

PUBLIC BENEFITS LOW-INCOME PROGRAM INCOME VERIFICATION

Customer Engagement

Board of Public Utilities

November 17, 2025

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LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

- 1. State law has required local publicly owned utilities to provide weatherization programs and rate assistance to low-income customers since the 1990s
- 2. Assembly Bill (AB) 1890 (Brulte, 1996) required that 2.85% of electric revenue be utilized to fund public benefits programming to be used in any of the following four areas: demand side management (energy efficiency), renewable energy, low-income assistance, or research, development, and demonstration
- 3. Senate Bill (SB) 1939 (Alarcon, 2000) added requirements for POUs that had not implemented targeted energy efficiency programs and rate discounts for low-income electricity customers, prepare a needs assessment for those customers and required them to consider increasing the level of discounts or raising eligibility levels to reflect customer need and to implement these programs
- **4. SB X2-2** (Alarcon, 2001) required POUs to streamline their enrollment for low-income programs by collaborating with existing providers for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and other electric or gas providers withing the same service territory



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BACKGROUND

RPU has been providing low-income assistance programs since the the 1980's

- 1. Sharing Households Assist Riverside's Energy (SHARE) program established in 1989
 - a. Initially only provided emergency assistance
 - b. Currently provides a monthly on-bill credit and deposit and emergency bill assistance
- 2. Energy Savings Assistance Program (ESAP) established in 2012
 - a. Provides direct installation of energy efficient devices and appliances to increase efficiency and help lower bills



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BACKGROUND

- SHARE and ESAP apply the same income qualification criteria
- 2. Customers who qualify for one program will qualify for the other
- 3. Currently at 250% or below federal poverty guidelines

Number in Household	Total Annual Income Does Not Exceed	Total Monthly Income Does Not Exceed
1	\$39,125	\$3,260
2	\$52,875	\$4,406
3	\$66,625	\$5,552
4	\$80,375	\$6,697
5	\$94,125	\$7,843
6	\$107,875	\$8,989
7	\$121,625	\$10,135
8	\$135,375	\$11,281



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PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

- 1. About 35% of Riverside's households qualify as low-income based on the 250% of Federal Poverty Guidelines
- 2. The current assistance programs see a far lower participation rate than the potential 31,710 households which could potentially qualify for RPU's SHARE program
- 3. On average, 5,900 customers per month are in receipt of the assistance, or 19% of potentially qualified customers

Riverside Population Data	Population	Number Below 250% FPG	Percentage Below 250% FPG
Population determined in poverty	299,549	118,001	39%
Households	91,110	31,710	35%
Family Households	66,568	22,036	33%
Non-Family Households	24,542	9,674	39%



Source: U.S. Census Bureau Data; American Community Survey 2021 and included in the RPU 2023 IRP

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DISCUSSION

- Income criteria of 250% of federal poverty guidelines applies to both the SHARE and ESAP programs. If customers are approved for one program they will automatically qualify for the other
- 2. SHARE program income verification is co-administered with County of Riverside Department of Public Social Services Department of Community Action Partnership (CAP)
 - a. On June 11, 2024, the City Council approved a first amendment to the agreement between RPU and CAP to continue this collaboration with extension options through June 30, 2029



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SHARE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

Step 1: Validation of customer identity

- May not be primary account holder but must be named on account
- 2. Customers must provide a valid form of identification and their Social Security card
 - Qualified identification includes a driver's license, state or federal identification card, Real ID, Passport, or Military ID



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SHARE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

Step 2: Income Verification

- All household income, including for all persons in the household, must be provided
- 2. Document submitted must be originals
- Current year award letters for other assistance programs should also be submitted

- Paycheck stubs: copies of all check stubs (last 4 weeks), full consecutive month of pay
- SSI or SSA award letter (covering current year)
- Current bank statement showing direct deposit only for SSI, SSA, TANF or pension
- Unemployment check stubs/ on-line print out showing direct deposit
- Current TANF Notice of Action or Passport to Services printout (including current month)
- Child support receipts/ on-line printout
- Alimony-spousal support
- Disability insurance payments
- Jury duty payment
- Proof of self-employment (current filed 1040 tax form and Schedule C)



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SHARE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

- Deposit assistance is only for qualified new customers unable to pay required deposit
 - a. The higher assistance provided if consumer report indicates the requirement or if the customer closed a prior account in arrears
 - b. Assistance only covers the required amount, and no additional funds are placed in the customer's account
- 2. Emergency assistance requires the customer have received a 48-hour disconnection notice

Deposit Type	Fee
Electric- Residential - Standard	\$200
Electric- Residential - Higher	\$250

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SHARE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

- Customers can only apply for the program every 12 months; the 12-month period starts when the customer applies for and receives assistance. Customers cannot apply again until the current year has expired, this applies to monthly and \$250 assistance
 - a. The Customer Engagement Supervisor verifies eligibility for all applications
- 2. Applications from City or RPU staff require additional reviews a manager or executive staff member must co-sign the application
- About 10-15 applications are denied each month though many customers, after reviewing the qualifications or discussing with staff decide not to apply



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ESAP PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

- 1. ESAP uses the same 250% federal poverty guidelines qualification criteria
- 2. SHARE customers are referred by RPU to the ESAP program, after qualification has been verified and approved by RPU staff
- 3. SoCal Gas maintains a secondary customer list that the vendor may used after exhausting SHARE referrals which applies the same qualification criteria



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RECOMMENDATION

That the Board of Public Utilities receive and file a report outlining the Public Benefits low-income qualification verification criteria.



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