



POLICIES, RULES AND REGULATIONS	
Title: PILOT – RATEPAYER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM	
Approval Date: April 2023	Effective Date: July 2023
Approved By: Board of Directors	DMS #35440

**RATEPAYER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
(PILOT PROGRAM)**

1.0 PURPOSE

The Board of Directors of the Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency (the “Agency”) recognizes that some Agency residential households, whose household income falls below the federal poverty line, are not current on their water bills or are struggling to pay their water bills. The Agency has developed the Ratepayer Assistance Program (pilot program) to help some low-income residential households stay current on their water bills. The purpose of implementing this financial assistance program is to assist such customers with the monthly payment of their water bills.

The Agency intends to finance the Ratepayer Assistance Program with funds received from lease agreements with telecommunication companies who lease Agency property for telecommunications purposes or rental income received from Agency-owned property (“Program Funds”). These Funds are unrestricted funds and may be used by the Agency for any public purpose.

This pilot program is valid for three fiscal years (“FY”), beginning with FY 2023/24, with an effective date of July 2023 and ending with FY 2025/26, expiring in June 2026.

2.0 POLICY

Establishment of Assistance Fund for Low-Income Residents

- 2.1 The Agency hereby establishes a financial assistance fund for qualifying low-income customers that will be supported with Program Funds approved by the Board of Directors, in its sole discretion, for use in accordance with this policy (the “Assistance Fund”). The Agency shall ensure that the Assistance Fund does not mix with other Agency revenues, including water rate revenues.
- 2.2 The Board of Directors shall approve the amount of funds for the Assistance Fund as part of the budget process for each fiscal year. Approved funding, if any, will be a not-to-exceed amount established for a twelve (12) month period, beginning each fiscal year. The Agency is under no obligation to approve funding for the Assistance Fund or to provide financial assistance to any customers if there are no funds available in the Assistance Fund.
- 2.3 The Agency, in its sole discretion, reserves the rights to reduce amounts available under the Assistance Fund, and any assistance available under that program, in its entirety, upon at least thirty (30) days written notice to participants in the program.



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3.0 ASSISTANCE

The Agency will apply a \$10 monthly credit on fixed charges for qualifying residential customer accounts towards their respective monthly water bills for up to a 12-month period during a fiscal year. Financial assistance shall be given to qualifying customers from the priority group as identified in 4.4, on a “first-come, first-served” basis, so long as funds are available and designated by the Board of Directors in each fiscal year. Once all of the authorized funds in a fiscal year are committed to qualifying customers, the Agency is under no obligation to provide any financial assistance to additional customers.

4.0 QUALIFYING CRITERIA

- 4.1 An applicant’s primary residence must be the service address on the account for which he or she is seeking financial assistance.
- 4.2 Customers who present evidence that they are enrolled in the Southern California Edison (“Edison”) or Southern California Gas (“SoCalGas”) California Alternate Rates for Energy (“CARE”) programs qualify for financial assistance under this policy. The name and/or service address on the Edison bill or SoCalGas bill reflecting the customer’s enrollment in the CARE program must match the name and/or service address on the Agency water bill.
- 4.3 As indicated above, any approved financial assistance will be provided on a fiscal year basis. For continued consideration, a new application must be submitted every fiscal year. Agency staff shall determine deadlines for applications and timing of awards and shall make such information available to the public. The Board of Directors may in its discretion decide whether to authorize contributions of Program Funds to the Assistance Fund or not. If the Board does not authorize contributions in a fiscal year or decides to end the pilot program, the Agency has no obligation to provide any financial assistance to otherwise qualifying customers.
- 4.4 Priority will be given to the following groups meeting the criteria established in 4.2:
 - a. Seniors, age 62 or greater
 - b. Veterans
 - c. Permanently disabled
- 4.5 If it is projected by Agency staff that there will be available funds in the Assistance Fund after processing the priority group applications, the Assistance Fund will be opened to all eligible customers meeting the qualifying criteria as established in 4.2.



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4.6 Only individually metered residential accounts, who receive water through a 1-inch or smaller water meter, will be eligible for the Assistance Fund.

5.0 INTERNAL SYSTEM TO PROCESS APPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Agency shall create a standard application form, available in both English and Spanish and accessible on the Agency’s website to all customers, including those with disabilities.
- 5.2 Staff shall be trained in evaluating and processing applications and providing customer support for applicants with questions about the Assistance Fund.
- 5.3 The Agency shall ensure that sufficient staff are available for timely application processing and customer support.
- 5.4 Staff shall issue written decisions, delivered by e-mail, in the event that an application is denied explaining the reasons for denial.

(Originally Adopted April 2023)