



City of San Marcos

City Council Meeting Utility Assistance & Disconnects

August 3, 2021



Discussion Points

- **Update on utility assistance program**
- **Reinstatement of disconnects and late fees August 31, 2021**



Utility Assistance Guidelines

- **Guidelines**

- Up to \$1,500 for COSM customers that are >60 days past due on a first-come, first-served basis
- One page application attesting to COVID-19 or Winter Storm Uri impact
- Documentation needed includes application, valid photo ID or utility bill with account holder's name from within last 90 days, documents supporting request (if available)
- Forms available at utility billing locations and can be completed in-person with staff assistance

- **Improvements made**

- Online applications enhanced to an embedded form that can be completed and submitted upon completion
- Added pdf applications that can be completed online or printed and completed
- Expanded ID requirement to include utility bill from last 90 days



Utility Assistance Outreach

- Revamped program materials in English and Spanish
- Outreach
 - Mailing to customers >60 days delinquent
 - Places of worship
 - Storefronts
 - Food bank
 - City facilities including Activity Center and WIC offices
 - Hays Co. Health Department
 - La Michoacana
 - Village Main
 - Council of Neighborhood Associations
 - Neighborhood Commission
 - Local nonprofits
 - Online groups including Facebook and Nextdoor and advertising online
 - San Marcos CISD
 - Everbridge phone message outreach and on-hold message
 - Press releases



Utility Assistance Program Summary

As of 7/22/21

Description	Amount
Allocation	\$1,075,081.32
Approved/Paid	\$377,094.44
Balance Remaining	\$697,986.88



Utility Assistance Program Summary

As of 7/22/21

Week	Count	Approved	Assistance Provided	Denied	Pending
6/11/21	9	9	\$9,144.62	0	
6/12-6/18/21	130	119	\$111,105.03	11	
6/19-6/25/21	180	116	\$102,538.49	65	
6/26-7/2/21	62	46	\$44,313.34	16	
7/3-7/9/21	63	44	\$40,650.26	19	
7/10-7/16/21	60	44	\$39,036.80	15	1
7/17-7/22/21	48	37	\$30,305.90	5	6
Total	552	415	\$377,094.44	131	7



Utility Assistance Program Denials

Type of Denial	#
Not 60 days past due	98
Zero balance	13
No longer active	4
Credit balance	2
Duplicate application	8
Not account holder/not 60 days past due	3
Account holder deceased	1
Not impacted	2
Total	131



Residential Active Account Analysis

As of 7/22/21

Aging	# of Accounts	Balance Due
61-90 Days	234	\$109,355
> 90 Days	865	\$1,094,039
Total	1,099	\$1,203,394

Note: Only active accounts have been included and non-metered accounts have been excluded



COSM Disconnect Policy

- The City's current unofficial policy is to follow PUC and not perform disconnects when temperature (or heat index) is above 100 degrees and anticipate being above for 2 days during the disconnection period of the cycle being disconnected.

25.29 - Public Utility Commission of Texas

- | (i) **Disconnection during extreme weather.** An electric utility cannot disconnect a customer anywhere in its service territory on a day when:
 - | (1) the previous day's highest temperature did not exceed 32 degrees Fahrenheit, and the temperature is predicted to remain at or below that level for the next 24 hours, according to the nearest National Weather Service (NWS) reports; or
 - | (2) the NWS issues a heat advisory for any county in the electric utility's service territory, or when such advisory has been issued on any one of the preceding two calendar days.



Status of Other Muni Disconnects/Penalties

Utility	Disconnecting	Penalty
City of Bryan	Yes	Yes 5%
City of College Station	Yes	Yes
City of Kyle	Yes	Yes
City of Austin	Start July 16th	Reversing 1 late fee in 12 months
City of Victoria	Yes	Yes
City of New Braunfels	Yes - July 2020	Yes
City of Bastrop	Yes - Oct 2020	Yes
City of Buda	Yes	Yes
City of Seguin	Yes	Yes
San Antonio Water System	Start Oct	No
City Public Service Energy - San Antonio	No	No



Other Considerations

- ARP funds can only be used for those hardest hit economically
- Not enough funds allocated to pay all balances without ARP funds
- Potential impact to S&P rating
- Customers that vacated and did not disconnect
- Fund balance
- Documentation
- Public purpose



Council Direction Requested

- Utility assistance program
 - Next steps?
 - Include longstanding utility customers without application?
 - Criteria: currently delinquent, Active in 3/2020, not delinquent 12 months prior to 3/2020
 - Amount: \$90,000
- Disconnect and late fees
 - Finalize date of resuming both currently scheduled for August 31, 2021?