



# RIVERSIDE PUBLIC UTILITIES

## Board Memorandum

**BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES**

**DATE: JULY 11, 2022**

**GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT**

**CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM UPDATES THROUGH MAY 2022**

Customer Engagement is funded by Assembly Bill (AB) 1890 that was adopted in 1996. The bill requires publicly owned utilities to collect and spend public benefits charge funds in four areas: low-income assistance, energy efficiency and conservation programs, renewable energy, and research, development, and demonstration projects.

The Customer Engagement Team provides and processes a robust and diverse range of assistance and rebate programming; the team also conducts significant education and outreach to support these programs, as well as energy efficiency and water conservation messaging for customers and the wider community.

**CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT MAY 2022 HIGHLIGHTS**

*Residential*

- A. Sharing Households Assist Riverside's Energy (SHARE) program assisted 3,189 electric customers July – May 2022 totaling \$1,088,767.76.
- B. Energy Savings Assistance Program (ESAP) assisted 382 customers through May 2022 and expended \$214,058.75
- C. Emergency Recovery Assistance Program (ERAP) from July 2021 through May 2022, approved 503 applications and \$201,156 in assistance
- D. RPU processed a total of 321 water rebates in collaboration with regional stakeholder Metropolitan Water District (MWD).
- E. Electric Vehicle (EV) Rebate Program processed 73 applications with \$34,387.31 for customer benefits

*Commercial*

- A. Processed a total of 58 large commercial electric rebates July 2021 through May 2022 for a total of \$593,589.44 paid and 6,332,960 kWh saved.

*Educational*

- A. Essay Contest Winners were announced and awarded at Hillcrest High School and Poly High School
- B. STEM PULL planning is well underway in preparation for July

*Communications*

- A. Celebrated Water Awareness Month and Drinking Water Week and the water professionals

at RPU

- B. Continued drought messaging with a “Don’t Doubt the Drought” campaign
- C. Updated automated bilingual email to ebill customers to include drought messaging, assistance and rebate programs, and a link to digital versions of our back of bill and bill inserts
- D. Re-certify email reminders sent to SHARE customers
- E. Worked with Business Systems to secure a supply of bill stock to be used in case of disruption to paper supplies
- F. Email to residential customers on 5/27 - Water Awareness Month | Employee Spotlight – Greg Herzog | Assistance/CAP | Don’t Doubt the Drought | Investing in Our Future – Canyon Crest Cable Replacement | Mylar Ballons | 2021 Engineering Essay Contest

