



## Conducting Business in the Era of COVID-19

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The COVID-19 pandemic impacted every aspect of Duke Energy's business and the lives of its employees and customers in 2020. Our priorities became clear early on: take care of our customers and protect the health and safety of our employees.

Beginning in March 2020, Duke Energy took early and swift action to assist its 7.9 million electric and 1.6 million natural gas customers. We were one of the first utilities to proactively suspend disconnections in all jurisdictions for customers who were unable to pay their bills. We also waived fees for late and returned payments; and, for residential customers, waived fees for credit and debit card payments. In addition, we made the first of many donations to COVID-19 relief efforts to assist our local communities.

As the year progressed, the company began offering additional support:

- We rolled out online tools so customers could select an extended payment plan that best fits their needs.

- The company simplified the process for accessing the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program and other funds available through community agencies.
- Duke Energy provided professional guidance for small business customers to help analyze their energy usage, discuss energy rates and identify solutions to lower their bills as they were reopening.
- We extended the suspension of credit and debit card payment fees for residential customers for an additional two months, once billing and payment practices resumed in their states.
- Duke Energy and its Foundation donated more than \$8 million to COVID-19 relief efforts during 2020.

The company also proactively contacted customers to offer flexible payment plans and information about how to connect with local assistance agencies to manage their delinquent accounts.

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The company continues to focus on extending payment flexibility to those customers experiencing economic hardships from the pandemic. For 2021, this includes the extension of payment arrangements and modified reconnection policies.

As an essential service, Duke Energy's employees continued to deliver electricity and natural gas to our customers without interruption. Employees who could do their jobs remotely made a swift transition to working from home to help mitigate the spread of the virus – including customer care representatives.

However, for field employees and many power plant workers who could not do their jobs remotely, the company put protocols in place to make sure employees arrived healthy and worked in a safe environment. These protocols included social distancing, wellness screening questions, temperature checks, staggered shifts, enhanced cleaning and face covering requirements.

To support our employees' overall well-being throughout the pandemic, the company provided additional benefits to support our workforce, including 60 additional hours of personal time to employees who experienced certain disruptions in dependent care, the option for more flexible work schedules and a \$1,500 stipend to assist with unplanned expenses resulting from the pandemic for employees below a certain pay threshold. In addition, the Duke Energy Foundation provided more than \$550,000 in assistance to qualified employees through the Relief4Employees program.

Dedicated resource pages for employees and managers with COVID-19 information served as a hub for all information related to the company's response. Sites were updated in real time as the crisis continued.

The lessons learned in 2020 will guide the company as it continues to provide reliable service to our customers and a safe work environment for our employees.