

Neighbors helping Neighbors

Donation Program for Rate Assistance

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Utilities

April 6, 2023



Direction Needed from Commission

Staff is seeking the Commission's recommendation to City Council to implement the proposed Donation Program for Rate Assistance.



Agenda

1. Program Background
2. Proposed Program
3. Next Steps
4. Questions & Answers



Timeline

Council Request:
*consider
accepting
donations to
support rate
relief*

Today:
Presenting
findings and
recommendation
for feedback

Staff: research on
options, technical
feasibility,
benchmarking

Future Process:
Present proposal
and ESC
Recommendation
to Council for
approval



Program Background



Existing Utility Relief Programs

Emergency Assistance Program

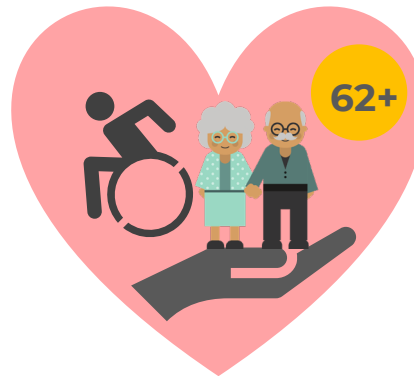
Experiencing Temporary Financial Shock



Waive up to **4** Months Utility Bills

Utility Rate Relief

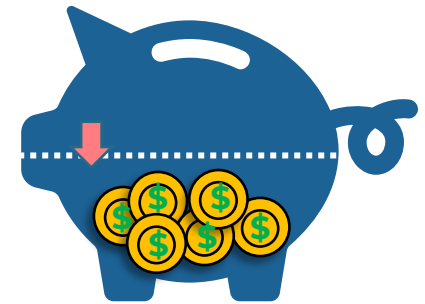
Low Income Seniors
Disabled Residents



70% Utility Bill Discount

Utility Tax Relief

Low Income Households



 Utility Tax Rebate



Why a New Program

- Potential new funding source
 - Possibility of accepting donations on the bill with new billing system
- Existing gap
 - Not all low-income customers qualify for existing programs

New Program: Temporary relief for expanded eligibility pool



Examples of Low-income Customers this would Help

- Senior/disabled customers who disqualified based on prior year's income
- New retired senior
- Disabled resident with no disability proof
- Resident with critical sickness and ongoing high treatment costs
- Families with limited financial resources

Benchmarking of other Donation Programs

Key Components:

- 1) Unique branding to communicate purpose and nature of the program*
- 2) Accept recurring donations on the utility bill and one time donations online*
- 3) Dedicated for Temporary Relief*



Receiving Donation Funds:

Customer

- Recurring fixed amount on the bill
- One-time online donation

Non-Customer

- One-time online donation

Utilities Contribution

- Seed with \$50K, and
- Up to \$50K match per year



Using Donations to Fill the Gap

Neighbors Helping Neighbors

Preventing Water Shutoff



Waive up to **2** Months Utility Bills

- Available to low-income residents with an Urgent / Shutoff Notice
- 100% reduction on basic utility bill
 - Up to \$333 credit for two months if eligible for donation funds only
 - Up to \$1,000 credit for 6 months if eligible for both EAP and donation funds
- Pilot: evaluate donation level & terms to meet need as part of budget process



Next Steps

- Receive ESC feedback
- Develop implementation plan
- Develop communication plan
 - Informing customers of the new assistance available and what donations support
 - Informing the community on donation options
- Council approval



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Questions & Recommendation

