

LOW-INCOME PANEL PRESENTATION TO EUC

Good evening. My name is Doris Williams. I want to thank you for the opportunity to present before the Commission. My presentation will cover four subject areas as follows:

1. Short explanation about how I become involved in these matters: Much of what I am about to say comes from actual experience as a residential consumer.
2. My research findings on the customer service programs offered by the utility.
3. What is wrong with these programs, in my opinion
4. Recommendations as to how to fix the programs and/or what we can do to improve them

I. Background

- Retired, Senior, Small Business Owner, family of one, though not necessarily in this order.
- Concerned about being on a fixed income facing substantial utility rate increases.
- The reason why I am here today is because I want to know if these increases are really necessary and to say that I am in disagreement with most of Public Involvement Committee, (PIC) June 1, 2011 recommendations. I will go into more detail further into my presentation.

II. Customer Programs

There are at least three utility programs offered by Austin Energy that need further clarification.

- 1) Customer Assistance Discount Program
- 2) Weatherization Program
- 3) Free Home Energy Program

III. Irregularities and Issues of Concern

All three programs need further clarification of the "explanation of benefits" and eligibility requirements. There are similarities in their customer base that make them somewhat interchangeable. For example, customers enrolled in the CAP Discount Program may also be eligible for weatherization and can benefit from the Free Home Energy Program. My research found there is no mechanism to carryover to the other programs, the Weatherization and Free Home Energy

Program. "Check-offs" on the application for service could possibly solve this problem. The customer may be eligible for one or all three of the programs.

Additionally, there is no good information on programs to help people with their utility bills. I was denied weatherization last year by AE because the program ran out of funds. The PIC talks about providing a one-time transitory financial hardship and limiting assistance. The report does not give enough detail and clarification. We need to look closely into this recommendation.

Customer Service Representatives should be trained to be familiar with each program for the customer. This should be the #1 priority. When I was inquiring about the programs to determine my own eligibility, I found confusion within the Customer Service office, i.e., one person stated the programs were not based on income when I know for a fact that the Weatherization, CAP Discount Programs and Free Home Energy Program are all income based. The CSR's response may be due to training. The fact remains there are similarities in customer bases and eligibility criteria.

Finally, my evaluation of the CAP Discount Program found there is confusion among the employees and too much fragmentation and decentralization where centralization would be more effective. For example, if a customer calls and inquires about any one of these programs, the customer may very well be referred to several different departments within the utility. In my opinion the programs would be more effective if they were centralized.

IV. Strengthening and Improving Customer Programs

There is much work to do, in my opinion, with the Customer Programs to strengthen them to make them more effective and reach the desired targeted audiences, if indeed, this is the goal. I admit that I may not be knowledgeable of all aspects of the programs and this is where the utility can step in with its outreach to the community.

- Improve Outreach Program
- Centralize programs into one department
- Provide comprehensive Employee Customer Service Training on all programs
- Review the requirements for CAP Discount Program for moderate-to-low income and raise the poverty level requirement commensurate to any increase in utility rates.
- Improve the Request for Service application process by providing "check-offs" for those interested in the CAP Discount Program, Weatherization, and Free Home Energy Programs and if they are enrolled in human/social services programs. Develop easy access and carry over to these programs

- Continue the Automatic Enrollment for those eligible on human services programs. I disagree with PIC Recommendations, June 1, 2011, to discontinue the Automatic Enrollment as presented. This recommendation is misleading because it infers that ratepayers are automatically enrolled without requesting assistance when this is not the case. Human/Social Services Case Managers should have already determined eligibility, thereby insuring those enrolled in the Discount Program are prescreened for eligibility. Here is an area where I believe we can collaborate and come together to strengthen this area.
- Create a residential customer advisory committee for the CAP Discount Program and customer programs.

Thank you.

Doris Williams, Concerned Residential Customer

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Austin Energy

Rate Case Proposal

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Rate Design for Low-Income Customers:


Is the document missing in action?

What benefits can vulnerable customers expect?

Should the cost be variable or fixed?

