



## RESOLUTION NO. U-11203

1 A RESOLUTION related to changes to the eligibility criteria for the Bill Credit  
2 Assistance Program (BCAP) from 150% of the Federal Poverty Level to  
3 60% of the Median Family Income for the Tacoma, Washington Housing  
4 and Urban Development Fair Market Rent Area for the number of  
5 individuals in the household and to authorize the Director of Utilities, in  
6 collaboration with the Director of Environmental Services, to make  
7 necessary adjustments to the qualifying Median Family Income  
8 percentage during the biennium budget review.

9 WHEREAS in 1982, by Board Resolution U-6645, the Department of  
10 Public Utilities created the Project Need Program, to encourage Tacoma Power  
11 customers to donate to a special fund to be used and applied for the benefit of  
12 assisting eligible low-income customers with Power bill payments, and

13 WHEREAS the City Council appropriated funding for administration of  
14 the Project Need Program, that was renamed to the Family Need Program, and  
15 later changed to the Bill Credit Assistance Program (BCAP), and

16 WHEREAS in addition to the funding appropriated by the City Council  
17 and donated by customers, Tacoma Public Utilities budgets have consistently  
18 funded the BCAP program to assist low-income Power, Water, and  
19 Environmental Services customers, and

20 WHEREAS the current eligibility criteria for BCAP assistance is based on  
21 150% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), and

22 WHEREAS the recommended change to BCAP eligibility criteria from  
23 150% of FPL to 60% of the Median Family Income for the Tacoma, Washington  
24 Housing and Urban Development Fair Market Rent Area for the number of  
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individuals in the household, is anticipated to reach more households known as  
1 ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed), and

2 WHEREAS the recommended change also aligns the eligibility criteria  
3 for BCAP with the eligibility criteria for other City of Tacoma income based  
4 assistance programs; and  
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6 WHEREAS allowing the Director, in collaboration with the Director of  
7 Environmental Services, to make adjustments to the Median Family Income  
8 eligibility percentage in conjunction with the biennium budget will allow a timely  
9 response to changing conditions in order to maximize the assistance available  
10 to low-income Power, Water, and Environmental Services customers; Now,  
11 therefore,  
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13 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE PUBLIC UTILITY BOARD OF THE CITY OF TACOMA:

14 That the Public Utility Board of the City of Tacoma hereby approves  
15 changing the eligibility criteria for the Bill Credit Assistance Program from 150%  
16 of the Federal Poverty Level to 60% of the Median Family Income as adjusted  
17 for Section 8 Income Limit calculations established by the Department of  
18 Housing & Urban Development (or its successor agency) for the Tacoma,  
19 Washington Housing and Urban Development Fair Market Rent Area for the  
20 number of individuals in the household, and authorizes the Director of Utilities to  
21 collaborate with Environmental Services to make eligibility percentage  
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adjustments based on current economic conditions as necessary in conjunction  
1 with the biennium budget.

2 Approved as to form:

3 \_\_\_\_\_  
4 */s/*  
5 Chief Deputy City Attorney

\_\_\_\_\_ Chair

\_\_\_\_\_ Secretary

6 \_\_\_\_\_  
7 Clerk

Adopted \_\_\_\_\_

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## Board Action Memorandum

**TO:** Jackie Flowers, Director of Utilities  
**COPY:** Charleen Jacobs, Director and Board Offices  
**FROM:** Steve Hatcher, Customer Services Manager  
**MEETING DATE:** October 28, 2020  
**DATE:** October 16, 2020

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**SUMMARY:** To change the eligibility criteria for the Bill Credit Assistance Program (BCAP) from 150% of Federal Poverty Level (FPL) to 60% of the Median Family Income as adjusted for Section 8 Income Limit calculations established by the Department of Housing & Urban Development (or its successor agency) for the Tacoma, WA Housing and Urban Development Fair Market Rent Area for the number of individuals in the household and to authorize the Director of Utilities, in collaboration with the Director of Environmental Services, to make adjustments to the Median Family Income percentage during the biennium budget review.

**BACKGROUND:** Effective December 22, 1982, by Board Resolution U-6645, the Department of Public Utilities 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 appropriated funding for the administration of the Project Need Program, and the Project Need Program was renamed the Family Need Program and, ultimately, renamed the Bill Credit Assistance Program (BCAP). In addition to the funding appropriated by the City Council and the ongoing donations from customers, Tacoma Public Utilities budgets have consistently funded the BCAP program. The BCAP program funds are currently used to assist eligible low income Power, Water and Environmental Services customers by providing a credit to the customer's utility account.

The current eligibility criteria for BCAP assistance is based on income percentage of the Federal Poverty Level. The recommendation to change the eligibility criteria from a percentage of the Federal Poverty level to a percentage of the Median Family Income offers the opportunity to reach more households known as ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed). This recommended change also aligns the utility assistance programs with other income-based programs offered by City of Tacoma.

In addition, giving the Director the ability to make adjustments to the eligibility percentage in conjunction with the biennium budget review allows for timely response to changing economic conditions in order to maximize the assistance available to customers. The Director will collaborate with the Director of Environmental Services in order to ensure that the appropriate assistance funds will apply to eligible customers' bills for electricity, drinking water, wastewater, solid waste and surface water.

**ARE THE EXPENDITURES AND REVENUES PLANNED AND BUDGETED?** Yes

**IF THE ACTION REQUESTED IS APPROVAL OF A CONTRACT, INCLUDE LANGUAGE IN RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING \$200,000 INCREASE IN ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITY TO DIRECTOR?**  
No.

**CONTACT:** Steve Hatcher, Customer Services Manager, 253-722-3968.  
Francine Artis, Assistant Customer Services Manager, 253-720-0607.