



Department Source: City Utilities - Water and Light

To: City Council

From: City Manager & Staff

Council Meeting Date: November 1, 2021

Re: Authorizing a Low Income Household Water Assistance Program Supplier Agreement with the Missouri Department of Social Services Family Support Division.

Executive Summary

Staff has prepared for Council consideration an ordinance authorizing the City Manager to execute an agreement with the Missouri Department of Social Services Family Support Division to participate in the Low Income Household Water Assistance Program. This program will assist utility customers in need with the water and wastewater portion of their utility bills.

Discussion

Recently approved legislation from the federal government authorized funding as part of an overall emergency effort to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, with the public health focus of ensuring that low-income households have access to drinking water and wastewater services when they are having difficulty paying utility bills. Central Missouri Community Action (CMCA) provides the largest amount of utility assistance in Columbia and will be administering the federally funded Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) via the Department of Social Services.

Utility customers with various needs may rely heavily on this program to assist with maintaining a living environment. To qualify for program assistance, applicants must meet the following requirements.

- Be the individual responsible for paying the water and sewer bill
- Be subject to disconnection
- All household members be a United States citizen (or have been legally admitted for permanent residence)
- Be below the threshold set for total funds in bank accounts, retirement accounts or investments
- Meet specific income guidelines for their household size
- If all household members currently get Temporary Assistance (cash) or SNAP (food stamp) benefits, they are automatically eligible for this program. They must still apply for the program to get the benefit.

It is unknown at this point in time how many utility customers will utilize this new program. However, this new program will offer citizens and the City additional resources to ensure that everyone thrives in the community.



Fiscal Impact

Short-Term Impact: NA

Long-Term Impact: NA

Strategic & Comprehensive Plan Impact

[Strategic Plan Impacts:](#)

Primary Impact: Not Applicable, Secondary Impact: Not Applicable, Tertiary Impact: Not Applicable

[Comprehensive Plan Impacts:](#)

Primary Impact: Not Applicable, Secondary Impact: Not applicable, Tertiary Impact: Not Applicable

Legislative History

Date	Action
None	None

Suggested Council Action

Approval of the ordinance.