

City of Monterey Park

Residential Utility Assistance Program

GUIDELINES



Management Services Department
320 W. Newmark Avenue
Monterey Park, CA 91754

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CITY OF MONTEREY PARK
RESIDENTIAL UTILITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM GUIDELINES

I. INTRODUCTION

The City of Monterey Park’s COVID-19 Residential Utility Assistance Program provides financial assistance to low- and moderate-income residents with an emphasis on those negatively impacted by COVID. This program offers a one-time grant up to \$1,200 to residents to pay electricity, gas, water, and trash utilities. Grant awards will cover utility expenses for up to three months. Utility payments will be made directly to utility providers on behalf of the qualified resident. Residents are not expected to pay back this assistance. Awards will be based on the availability of CDBG and/or CARES Act CDBG-CV funds. Applicants will need to submit an application and documentation proving eligibility.

The program is funded through a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and supplemental CARES Act CDBG-CV funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development as eligible under Section 105(a) 17 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974. The City of Monterey Park’s COVID-19 Residential Utility Assistance Program meets the national objective of benefiting persons or households of low- to moderate-income.

II. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

The City’s Management Services Department staff will serve as the primary contact for implementation of the program guidelines. The City will:

- Market the Program;
- Accept and process applications;
- Ensure applicants meet eligibility requirements;
- Recommend approval of grants;
- Ensure disbursement of grant funds;
- Maintain grant files and fiscal records;

III. PROGRAM ASSISTANCE

A. Amount and Payment of Assistance

Assistance is limited to \$400 per month not-to-exceed three months for the payment of trash, water, gas, and electric utilities. Payment will be made directly to the utility provider.

B. Calculation of Assistance

The maximum monthly utility assistance will be determined by using difference between the household's disposable income and ability to cover utility obligations as shown on the household provided utility bills.

The City may, at its discretion, provide assistance with utilities that are in arrears beginning April 10, 2020. April utilities, if paid through the Program, will be prorated and the City's assistance will only cover that portion of the utility bill from April 10, 2020 to April 30, 2020. The months of all City-paid utility arrears will count as individual months in the City calculation of the number of months for which City assistance is provided not to exceed three (3) months.

C. Definition and Calculation of Household Need

Household need is defined as the financial need for assistance to pay utilities due to insufficient current monthly income. Household need is calculated by taking the total gross monthly income of all household members 18 years of age and older and subtracting the household's documented monthly expenses. The City, at its discretion may use an alternate method of calculating assistance in the event the above method is determined to be cumbersome in expediting program assistance.

IV. PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

A. Eligible Applicants

Under federal regulations, use of CDBG funded activities must meet the national objective of benefit to low- and moderate (“low-mod”) income benefit. For the purpose of this Program, the applicant must meet the following minimum requirements:

1. Applicant’s household income has been drastically reduced as a direct result of a loss or reduction in wages due COVID-19.
2. The Applicant’s current household monthly income is not sufficient to cover the Applicant’s documented monthly expenses that were current as of March 1, 2020.
3. Applicant’s household current COVID-affected gross annual income must at or below 80% of the Los Angeles median income, adjusted for household size;
4. Applicant’s primary residence is in the City of Monterey Park’s jurisdictional limits; and
5. Applicant submits a completed, signed application and all required support documentation by the due date and time (application may be signed electronically).

B. Low- And Moderate-Income Definition

Low- and moderate-income households for the purpose of this program must have a gross annual household income at or below that shown in the table below, as adjusted for household size.

HUD LOW-MODERATE INCOME (LMI) LIMITS			
Household Size	Maximum Income	Household Size	Maximum Income
1	\$63,100	5	\$97,350
2	\$72,100	6	\$104,550
3	\$81,100	7	\$111,750
4	\$90,100	8	\$118,950

Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. These income figures are subject to change annually (last updated: 4/02/20).

The projected annual gross income of the applicant’s household will be used to determine whether it is within the income limits above. Income to be included are salaries and wages, disability and State and Federal unemployment benefits. Please refer to Attachment A, 24 CFR Part 5.609, for a guide on what incomes to count and what incomes are excluded.

C. Eligible Use of Funds

Grant funds must be used to cover payment of utilities including water/sewer, trash, and electric/gas coverage usage periods on or after March 1, 2020. The amount of assistance will be based on the actual bills presented for payment. Payment will be made directly to the utility provider.

