

Utility Discount Program

**PRESENTATION: SEATTLE PUBLIC UTILITIES AND
NEIGHBORHOODS COMMITTEE**

MAY 29TH, 2015



Background

- The Utility Discount Program is one of the most generous low-income utility assistance programs in the country, yet it is underutilized.
- Last year, Mayor Ed Murray announced a goal of doubling enrollment in the UDP – from 14,000 to 28,000 customers – by the end of 2018
- An IDT developed recommendations to achieve this goal by creating a utility assistance program that is better known, easier to navigate, and simpler to enroll in.
- The report containing these recommendations – “Strengthening the Utility Discount Program” – was transmitted to Council in August of 2014.
- Council has long supported efforts to expand participation – approved both Seattle City Light’s and Seattle Public Utilities’ strategic business plans which include funding for increased UDP enrollment.



UDP Mission and Eligibility

To ensure that utility bills are affordable for all.

The Utility Discount Program (UDP) helps low-income customers with utility payments by offering a discount of 60% on Seattle City Light bills and a 50% discount on Seattle Public Utilities bills.

This program is available for residential City Light and Seattle Public Utilities customers.

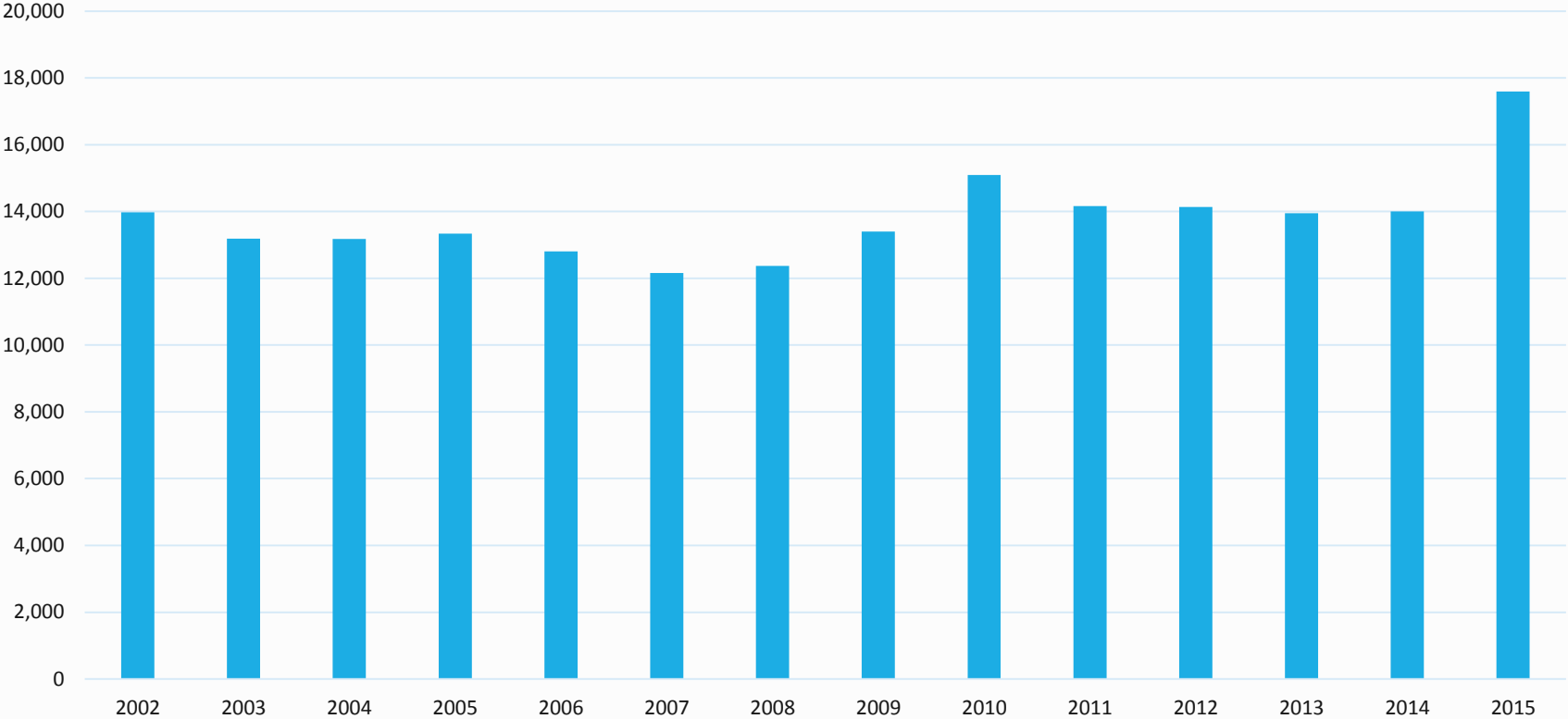
This program is funded by SCL and SPU rate payers.

