AFFORDABLE ENERGY POLICY SUMMIT

Tuesday, July 11, 2017

AT&T Executive Education & Conference Center
1900 University Avenue
9:00am - 4:30pm
Customer Assistance Program
Customer Assistance Program

Who are we?
The Customer Assistance Program (CAP) encompasses all of the City of Austin sponsored programs designed to assist moderate to low-income customers in regards to their utility bill.

What do we do?
The goal of the Customer Assistance Program is to maximize the participation of eligible City of Austin utility customers by better promoting and presenting these programs to utility customers, civic, public, and private organizations.

Why are we here?
Austin Energy promotes programs designed to provide assistance to customers in the areas of financial support, case management, dispute resolution, energy efficiency improvements and water conservation.
Programs
Education

Discounts

Case Management & Evaluation

Weatherization
Discount Program

Provides discounts to City of Austin utility customers on low or fixed incomes who participate in certain state, federal, or local assistance programs. These discounts appear on the customer’s bill monthly.
Discount Eligibility

A customer may be eligible if she/he or someone in the household participates in one of these programs:

- Medicaid Program
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP)
- Telephone Lifeline Program
- Travis County Comprehensive Energy Assistance Program (CEAP)
- Medical Access Program (MAP)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH)
Potential Discounts

Potential waivers and discounts could include*:

- Electric Service Customer Charge waiver
- Discount on total electrical usage
- Discount on Community Benefit Charge
- Water Service Customer Charge waiver
- Water Tiered Fixed Charge waiver
- Water Volume Charge discount
- Wastewater Service Customer Charge waiver
- Drainage Fee 50% discount

*Discounts are dependent on the customer’s utility services
Electric Discounts

Discount Provided:
• Electric Service Customer Charge waiver
• Discount on Community Benefit Charge
• Discount on total electrical usage
Water & Wastewater Discounts

Discount Provided:
• Water Service Customer Charge waiver
• Water Tiered Fixed Charge waiver
• Water Volume Charge discount
• Wastewater Service Customer Charge waiver
Drainage Discount

Discount Provided:
• Drainage Fee 50% discount
Applying for Discounts

• Call the CAP Contact Center at 855-319-6630 for an application
• Customers can download application from www.austinenergy.com
• Application should be submitted with qualifying documents
• Customers must recertify every 12 months
  • Sent letter and application 30 days before enrollment end date to recertify
Discount Process

• Auto enrollment based on address, name and ID match for some qualifying programs – no application needed
• Self enrollment by filling out application is option for residential customers
• Customers can opt out of the Discount Program by calling (855) 319-6630
• Home site value cannot be more than 250k
• No waitlist
• Discounts follow when customers transfer service
Austin Energy Weatherization

Offers no-cost home improvements to qualified customers. Some of the possible improvements include:

- Air Infiltration
- Attic Insulation
- Duct System Improvements
- Solar Screens
- LED Lighting
- Life Safety
- A/C Tune Up
- Water Conservation
No Cost Weatherization Eligibility

Two referral methods
- Automatic (No Application Required)
  - CAP Discount Customers
- Self Nominations/Referrals (Application Required)
  - Non CAP Customers
  - 512-482-5346

Premise Eligibility:
- 200% or less of the Federal Poverty Level
- Dwelling type
- Home Value of $250K or less
- Home size of 2,000 square feet or less
- Home greater than 10 years old
- Have not received weatherization from AE in the last 10 years

Other Support Services
- CAP Customers only
  - Education class
  - Case management
  - 18-month follow up

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Community Connections Education

CAP Weatherization customers attend a one-time class to learn tips on how to maximize their home weatherization

• Subjects covered:
  • Understanding your Bill
  • Energy and Water Conservation
  • Indoor Air Quality
  • Budgeting
  • Sources of Energy and Water
  • Reduce, Reuse, Recycle
  • Safety Hazards
  • Tenant Rights
Financial Support Plus 1 Program

Designed to assist those City of Austin utility customers who are having financial difficulties and are unable to pay their utility bill due to unexpected emergencies. The City of Austin has partnered with local churches and non-profits to help identify assistance recipients.
Plus 1 Funding

Plus 1 is funded by:

• Austin Energy
• Community Benefit Charge
• Residential Voluntary Contributions
• COA Combined Charities Campaign (COACC)
Plus 1 Funding

• Funding is distributed by a network of local social service agencies.
  • Network is comprised of 50 members
  • Screen applicants
  • Determine eligibility
  • Ensure funding is applied to the customer’s utility account

• Customers should contact one of these agencies to apply
• You must be a current client of agencies marked with an asterisk (*)
Plus 1 Eligibility

• City of Austin residential customers are eligible for up to $1,500 in Plus 1 funding in a 12 month period

• Each agency can assist the same customer twice in a 12 month period

• The Plus 1 pledges cannot be applied if:
  • Meter tampering
  • Unpaid deposit
  • Exceeds the Plus 1 pledge limit
  • Pledge will create credit
Medically Vulnerable Registry

The City of Austin offers the Medically Vulnerable Registry for customers with life support equipment, a critical illness or serious illness. Eligible customers receive additional time to pay their bills in addition to one-on-one case management.
MVR Qualifiers

Life Support – Requires Yearly Recertification
A resident who is sustained by a life support system that has been registered with and approved by the City and that requires uninterrupted electric or water service.

Critical Illness – Requires Yearly Recertification
A resident who is being treated by a licensed physician for paraplegia, hemiplegia, quadriplegia, Multiple Sclerosis or Scleroderma, and such medical condition requires heating or air conditioning.

Serious Illness – Requires 90 Day Recertification
A resident who is being treated by a licensed physician for a disease or ailment of long duration or frequent recurrence where bodily function or organs would be seriously impaired without hearing or air conditioning.

*City Ordinance 15-9-23 - MEDICALLY VULNERABLE RESIDENTS*
MVR Benefits

• Austin Energy has knowledge of all MVR households on file
• Home visits for new enrollments and ongoing yearly contact
• Referrals to other social service providers
• One-on-one case management
• Manual collections process
• Third party notification
MVR Requests

• Request the registry by calling 512-494-9400 and providing the patient’s name and physician’s name, address and phone number
• Registration forms will be mailed or faxed directly to the customer's physician
• A copy may be sent to the customer as verification that it was sent to the physician but it must be certified by the physician
Outreach
Community Connections Resource Fair

- Utility meets customers at community level
- Holistic approach to customer service
- One-stop shop to reach basic needs services
- Targets low to moderate income customers
- Focuses on high poverty zip codes
- Over 1,300 participants with over 85 community agencies represented
Affordable Energy Policy Summit

• Introduces utility changes to the community
• Communication avenue for community partners
• Avenue for community input and feedback
• Targets local social service providers
  • Non-profits
  • Faith-based groups
  • Government agencies
  • Advocacy groups
  • Low income housing representatives
Outreach Activities

CAP educates community about programs through many outreach events:

• Women’s Resource Fair
• Feria Para Aprender
• Juneteenth
• Boo the Flu
• Harvest Fest
• National Night Out
Customer/Government Information Requests
Release of Information Agreement (RIA)

• Allows a customer to give full or limited access to their account to another person or agency without making them financially responsible for the account

• Avenues to release customer information:
  • Proper City of Austin Authorization Form
  • Power of Attorney
  • Attorney Representation
  • Verbal Release

• RIAs can be faxed to (512) 505-4020 or emailed to: AEGovInfoRequest@austinenergy.com
Government Information Requests

• Applies to government and social service agencies requesting customer account information
• RIA must be on file
• AEGovInfoRequest@austinenergy.com
Useful Tools
Austin Energy Web App

• Monitor daily consumption, view bill history and see future forecast of energy bill

• Text or email alert when getting close to entering next electric rate tier

• Log into austinenergyapp.com by using online COA Utilities username and password from www.coautilities.com
ECAD Ordinance

• The Energy Conservation Audit and Disclosure (ECAD) ordinance helps improve energy efficiency and protect the environment

• Austin Energy Guide provides residents with an estimated average monthly energy cost for multifamily units

• Properties must provide a report before you sign or renew a lease
ECAD Energy Guide

A. Expected monthly electric cost
B. Scan for information
C. Consumption habits
D. Audit results
E. Tenant signature
Questions?