



## Recommendation for Action

**File #:** 21-1139, **Agenda Item #:** 4.

2/18/2021

### **Posting Language**

Approve an ordinance amending the fiscal year 2020-2021 operating budgets of Austin Water and Austin Energy in Ordinance No. 20200812-001 to appropriate an additional \$5,000,000 for each of the utilities' Plus -One payment assistance programs, for a total additional appropriation of \$10,000,000, to help address the ongoing economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Lead Department**

Austin Energy/Austin Water

### **Fiscal Note**

Fiscal notes are attached.

### **Prior Council Action:**

August 12, 2020- Council approved an ordinance adopting the City of Austin Budget for Fiscal Year 2020-2021, beginning on October 1, 2020, and ending on September 30, 2021.

### **For More Information:**

Mark Dombroski, AE Deputy General Manager, Chief Financial and Risk Officer, 512-322-6148; Joseph Gonzales, AW Assistant Director, Financial Services, 512-972-0359

### **Council Committee, Boards and Commission Action:**

February 3, 2021- Recommended by the Water and Wastewater Commission on a 9-0 vote on a motion by Commissioner Michel and Commissioner Turrieta's second with Commissioner Williams off the dais.

To be reviewed by the Electric Utility Commission on February 8, 2021.

### **Additional Backup Information:**

During the March 26, 2020 Council meeting, Council approved Resolution No. 20200326-092 directing the City Manager to explore options available to reduce the impact of utility bills during the time when the City is asking our community to work from or otherwise stay at home to help reduce the spread of the coronavirus. The resolution directed the City Manager to at a minimum consider adjusting eligibility criteria for the Plus 1 emergency financial aid program to make it accessible to individuals who have experienced an impact to their job or earnings as a result of COVID-19 and consider other options for utility rate relief for residential customers.

On April 9, 2020 Council approved Ordinance No. 20200409-083 for Austin Energy and Austin Water to contribute an additional \$5 million each to the Plus One payment assistance program. The Plus One payment assistance program provided direct and targeted relief to our most vulnerable customers experiencing hardship in paying utility bills.

Pursuant to this action, Austin Energy and Austin Water will each contribute an additional \$5 million to the Plus One payment assistance program for FY2021 for additional payment assistance, due to the continuing impacts

of COVID-19.

**Strategic Outcome(s):**

Government that Works for All