**Section 280.30 Application**

a) Intent: A utility may use reasonable means to verify the identity of its customers. Applicants shall have the right to a reasonable application process designed to provide for persons to obtain utility services without delay, while also safeguarding utilities and other customers from potential harm associated with fraud or the uncollected debts of applicants.

b) Information Requirements: The utility shall make available on its website a full description of the utility's application process, including all forms of acceptable identification, for review in the utility's tariff with the Commission. The utility shall also mail a printed version to applicants or customers who request a copy.

c) Methods:

1) The applicant shall have the option to choose from the available application methods offered by the utility.

2) Third party applications may be made only by persons who have been authorized to act on behalf of the applicant, and the utility must verify this authorization either by documentation or by direct contact with the applicant. If a utility fails to verify authorization, it shall not be entitled to collect for service if the customer disclaims any responsibility for requesting the service; provided, however, that named customers who reside and receive mail at the service/billing address will be rebuttably presumed to have authorized the application if they do not contact the utility to contest billing within six months after service activation.

d) Application Content:

1) Positive identification (ID) of applicants may be required by up to two forms of ID. One form shall be a government issued photo ID, including a state issued ID, U.S. or foreign government issued passport, and consular identification documents, as defined by the Consular Identification Document Act [5 ILCS 230]. Applicants may be asked to provide one other form of identification, including but not limited to any of the following:

1. A second government issued photo ID;
2. Social Security number;

C) Driver's license number;

D) Birth certificate;

E) Immigration and/or naturalization documents;

F) Student identification;

G) Banking information;

H) Employment records;

I) Government benefits/compensation records;

J) Tax ID number;

K) Articles of incorporation; or

L) Business license.

2) The applicant shall have the opportunity to choose the second form of identification to provide from the list in subsection (d)(1). The utility may not oblige an applicant to provide one form of identification in favor of another, so long as one form is a government issued photo ID and the identification provided is valid and accurate.

3) If the applicant is non-residential, the utility shall request information to determine if the applicant is a small business.

4) Service location and contact information required of applicants:

A) Service address for the premises;

B) Mailing address if different from the service address;

C) The applicant's preferred method of contact from the utility;

D) Telephone number if available;

E) E-mail address (optional); and

F) Contact information for property owner/manager if premises are rental (optional).

e) Requirements for Successful Application:

1) Information submitted must be accurate and verifiable; and

2) Any past due debts for utility services still owing to the utility by the applicant shall be identified and governed by this subsection (e)(2). The applicant must:

A) Pay past due debt in full and, if otherwise required, enter into a payment plan for the deposit amount; or

B) At the utility's discretion, enter into a payment agreement to retire the debt; or

C) Make a down payment and agreement to retire the debt under the requirements of Section 280.180 (Reconnection of Former Residential Customers for the Heating Season).

f) Applicable Past Due Debts:

1) Past due debts may only include debts for which the utility has retained summary data to support the validity of the debt. The utility shall make these records available to the applicant upon request. In addition, the utility shall provide, on request, a detailed description and the source of any other information supporting the debt. At a minimum, summary data supporting the debt shall include:

A) The service address or addresses where the debt accrued;

B) Meter readings and dates;

C) Usage and dates; and

D) Bill amounts and dates.

2) For purposes of determining whether an applicant may become a customer, past due debts shall not include charges owing for non-utility services and merchandise.

3) Past due debts shall not include utility charges owing for a different class (residential or non-residential) or type (gas, electric, water or sewer) of service.

4) Past due debts shall not include debts owing by persons other than the applicant, with the exception of debts owing as family expenses of married persons. Family expenses shall not include debts incurred at a location separate from the family by a spouse who abandons the family (see Section 15 of the Rights of Married Persons Act [750 ILCS 65/15]).

5) This subsection (f) shall not prevent a utility from considering past due debts when evaluating applications or pursuing collections if those past due debts accumulated before November 1, 2014, and if the utility kept records to document the past due debts as were allowed at the time the debts were accumulated.

