



**City of Lawrence residents whose income has been affected by the coronavirus pandemic can soon apply for assistance in paying their city utility bill.**

The city has been awarded \$500,000 from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act, or CARES, for an assistance program to help utility customers with economic hardship due to COVID-19. The program will help residents cover utility bills incurred between March 1 and Dec. 10, and will begin accepting applications on Nov. 1, according to a city staff memo.

The city has partnered with various local social service agencies to administer the program. Applicants will need proof of being a residential utility customer, proof or certification of not being able to pay utilities due to a loss/reduction of income due to the economic impact of COVID-19, and proof of economic need. Specifically, a household's pre-COVID-19 income must have been less than 80% of the area's average median income, or a household can affirm eligibility if it is receiving benefits through other programs, such as Medicaid.

The annual income limit is \$49,500 for one person, \$56,600 for a household of two, \$63,650 for a household of three, \$70,700 for a household of four, and \$76,400 for a household of five. Residents whose income exceeds the threshold are still eligible to apply to the program, but those at or below 80% average median income will be prioritized.

Those who have a delinquent balance of 22 days or more will be notified by mail about the program. As of Oct. 20, there were 3,359 active utility accounts with a balance more than 21 days past due, totaling about \$1.04 million in delinquent payments, according to city reports.

**Community organizations that will receive and process applications:**

- Ballard Center, 785-842-0729
- Catholic Charities, 785-856-2694
- ECKAN, 785-841-3357
- Lawrence Family Promise, 785-764-9506
- Salvation Army, 785-843-4188
- Senior Resource Center, 785-842-0543
- Willow Domestic Violence Center, 785-843-3333