Should poor families who receive only CHIP or Food
Stamps be excluded?

Submitted by


Randall Chapman, Executive Director
Texas Legal Services Center



Consumer Information

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Consumer Assistance

Industry Assistance

Agency

Rules & Laws

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Paying Your Bill

Assistance Paying Your Bill

LITE-UP Texas Program

The LITE-UP TEXAS program is designed to help qualified low-income individuals reduce the monthly cost of discounts to eligible customers in the following months:

May, June, July, August and September 2011 bills

An electric customer is qualified if the customer is currently receiving: Medicaid and SNAP. If you are not in c you can still qualify in the program **if your household income is at or below 125 percent of the federal poverty level**. *Food stamps*

If you are not a participant in the above qualified programs but think you qualify based on household income calling toll-free 1-866-454-8387 and request an application or by printing an application from this website.

Number in Household	Annual Income (125%)
1	\$13,613
2	\$18,388
3	\$23,163
4	\$27,938
5	\$32,713
6	\$37,488
7	\$42,263
8	\$47,038
Each additional add	\$4,775

IMPORTANT: The information on the electric bill (Name, Address, etc..) **must** match the information of the self-enrolled application.

You can fax or email your completed and signed scanned copy of your application, with all the backup inform

1-877-215-8018 Phone/fax (toll free)

liteuptexasupport@solixinc.com email

LITE-UP TEXAS Self-Enrollment Discount Form and FAQ

[Self-Enrollment Form](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

LITE-UP En Español

LITE-UP Texas un Programa de Descuento en la electricidad para personas de bajos ingresos

Para más información, llame gratis 1-866-454-8387.

Lifeline

The Lifeline program is designed to help qualified low-income individuals pay the monthly cost of basic teleph

A resident is qualified if the current total household income is at or below 150 percent of the federal poverty they are currently receiving: Medicaid, Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program support, SNAP, Federal Security Income (SSI), Health Benefit Coverage under Child Health Plan (CHIP) under Chapter 62 support.

Number in Household	Annual Income (150%)
1	\$16,245
2	\$21,855
3	\$27,465
4	\$33,075
5	\$38,685
6	\$44,295
7	\$49,905
8	\$55,515
Each additional add	\$5,610

Lifeline reduces the basic monthly telephone rate by \$7 and waives the federal subscriber line charge up to \$13.50 for those who qualify. This program does not cover the cost of additional services such as caller ID or for installation of local telephone service may be available to these customers through the Link-Up program.

You can apply for Lifeline Discounts by calling toll free 1-866-4LITEUP (866-454-8387) or by downloading the

Visit the Lifeline Support website at www.lifelinesupport.org for information about local phone companies as Up program.

Lifeline Self-Enrollment Discount Forms

[Self-Enrollment Form](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

You can fax or email your completed and signed scanned copy of your application, with all the backup inform

austinenenergy.com

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Home > Customer Care > Billing > Payment Assistance > Fee Waiver and Discounts

Fee Waiver and Discounts

The City of Austin makes every effort to assist customers on low and fixed incomes. Our assistance programs help those who face emergencies keep their utility accounts in good standing.

Eligible customers qualify for the following fee waiver and discounts:

- \$23*
- A \$6.00/month waiver of the customer electric service charge
 - A \$17.00 (on average) reduced CAP fuel charge on electric use
 - A \$7.10/month waiver of the customer water service charge
 - An \$8.95/month waiver of the customer waste water service charge
 - A 50% reduction on your residential City of Austin Drainage fee to \$3.88 a month

View what your sample bill might look like with these discounts applied.

Eligibility for Waiver and Discounts

To verify your eligibility for the fee waiver and discounts, provide a copy of one of the following documents as proof that you or someone in your household participates in a qualifying assistance program:

- Supplemental Security Income Program
- Medicaid program types 3, 12, 13, 14, 18, 19, 22, 23, 24, or 51 only
See sample document
- Travis County Hospital District Medical Assistance Program (MAP)
- Travis County Energy Assistance Programs: CEAP or FEMA
- State paid Medicare parts A and B (QMB, SLMB or QI)

Apply for Fee Waiver and Discounts

Print the Fee Waiver and Discounts form (pdf), complete and send to:

City of Austin
Customer Care Contact Center—Customer Assistance Program
721 Barton Springs Rd.
Austin, TX 78704-9916

Fax: (512) 505-4028

Call (512) 494-9400 to request a form by mail.

