

#38
05-12-05

RESOLUTION NO. 050512-38

WHEREAS, the City of Austin makes every effort to assist customers on low-to-moderate or fixed incomes, or who face unexpected emergencies in keeping their utility accounts in good standing; and,

WHEREAS, the City of Austin maintains a Customer Assistance Program (CAP) which provides money saving opportunities and financial assistance to qualified persons; and,

WHEREAS, every month, a message is included in all utility bills asking customers to "please, if they can, donate \$2, \$3, or any amount to help your neighbors in need with their utility bill"; and,

WHEREAS, annual contributions to the Customer Assistance Program in 2004 were down 43 percent from six years ago, and 24 percent from the prior year; and

WHEREAS, Austin Energy has been working with the Community Action Network (CAN) CAP team on strategies for improving the program;
NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:

That the City Council directs the City Manager to continue to work with the CAN CAP team to identify strategies for increasing contributions to the Customer Assistance Program listed on the City's utility bill; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That those strategies include the following actions:

- 1) recommend alternative placement and format of the CAP contribution line on the utility bill;
- 2) recommend a new program name, logo and slogan;
- 3) develop program advertisements that can be used by community organizations in their newsletters;
- 4) develop strategies promoting the program to specific customer segments (e.g., small and medium businesses);
- 5) target promotional efforts to coincide with the following: (a) during the months that utility bills are traditionally lowest (e.g., April and November); (b) when the CAP runs out of money to assist qualified persons; and (c) as part of other assistance efforts in the community such as fan and coat drives; and report back to City Council in 90 days.

ADOPTED: May 12, 2005

ATTEST: _____

Shirley A. Brown
City Clerk