

ORDINANCE NO. _____

AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING A CUSTOMER ROUND-UP AND DONATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR THE CITY OF WILLARD, MISSOURI, AUTHORIZING COLLECTION AND ADMINISTRATION OF DONATED FUNDS TO ASSIST CUSTOMERS IN NEED

WHEREAS, the City of Willard, Missouri ("City") recognizes that certain customers may experience temporary financial hardship that impacts their ability to pay for essential utility services; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Aldermen desires to provide a means by which customers may voluntarily contribute to a fund designed to assist qualified customers experiencing such hardship; and

WHEREAS, the Board further recognizes the importance of administering such assistance in a manner that ensures fairness, transparency, and accountability through independent eligibility verification and oversight;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN OF THE CITY OF WILLARD, MISSOURI, AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Purpose.

The purpose of this Ordinance is to establish a Customer Round-Up and Donation Assistance Program ("Program") allowing voluntary customer contributions to support the payment of utility bills for eligible customers in financial need.

Section 2. Program Authorization.

a. The City is hereby authorized to provide utility customers the option to:

1. Round up their monthly utility bill to the next whole dollar amount; and/or
2. Authorize a fixed recurring or one-time donation amount of their choosing.

b. All funds collected under this Program shall be deposited into a separate, non-interest-bearing account designated solely for the purpose of providing assistance under this Program.

Section 3. Administration and Disbursement.

a. The City shall enter into an agreement with a qualified third-party entity specializing in means-testing and/or administering public assistance programs to review and approve requests for assistance.

b. Assistance shall be provided only upon verification of financial hardship or qualification for means-tested benefits, as determined by the third-party entity.

- c. Funds shall be disbursed solely for the payment of City utility accounts held by eligible customers.
- d. No individual customer shall receive more than a reasonable and proportionate share of available funds, as determined by the third-party entity in accordance with program guidelines.
- e. Customers may not receive repeated or continuous assistance unless circumstances warrant and sufficient funds are available, as determined by the administering entity and approved by the City Administrator or designee.

Section 4. Reporting and Oversight.

- a. The City Administrator shall ensure periodic reporting to the Board of Aldermen detailing:
 - Total contributions received;
 - Total disbursements made; and
 - Number of customers assisted.
- b. No personally identifiable information regarding applicants or recipients shall be disclosed in such reports.

Section 5. No Entitlement or Obligation.

Participation in or application to this Program shall not create any legal right, entitlement, or obligation on the part of the City to provide assistance. All assistance shall be subject to availability of funds and the terms of this Ordinance.

Section 6. Agreement Authorization.

The City Administrator is hereby authorized to execute agreements or memoranda of understanding with qualified third-party entities for the purpose of administering this Program, provided such agreements comply with the intent and provisions of this Ordinance.

Section 7. Severability.

If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, or phrase of this Ordinance is held to be invalid, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions.

Section 8. Program Discontinuation and Disposition of Funds.

- a. In the event the Board of Aldermen discontinues this Program for any reason, any remaining funds held in the Program's dedicated account shall be donated in full to an

appropriate charitable organization that provides assistance to individuals or families facing financial hardship.

b. Upon issuance of the public notice described in subsection (c), all authorized customer round-ups, recurring donations, and other voluntary contributions under this Program shall be immediately terminated. Any funds already in process at the time of termination shall be deposited and included in the total amount to be disposed of under this Section.

c. Prior to disposition of such funds, the City shall publicly issue notice of:

1. The total amount to be donated;
2. The proposed recipient organization; and
3. Any other pertinent details regarding the donation and transfer of funds.

d. Such public notice shall be issued no less than thirty (30) days before disposition of the funds.

e. Public input shall be accepted and recorded during at least two (2) regularly scheduled Board of Aldermen meetings following the issuance of notice, allowing residents of Willard an opportunity to express opinions, concerns, or suggest alternative recipients for consideration.

f. Following the conclusion of the public input period, the Board of Aldermen shall, by resolution, formally declare the recipient organization and authorize the final disposition of the funds. Such decision shall be final.

Section 9. Effective Date.

This Ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage and approval.

Passed and approved this ____ day of _____, 2025.