43%	48%	45%

For the 2025-2026 heating season, six utilities reported data. Approximately 45% of USPP participants across reporting utilities exhibited high consumption which has fluctuated between 39% last season and 59% in the season prior. During the pandemic, only 25% of USPP households displayed high usage.

¹⁷ Excludes analysis for Poverty Level 6 and Poverty Level 7.

PRIMARY HEAT SOURCE

Table 13 presents the percentage of USPP participants, MEAP-certified, non-USPP participants, and non-MEAP customers whose primary heat source is provided by the indicated utility. For all utilities in the 2025-2026 heating season, 56% of USPP customers, 60% of MEAP-certified non-USPP participants, and 55% of non-MEAP customers received their primary heating source from the utility responding to the data request. The percentage of USPP customers using the reporting utilities as their heating source was lower than the 61% and 63% range seen in the previous heating seasons.

The data applicable to the primary heating source varies across utilities. Out of the applicable respondents, the percentage of USPP customers whose primary heating source was provided by the reporting utilities ranged from a low of 24% in the case of Pepco (electric heating) to 100% for Columbia and WGL (gas heating), as previously reported. BGE reported 76% of USPP customers using BGE as the primary heating source for the 2025-2026 heating season which combined its electric and gas services.

Table 13: Percentage of Participants, MEAP-Certified Non-USPP Participants, and Non-MEAP Customers whose Primary Heat Source is Provided by the Utility by Benefit Level¹⁸

UTILITY	USPP Participants						MEAP-Certified Non-USPP Participants						Non-MEAP Customers
	Poverty Level						Poverty Level						
	1	2	3	4	5	Overall 1	1	2	3	4	5	Overall	
Baltimore Gas & Electric	70%	74%	76%	77%	80%	76%	63%	61%	62%	65%	67%	63%	49%
Chesapeake Utilities	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Columbia Gas of Maryland, Inc.	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	97%	99%	99%	99%	98%	99%	96%
Delmarva Power & Light	36%	35%	36%	35%	36%	36%	52%	53%	53%	51%	45%	51%	49%
Easton Utilities	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Hagerstown	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Mayor & Council of Berlin	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Potomac Electric Power Company	18%	30%	28%	22%	25%	24%	61%	61%	67%	64%	66%	66%	64%
Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
The Potomac Edison Company	53%	53%	48%	47%	42%	48%	82%	86%	75%	85%	82%	81%	53%
Thurmont	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
UGI Utilities, Inc.	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Washington Gas Light Company	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Williamsport	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
TOTALS	47%	48%	50%	53%	56%	56%	48%	60%	61%	64%	65%	60%	55%

¹⁸ Excludes analysis for Poverty Level 6 and Poverty Level 7.

MEAP GRANTS

Table 14 presents the average MEAP grant payable to the utility at the time of the customer's enrollment in the USPP program. Most USPP participating utilities work closely with OHEP to lower their customers' arrearages and unpaid balances so they may enroll in USPP and be eligible for an alternate payment plan. OHEP's benefit calculation methodology provides larger MEAP grants at poverty levels reflecting lower incomes. *Table 14* excluded analysis for Benefit Level 5, 6, and 7.

The data indicates that the overall average benefit was \$347 in the 2025-2026 heating season which illustrates a steadily declining benefit trend since 2021 of \$650 down to \$566, to \$502, and down to a low of \$249 before rebounding to \$347 this past year. In its report on the Status of Implementation of Categorical Eligibility on January 15, 2025, the Maryland Department of Human Services disclosed that the increase in enrollments was being met with a corresponding decrease in MEAP benefits to ensure that all eligible households would receive assistance.¹⁹

As in previous heating seasons, the MEAP benefit amounts have prioritized lower incomes. In this report, customers in Poverty Level 1 received the highest MEAP benefit at approximately \$398. Regarding utility-specific differences, DPL and Pepco customers both received the largest average grants, at \$1,126 and \$992 respectively. Previously, during and prior to the 2023-2024 season, Columbia, WGL, and BGE customers received the largest average grants.

