

Mecklenburg County Resident Updates

(updated 3/31/20)

Utilities

Duke Energy: Since many customers may be facing unusual financial hardships as a result of COVID-19, we are temporarily suspending disconnections for nonpayment and waiving late payment fees effective March

21. https://www.dukeenergyupdates.com/?_ga=2.85342681.1378577640.1585665980-205693252.1585665980

Piedmont Natural Gas: Since many customers may be facing unusual financial hardships as a result of COVID-19, we are suspending disconnections for nonpayment effective March 13. This applies to all home and business accounts in North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee. In addition, we have waived all late payment fees and fees for returned checks effective March 21. Customers who were recently disconnected can contact us to make arrangements for service restoration. See our Frequently Asked Questions for more information.

<https://www.piedmontng.com/Customer-Service/COVID-19>

Charlotte Water: Effective immediately and until further notice, Charlotte Water will not disconnect water for non-payment of any account type. Those currently disconnected will be re-connected. (Mayor Vi Lyles)

(Note all services provided will still require payment. These measures simply ensure people have time to pay and still have access to critical services during this crisis.)

Housing

Eviction: North Carolina will stop eviction and foreclosure hearings for the next 30 days as part of the court system's latest effort to reduce courthouse traffic and slow the spread of the coronavirus. (March 13)

Internet/ Phone

Spectrum:

COVID-19 Remote Education Credit: During this time of uncertainty due to COVID-19, our customers need to stay connected more than ever. We're committed to offering special discounts to households affected by this virus. Beginning Monday, March 16, we'll offer free access to internet and WiFi for 60-days for new Pre-K to 12, college student and

teacher households who don't currently have internet or WiFi service. This discount will be applied as a credit for your first two months of internet services. We'll waive any installation or pre-payment fees to help get you started. You can qualify for this offer if you: (1) Have a student of qualifying age at your service address with remote education needs and (2) Have not subscribed to our internet services within the past 30 days. Call (855) 243-8892 to sign up for this offer.

AT&T: announced free public Wi-Fi for 60 days, with Charter offering free broadband for households with students through college age who don't already have a subscription.

Verizon:

Late Fee- If you are experiencing hardship because of COVID-19 and cannot pay your bill in full, we will not charge you a late fee or terminate your service during this difficult period. This policy is currently in effect through May 13, 2020. **To qualify, you must let us know that you are experiencing hardship by completing this [short form](#).** Once you have submitted your hardship form, your account will be protected from late fees and service termination through May 13, 2020.

Hot spot data- Verizon is offering additional Mobile Hotspot data for customers to use during this time. We are automatically adding 15 GB of data across nearly all of our plans, to be used between 03/25/2020 and 04/30/2020. Please note that you will not see the additional allowance in your My Verizon account online, in the Verizon App, or on your bill. To be eligible, you must be on a qualifying postpaid (unlimited or shared), Jetpack or prepaid plan.

T-Mobile: announced that it would provide unlimited smartphone data to all current subscribers and increase the data allowance to schools and students using their digital learning programs.

Food Pantry Q & A

Length between Loaves & Fishes Referral and access: If there is an open slot, an approved referral can get food the same day or the next. The only reason someone would have to wait a

week is if their preferred pantry does not have a slot. They can choose a different location ([one of 20](#)) in the community.

Accessing SNAP Benefits: DSS is still signing people up for food benefits remotely. There is a number to call. Typically it takes about 6-10 business days to get a new EBT card. Not sure if that timeline has changed. (apply online at <https://epass.nc.gov/CitizenPortal/application.do> To receive a mail-in application and assistance in applying for benefits, call 704-336-3000.)

Citizenship Status: Although Loaves & Fishes does ask for the last 4 digits of SSN for each person in the house, it is not required. They will still ask for names and DOBs as a way to verify who is in the home.

Pick Up: A caseworker, volunteer or neighbor can pick up food from pantry site and deliver it to the person. They do not check ID at pantry site. The recipient would have to schedule a pick up from the site, but someone else could pick it up for them at the stated time. A person could also pick up food for multiple families. Just plan accordingly with car (each person in family gets 1 box... could be big load) The pick up person would need that recipient's unique information in order to make the pick-up.

Will the 8 times a year max be changed? There is a possibility that may happen but here are some current facts.

- In a normal year, the average Loaves and Fishes family gets food from the pantry 3 times. Very few ever hit the max.
- Some people think they are close to their limit, but that is not actually the case. This should be verified and not assumed to be true.
- Social workers/ community partner can call and inquire. If family has reached max for year, it is possible that a waiver could be issued.

Additional Details

- Loaves & Fishes Currently have 20 full size pantries operating
- Multiple mobile pantries around community. ([list of pantry locations.](#))