



City of Bellevue

MEMO

DATE: May 26, 2023

TO: Mayor Robinson and Councilmembers

FROM: Vanja Knezevic, Chair, Environmental Services Commission

SUBJECT: **Donation Program for Rate Assistance**

A handwritten signature in black ink on a grey background, reading "Vanja Knezevic".

The Environmental Services Commission has reviewed the proposed Donation Program for Rate Assistance and recommends City Council adopt the program. The proposed program will support Council's vision and priorities, including maintaining the affordability of housing in Bellevue and emphasizing that our entire community experiences equitable access to services.

Bellevue's existing utility rate relief programs provide both ongoing and emergency assistance to low-income households in Bellevue Utilities' service area.

- The Utility Rate Relief Program provides an ongoing discount to low-income seniors and low-income disabled residents.
- The Emergency Assistance Program provides temporary assistance to low-income households experiencing a financial shock.
- The Utility Tax Relief Program provides an annual tax rebate to low-income households.

With the implementation of a new billing system later this year, Utilities will have the ability to accept donations to support its rate relief programs. Providing an opportunity for Bellevue residents and businesses to assist low-income households through a donation program will create the opportunity to expand assistance without creating a rate impact.

Utilities staff have developed a proposed program that is informed by utility industry best practice, regional benchmarking, and evaluation of our own existing programs.

At the April 6, 2023 Environmental Services Commission meeting, the Commission voted unanimously to recommend that City Council adopt the proposed Donation Program for Rate Assistance.