

RIVERSIDE PUBLIC UTILITIES

Board Memorandum

BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES

DATE: July 8, 2019

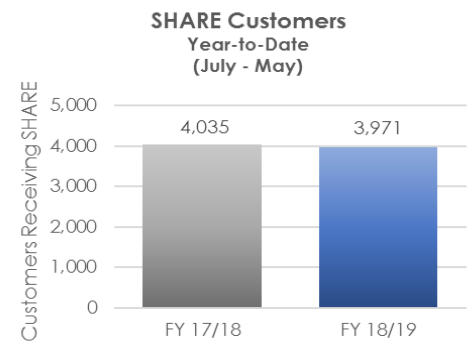
GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

ITEM NO:

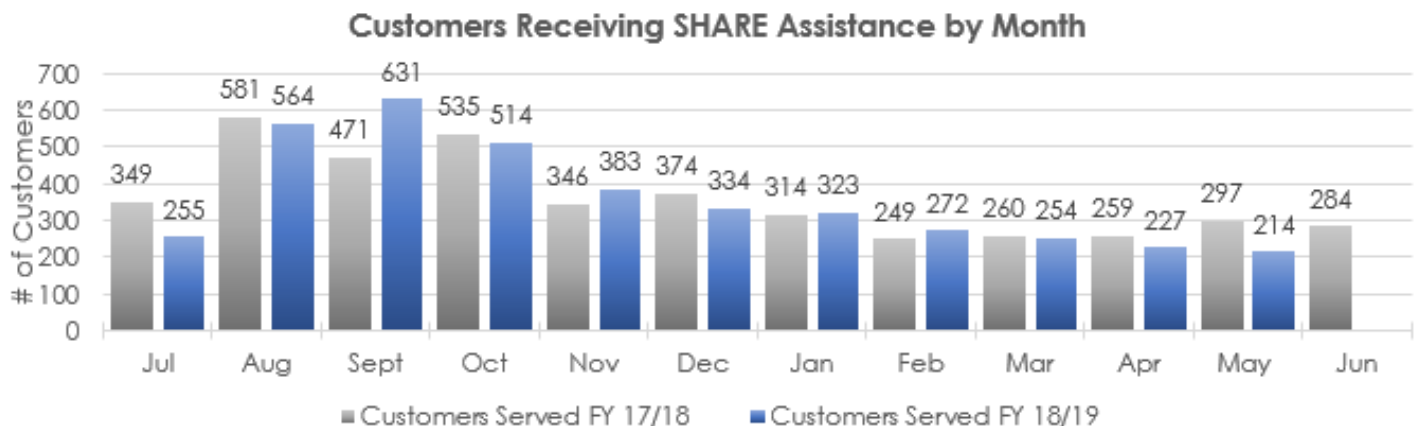
General Manager's report on SHARE program participation July through May 2019

Concurrent with the adoption of the rate plan in 2018, the City also approved enhancements to the SHARE program. This included increasing the amount budgeted for the program from about \$1.7 million per year in FY 17/18 to \$2.8 million for FY 18/19. The SHARE program provides financial assistance to qualified low-income customers.

Enhancements for the current fiscal-year included changing the income eligibility for customers from 150% of the Federal Poverty Level to 200% of the Federal Poverty Level, which allows more customers to qualify. Additionally, the SHARE program also now offers two monthly on-bill rebates for customers. Qualified customers can receive \$14 per month from their electric bill and \$2.25 from their water bill. The SHARE program maintained the once-annual \$150 assistance to customers but has limited it to either deposit assistance or emergency assistance for customers that receive a disconnection notice but are unable to pay. In prior years, customers did not need to demonstrate an emergency to receive the once-annual assistance.



Over the first eleven months, through June 2019, the total number of customers that have received SHARE assistance on their utility bill is 3,971. This represents a year-over-year decrease of -2% when compared to 4,035 customers served between July and June 2018. Participation continues to trend similar to prior years despite increasing outreach. Staff believes that this is due to the currently economic conditions. However, staff continues to expand outreach.



Note: The number of customers served in FY 17/18 in February through June were updated to actual data.

Customer Engagement conducted four outreaches for the month of May:

Figure 1

5/4/19 – Show and Go Car Show in Downtown Riverside



Figure 2

5/23/19 – Riverside University Health System Wellness and Resource Fair at Fairmount Park



Figure 3

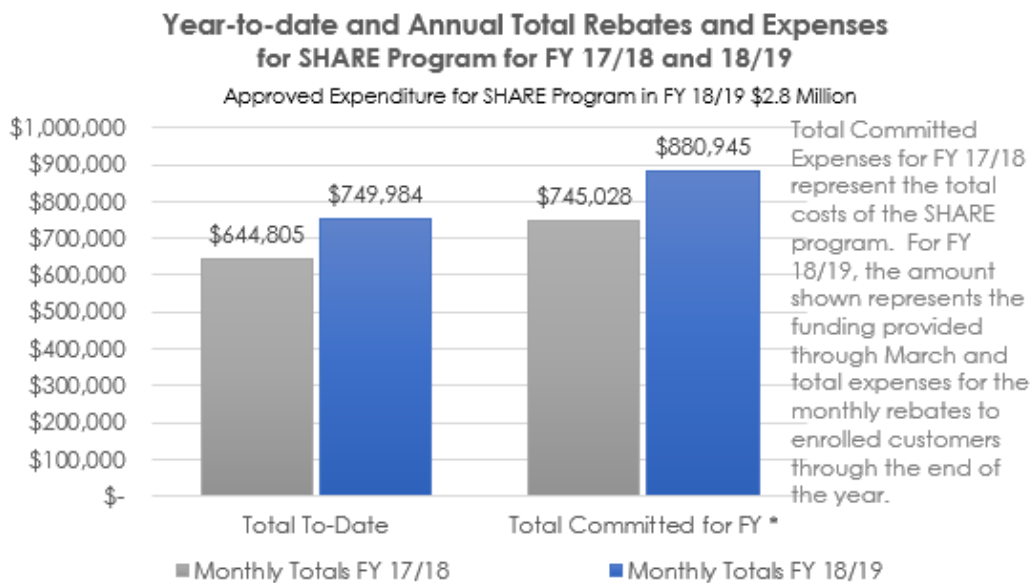
5/25/19 – Annual Riverside Chili Cook Off and Car Show on Magnolia Ave and Jackson St