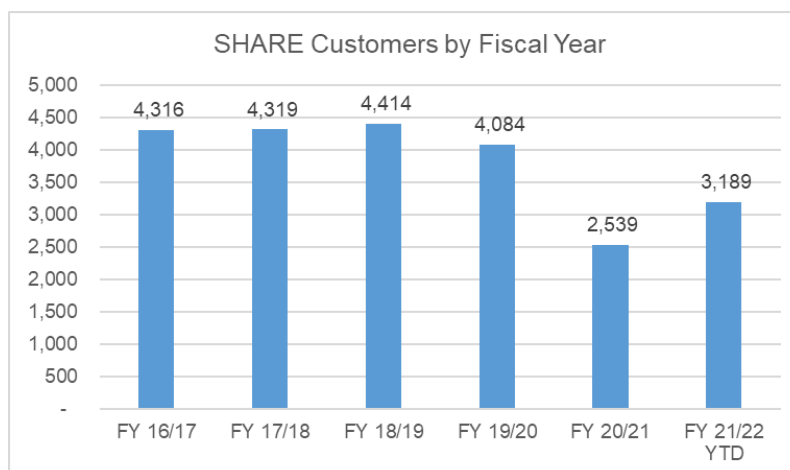
### New and Emerging Programs

- A. Council approved the Restart Utility Bill Repayment Program on May 17th, which will help customers who, because of COVID-19, are behind on their bills
- B. Board and Council approved an increase in SHARE qualification to 250% of Federal Poverty Guidelines and increased monthly assistance to \$16 electric and \$3.25 water, effective July 1<sup>st</sup>
- C. Low-Income Home Water Assistance Program (LiHWAP) – Program enrollment was accepted with California Department of Community Services & Development (CSD) and Community Action Partnership of Riverside County (CAP) for program implementation for June 2022.
- D. Community Action Partnership of Riverside County (CAP), is now present at the Casa Blanca Customer Resource Center (CRC) on Tuesdays and Thursdays 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. Through the month of May, CAP representatives have assisted a total of 25 walk-in customers at the CRC center.
- E. CE Team is beginning a comprehensive study of the equity of CE programs including a community needs assessment. Meeting with community leaders to take this work forward.

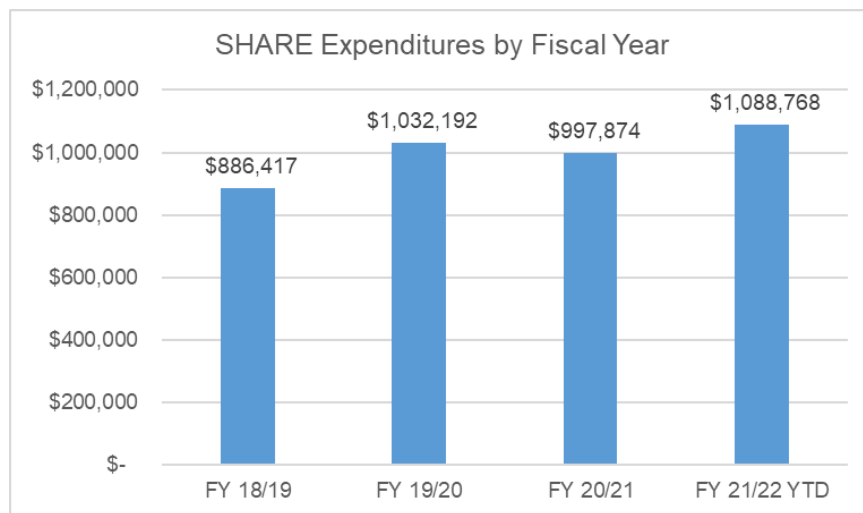
## **RESIDENTIAL DETAIL**

### Sharing Households Assist Riverside’s Energy - SHARE PROGRAM

The SHARE program assisted 3,189 customers through May 2022.