Household Size	Gross Monthly Income	Gross Yearly Income
1	\$2,570	\$30,840
2	\$3,360	\$40,320
3	\$4,151	\$49,812
4	\$4,941	\$59,292
5	\$5,732	\$68,784
6	\$6,523	\$78,276
7	\$6,671	\$80,052
8	\$6,819	\$81,828
9	\$6,967	\$83,604
10	\$7,116	\$85,392
Each additional	\$211	\$2,541

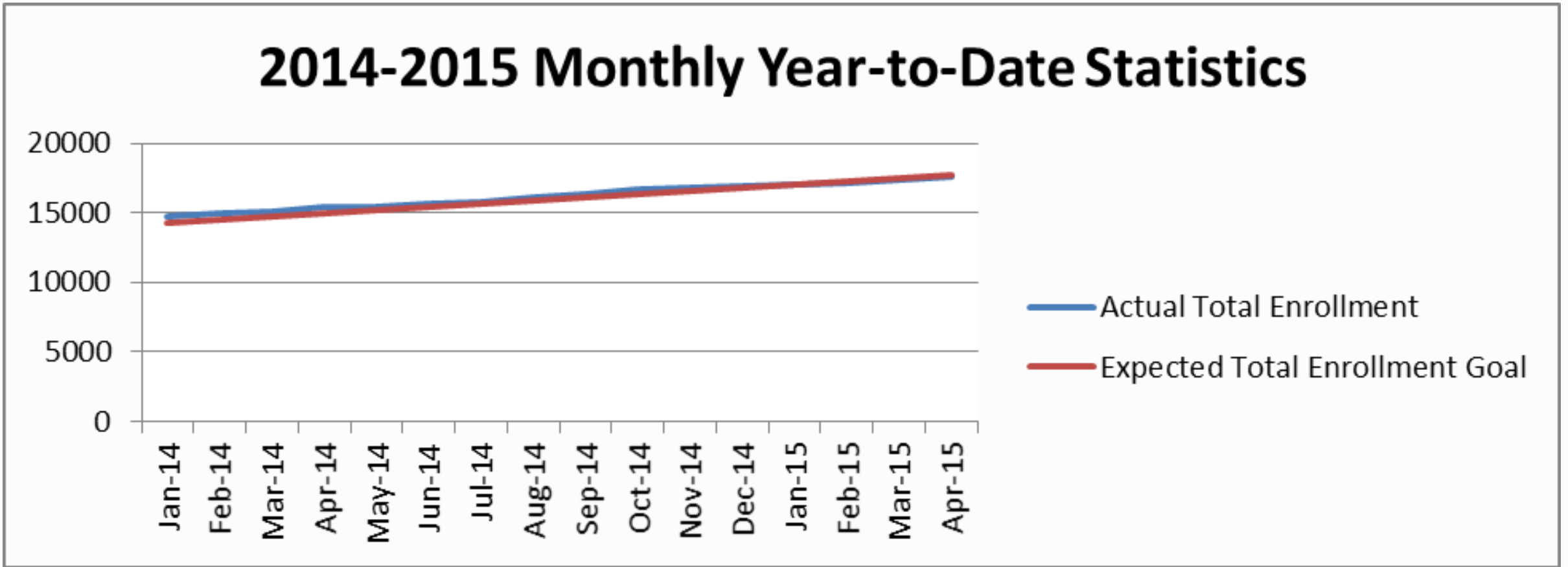
*Note: Gross Income is based on 70% of the state's median income.



