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Small Business Utility Payment Programs

Economic & Workforce
Development Committee

Presented by Caitlin Cowart,
Economic Development
Manager

August 12, 2022



Background

- March 2020: Service disconnections suspended by CPS and SAWS in response to the pandemic
- Summer 2021: Both utility companies announced plans to resume service disconnections in the fall
- October 2021: Service disconnections resumed
- November/December 2021: Service disconnections temporarily paused due to holidays
- January 2022: Service disconnections resumed
- June 2022: City Council approved the ARPA Small Business Implementation Plan and requested EWDC briefing on utility payment plan options

Allowable Use of COVID Impact Grants Funding

- Payroll costs
- Rent payments
- **Utility payments**
 - March 3, 2020 – December 31, 2024
- Worker protection expenditures
- Other ordinary and necessary business expenses, including maintenance costs
- Administrative costs

A photograph of two women in a kitchen or office setting. The woman on the left, who is Asian, is wearing a black t-shirt and a grey apron, holding a white mug and smiling while looking at a laptop. The woman on the right, who is Black, is wearing a white collared shirt and a grey apron, looking intently at the laptop. In the background, there are stacks of white containers and a white refrigerator with a yellow sticky note.

San Antonio Water System (SAWS)

Presented by:

Meghan Patronella, Director of Operational Excellence

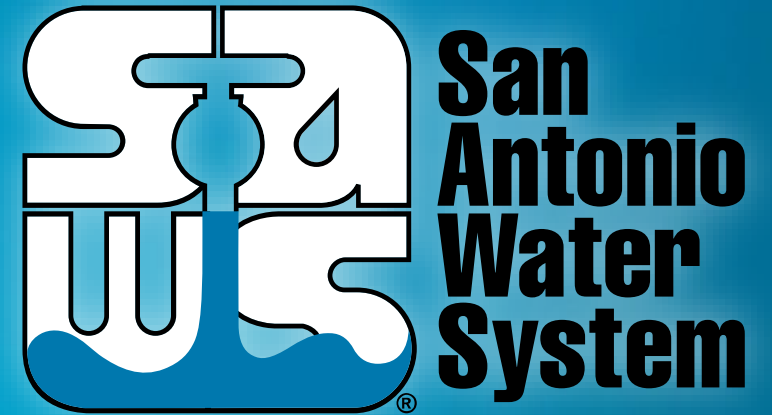
Commercial Customer Delinquency

Meghan Patronella

Director of Operational Excellence – Customer Service

Economic and Workforce Development
Committee

August 12, 2022



MAKING SAN ANTONIO
WATERFUL



Commercial Account Payment Plan Options


Payment Plans


- Customers can self-serve through the portal or over the telephone and select a 3-, 6-, or 9-month payment arrangement.
- They request an arrangement up to 18 months by calling in or visiting a service center.
- Requests above 18 months are approved on a case-by-case basis.

PAYMENT ARRANGEMENT SETUP


BALANCE DUE \$8,097.22

Please select a payment option:



3 Payments



6 Payments


SELECTED


9 Payments
That's only \$899.69 a month

My Plan


9 Payments
for the next 9 months


Pay \$899.69
In addition to new monthly charges


Beginning on your [Next Month] bill

The first of your monthly installments will be due on your next SAWS bill due date. The monthly installment amount will not show on your bill. You will need to pay the current monthly bill charges PLUS the amount of your monthly installment.

If any of your monthly payments are late or short of the amount due, this arrangement will be considered "broken," and your water services cannot be guaranteed.

In addition, a broken arrangement makes your account ineligible for another payment arrangement for at least six months.


■ By checking this box and submitting this form, I am providing my digital signature that I understand I am agreeing to pay each monthly installment amount plus the current month's bill.

