

RESOLUTION NO. U-11149

A RESOLUTION related to creating an Emergency Assistance Program during the period of the state of emergency declared by the City of Tacoma in response to COVID-19 in order to allow more households to qualify for assistance.

WHEREAS effective December 22, 1982, the City of Tacoma, Department of Public Utilities, pursuant to Board Resolution U-6645 created the Project Need Program which would encourage Tacoma Power customers to donate to a special fund to be used and applied for the benefit of assisting eligible low income customers with Power bill payments; and

WHEREAS the City Council appropriated funding for the administration of the Project Need Program, and

WHEREAS the Project Need Program was renamed the Family Need Program and, ultimately, renamed the Bill Credit Assistance Program (BCAP), and

WHEREAS subsequent to, and in addition to the funding appropriated by the City Council and the ongoing donations from customers, the Tacoma Public Utilities budgets have consistently funded the program now known as BCAP through moneys in the Family Need Assistance Fund, and

WHEREAS the program now known as BCAP is available to eligible electricity, drinking water, solid waste, recycling and surface water customers, and provides assistance in the form of a utility credit up to \$564 annually, which is applied to the utility account each time the bill is paid in full and on time, and

WHEREAS households eligible to receive assistance from the BCAP must have a current Tacoma Public Utilities Account, live in the dwelling unit as

the primary residence, have residential, single metered service and meet the applicable household income guidelines, and

WHEREAS the current household income eligibility levels are set at not more than 150 percent of the poverty guidelines established by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (or its successor agency) as computed annually and published in the Federal Register, and

WHEREAS the current household income guidelines are as listed below:

Household Size: 1

Maximum Monthly Household Income: \$1,595

Household Size: 2

Maximum Monthly Household Income: \$2,155

Household Size: 3

Maximum Monthly Household Income: \$2,715

Household Size: 4

Maximum Monthly Household Income: \$3,275

Household Size: 5

Maximum Monthly Household Income: \$3,835

Household Size: 6

Maximum Monthly Household Income: \$4, 395, and

WHEREAS during the state of emergency that has been declared to respond to COVID-19, it is anticipated that more Tacoma Public Utilities customers may be in need of the utility credit than is available through the existing the BCAP, and

WHEREAS during the state of emergency that has been declared to respond to COVID-19, Tacoma Public Utilities desires to create a new Emergency Assistance Program with income eligibility levels at not more than 200 percent of the poverty guidelines established by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and

WHEREAS setting income eligibility at 200 percent of the federal poverty guidelines for the Emergency Assistance Program during the COVID-19 Emergency period would allow households with the following maximum monthly income to utilize the Emergency Assistance Program:

Household Size: 1

Maximum Monthly Household Income: \$2,127

Household Size: 2

Maximum Monthly Household Income: \$2,874

Household Size: 3

Maximum Monthly Household Income: \$3,621

Household Size: 4

Maximum Monthly Household Income: \$4,367

Household Size: 5

Maximum Monthly Household Income: \$5,114

Household Size: 6

Maximum Monthly Household Income: \$5,861 and

WHEREAS it is estimated that changing the eligibility guidelines will result in a significant number of additional households becoming potentially eligible to be assisted during the state of emergency, and

WHEREAS the eligibility criteria for the BPAC may be more restrictive than is necessary for the Emergency Assistance Program, and therefore the criteria for such a program should be established by the Director of the Utilities in light of the needs of the Emergency Assistance Program and those potentially being served by the Emergency Assistance Program,

Now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE PUBLIC UTILITY BOARD OF THE CITY OF TACOMA:

Section 1. That to allow for more households to qualify for assistance in this time of emergency, the Public Utility Board of the City of Tacoma hereby concurs and approves the recommendations for creating a new Emergency Assistance Program during the period of the state of emergency declared by the City of Tacoma in response to COVID-19 with up to one million dollars in the Family Need Assistance Fund to be used for the Emergency Assistance Program.

Section 2. That the Director of Utilities is delegated authority to establish criteria for the Emergency Assistance Program for households with income eligibility levels at not more than 200 percent of the federal poverty guidelines.

Section 3. That, at the conclusion of the state of emergency declared by the City of Tacoma in response to COVID-19 the Emergency Assistance Program will terminate.

Section 4. That this action does not impact the existing BCAP and all prior administrative actions concerning the eligibility and administration of the programs known as Project Need, Family Need and currently known as BCAP are hereby ratified.

Approved as to form:

_____	_____
Chief Deputy City Attorney	Chair
_____	_____
Clerk	Secretary
	Adopted _____



Board Action Memorandum

TO: Jackie Flowers, Director of Utilities
COPY: Charleen Jacobs, Director and Board Offices
FROM: Steve Hatcher, Customer Service Manager
MEETING DATE: March 17, 2020
DATE: March 13, 2020

SUMMARY: Tacoma Public Utilities requests a resolution allowing the use of up to one million dollars in the Family Assistance Fund for the creation of an Emergency Assistance program that would be developed by the Director of Utilities and which would apply an eligibility criteria of not more than 200 percent of the poverty guidelines established by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services during the period of the state of emergency declared by the City of Tacoma in response to COVID-19.

BACKGROUND: Effective December 22, 1982, the City of Tacoma, Department of Public Utilities, pursuant to Board Resolution U-6645 created the Project Need Program which would encourage Tacoma Power customers to donate to a special fund to be used and applied for the benefit of assisting eligible low income customers with Power bill payments. The City Council also appropriated funding for the administration of the Project Need Program. The Project Need Program was renamed the Family Need Program and, ultimately, renamed the Bill Credit Assistance Program (BCAP). Subsequent to, and in addition to the funding appropriated by the City Council and the ongoing donations from customers, the Tacoma Public Utilities budgets have consistently funded the program now known as BCAP through moneys in the Family Assistance Fund. The program now known as BCAP is available to eligible electricity, drinking water, solid waste, recycling and surface water customers, and provides assistance in the form of a utility credit up to \$564 annually, which is applied to the utility account each time the bill is paid in full and on time. Households eligible to receive assistance from BCAP must have a current Tacoma Public Utilities Account, live in the dwelling unit as the primary residence, have residential, single metered service and meet the applicable household income guidelines. The current household income eligibility levels are set at not more than 150 percent of the poverty guidelines established by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (or its successor agency) as computed annually and published in the Federal Register.

During the state of emergency that has been declared in response to COVID-19 it is anticipated that more Tacoma Public Utilities customers may be in need of the utility credit available through BCAP. Tacoma Public Utilities desires to use up to one million dollars of the moneys in the Family Assistance Fund to create a new Emergency Assistance Program during the current state of emergency. The criteria for the new program would be developed by the Director of Utilities for individuals with income eligibility levels at not more than 200 percent of the poverty guidelines established by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It is estimated that creating a new Emergency Assistance program with fewer criteria and higher eligibility guidelines will result in a significant number of additional households becoming potentially eligible to be assisted during the state of emergency.



Board Action Memorandum

ARE THE EXPENDITURES AND REVENUES PLANNED AND BUDGETED? Yes, expenses for additional assistance are budgeted within the planned and approved 2019-2020 biennium budget.

IF THE EXPENSE IS NOT BUDGETED, PLEASE EXPLAIN HOW THEY ARE TO BE COVERED.
N/A.

IF THE ACTION REQUESTED IS APPROVAL OF A CONTRACT, INCLUDE LANGUAGE IN RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING \$200,000 INCREASE IN ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITY TO DIRECTOR?
N/A.

ATTACHMENTS:
N/A

CONTACT: Steve Hatcher, Customer Service Manager, (253) 502-8691