¹⁹ Maryland Department of Human Services. Page 4. [https://dlslibrary.state.md.us/publications/JCR/2024/2024_156-157_2024\(rev\).pdf](https://dlslibrary.state.md.us/publications/JCR/2024/2024_156-157_2024(rev).pdf).

Table 14: Average Maryland Energy Assistance Program Grant for USPP Participants by Poverty Level for the Last Two Heating Seasons²⁰

UTILITY	Average 2025-2026 Grants (\$)					Average 2024-2025 Grants (\$)				
	Poverty Level					Poverty Level				
	1	2	3	4	Overall	1	2	3	4	Overall
Baltimore Gas & Electric	\$326	\$298	\$252	\$227	\$209	\$322	\$422	\$255	\$194	\$223
Chesapeake Utilities	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Columbia Gas of Maryland, Inc.	\$479	\$371	\$363	\$355	\$315	\$259	\$216	\$180	\$174	\$139
Delmarva Power & Light	\$1,277	\$1,161	\$1,021	\$1,033	\$1,126	\$898	\$567	\$654	\$733	\$686
Easton Utilities	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Hagerstown	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Mayor & Council of Berlin	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Potomac Electric Power Company	\$1,199	\$1,040	\$942	\$963	\$992	\$898	\$567	\$654	\$733	\$686
Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative	\$101	\$107	\$100	\$100	\$101	\$106	\$104	\$104	\$105	\$104
The Potomac Edison Company	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$112	\$102	\$105	\$104	\$103
Thurmont	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
UGI Utilities	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Washington Gas Light Company	\$493	\$402	\$396	\$395	\$405	\$332	\$321	\$233	\$246	\$254
Williamsport	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
TOTALS	\$398	\$348	\$317	\$317	\$347	\$293	\$230	\$219	\$229	\$249

²⁰ N/A indicates that a company did not participate in USPP. 0% indicates that the company reported 0% enrollment for USPP data so the calculation for this table resulted in 0% participation.

CONCLUSION

The 2025–2026 winter heating season marked a continued decline in participation in the USPP, reaching only 25,057 enrollments, a 30% decrease from the 2023-2024 heating season. Although USPP participation increased between 2020 and 2024 due to pandemic-related factors, such as unemployment and lifted termination prohibitions, the long-term trend has been downward. Despite the decline in enrollments, average arrearages returned to 2021 levels.

USPP enrollments continue to account for about 1% of total customers, and the repeat enrollment rate has decreased. It should be noted that although statewide utility terminations fell by 55%, the financial strain felt by customers and the generally decreasing energy assistance grants may affect future participants' ability to avoid disconnections.

APPENDIX A1: Utilities Reporting Basic Information in 2025-2026 Heating Season

UTILITY	Participated in USPP	Serving Customers	Service Type	Included in Data Analysis
BGE	Yes	≥ 5,000	Gas and Electric	Yes
Chesapeake Utilities – Maryland Division	Yes	≥ 5,000	Gas	Yes
Chesapeake Utilities - Sandpiper Energy	Yes	≥ 5,000	Gas	Yes
Columbia Gas of Maryland, Inc.	Yes	≥ 5,000	Gas	Yes
Delmarva Power and Light Company	Yes	≥ 5,000	Electric	Yes
Easton Utilities Commission	Yes	≥ 5,000	Gas and Electric	Yes
Elkton Gas Company	Yes	≥ 5,000	Gas	Yes
Hagerstown Light Department	No	≥ 5,000	Electric	Yes
Mayor & Council of Berlin	No	< 5,000	Electric	Yes
Potomac Electric Power Company	Yes	≥ 5,000	Electric	Yes
The Potomac Edison Company	Yes	≥ 5,000	Electric	Yes
Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative	Yes	≥ 5,000	Electric	Yes
Thurmont	No	< 5,000	Electric	Yes
UGI Utilities, Inc.	Yes	< 5,000	Gas	Yes
Washington Gas Light Company	Yes	≥ 5,000	Gas	Yes
Williamsport Municipal Electric Light Plant	No	< 5,000	Electric	Yes

