



Department Source: City Utilities - Water and Light

To: City Council

From: City Manager & Staff

Council Meeting Date: December 20, 2021

Re: REPORT: Budget Billing Program Changes

Executive Summary

Staff has prepared for Council consideration a report regarding changes to the budget billing program for City of Columbia utility bills.

Discussion

The current budget billing program allows for applications to be accepted February 1 through March 31 each year. Currently, this is the only time of the year that customers can apply to participate in this program. Additionally, the current budget billing program requires the customer account be settled up on an annual basis in March of each year. For instance, if the customer owes a balance they are required to pay that balance before April when their new budget billing amount is assessed. If the customer has a credit on their account that credit will stay on their account until it has been used.

Staff is proposing to modify these features of the current program, as follows:

1. Modify the program to allow customers to apply for participation in the budget billing program at any time throughout the year.
2. Modify the program to include rolling any credit or balance due in March into the calculation for the next year monthly budget billing amount instead of requiring the account to be settled annually.

These changes will allow customers more flexibility to participate in the program and are consistent with other utilities operation of budget billing programs.

There will not be any changes to the eligibility criteria to be approved for the program which are as follows:

1. A minimum of 12 months of continuous service at their current location
2. Must have a metered service, i.e. electric and/or water
3. Not more than 3 late payments within the last 12 months
4. Not been disconnected or sent to collections within the last 24 months
5. Not have returned payments resulting in a "Cash Only" status on their account
6. Will not be eligible for payment arrangements
7. If they request to be removed from the program they will not be eligible to apply for participation again for a minimum of 12 months
8. Failure to meet these requirements may result in their being removed from the Budget Billing program.



Fiscal Impact

Short-Term Impact: No fiscal impact is anticipated due to these proposed changes.

Long-Term Impact: No fiscal impact is anticipated due to these proposed changes.

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

This report is for informational purposes.