

**Response to Commissioner Biedrzycki's Questions regarding
Donations to Customer Assistance Program via On-line Billing
March 21, 2016: Item 15**

Q. Can customers make donations to the Customer Assistance Program via on-line billing?

- A. Yes; please see screenshot below from when making a payment on-line, or via a checking or savings account draft.

The screenshot shows a web browser window titled "COA Utilities - Pay My Bill - Microsoft Internet Explorer provided by Austin Energy". The address bar shows a URL from coautilities.com. The page has a navigation bar with links: "Pay My Bill", "Payment Methods", "Autopay", "Budget Billing", and "eBill". The "Pay My Bill" section is active and contains the following content:

Would you like to make a charitable contribution?
Please consider contributing to these programs.

Donate to the Customer Assistance Program
Each month, some of our customers need help paying their utility bills. Your tax-deductible contribution will help your neighbors in need. Thank you!

Amount:

Donate to the Parks & Libraries Fund
Your tax-deductible contribution will help the Parks department plant trees and provide scholarships for summer camp and after school programs. Your contribution will also help the Austin Public Library keep its shelves up to date with the most popular digital materials. Thank you!

Amount:

Donate to Public School Energy Assistance
You can help local independent school districts lower their energy costs by making a tax-deductible contribution to Public School Energy Assistance. Starting in Spring 2013, you will be able to make donations on the return portion of your paper bill. Thank you!

Amount:

☐ I do not want to make a contribution.

[Next](#)

Need to Pay Today?

Use Quick Payment now to:

- make a payment to stop disconnection of service
- use a credit or debit card for payment

A convenience fee will be charged to use this option.

[Make a Quick Payment](#)

Contact Us

Customer Care
(512) 494-9400
TDD: (512) 477-3663

Outside Austin call toll-free:
(888) 340-6465

Monday - Friday
7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. CST
Saturday
9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. CST

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Q. When this was put into place?

- A. Online Customer Care (OCC) Portal GO LIVE - 2012

Q. How does it work?

- A. If it is a one-time donation, then it is added to the customers total balance for that month while paying that specific bill. In the background, the billing system puts the donated amount into a funding bucket. If it is a recurring donation, then it is billed to the customer's account during the customer's monthly billing process, and their new monthly balance will include a billable charge for the donation amount.

Q. How many people have used it?

- A. On average, about 3,000 customers per month for all available programs (CAP, Library, PSEA).

Q. If people are having trouble making donations on line what steps are being taken to fix them?

- A. OCC gives the customer a place to provide feedback while they are in their transaction process, and that email is sent to customer care to follow up with the customer. If the customer sends something during the "tell us about your experience" at the end of their OCC session, then it goes to IT and they forward any customer concerns to customer care. If the customer calls into the Utility Contact Center, the Customer Service Rep will walk them through the process, or can enter a ticket to our portal team for any issues.

Please note, there are no tickets/complaints from customers regarding any issues of this process not functioning properly.