APPENDIX A2: 2025-2026 Data Request

TO ALL GAS AND ELECTRIC UTILITIES PARTICIPATING IN THE UTILITY SERVICE PROTECTION PROGRAM ("USPP")

Pursuant to Section 20.31.05.09 of the Code of Maryland Regulations ("COMAR") entitled *Utility Data Collection*, utilities participating in the USPP are required to compile and maintain certain data, as specified by the Public Service Commission of Maryland ("Commission"), to be filed with the Commission annually. This data is to be collected for the heating season ending March 31, 2026. The data requested below should be provided to the Commission Staff no later than June 14, 2025. This data is required to enable the Commission to fulfill its statutory annual reporting requirement under Section 7-307(c) of the Public Utilities Article, *Maryland Annotated Code*.

The information requested by the Commission is listed below. The requested data pertains to the November 1, 2025 through March 31, 2026 billing months. Where data is requested by poverty level, the reported data should be segmented according to the four comparable poverty levels used by the Department of Human Resources to establish income eligibility for grants from the Maryland Energy Assistance Program ("MEAP"), consistent with COMAR 20.31.05.05.

For the period at issue, the poverty levels were as follows:

Benefit Level 1	0%-25% of the FPL
Benefit Level 2	26%-50% of the FPL
Benefit Level 3	51%-100% of the FPL
Benefit Level 4	101%-150% of the FPL
Benefit Level 5	151%-200% of the FPL
Benefit Level 6	MEAP Subsidized Housing Sub-metered Dwellings (SNAP Recipients)
Benefit Level 7	Other

Please report the data accordingly.

Pursuant to COMAR 20.31.01.08, an alternate payment (referred to by some utilities as a supplemental payment) is defined as a payment made pursuant to a payment plan provided by the utility to the customer to avoid termination of service and to retire all outstanding charges to the utility. The responding utility should report all reasonable alternate/supplemental payment plans that were negotiated in good faith with low-income customers who were unable to pay the charges for service.

To the extent possible, where indicated, please respond to those data request questions which have been broken down as follows: **“as of March 31, 2026”** (to provide a snapshot of the data at a point in time); and **“for the period November 1, 2025 through March 31, 2026”** (to provide cumulative data during the period of analysis).

Municipally-owned utilities and gas or electric utilities with fewer than 5,000 residential customers shall report only the information requested in Section E below.

A. *With regard to USPP participants, PLEASE PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION BY POVERTY LEVEL:*

1. The total number of customers who enrolled in the USPP program prior to the end of the March 2026 billing cycle. (This number should include any customers who successfully enrolled in USPP even if the customer was later dropped from or otherwise left the program during 2025-2026 winter heating season.)
2. The number of USPP customers included in No. 1 above who were also USPP participants during the previous (**2024-2025**) heating season.
3. The number of USPP customers whose primary heating source is the electric or gas service provided by the responding utility.
4. The number of USPP customers making monthly supplemental payments pursuant to COMAR 20.31.01.08:
 - a) as of the end of the March 2026 billing cycle and please specify the end date of the March 2026 billing cycle;
5. The average dollar amount of the monthly supplemental payments for response A4:
 - a) as of the end of the March 2026 billing cycle; and
 - b) Please explain how the amounts in part a) are calculated.
6. The average dollar amount of the arrearage on which the response for A4 is based:
 - a) as of the end of the March 2026 billing cycle; and
 - b) Please explain how the amounts in part a) are calculated.
7. The number of USPP customers in arrears on monthly USPP equal monthly payments:
 - a) as of the end of the March 2026 billing cycle;
8. The average dollar amount of the arrearage in the response for A7 (this amount should not include any supplemental payments owed by customers):
 - a) as of the end of the March 2026 billing cycle;
9. The average monthly payment obligation, excluding alternate/supplemental payments calculated pursuant to COMAR 20.31.05.06.B. (or recalculated pursuant to COMAR 20.31.05.06.D) and in effect as of the March 2026 billing cycle.
10. The average Maryland Energy Assistance Program grant payable to the utility at the time of enrollment.
11. The number of customers who were dropped from the USPP during the billing months of November 2025 through March 2026 for failing to pay the amount due on two consecutive monthly bills. This number should include customers who were taken off USPP for non-compliance even if

they were subsequently reinstated in the program.