D. Conflict of Interest

Applicants shall not be an employee, agent, consultant, officer or elected official or appointed official of the City who exercises or have exercised any function or responsibilities with respect to activities relating to this Program or who are in a position to participate in a decision-making process or gain inside information with regard to these activities, may obtain a financial interest or financial benefit from this Program, or the proceeds from such activity, either for themselves or those with whom they have business or immediate family ties, during their tenure or for one year thereafter.

V. APPLICATION PROCESSING

A. Program Marketing and Outreach

The City will conduct program marketing. Examples of marketing include media coverage with ads in local papers and distribution of marketing brochures to local chamber of commerce, and business networking organizations. Social media marketing will include Twitter and the City's website. At least two webinars will be hosted by the City to provide applicants with general program and application information.

B. Application Documentation

The application will include information to document eligibility and assess need including but not limited to:

1. Valid California driver's license or identification card.
2. Documentation showing proof of reduction of income due to COVID-19 such as furlough notice, layoff notice, date of unemployment filing.
3. Documented monthly expenses.
4. Social security card or birth certificates for minors living in the household
5. Proof of current monthly income for:
 - i. Working adults
 - ii. Adults with other income such as unemployment (state and federal), social security, disability, pension, other income, etc.
 - iii. Self-employed persons
6. Federal income tax return for all persons filing tax returns.
7. Most recent statement of assets including savings and checking, 401K, etc.
8. Most recent utility bills

C. Application Process

Residents may download an application from the City of Monterey Park website at <https://www.montereypark.ca.gov/1314/COVID-19-Programs>. Applicants may also call the City of Monterey Park at (626) 307-1398 during regular business hours to request an application by mail. The City will receive applications beginning **June 10, 2020 to June 22, 2020 at 5:00 p.m.** Applications received after 5:00 p.m. on June 22, 2020 or postmarked after June 19, 2020 will not be processed. All applications submitted by the due date that also include all required support documentation will be sorted to determine the need for assistance. Incomplete applications will not be assigned a random number and will not be included in the lottery. Only applicants that show a need for assistance will be assigned a random number and included in the lottery. Applications will be reviewed for eligibility and grant funding in the order of the assigned number is selected in the lottery. If grant funds are exhausted, the remaining applicants will be placed on a waitlist in the order of their lottery number until additional funding becomes available, if any. If grant funds are not exhausted, the City has the option to keep the application period open until all funds are exhausted.

Application Submittal - Submit the application and copy of all required supporting documentation:

- On-line at <https://www.montereypark.ca.gov/1314/COVID-19-Programs>
- By mail. Applications must be postmarked on or before June 24, 2020, 5:00 p.m.

Mail to:

City of Monterey Park
Attn: Deborah Niblick, Management Services Department
320 W. Newmark Avenue
Monterey Park, CA 91754

TIMELINE

Application Available	June 8, 2020 – June 26, 2020
Eligibility Processing	June 29 – July 10, 2020
Lottery	July 13, 2020

D. Applicant Confidentiality

All personal and business financial information will be kept confidential. Program participant files with personal and business confidential information will be kept in locked secured storage units.

E. Dispute Resolution/Appeals Procedure

Any business applying for a financial assistance grant through the CDBG program has the right to appeal if their application is denied. The appeal must be made in writing to the City. A written response to the appeal will be provided to the applicant by the City within 30 days of receipt of the applicant's appeal letter.

F. Exceptions / Special Circumstances

Exceptions are defined as any action which would depart from policy and procedures stated in the guidelines. The City reserves the right to make exceptions but must comply with federal program requirements for household assistance.

G. Approval and Disbursement of Funds

Once applicants are determined eligible, the Program Administrator will contact the household for execution of paperwork and subsequent disbursement of funds. Funds will be disbursed directly to the utility provider.

H. Equal Opportunity

This Program will be implemented in ways consistent with the City's commitment to state and federal equal opportunity laws. No person shall be excluded from participation in, denied the benefit of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity funded in whole or in part with CDBG program funds on the basis of his or her religion, religious affiliation, age, race, color, ancestry, national origin, sex, marital status, familial status, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, or other arbitrary cause.