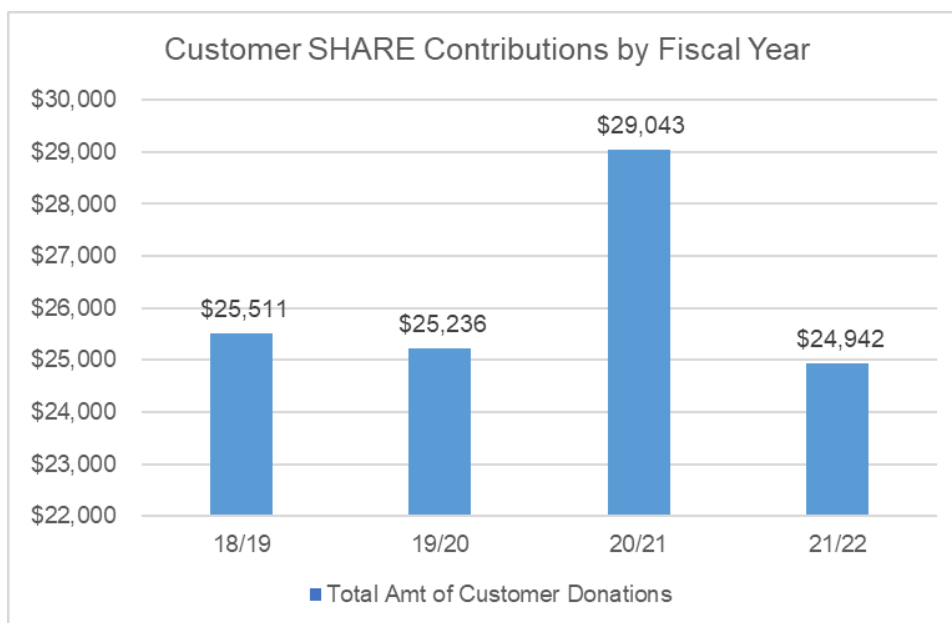


On May 17, 2022, the City Council approved the fourth yearly SHARE enhancement increase for electric and water monthly credits. Effective July 1, 2022, electric monthly credits will increase from \$15.50 to \$16.00, and water monthly credits will increase from \$3.00 to \$3.25. In addition to the monetary increase, the qualification criteria were also expanded to increase from 200% federal poverty guidelines to 250%, meaning that a family of four (4) can have a household income of up to \$69,375 or less to qualify for SHARE.



#### SHARE Customer Donations

RPU customers can donate to the SHARE program and the average customer donation is \$28 per year. Customer donations are promoted through back of utility bill, social media, and customer outreach. From July 1, 2021, through May 31, 2022, customers have donated a total of \$24,942 and have provided emergency/deposit assistance to 100 customers.



#### Energy Savings Assistance Program (ESAP)

ESAP was created to help low-income renters and homeowners with energy-savings home improvements at no-cost. The program was put on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The

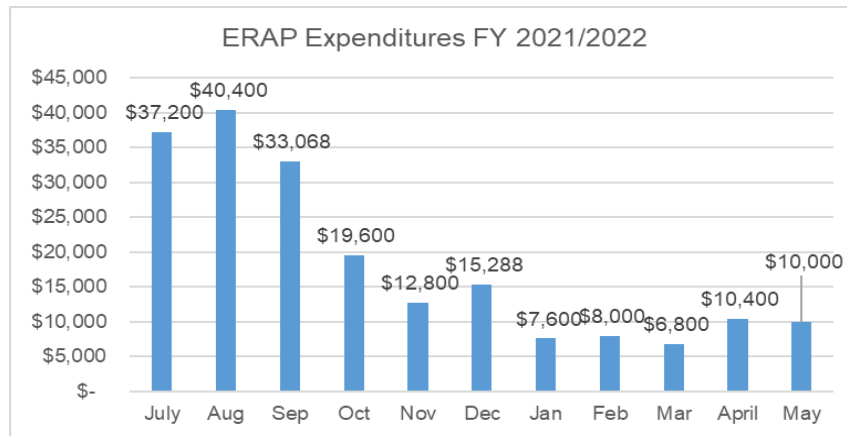
ESAP agreement has been amended and restated with SoCal Gas and was approved by the Board on January 24, 2022, and by the City Council on February 8, 2022.

Since March 1, 2022, the program has benefitted approximately 382 homes in the RPU service area, expending a total of \$214,058.75. The program continues to help our customers and with an interest list of over 2,000 customers, participation looks set to remain strong over the coming months.

#### Emergency Recovery Assistance Program (ERAP)

ERAP was created to assist residential electric customers who have been unemployed, furloughed or experienced a reduction in work hours due to COVID-19. ERAP launched on May 20, 2020, and will end 90 days after the City is no longer under the present Emergency declaration.

From July 2021 through May 2022, 503 applications have been approved and \$201,156 has been expended on the program.



#### Residential Rebates

From July 2021 through May 2022, a total of 8,301 residential energy rebates were processed for a total rebate benefit of \$716,383.19.

Residential Devices	Participation	RPU Expenditures
Air Conditioning	433	\$277,150.00
Energy Star	1,381	113,825.00
Pool Pump	95	19,000.00
Tree Power	5,685	212,745.14
Weatherization	329	57,763.05
Recycling	378	35,900.00
<b>Energy Rebate Total</b>	<b>8,301</b>	<b>\$716,383.19</b>

On August 9, 2021, the Board of Public Utilities voted to recommend that the City Council approve the Electric Vehicle Rebate Program, and on October 12, 2021, this item was unanimously approved by the City Council. To date, 44 used EV rebates have been processed and approximately \$19,000 has been paid out, this also includes two low-income rebates.

A total of 22 EV Charger applications have been processed with a total payout of \$9,413. Five (5) EV Adapter applications have been processed with a total payout of \$3,974.31.

