

**Emergency Utility Assistance Program
September 2021**

The Emergency Utility Assistance Program was approved by Council in 2004 to assist qualified City of Salem utility customers facing financial difficulties. Dependent on donations, program funding was depleted annually. In 2016, the Water/Wastewater Task Force recommended a match of up to \$10,000 per year with utility rate funds. Since 2017, available funding has met or exceeded demand and assisted qualifying customers with urgent financial needs.

The program was readopted in 2019 and subsequently amended and expanded in April 2020, August 2020, and March 2020 to increase total funding available, expand qualification criteria for customers, increase maximum assistance per account, and extend the effective date of these changes. The September 2021 changes further expand pre-qualification criteria and extend current provisions through December 2022.

City of Salem Emergency Utility Assistance Program requirements are as follows:

1. Applicant must be the named customer on a single-family residential account.
2. Applicant customers who are facing temporary financial difficulty and cannot pay their utility bill are referred to local nonprofit service agencies to be qualified for the City of Salem Emergency Utility Assistance Program.
3. Applicant will be qualified or pre-qualified by a partner agency based on one of the following:
 - St. Vincent DePaul and Salvation Army clients are qualified based on the Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)
 - Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency clients participating in the Low-Income Housing Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and Low-Income Housing Water Assistance (LIHWA) Program are pre-qualified.
 - Salem Housing Authority clients receiving Section 8 Rental Housing Assistance and those living in Salem Housing Authority units are pre-qualified
4. Emergency Utility Assistance is applied to the utility account in the amount of the delinquent bill or balance to a maximum of \$150 per year. The maximum was increased during the COVID pandemic by Resolution 2020-22 to \$500 from \$150 per year, and this change is in effect until December 31, 2022.
5. Assistance may only be applied to utility rates and charges and may not be applied to fees for violations such as meter tampering, meter obstruction, or meter bypass.
6. Clients must be requalified annually by participating agencies.