



New Utilities Customer Assistance Program (CAP)

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Strategic Plan



Financially Responsible



Strong Relationships and Partnerships



Background

Good Neighbor Program

- Established in 2014 under Ordinance No. 2175
- \$25,000 pilot program funded by the General Fund
- Long-term funding intended to come from customer "round-up" contributions



Background

Good Neighbor Program Challenges

- Program is in need of reformatting due to a funding deficit (i.e. "round-up" not sufficient to fund)
- Unable to accept donations in excess of monthly "round-up" amounts (e.g. miscellaneous donations)



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75 Day Work Plan Goals:

- Prioritize our Customers
- Increase efficiencies
- Create positive outcomes for the organization and community



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Why Create a Customer Assistance Program?

- **Increase access to utility resources:** Customer Assistance Programs help to enhance access for citizens within a community facing financial hardships.
- **Decrease amount of delinquent customers:** Greater assistance can prevent customers from entering delinquency and decrease the utility's time, processes, and efforts in processing delinquent accounts, including service termination and collections handling.
- **Enhance community relations:** Efficient and effective Customer Assistance Programs build a sense of community by bringing together various stakeholders (e.g. social agencies, municipalities, residents) working towards a common goal and thus increasing the public's perception of a utility.



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Staff Recommendation:

- Partner with local agency to create an updated Customer Assistance Program (CAP)
- Fund the 2019 CAP with a blend of existing General Fund and "round-up" amounts available
- FY 2020 and beyond funds subject to annual budget process "round-up" and other donations



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Recommended Partner: Almost Home

- Mission: To promote self-sufficiency and provide assistance to those experiencing housing instability.
- Goals: To prevent homelessness and provide temporary and permanently affordable housing for those who are in need of assistance.
- Existing, established relationship with City through programs like Cold Weather Care, Brighton Housing Authority, staff volunteers and more.



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New Customer Assistance Program Will Focus On:

- Financial sustainability and education for residents: Monthly budgeting and money management education
- Strong local partnerships: Current City partner Almost Home has been a member of the Brighton community since 1993
- Education on water conservation: Provide tools for residents to reduce water usage which reduces monthly statements



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New CAP Framework:

- Contact Almost Home to conduct a brief case evaluation
- Upon completion of case evaluation, Almost Home will distribute a voucher to Customer, up to \$300 annually
- Vouchers returned to Utilities Customer Service where the account will be credited for the specified amount
- "Round-up" option still available for residents that would like to participate
- Additional contributions, outside of "round-up" will be accepted by the City in a dedicated fund for CAP



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Requirements to Participate in CAP:

- Must be a City Brighton resident and show proof of residency at the address associated with the utility bill
- Must be a residential customer of the City of Brighton
- Assistance is available to both families and individuals
- Income verification is not required



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Benefits to Customers:

- Provides assistance to those facing financial hardships
- Increases local community partnerships and relationships
- Improves relationships between customers and City
- Allows residents to contribute monthly with "round-up" contributions and also contribute anytime during the year via other donations



Thank you!

Questions?