



City of Tualatin

CITY OF TUALATIN Staff Report

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
THROUGH: Sherilyn Lombos, City Manager
FROM: Don Hudson, Assistant City Manager/Finance Director
DATE: December 11, 2023

SUBJECT:

Consideration of **Resolution No. 5739-23** Authorizing the City Manager to Execute a Memorandum of Understanding with Community Action Organization to Provide Eligibility Verification for a Low-Income Utility Bill Assistance Program

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approving Resolution No. 5739-23

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

During the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 budget process, the Council and staff discussed the desire to set up a low-income utility bill assistance program. Direction was given to set aside funding to set up such a program; the adopted budget includes amounts set aside in both the water and sewer funds for a program.

The attached resolution authorizes the City Manager, or designee, to sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Community Action Organization (CAO) to provide for a streamlined information sharing process to establish eligibility for customers that could participate in the assistance program.

Customers with household incomes at or below 60% of the Oregon Annual Median Income for the past 60 days are eligible for bill forgiveness. The current qualifying income levels are included in the attached document. Additionally, a customer may be eligible for the program if they are actively enrolled in one of the following programs:

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Woman, Infants, Children (WIC)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Oregon Health Plan (OHP)
- Free and Reduced Lunch
- Energy Assistance Program
- Public Housing, Section 8 Choice Voucher Program or Project Based Voucher Program

Residential customers facing extreme financial hardship may be eligible for bill forgiveness of \$300, per fiscal year.

Customers will be qualified by Community Action by applying for assistance. Customers will either be already aware of the program, be notified of the program by City staff or by Community Action staff while going through the process for other assistance programs offered through CAO. Upon qualification, CAO will notify the City of a customer's approval and the City will credit the customer's account accordingly.

OUTCOMES OF DECISION:

Approval of the attached resolution will allow for the City to contract with Community Action Organization for the services described in the MOU. This process will allow the City to stand up the program sooner and more efficiently.

ALTERNATIVES TO RECOMMENDATION:

Not approving the resolution will delay the implementation of the program and would significantly hinder the City's ability to operate a low-income utility bill assistance program.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The agreement calls for a one-time \$1,250 set-up fee and a fee of \$7,800 for the period beginning with the full execution of the MOU through June 30, 2025, payable in three installments, for up to and including 225 screenings. Screenings above 225 during this contract term will be billed monthly at \$35 per screening. Funds for the program are available in the American Rescue Plan Act Fund and the water and sewer operating funds.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Resolution No. 5739-23
- Memorandum of Understanding
- Low-Income Utility Bill Assistance Program Reference Guide