Waiver of Monthly \$6.00 Electric Customer Service Charge

We waive the \$6.00/month customer service charge for eligible customers. That's a total yearly savings of \$72.00.

Waiver of Monthly \$7.10 Water Customer Service Charge

We waive the \$7.10/month customer service charge for eligible customers. That's a total yearly savings of \$85.20.

Waiver of Monthly \$8.95 Waste Water Customer Service Charge

We waive the \$8.95/month customer service charge for eligible customers. That's a total yearly savings of \$107.40.

50% Discount on Monthly Drainage Fee

Save 50% on your residential City of Austin Drainage fee. The fee helps pay for water quality programs, maintenance and repair of creeks and storm water drainage systems.

Quick Links

- En Español: Descuentos y Programas Gratis

Links







- Fee Waiver and Discounts Form (pdf)
- Sample Medicaid Identification Document
- Sample Bill with Discounts (pdf)

Related Content

- Customer Assistance Program
- Free Home Energy Improvements
- Deferred Payment Agreement
- Services for the Medically Vulnerable

*No Food Stamp
eligible*

*No Childrens Health
Insurance Program
eligible
(CHIP)*

Customer Name		Account No.	Page 2
 Electric Service	Meter #	Read Date	Reading
	88501	07/23/2008	95664.00
		06/20/2008	94664.00
		Read Difference	1000.00
		Total Consumption in KWH	1,000
	Billing Rate: Residential Service CAP Summer		
	Customer Charge		\$6.00
	1. Credit Customer Charge		\$6.00CR
	Energy Charge	500.00 @ \$.0355000 per KWH	\$17.75
		500.00 @ \$.0782000 per KWH	\$39.10
 Water Service	Fuel Charge	1,000.00 @ \$.0365300 per KWH	\$36.50
	Credit Fuel Charge	1,000.00 @ \$.0365300- per KWH	\$36.50CR
	2. CAP Fuel Charge	1,000.00 @ \$.0170000 per KWH	\$17.00
	Sales Tax		\$1.74
	TOTAL CURRENT CHARGES - Electric		\$75.59
 Wastewater Service	Meter #	Read Date	Reading
	2216	07/23/2008	8970.00
		06/20/2008	8900.00
		Read Difference in Hundreds	70.00
		Total Consumption in Gallons	7,000
	Billing Rate: Inside Residential Water		
	3. Customer Charge		\$5.35CR
	Consumption Charge	2,000 Gallons @ \$.9300000 per 1,000	\$1.86
		5,000 Gallons @ \$ 2.4300000 per 1,000	\$12.15
	Total Consumption:	7,000 Gallons	
 Solid Waste Service	TOTAL CURRENT CHARGES - Water		\$14.01
	4. Customer Charge		\$7.10CR
	Flow Charge	2,000 Gallons @ \$ 3.1800000 per 1,000	\$6.36
		4,300 Gallons @ \$ 7.1800000 per 1,000	\$30.87
	Total Flows:	6,300 Gallons	
 Drainage/Street Service	TOTAL CURRENT CHARGES - Wastewater		\$37.23
	Anti-Litter Residential		\$2.60
	Res. - Base Customer Charge		\$7.00
	Res 60 Gallon Cart @ \$7.50 each		\$7.50
	Sales Tax		\$1.21
 Drainage/Street Service	TOTAL CURRENT CHARGES - Solid Waste		\$18.31
	5. Comprehensive Drainage Fee		\$7.15
	6. Transportation User Fee		\$4.14CR
	CAP Drainage Fee Discount		\$3.58CR
	TOTAL CURRENT CHARGES - Drainage/Street Service		\$3.57

Public Benefit Fund

Monthly PBF Customer Count