SAWS Customer Outreach










Payment Plans

Customers are made aware of these options through several channels:

- Bill Messaging
- Online Portal Account
- SAWS.org/getcurrent
- Robo Dialer Campaigns
- Social Media
- Customer Service Agents

**mysaws**
San Antonio, Texas

Payment Arrangement Calculation Example

| | | |
|---|--|---|
|  Customer's Account Total Balance: |  Customer's Payment Plan: 3 months | Customer owes a payment arrangement amount of \$50 for the next three months in addition to their current charges. |
| | =  Payment Arrangement Amount |  ↓   ↓   ↓  |

ed a bill 💰 payment and need more time
u can now schedule payment
online. Click the link in our bio for all the
nAntonio #billpayments
ngements #selfservice

BEHIND ON YOUR WATER BILL PAYMENTS? GET CURRENT AND STAY CONNECTED.

As our community recovers from the pandemic, our goal is to keep your water service turned on.

If you're behind on your bill, we want to help.

We'll set up a payment plan for you — to keep your water connected while giving you more time to pay. You may also qualify for our need-based assistance.

To get started, visit saws.org/getcurrent or call us at 210-704-SAWS (7297).

Customer Delinquency Status

Commercial and Industrial active accounts 60 or more days past due

| Account Class | No. of Accounts | % of Accounts | Total Past Due | Avg. Past Due Balance | Portion Aged 60+ |
|--------------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Payment Plan | 330 | 14.07% | \$ 684,847 | \$2,075 | \$ 643,111 |
| No Payment Plan | 2,015 | 85.93% | \$ 3,753,546 | \$1,863 | \$ 3,253,638 |
| Grand Total | 2,345 | 100% | \$ 4,438,393 | \$1,893 | \$ 3,896,749 |

Data as of 08/02/2022

Commercial Customer Delinquencies

Communication Prior to Disconnection

Notices

- Initial Final Notice Mailed at 45 days
- Robo Dialer Message once disconnection is scheduled
- Portal messaging based on milestone

AVISO FINAL

Para prevenir la interrupción de su servicio de agua la cantidad indicada en la factura abajo tiene que ser pagada. Esta cantidad puede ser pagada con cheque o tarjeta de crédito utilizando www.saws.org. También puede llamar a nuestros agentes de Servicio al Cliente por teléfono al 210-704-7297. Usted también puede pagar en

una de los cuatro Centros de (AWS), o en los centros de pago

adicional de servicio más un depós

FINAL NOTICE

This account is now seriously past due and is scheduled to be turned off. The total amount shown below must be paid in order to keep your water service from being discontinued. This amount may be paid by check or credit card at www.saws.org or by calling our Customer Service Call Center at (210)704-7297. You may also pay by cash, check or credit card at any of the four San Antonio Water System Customer Contact Centers or at any authorized SAWS Payment station.

Termination of service will subject your account to an additional service charge plus a deposit or increased deposit. If your service is terminated for delinquency and you would like to have your service restored, we offer a same day service restoration option for \$34.98, if paid by 3:00 PM. Otherwise your service will be restored the next business day after payment is made. If payment is made at an authorized SAWS payment station, please call 704-SAWS (7297) with the confirmation number in order to avoid interruption of service.

Instructions for Obtaining a Hearing before Service is Disconnected:

If you disagree with the amount due and desire to discuss a payment plan, you may have a conference with a Customer Review Officer by contacting a SAWS Customer Service Center (listed on back), or call SAWS at (210)704-7297(SA



Your service is scheduled for disconnection.

Contact SAWS at 210-704-7297 to pay the past due balance on your account. If your service is disconnected, additional fees will also be charged to your account.

PAY NOW

I understand

Financial Assistance Outreach

Overview

We have already done the following outreach:

- Grant information has been placed on our assistance page: SAWS.org/getcurrent
- Robo Dialer campaign reaching all delinquent commercial account holders
- Social Media



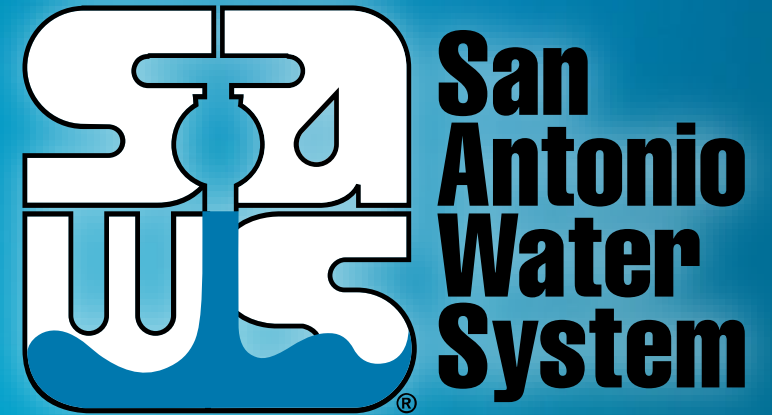
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MAKING SAN ANTONIO
WATERFUL





