



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

Agenda Item Number: 5

Agenda Date: May 24, 2022

In Control: Municipal Utilities Committee Meeting

DEPARTMENT: Finance Department

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Troy Elliott, Deputy Chief Financial Officer

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT:

Update on ARPA Funding Agreement

SUMMARY:

SAWS to provide a briefing on the recent changes to the program and utilization of the funds to-date.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

On November 18, 2021, City Council approved \$30 million for utility assistance using funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). The funding was designed to assist low-income residents financially impacted by the COVID-19 crisis with utility payments. Council allocated \$20 million to assist CPS Energy customers and \$10 million to assist SAWS customers.

On February 1, 2022, the San Antonio Water System (SAWS) Board of Trustees approved an agreement between the City of San Antonio (the “City”), which the City would provide up to \$10 million in utility assistance pursuant to the terms outlined in the Funding Agreement. The Funding Agreement provided various requirements for SAWS’ customers to be eligible to qualify for the assistance, including the period for eligible charges, applications for qualifications, and limits on the amount of assistance for eligible customers.

Since inception, fewer customers than anticipated have been able to benefit from the assistance under the terms of the Funding Agreement.

The City, SAWS, and CPS Energy have agreed to amend the agreement to streamline the qualification process for customers living in Qualified Census Tracts and expand the period for eligible charges. These changes will enable SAWS and CPS Energy to provide ARPA assistance in a more timely manner to customers financially impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The changes to the SAWS agreement are outlined below:

- Expand assistance eligibility period by 6 months to apply to bills incurred through March 31, 2022, rather than September 30, 2021
- Allow customers confirmed to live in Qualified Census Tracts (QCT) who are also enrolled in an Affordability Discount Program (ADP) to receive assistance toward eligible outstanding balances without need for application
- Allow customers confirmed to live in a QCT who are not enrolled in ADP to receive credits of up to \$700 (SAWS) if 120+ days past due.

Additionally, the City's Department of Human Services have worked with SAWS and CPS Energy on administrative solutions to allocate more assistance to families in need. This includes sharing resident data for those who have recently qualified for the Emergency Housing Assistance Program (EHAP) to pay their utility bills without further applications from the resident.

ISSUE:

Briefing by SAWS on the ARPA Funding Agreement, utility assistance funded by the American Rescue Plan Act.

RECOMMENDATION:

This item is for briefing purposes only