

# RIVERSIDE PUBLIC UTILITIES

## Board Memorandum

**BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES**

**DATE:** May 11, 2020

**GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT**

**ITEM NO:** 11

### **General Manager's Report on SHARE Program Participation and Customer Resource Center (CRC) Utility Assistance Programs July through February 2020**

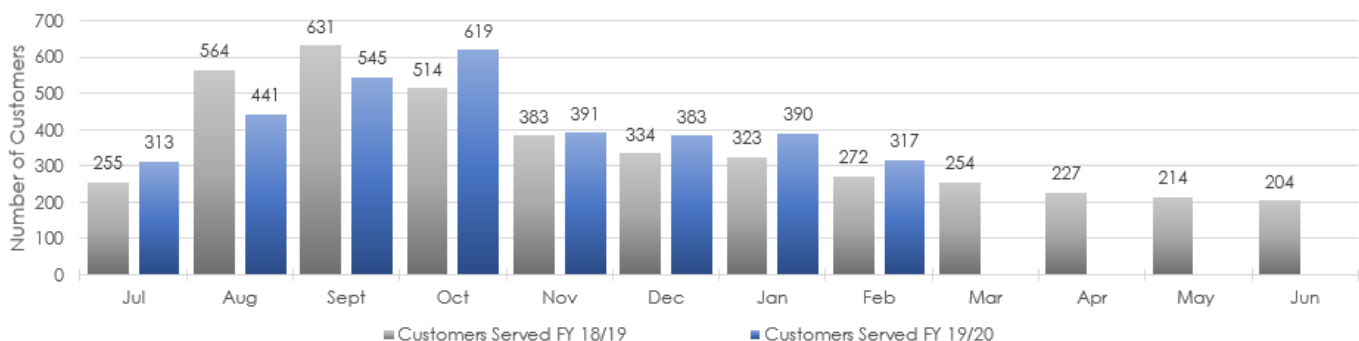
#### SHARE Program

The SHARE program provided assistance to over 4,400 electric customers and over 1,300 water customers for fiscal-year 18/19.

Enhancements for fiscal-year 19/20 include allowing customers that participate in other Federally funded programs such as: Cal-Fresh, SNAP, CalWorks/TANF, LI-HEAP, MediCal/Medicaid, Healthy Families A&B, National School Lunch Program, SSI, WIC or the Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance to bring their current year award letter to easily qualify for SHARE. Additionally, the monthly assistance increase was approved by Board June 10, 2019 and by Council July 2, 2019. Effective July 3, 2019, qualified customers can receive \$14.50 per month for their electric bill and \$2.50 for 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.

Over the first year of the enhanced program, the total number of customers approved for SHARE assistance was 4,414. This represented a year-over-year increase of 2% when compared to 4,319 customers served between July 2017 and June 2018. Participation continues to trend similar to prior years despite increasing outreach. Staff believes that this is due to the current economic conditions. The number of customers served July 2019 through February 2020 is 3,399, a 4% increase from the previous year.

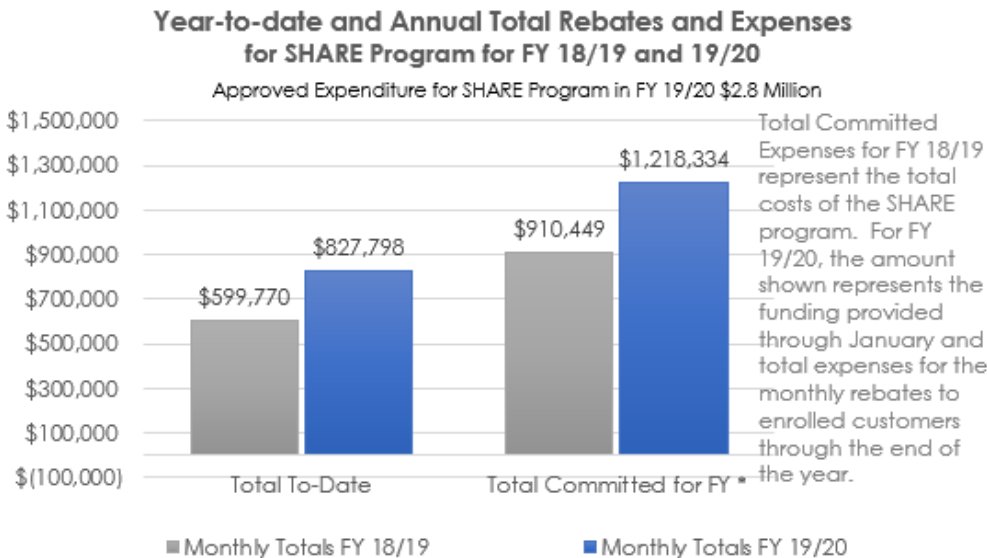
**Customers Receiving SHARE Assistance by Month**