SMALL BUSINESS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & SUPPORT

PRESENTED BY:

KJ Feder

VP, Community Engagement & Corporate Responsibility

August 12, 2022

Informational Update Requested

AGENDA



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & SUPPORT

- **SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT INITIATIVES**
- **COVID IMPACT GRANT COMMUNICATION EFFORTS**
- **ACCOUNT OVERVIEW**

Share initiatives and accomplishments of our specialized small business support team known as Energy2Business.

SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT INITIATIVES



CORE Team

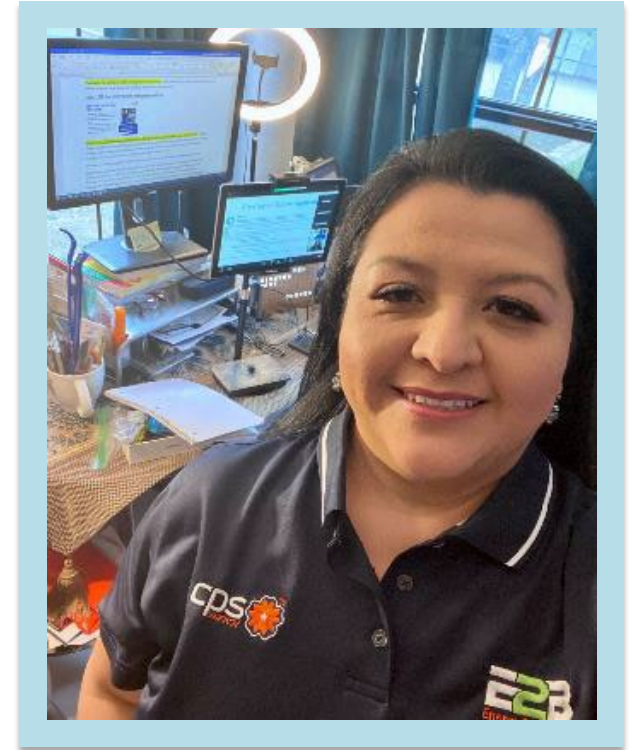
- Letters & email communications sharing eligibility for Payment Protection Program, Grants & Payment Plans

Media Communication

- Infomercials
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=twkFnUcIpl8>)
- Webinars & Facebook Live Events

E2B Team Site Visits

- Community opportunities through partnerships
- Payment Plans
- Energy Saving Rebates



Energy2Business Liaison, Julia Martinez staffing a Facebook Live event.

Launched in 2019 as an outreach team to connect small businesses to energy savings rebates, during the pandemic E2B quickly became a full service customer support team connecting customers with additional resources.

COVID IMPACT GRANT COMMUNICATION EFFORTS



E2B Team Efforts

- 30k+ letter & email communications with eligibility & requirements of grant
- Community Partnerships
- Support Fairs
- Payment Plans
- Energy Saving Rebates
- Website Updates – CPSEnergy.com/e2b



E2B Fair attendees obtaining resources



E2B fair raffle table

The logo for Energy2Business, featuring the letters 'E2B' in blue and green, with 'Energy2Business' in green below.

Join us in partnership with our community allies as we host

Small & Medium Business Support Fair

AUGUST 4th
3 pm - 7 pm
Comanche Park, Navajo Civic Center
2600 Rigsby, San Antonio, TX 78222

- Billing Questions
- Concierge Support
- Energy Saving Rebates
- Networking
- Payment Plans
- Program Opportunities
- Utility Assistance

NO REGISTRATION REQUIRED

For details contact:
210.353.6322
e2b@cpsenergy.com
cpsenergy.com/energy2business

The logo for CPS Energy, featuring the letters 'cps' in blue and 'ENERGY' in orange, with a stylized orange and yellow flower-like shape to the right.