12. The number of customers whose utility service was actually terminated during the billing months of November 2025 through March 2026.
13. The number of customers who consumed more than 135% of the system average for November 2025 through March 2026 (monthly or aggregate figures). Report sample size if sample data are used. (This question need not be answered by utilities providing an alternative prioritized customer list to the Weatherization Assistance Program ["WAP"]. If this is the case, please state in your response that such a list is being provided to the WAP.)
14. The average monthly cost of actual usage by participants for the five billing months of November 2025 through March 2026. (Report sample size if sample data are used). Please provide a sample calculation for USPP participants by poverty level indicating average monthly cost of actual usage during the heating season from November 2025 through March 2026.

B. *With regard to MEAP-certified customers who did not participate in the USPP, PLEASE PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING DATA BY POVERTY LEVEL.*

1. The number of customers:
 - a) as of the end of the March 2026 billing cycle;
2. The number of customers whose primary heat source is the electric or gas service provided by the responding utility.
3. The number of customers who are in arrears (this should not include any supplemental payments owed by customers):
 - a) as of the end of the March 2026 billing cycle;
4. The average dollar amount of the arrearage referred to in the response to B3:
 - a) as of the end of the March 2026 billing cycle;
5. The number of customers whose utility service was actually terminated during the five billing months of November 2025 through March 2026.
6. The average monthly cost of actual usage for the five billing months of November 2025 through March 2026.

C. *With regard to non-MEAP certified residential customers, please provide the following data:*

1. The number of customers:
 - a) as of the end of the March 2026 billing cycle;
2. The number of customers whose primary heat source is the electric or gas service provided by the responding utility.
3. The number of customers who are in arrears (this should not include any supplemental payments owed by customers):
 - a) as of the end of the March 2026 billing cycle;

4. The average dollar value of the arrearages in the response for C3:
 - a) as of the end of the March 2026 billing cycle.
5. The number of customers whose utility service was actually terminated during the five billing months of November 2025 through March 2026.

D. *With regard to all USPP- eligible customers, please answer the following:*

1.
 - a) Please provide a description of each of the utility's supplemental/alternate payment plans offered to or arranged with a USPP customer to address any arrearages.
 - b) Please indicate whether your company offers any form of budget billing plan to your customers. If so, please explain how the budget billing plan is calculated/determined on a monthly basis and whether the budget plan is the same or different from USPP supplemental/alternate payment plans. If different, please explain.
 - c) Please provide an example of an USPP participant for each of the following: (i) supplemental payment; (ii) arrearage payments; (iii) even monthly payment arrangements; and (iv) other monthly obligation payment, as they are related to A5, A6, A7, A8, and A9.
2. Please describe how each plan listed above operates, including whether a customer must request the plan or whether a customer is automatically enrolled in the supplemental /alternate payment plan.
3. Please state whether the company has added, modified, or deleted any of the types of supplemental/alternate payment plans offered or arranged during the last reporting period. If yes, please specify what has been added, modified, or deleted.
4. Please provide your comments on the 2025-2026 winter USPP program and suggestions for future USPP program improvements or changes.

E. *Municipal utilities and gas or electric utilities with fewer than 5,000 residential customers are requested to provide the following information as specified in Sections A, B, C, and D above. (Responses to any additional items are at the utility's discretion.)*

Section A - Items 1, 4, 7, 11, 12

Section B - Items 1, 3, 5.

Section C - Items 1, 3, 5.

Section D – Items 1, 2.