

2. SUBJECT TO SUBPARAGRAPH (II) OF THIS PARAGRAPH, WITH RESPECT TO ANY OF THESE COSTS NOT INCLUDED IN RATES ON JANUARY 1, 2000, IS NOT SUBJECT TO ANY OTHERWISE APPLICABLE CAP.

(II) THE RECOVERY BY AN ELECTRIC COMPANY OF COSTS FOR A UNIVERSAL SERVICE PROGRAM IS SUBJECT TO ANY APPLICABLE CAP REGARDLESS OF WHEN THE COSTS ARE INCLUDED IN RATES.

(3) DURING THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2000, AN ELECTRIC COMPANY MAY NOT, UNDER PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS SUBSECTION, RECOVER COSTS OF A CONSUMER EDUCATION PROGRAM ESTABLISHED BY LAW, REGULATION, OR ORDER

7-512.1.

(A) (1) THE COMMISSION SHALL ESTABLISH A UNIVERSAL SERVICE PROGRAM TO ASSIST ELECTRIC CUSTOMERS WITH ANNUAL INCOMES AT OR BELOW 150% OF THE FEDERAL POVERTY LEVEL.

(2) THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES SHALL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ADMINISTERING THE UNIVERSAL SERVICE PROGRAM THROUGH THE MARYLAND ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

(3) THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES MAY, WITH INPUT FROM A PANEL OR ROUNDTABLE OF INTERESTED PARTIES, CONTRACT WITH A FOR-PROFIT OR A NONPROFIT MARYLAND CORPORATION EXISTING AS OF JULY 1, 1999 TO ASSIST IN ADMINISTERING THE UNIVERSAL SERVICE PROGRAM.

(4) THE COMMISSION SHALL HAVE OVERSIGHT RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE UNIVERSAL SERVICE PROGRAM.

(5) THE COMPONENTS OF THE UNIVERSAL SERVICE PROGRAM SHALL INCLUDE:

(I) BILL ASSISTANCE, AT A MINIMUM OF 50% OF THE DETERMINED NEED;

(II) LOW-INCOME WEATHERIZATION; AND

(III) THE RETIREMENT OF ARREARAGES THAT WERE INCURRED PRIOR TO THE INITIAL IMPLEMENTATION DATE.

(B) (1) (I) ALL CUSTOMERS WILL CONTRIBUTE TO THE FUNDING OF THE UNIVERSAL SERVICE PROGRAM THROUGH A CHARGE COLLECTED BY EACH ELECTRIC COMPANY.

(II) IN THE FIRST 6 MONTHS AFTER THE INITIAL IMPLEMENTATION DATE, THE COMMISSION SHALL CONSIDER ADJUSTMENTS TO THE CHARGES COLLECTED FOR THE UNIVERSAL SERVICE PROGRAM FOR PERSONS THAT ARE NOT ELIGIBLE FOR CUSTOMER CHOICE.