At the outreach events since March, staff has made contact with upwards to 1,000 customers. All Customer Engagement staff will receive training on low-income outreach and will participate in the upcoming neighborhood events in each ward to provide information on utility assistance, rebate programs, energy efficiency and water conservation.

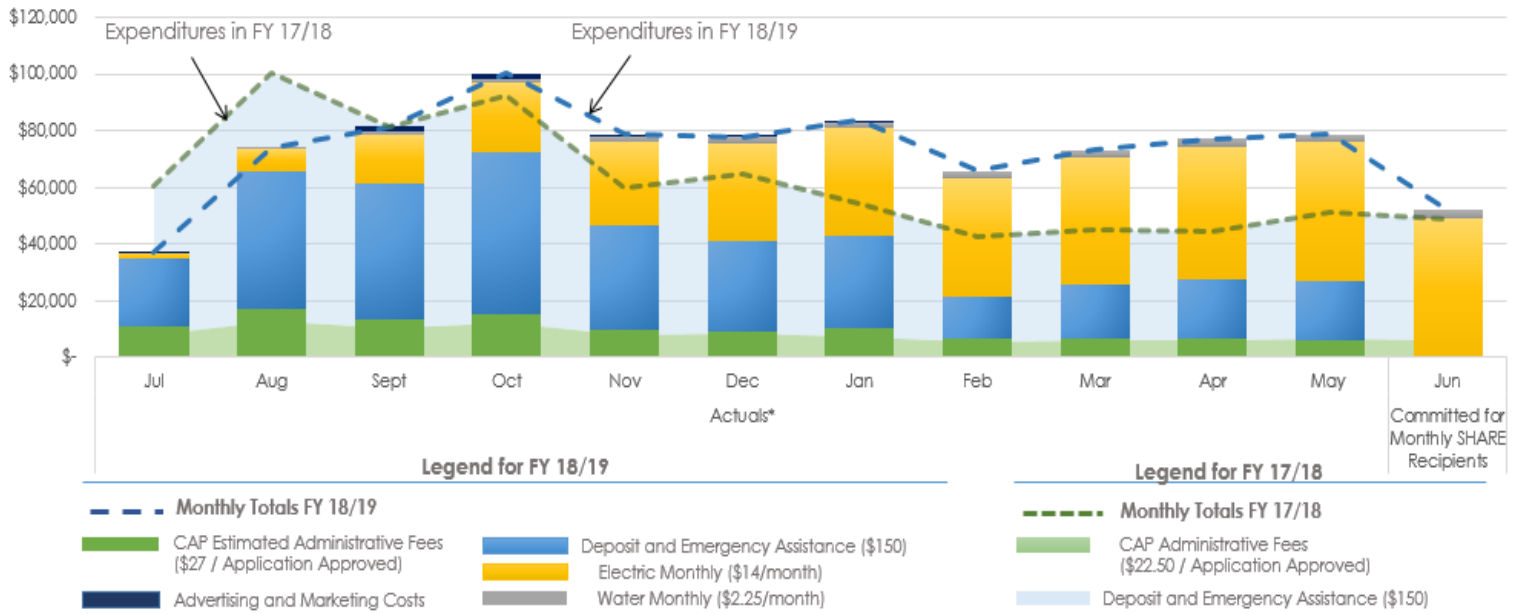
In regards to the funding for the program, the SHARE program continued expenses in FY 18/19 are trending similar to FY 17/18 for costs for the same period. As noted in previous months, this was anticipated by staff as the rebate provided to customers transitioned to fewer receiving the once-annual lump-sum \$150 emergency or deposit assistance and all customers receiving monthly assistance. As customers enroll in the program for the monthly assistance, the costs have been increasing throughout the year.

In FY 17/18, the SHARE program cost was \$172.50 per customer, which included the customer rebate of \$150 and the administration cost of \$22.50 for the application processing services provided by the County’s, CAP. Program costs in FY 18/19 will vary month to month, particularly in this first year of the enhanced program. Until the enhanced SHARE program has been running for a full 12 months, the monthly average per customer will increase as more customers enroll in the monthly rebate programs. Expenses associated with the rebates per customer are spread throughout the year as customer receive their monthly rebates. The amount expended per customer as of the end of June 2019 was \$208.73. The cost per customer for end of the fiscal year is expected to be \$221.84 (the amount includes monthly payments for enrolled customers through the end of the current fiscal year). Additionally, for FY 18/19, costs include the increased CAP administration cost of \$27 per approved application and marketing expenses.



The chart on the following page provides detail on the history and current progress of the SHARE program participants, expenditures, overhead costs and program goals. CAP administrative expenses are shown in green with the lighter color representing FY 17/18. In May 2019, there was a 42.4 percent difference in costs between the monthly electric rebate and the flat emergency/deposit assistance (shown as light blue for FY 17/18 and darker blue for FY 18/19). This reflects the monthly payments (shown in yellow) increasing as participation increases throughout the year.

Comparison of FY 17/18 and FY 18/19 (to-date) Expenses Associated with the SHARE Program



* CAP Administrative Fee for FY 18/19 is Estimated based on Approved Applications.