Historical Enrollment of Clients in Program



Goals & Outcomes



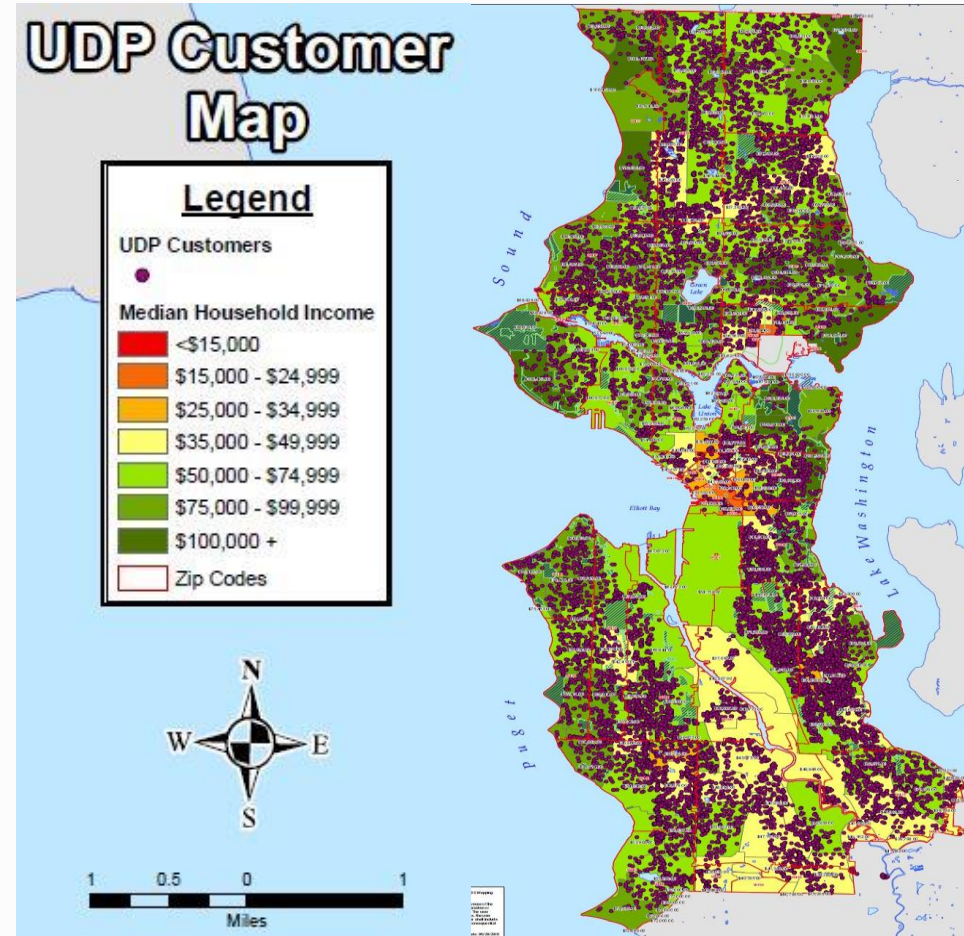
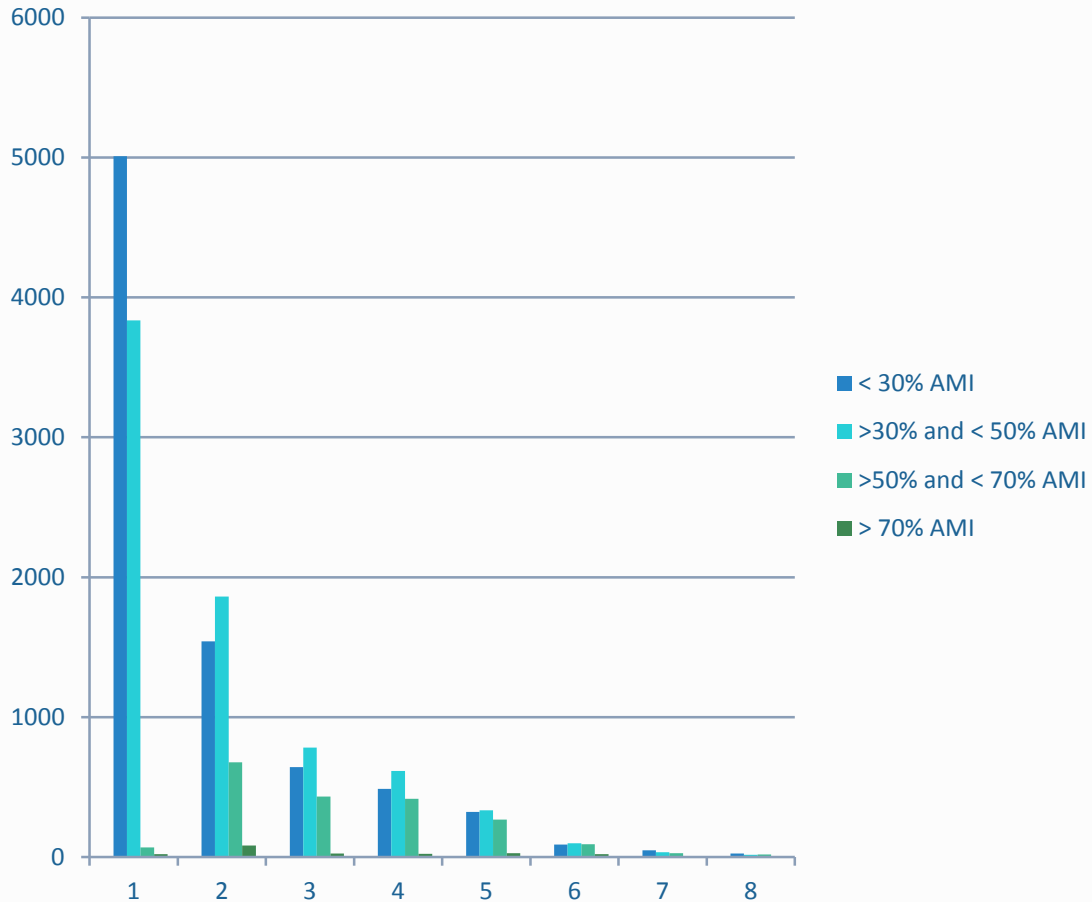
Status of Project

