

**COVID-19 EMERGENCY RECOVERY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (ERAP) IN AMOUNT OF \$5 MILLION, SUSPENSION OF OTHER PUBLIC BENEFIT FUNDED PROGRAMS EXCEPT SHARE, AND CONSIDERATION OF RESTART PROGRAM – SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION OF \$3,600,000**

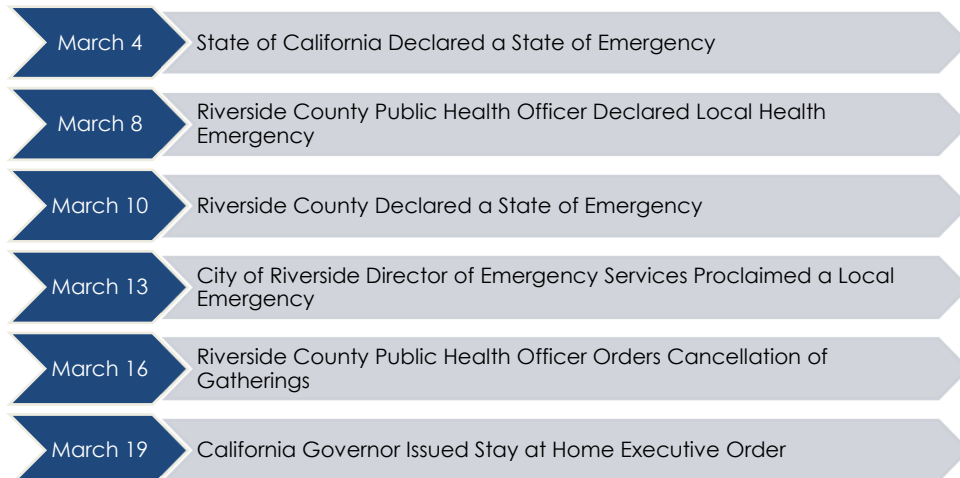
## **Riverside Public Utilities**

City Council  
May 5, 2020

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## **TIMELINE OF EMERGENCY DECLARATIONS**



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## RPU BACKGROUND

1. Many RPU customers financially impacted
2. March 17, 2020 – City Council suspended all utility shut-offs retroactive to start of the emergency
3. Issues:
  1. Many businesses are closed – reducing load
  2. The City cannot waive utility payments
  3. Unpaid customer bills will accrue



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## PUBLIC BENEFITS CHARGE

### Permitted Uses

**RPU is required  
by State Law to  
collect a Public  
Benefits Charge**

(Public Utilities Code Section 385,  
enacted 1996)

Energy  
efficiency and  
energy  
conservation

Renewable  
energy  
resources

Research and  
development

**Services for  
low-income  
residential  
customers**



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## SHARE LOW-INCOME ASSISTANCE

1. Sharing Households Assist Riverside's Energy (SHARE)
2. Began in 1989 – expanded in 2018
3. Provides bill assistance to low-income residential customers
  - a. Eligibility: 200% below the Federal Poverty Level
  - b. Monthly assistance: \$14.50 for electric customers and \$2.50 for water customers
  - c. Emergency or deposit assistance: \$150 once per year for electric residential customers



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## IMPACTS OF THE EMERGENCY

Suspension of utility shut-offs and delayed customer payments.  
Utility bills cannot be waived.

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**How can RPU assist customers  
and the communities' economic recovery?**



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## COVID-19 EMERGENCY RECOVERY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (ERAP)

1. New Low-Income Program for customers who have lost their jobs, been furloughed, or have had work hours reduced due to the COVID-19 Emergency
2. Program details
  - a. Limited time program – start of emergency to 3 months following
  - b. Provide a one-time bill credit of \$250 for up to 20,000 residential customers
  - c. Additional program guidelines will be established
3. \$5 Million Funding
  - a. Paid for solely by Public Benefit Funds (electric customers only)
  - b. \$3.6 Million supplemental, \$1.4 Million from unprogrammed



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## RESTART PROGRAM

1. Repayment program that will help business customers repay any unpaid utility bills
2. Program Options
  - a. Delayed start to repayments
  - b. Standardized repayment agreements
  - c. Ensure that a customer's credit is not negatively impacted by late utility bill payments
  - d. Establish flexible repayment timelines



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## RECOMMENDATIONS

That the City Council:

1. Authorize the City Manager, or designee, to implement the COVID-19 Emergency Recovery Assistance Program (ERAP) with a program amount of \$5,000,000 in order to assist low income residential electric customers that have been adversely impacted financially by the COVID-19 pandemic, as outlined in this report;
2. Authorize the City Manager, or designee, to make adjustments to or temporarily suspend any or all programs funded with Public Benefit Funds except for the ERAP and SHARE programs as needed in order to assist low income residential electric customers that have been adversely financially impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and to transfer the funding of such programs to the ERAP Program, if necessary, as outlined in this report;



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## RECOMMENDATIONS (CONT.)

3. Authorize a supplemental appropriation in the amount of \$3,600,000 from the Electric Public Benefits Fund Cash Reserve to the Electric Public Benefits Low Income Assistance Residential COVID-19 Program Account No. 6020100-456100 to fund the ERAP Program; and
4. Consider customer financial relief programs, including a utility bill Restart Program, for all electric and water utility customers and direct staff to return with recommendations for such programs.



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