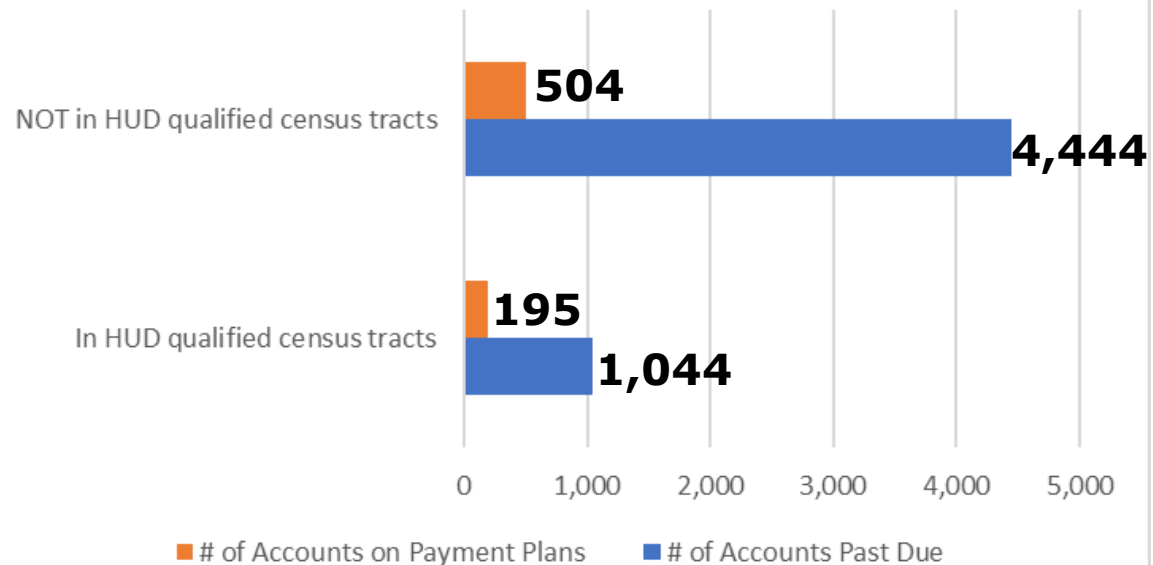
A row of logos for partner organizations: COSA Economic Development, Prosper West, SBA, MAESTRO, SAGE, SOUTH SIDE FIRST, Workforce Solutions, CENTRO, CPS Energy Recovery Redevelopment, and a Texas state seal.

In partnership with local non-profits, E2B Team engages with the public bringing resource awareness to the small business community.