6) In instances in which the utility decides not to offer a payment plan for past due debts, it must provide a written statement to the applicant that contains the rationale for its refusal.

g) Disputed Past Due Debts: If the applicant disputes the validity of the past due debt and the utility sustains the charges, the utility shall provide the applicant with the contact information for the Commission's Consumer Services Division for an informal complaint.

h) Deposit Payment Requirement: The utility may require a deposit of an applicant for service under the criteria listed in Sections 280.40 (Deposits) and 280.45 (Deposits for Low Income Customers). The utility may require that the initial down payment of any applicable deposit be paid within a minimum of 12 days.

i) Timeline for Application Processing:

1) Approval or rejection of the application, including notification to the applicant, shall be accomplished within two business days after the date all the required information is received from the applicant.

2) Notification shall include the specific reasons for the rejection so that the applicant may have the opportunity to remedy the reasons for the rejection. If the utility is unable to contact the applicant for notification purposes by a method other than mailing, written notification of the problems shall be sent to the mailing address provided by the applicant.

3) If the application meets the requirements of this Part or the applicant remedies any deficiencies, the utility shall approve the application for service.

j) Timeline for Service Activation:

1) Electric, water or sewer utilities: Absent any delays caused by construction or other equipment work required for service activation, an electric, water or sewer utility shall activate service for a successful applicant at the earliest possible date, but no more than four calendar days after the approval of the application, unless the applicant requests a later date of activation.

2) Gas utilities: Absent any delays caused by construction or other equipment work required for service activation, a gas utility shall activate service for a successful applicant at the earliest possible date, but no more than seven calendar days after the approval of the application, unless the applicant requests a later date of activation.

3) If a successful applicant for utility service seeks activation of service on a date beyond the timelines described in subsections (j)(1) and (2), the utility shall activate the service either on the date specified by the applicant or within two business days after the requested date if the utility is unable to accommodate the requested date.

4) If, through no fault of the applicant, the utility delays activation of service for two or more calendar days beyond the number of days required by this subsection (j), it shall issue a credit to the new customer's account equal to the monthly customer charge for that customer pro-rated by the number of days of the delay beyond the requirements of this subsection (j).

5) Exception for lack of access: A utility shall not be obliged to conform to the time limits in this subsection (j) if it is not allowed access to activate the service; provided, however, that the utility must record the date, time of day, utility personnel involved and reason access was not gained. It shall retain the record for two years. In addition, the utility's field representative making the visit to activate service shall leave a door tag at the premises. The door tag shall indicate when the utility representative was there and provide the contact information for the customer to reschedule.

6) Exception for damage or unsafe condition: A utility shall not be obliged to conform to the time limits of this subsection (j) if repair, construction or correction of an unsafe condition is required prior to activation of service.

7) Temporary exception for unforeseen circumstances: A utility that experiences a temporary, unanticipated and not reasonably foreseeable overload of its ability to provide for the timely activation of service may, upon notice explaining the circumstances to the Commission's Consumer Services Division, temporarily forego the requirements of this Section so long as the utility can demonstrate that it is taking diligent action to remedy the overload.

8) The utility shall report to the Commission's Consumer Services Division those instances in which the timelines are not met. The utility shall report quarterly on the frequency of the temporary exceptions exercised.

k) Data Collection and Maintenance Requirements: A utility shall collect the following data on a monthly basis and maintain the data for two years following its collection, making the data available to Commission Staff within 30 days after a request from Staff:

1) The total number of residential applications taken by the utility;

2) The total number of non-residential applications taken by the utility;

3) The number of residential applications rejected by the utility. For purposes of this subsection (k), applications for service that are not accepted by the utility because the applications are incomplete shall be considered rejected applications;

4) The number of non-residential applications rejected by the utility; and

5) The reason, by category under subsection (e), for the rejection of each application listed in subsections (k)(3) and (4).