



Department Source: City Utilities

To: City Council

From: City Manager & Staff

Council Meeting Date: October 17, 2022

Re: Authorizing a Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program Supplier Agreement with the Missouri Department of Social Services, on behalf of its 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 for Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) to assist utility customers in need with the energy portion of their utility bills.

Discussion

A percentage of Columbia utility customers experience difficulties paying utility bills, due to economic hardship, rising expenses from increased utility service usage from varying weather conditions and inflationary cost increases on household items. Central Missouri Community Action (CMCA) provides the largest amount of utility assistance in Columbia through the federally funded LIHEAP via the Department of Social Services. This agreement will be effective October 1, 2022 through September 30, 2025.

Utility customers with various needs rely heavily on this program to assist with maintaining a living environment. To qualify for program assistance, applicants must be the individual responsible for paying home heating and cooling costs, be a US citizen or have been legally admitted for permanent residence, have \$3,000 or less in bank accounts, retirement accounts, or investments, and meet specific income guidelines that vary according to household size and fuel type. This program consists of two components Energy Assistance (EA) and the Energy Crisis Intervention Program (ECIP), covers the energy portion of utility bills and requires the customer to pay the non-energy portion.

In September 2022, Utility Customer Services received 547 LIHEAP pledges totaling \$130,335.31 that helped approximately 496 utility customers. Without this program, many Columbia citizens would be considerably financially impacted when utility costs rise due to extreme weather during the summer and winter months. The utilization of this program offers citizens and the City additional resources to ensure that everyone thrives in this community.

Fiscal Impact

Short-Term Impact: NA

Long-Term Impact: NA

Strategic & Comprehensive Plan Impact



City of Columbia

701 East Broadway, Columbia, Missouri 65201

Strategic Plan Impacts:

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

Comprehensive Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Livable & Sustainable Communities, Secondary Impact: Not applicable, Tertiary Impact: Not Applicable

Legislative History

Date	Action
03/02/2020	B42-20 Authorizing a low income home energy assistance program supplier agreement with the Missouri Department of Social Services, on behalf of its Family Support Division

Suggested Council Action

Approval of the ordinance.