



MEMORANDUM

EUGENE WATER & ELECTRIC BOARD

Rely on us.

TO: Commissioners Brown, Carlson, Barofsky, McRae, and Schlossberg
FROM: Julie McGaughey, Chief Customer Officer and Billy Curtiss, Field Services
Supervisor
DATE: February 18, 2022
SUBJECT: Low-Income Household Water Assistance (LIHWA)
OBJECTIVE: Information Only

Issue

A Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program has become available through federal funding. This program will help our low-income customers pay their EWEB water bill. EWEB will receive and apply LIHWA funding directly to customer accounts.

Background

The Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program was established by Congress through the appropriation of \$638M in the Consolidated Appropriations Act (CAA) of 2021 and an additional \$500M in the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021. Oregon Housing and Community Services has been designated as the State of Oregon grantee. Oregon has received \$13.8 million to provide LIHWA assistance to low-income households.

Discussion

EWEB is entering into a contract with Lane County Human Services (HSD) to apply pledged funds directly to EWEB customer accounts. The contract will allow EWEB to facilitate water assistance payments that were federally allocated to the state and dispersed through Lane County. This assistance will be applied to EWEB water usage and City of Eugene wastewater and stormwater charges. LIHWA is similar to the LIHEAP (Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program) payments that EWEB has facilitated for several decades to assist customers with the electric portion of their utility bill. Like LIHEAP, this is a pass-thru program and 100% of the funds are applied to customer accounts.

EWEB continues to look for opportunities to help customers who need extra assistance, and we wanted to make the Board aware of this upcoming federal program. We currently anticipate \$600,000 in funding for qualifying EWEB customers from early 2022 through December 31, 2023. EWEB is prepared to start applying LIHWA assistance payments as soon as they are available for our customers. Lane County has not yet established a rollout date, however we are hopeful implementation will begin before the end of the first quarter.

Requested Board Action

Information only – No action is requested at this time.