



**Customer Driven.
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MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Bob Kahn, General Manager *BK*

DATE: July 27, 2023

SUBJECT: Implementation Update – Customer Assistance Program Discount Expansion
(Resolution No. 20221201-046)

The purpose of this memo is to inform City Council of the completed and ongoing actions to support the expansion of bill discounts provided through Austin Energy's Customer Assistance Program (CAP), as directed through [Resolution 20221201-046](#), adopted by Council on December 1, 2022.

Austin Energy's Customer Assistance Program provides bill discounts on city utility services, weatherization, emergency financial assistance, and arrearage management programs for income-qualified and medically vulnerable customers. As of December 2022, approximately 35,000 were enrolled in the CAP Discount. It is estimated that as many as 93,000 customers in the Austin area could be eligible for the program.

In November 2022, Austin Energy presented an ambitious work plan to expand the CAP Discount over the next two fiscal years. [Resolution 20221201-046](#) established targets for enrollment, beginning with a goal of 46% of eligible customers (42,780 households) enrolled by June 2023.

Austin Energy is pleased to report that its planned expansion measures have exceeded the first of three targets, with June enrollments reaching over 53,100 accounts. Customers not previously enrolled in the program have received a letter explaining the discounts and will realize savings with their next billing cycle.

Upcoming goals anticipate 72% of the eligible population being enrolled in the Discount program by June 2024 and 90% by June 2025. In pursuit of these objectives, Austin Energy has:

- Initiated targeted discussions with our Discount Steering Committee (comprised of representatives from community partners and non-profit agencies) to share ideas about potential avenues for enrollment,

- Requested data from Texas Health and Human Services Commission to examine enrollments in other programs not currently included in Discount auto-enrollment,
- Started planning data-sharing arrangements with city and county housing authorities as well as the PUC's Light Up Texas program, and
- Begun exploring how to ensure households with students in the free and reduced lunch programs are receiving discount benefits, beginning with a partnership with AISD.

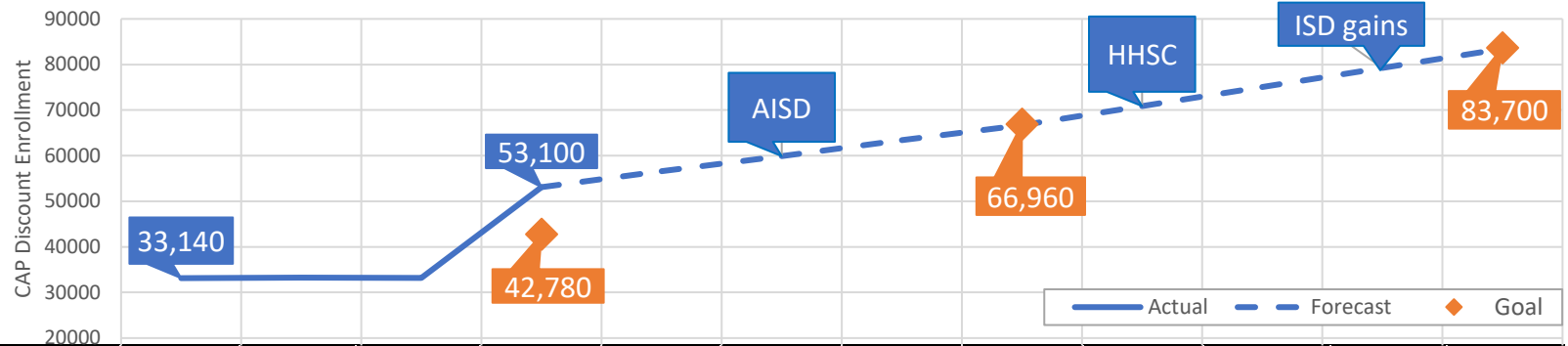
Austin Energy will continue to work toward enrollment goals for future years as outlined in the attached CAP Discount Expansion Plan, continuing the above efforts and applying lessons-learned to partnerships with other school districts and community partners as appropriate. Screening processes remain in place for secondary income verification when customers own homes above the threshold value or appear to own multiple properties. Austin Energy plans to regularly review quality controls to ensure benefits reach eligible customers; these efforts will be ongoing as the program evolves and continue through the stabilization phase.

Information on any additional resource needs or changes to the Community Benefit Charge to support these efforts will be presented as part of future budget requests. It is our plan to provide updates to Council each summer on progress toward the milestones in the resolution.

Please contact Kerry Overton, Austin Energy's Deputy General Manager, Chief Customer Officer, at Kerry.Overton@austinenergy.com, if you have any questions.

CC: Jesús Garza, Interim City Manager

CAP Discount Expansion Plan



| | FY23 Q1 | FY23 Q2 | FY23 Q3 | Current: FY23 Q4 | FY24 Q1 | FY24 Q2 | FY24 Q3 | FY24 Q4 | FY25 Q1 | FY25 Q2 | FY25 Q3 | FY25 Q4 |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------|-------------------|---|-----------------------------------|---|-------------------|---|-----------------|---|---------|-------------|
| | OCT-DEC | JAN-MAR | APR-JUN | JUL-SEP | OCT-DEC | JAN-MAR | APR-JUN | JUL-SEP | OCT-DEC | JAN-MAR | APR-JUN | JUL-SEP |
| CAP Discount Enrollment: Goal | | | | 42,780 | | | | 66,960 | | | | 83,700 |
| CAP Discount Enrollment: Actual | 33,140 | 33,270 | 33,170 | 53,100 | | | | + AISD Gains | | + HHSC Gains | | + ISD Gains |
| Operational Changes | Design/Build/Test Interface | | Go Live | Quality Assurance / Modifications (as needed) | | | | | Business Review | | | |
| AISD Lunch Program | Strategy Meetings | | Legal Review/ MOU | Student Enrollment Forms | Go Live | Quality Assurance / Modifications (as needed) | | | | | | |
| New HHSC Programs | HHSC Data Request | | Data File | Evaluation / Selection | Design/Build/Test Interface | | Go Live | Quality Assurance / Modifications (as needed) | | | | |
| Other School Districts | | | | | Strategy Meetings/ Data Gathering | | Program Selection | Student Enrollment Forms | Go Live | Quality Assurance / Modifications (as needed) | | |

Data as of July 10, 2023