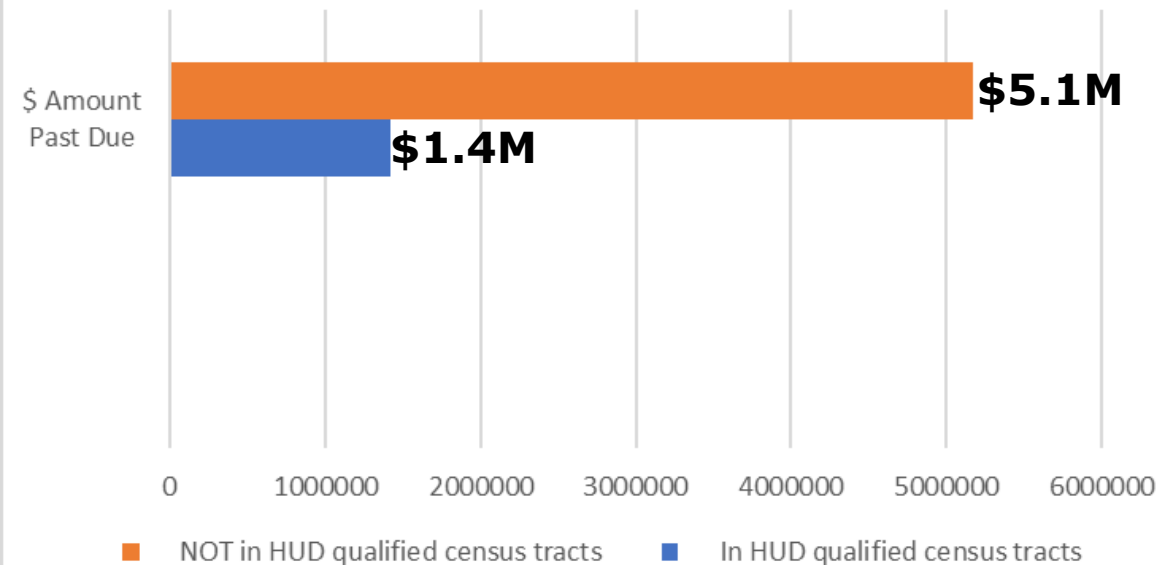
SMALL BUSINESS ACCOUNTS OVERVIEW



Number of Accounts Past Due



Amount Past Due



We continue to share that no customer has to be disconnected. They just need to call us back and set up a payment plan.

PAYMENT PLANS



Budget payment plan:

- Small/Medium Business Budget Payment Plans launched in 2020
- Customer pays the same amount each month
- The annual energy bill is averaged over the past year with a small percentage added to cover environmental factors and changing fuel costs



Installment plans:

- Divide past due amounts into equal monthly payments
- Plans are available to allow up to 48 months to pay
- The amount of the installment is added to the current monthly usage

Case by case:

- We will communicate with customers on a bi-weekly basis to secure payments and work with their individual situations
- We will work with customers to allow additional time to pay their bill



Sample payment plan messaging

OUTREACH PRIOR TO DISCONNECT



Customers are asked to talk with us about setting up a payment plan in multiple ways:

- Phone calls
- Letters in the mail with disconnection notices & minimum payment amount
- Hand delivered letters with attempt to collect a payment
- E2B site visit to provides community resources & offers payment options
- Certified letter in mail of final disconnection

This is a message from CPS Energy

A Final Disconnection Notice has been sent to you, and you are eligible for termination of service at any time. Please get in touch with us immediately to establish a payment plan to avoid this action.

You can go online at www.CPSEnergy.com/assistance, call our automated assistance line, go into one of our walk-in centers, or call our customer service line at [210-353-2222](tel:210-353-2222) to receive assistance. You may qualify for an extended payment plan, budget payment plan, late fee waivers, or other assistance, but you need to contact us immediately.

CPS Energy does not call and threaten disconnection, nor do we ever ask you to pay with gift cards or require you to pay with a credit card over the phone.

Sample email notice

HOW TO REACH YOUR E2B TEAM



To learn more about small business programs and support:

- Visit us online at cpsenergy.com/energy2business
- Call us at (210) 353-6322



Your Energy2Business Team



Thank You

Grant Program Communication Efforts

Payment Options:

- Grants website hosted by LiftFund
- Auto emails to applicants
- BDO partner outreach

A promotional poster for the City of San Antonio's COVID Impact Grants Program. The poster features a smiling man in a blue polo shirt and cap. The text on the poster includes the City of San Antonio logo, the LiftFund logo with the tagline 'DREAM IT. FUND IT.', the title 'COVID IMPACT GRANTS PROGRAM', the text 'APPLICATIONS OPEN AUGUST 1-22, 2022', and the website 'www.cityofsanantoniocovidgrants.com'. A QR code is located in the bottom right corner of the poster.

CITY OF SAN ANTONIO **LiftFund**
DREAM IT. FUND IT.

COVID IMPACT GRANTS PROGRAM

**APPLICATIONS OPEN
AUGUST 1-22, 2022**

www.cityofsanantoniocovidgrants.com

Call 1-800-923-9551 to apply, or visit the website listed above.
Contact sbgrants@liftfund.com or call (888) 215-2373 for more information.

SOUTHSIDEFIRST **Culturingua** **PROSPER WEST** **MAESTRO** **CENTRO SAN ANTONIO** **SAGE**
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL on the Border

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