RPU's water rebate programs are processed through Metropolitan Water District's (MWD) rebate portal: [www.SoCalWaterSmart.com](http://www.SoCalWaterSmart.com). All rebates issued to RPU water customers are paid out of the MWD budget, unless RPU elects to add additional funding to certain water conservation measures.

RPU pays an additional rebate for weather-based irrigation controllers, high efficiency sprinkler nozzles, and turf removal projects. From July 1, 2021 through May 31, 2022, a total of 321 residential water rebates were processed with total payout of \$55,385.

Residential Devices	Participation	RPU Expenditure	MWD Expenditure
High Efficiency Clothes Washer (HECW)	163	\$0.00	\$13,855.00
Residential Cistern Large	3	0.00	900.00
Residential Cistern Medium	1	0.00	300.00
Residential Premium HET (from 1.6 gpf toilet)	3	0.00	120.00
Residential Turf Removal (per square foot)	20	39,341.00	78,682.00
Rotating Nozzle	11	1,644.00	1,096.00
Weather Based Irrigation Controller (WBIC) (each < acre)	120	14,400.00	89,200.00
<b>Water Conservation Total</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>\$55,385.00</b>	<b>\$184,153.00</b>

## COMMERCIAL DETAIL

From July 2021 through May 31, 2022, a total of 58 commercial rebates were processed (one weatherization, 31 air conditioning, three energy star, one new construction and 14 lighting) with a total payout of \$593,589.44 and a kWh savings of 6,332,960.

Account management staff continues to work with key accounts on summer readiness and the Power Partners program to help with potential high summer loads and possible CAISO resource shortfalls.

## EDUCATION DETAIL

Essay Contest winners were announced:

First place, Pritesh Patel of Hillcrest High School, for an essay on engineering a solar array over the Gage Canal to decrease evaporation while also generating power.

Second place, Patrick Pascual of Poly High School, for an essay envisioning how vertical farming could improve the city's future.

Third place, Kaylee Akison of Hillcrest High School, for an essay on making parks sustainable.

California Baptist University will be hosting this year's STEM in Public Utilities Learning Labs scheduled to be held for the week of July 11 – 15, 2022. Students will be able to see a Lineman Demonstration, a Water Field demonstration, as well as take tours of the UOC and RERC facilities. Students will also be able to work with CBU engineering students throughout the week.

The CE Team has also collaborated with Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District and will be taking facilities tour of their wastewater treatment plant.

The Education team attended the Health and Safety Fair at Terrace Elementary School on May 19, 2022, handing out 200 RPU first aid kits.

The 2021/22 school year ended with the education team having taught a total of 145 water and energy classes to a total of 4,848 students across two school districts and one private school.

## **COMMUNICATIONS DETAIL**

Below are the in-person events the CE Team participated in during the month of May 2022:

- 5/11 – 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Senior Conference - Janet Goeske Center
- 5/13 – Promenade Vehicle Day (Promenade Elementary School)
- 5/19 – Terrace Elementary Health and Safety Fair
- 5/21 – CARB Grand Opening
- 5/25 – Community Action Partnership Open House
- 5/26 – EDA Workforce Center- Monthly utility assistance program outreach

Key social media posts during the month of May 2022 include:

- 5/2 - Drinking Water Week
- 5/4 - RPU team member Brandon Peterson wins American Water Works Association Proctor of the Year award
- 5/13 - Water conservation – car wash
- 5/19 - Don't Doubt the Drought – outdoor watering tip
- 5/24 - Mylar balloons reminder
- 5/25 - RPU Water Quality Report
- 5/26 - 2021 Engineering Essay Contest winner announcement
- 5/27 - Saturday hours at Orange Square customer counters

Back of Bill messaging for May included:

- Ways to be Waterwise
- Assistance programs

Bill Inserts for May included:

- Public Works Food Waste Diversion Program

In May, the CE Team continued to promote the Don't Doubt the Drought campaign to encourage the community to save water. The team also worked to develop messaging to prepare for June's Restart Program and the resumption of utility shutoffs.