

NCLC Project Stay Connected



The goal of Project Stay Connected is to maintain heating, electricity, gas, and phone services for low-income Massachusetts residents. Stay Connected staff attorneys – Jenifer Bosco, Charlie Harak, and Jeremiah Battle – provide free training and case advice for front-line social service workers and advocates in Massachusetts. **See the events and courses offered below.**

We also advocate for more consumer-friendly rules and practices regarding shut-offs of utility services, promote discount rates and reasonable payment plans, and seek adequate funding for the fuel assistance and weatherization programs. (More information about Public Policy Reforms [here](#)).

Please do not hesitate to contact stayconnected@nclc.org with any questions.

Utility Consumer Rights Course

NCLC staff will offer free zoom trainings for advocates and front-line social service workers who work with low-income, Massachusetts clients. Advocates learn the eligibility requirements for utility discounts, how to prevent service from being shut off, and how to restore service if it was terminated. The training lasts about 90 minutes including a short break and time for questions.

See schedule below for dates. Also below find a recording of a past training as well as course materials.

NCLC Open Energy and Utility Q&A Hours

“Q&A Hours” are an informal, virtual space for folks who work with low-income utility customers to gather with NCLC staff attorneys (and occasional guest experts) and ask questions about specific issues their clients are facing, ask general questions about MA utility law or the Stay Connected training materials, share information about what they are seeing in the field, and/or share recommendations with fellow advocates. Each session will begin with a brief 10-15 minute presentation by NCLC staff on one pressing issue (i.e. LIHEAP process, Arrearage Management Programs etc.). More information [here](#).

Q&A Hours will be offered periodically and the Zoom link will be posted on this page and shared widely prior to the event.

Upcoming Stay Connected Course and Event Calendar

September 27th at 2PM: Utility Consumer Rights Course (1.5 hours)

October 17th at 1pm: Q&A Hours (1 Hour) – Discussion topic LIHEAP – special guest: Liz Berube, Executive Director at Citizens for Citizens

Private Group Training Opportunities

We also offer our full Utility Consumer Rights Course to groups privately as well. **Advocates can request a live training by emailing stayconnected@nclc.org.** In your initial email please give us an idea of when you would like the training to take place and an estimate of how many attendees we could expect. *We need a minimum of three weeks to plan, and at least 15 people in attendance to give a private training.*

Training Recording and Course Materials

Please note that while most of this recording is current, it does contain some discussion of COVID protections that are no longer in effect.

If you view the training online, please fill out the evaluation form [here](#).

Training Materials

- *Utilities Advocacy for Low-Income Households in Massachusetts* (2019 4th edition), by Charlie Harak, Jenifer Bosco and Ana Girón Vives
- Web-only appendices:
 - Appendix G: Termination Schedule
- Handout Packet
- PowerPoint Slides

Additional Resources

- Fact Sheet: Affordable Connectivity Program, February 2022
- Fact Sheet: Utility Help in Massachusetts, January 2022
- Cold Relief Brochure – Home Energy Assistance 2022 ([mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov), 2022)
- Assisting Massachusetts Victims of Crime and Domestic Violence Who are Having Problems Establishing a New Account or Paying Their Utility Bills, 2019
- Access to Utility Service, 2018 6th edition (legal treatise for attorneys)
- Consumer Education Brochures (English and Spanish)
 - Keeping the Heat and Lights On, 2013
 - Mantener La Calefacción y Las Luces Encendidas, 2013

Archived training recording and materials can be found [here](#).

Read how Project Stay Connected helped Carol

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