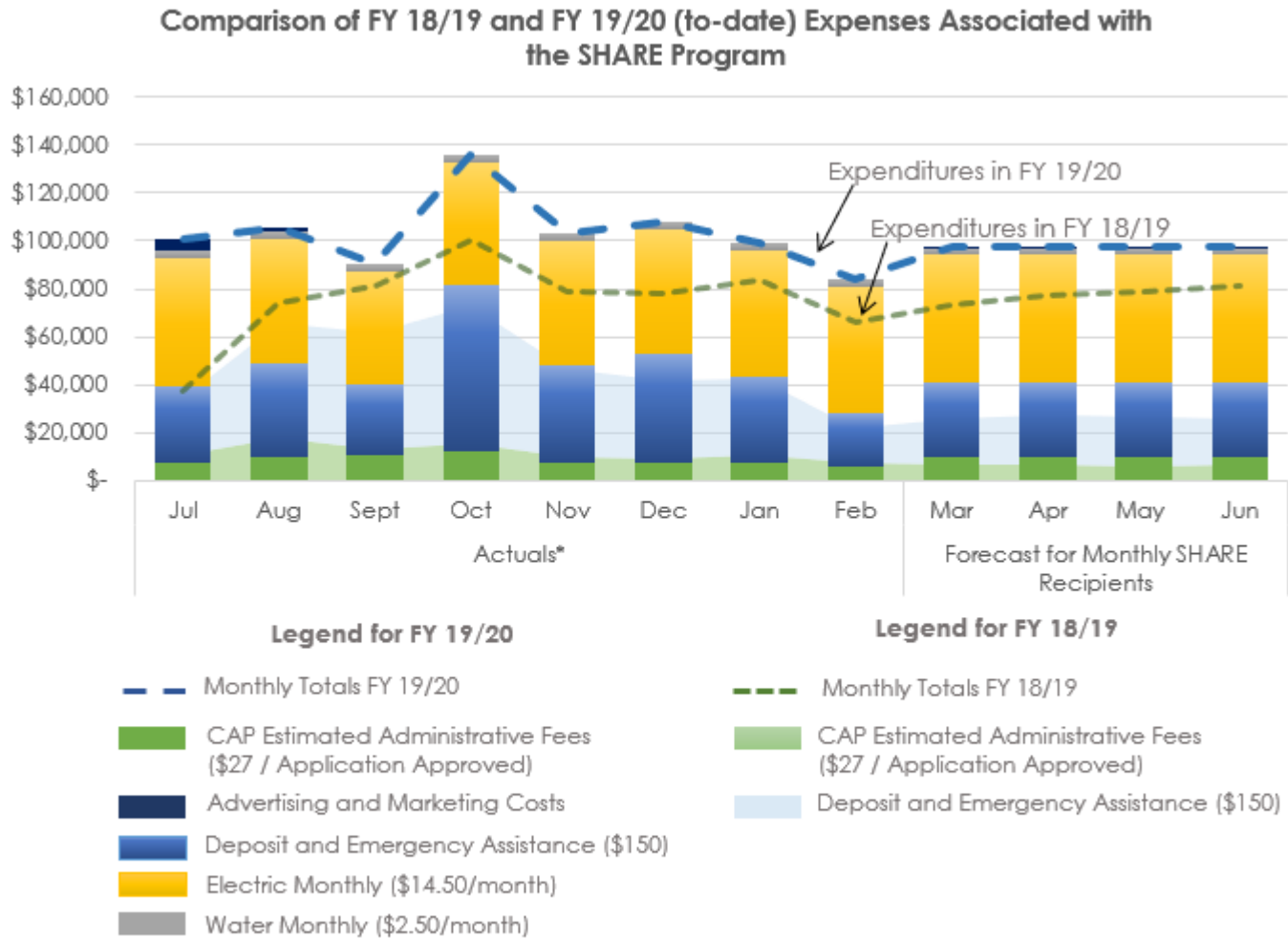
Note: The number of customers served in FY 17/18 in February through June have been updated to reflect actual data. Prior month's data were estimates based on previous years.

In FY 18/19, the SHARE program cost varied month to month, the monthly average per customer increased as more customers enrolled 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 FY 18/19 was \$225.64 (the amount includes monthly payments for enrolled customers through the end of the current

fiscal year). Through February, the amount expended per customer is \$243.54.



The chart on the next 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 19/20. In February 2020, there was a 31 percent difference in costs between the monthly electric rebate and the flat emergency/deposit assistance (shown as light blue for FY 18/19 and darker blue for FY 19/20). This reflects the monthly payments (shown in yellow) increasing as participation increases throughout the year.



\* CAP Administrative Fee for FY 19/20 is Estimated based on Approved Applications.

## Casa Blanca Customer Resource Center

The Customer Engagement division opened a location at the Casa Blanca Customer Resource Center (CRC). Customers have the ability to apply for SHARE, rebate programs and utilize on-site and have any questions or concerns immediately answered. This location provides an alternative location for customers who would have been required to go to the Community Action Partnership (CAP) office located near downtown on Iowa Street as in the past. Since the soft opening date on July 15, 2019, a total of 898 customers have been approved for SHARE at the CRC in addition to the 2,501 customers who have been approved through the traditional application process at CAP.

Customer Engagement is also working closely with Customer Service to assist in increasing SHARE and rebate applications at the CRC. Customers that enter the payment center seeking utility payment assistance are directed to the processing center to receive immediate assistance.

## Community Outreach

Since March 2019, staff has participated in over 30 community and neighborhood outreach events and made contact with upwards to over 2,000 customers. Customer Engagement has committed to participating in at least two outreach events beginning in March 2020.

To further increase participation, staff is working with the Office of Communications to develop a campaign promoting SHARE for the month of June. The campaign will be promoted through City social media channels, bill inserts, postcard mailers and in partnership with Southern California Gas Company and the Community Action Partnership of Riverside County.

## Energy Savings Assistance Program

The Energy Savings Assistance Program (ESAP) is administered in partnership with the Southern California Gas Company. The program offers no-cost energy saving home improvements to income-qualified renters and homeowners. ESAP has served homes during February and has served approximately 66 customers during Fiscal Year 2019/20 to date.

The most popular measure is the LED light bulb, over 19,000 have been installed in customer's homes.

As of November 19, 2020, City Council approved a \$500,000 increase to the ESAP program, bringing the program total to \$1 million for FY 19/20.