



# MEMORANDUM

EUGENE WATER & ELECTRIC BOARD

*Rely on us.*

TO: Commissioners Carlson, Barofsky, McRae, Schlossberg and Brown  
FROM: Julie McGaughey, Chief Customer Officer; Anna Wade, Business Line Manager; Caitlin Pratt, Customer Relationship Representative  
DATE: February 7, 2023  
SUBJECT: Community Partner Care Pilot  
OBJECTIVE: Information Only

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## Issue

Customer Solutions is launching a new pilot program to aid community partners who provide critical shelter services to the unhoused population. The pilot period will run from January 2023 - December 2023 and will be funded by Energy Share customer donations.

## Background

In response to the financial crisis beginning in 2008, the Board approved additional funding for limited income programs. Bill assistance spending was \$1M in 2008, increasing to \$1.5M in 2009 and \$2.3M in 2010. A temporary Shelter Care program to agencies providing support services to unhoused community members was a component of the increased assistance. The program was discontinued as the economy improved and budget allocations normalized.

The Eugene area lacks affordable housing, which was exacerbated by COVID19-related supply chain issues and rising costs. The City of Eugene estimates more than 3,000 people experience homelessness, with more than 2,000 without shelter each night <sup>1</sup>. As more community members face homelessness, shelters experience rising operations costs and limited capacity.

In addition to existing housing disparities, climate change impacts our community beyond severe cold weather events. Extended fire seasons, hotter summers, and poor air quality events affect the unhoused community disproportionately and threaten community safety.

## Discussion

Electricity is an essential service that enables local organizations to provide safe housing for those experiencing homelessness. Through this initiative, EWEB will address an eligibility gap in the EWEB Customer Care program (ECC) where individuals who would otherwise qualify based on income do not due to their unhoused status. By aiding the community partners who provide these essential services, we extend assistance to the unhoused population.

Eligible community partners are those who have designated 501(c)(3) status and whose primary function is providing assistance to the unhoused population. EWEB bill credits will be issued no more than one time per facility, per calendar year. Bill credit amounts will be no more than 10% of the previous year's total utility charges, which aligns with the calculation methodology for ECC, with not-to-exceed caps based on duration of operations.

Type	Grant Cap
<b>Award for 1st facility</b>	
Part-Time (<120 days/year)	≤ \$500
Full-Time (>120 days/year)	≤ \$1,000
<b>Award for 2nd facility</b>	
Part-Time (<120 days/year)	≤ \$250
Full-Time (>120 days/year)	≤ \$500

Estimated program spending is \$10,000-\$15,000 annually and will be funded by customer donations. Energy Share donations totaled \$200,000 in 2022. Customer donations are currently used to augment ECC and fund the Energy Share assistance program.

Customer Solutions staff will incorporate program results into quarterly reporting to the Board. The potential for formal adoption of a Community Partner Care program will be determined at year end.

**TBL Assessment**

Community Partner Care will ensure that community members have fair access to resources with a fiscally responsible funding mechanism. Additionally, the program will enhance strategic partnerships with nonprofit organizations that support EWEBs shared goal of community safety.

**Recommendation**

No action is requested at this time.

**Requested Board Action**

No action is requested at this time.

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<sup>1</sup> City Manager’s office. *Homelessness*. City of Eugene. <https://www.eugene-or.gov/3470/Homelessness>. November 2022.