Achievements to date:

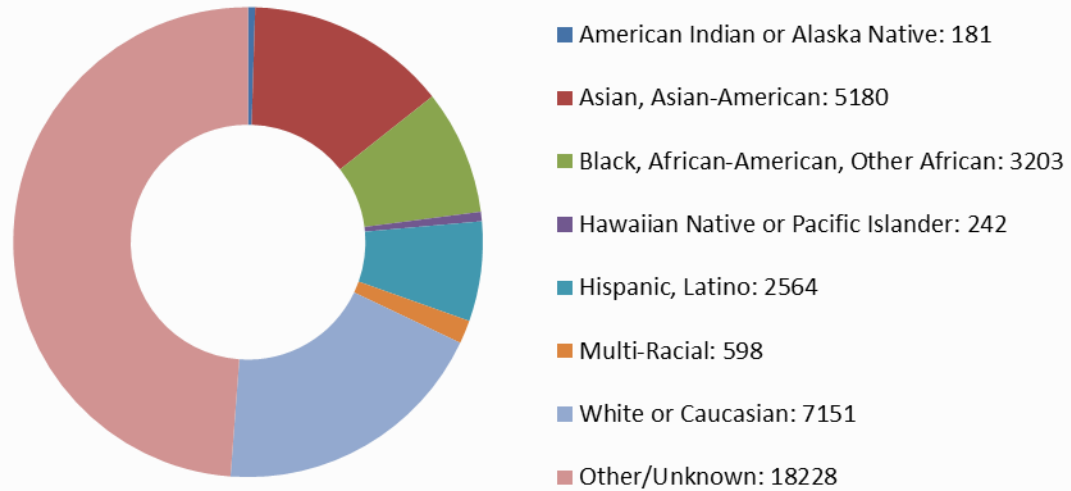
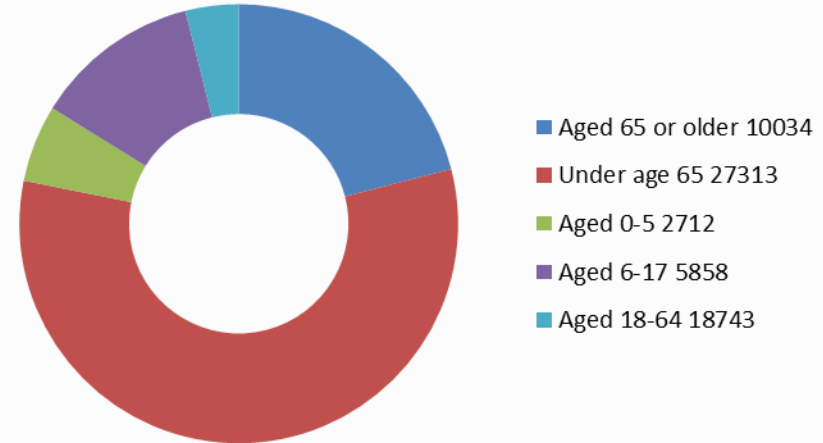
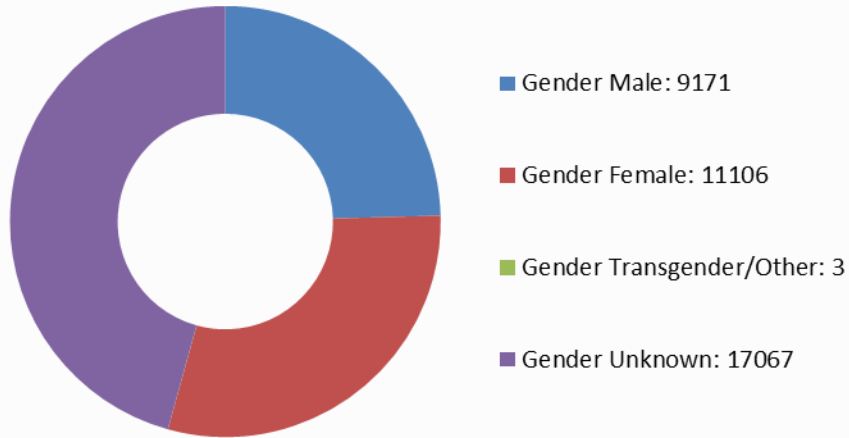
- Enrollments at historic high, and on track to 2018 goal: 17,593
- Improved coordination and collaboration
- Lack of back-log in application process
- Program data & reporting consistency
- Integration strategy with city affordability programs
- Clarity of roles



Who Are We Serving? Income



Who Are We Serving? Demographics



Actions Implemented to Date

Recruitment and enrollment

- Housing provider Partnership Express Rate Application (ERA)
- Enhanced direct-mail marketing campaign (25% increase in mailings over 2013)
- Allowed customers participating in SPU's EAP to be auto-enrolled in UDP
- Inter-departmental outreach team/calendar
- Require only one month's income information for enrollment vs three months

Customer Retention

- Extend recertification timeline from 18 months to two years for non-seniors
- Allowed customers to keep UDP when they move

Process Improvement

- Transfer administration of Project Share
- Improved processing of customer enrollment and termination information with new HSD database system: UAP3
- Eliminated back-log of applications



Challenges

Customer Challenges Identified and Addressed:

- One-month Income Documentation Verification
- Termination and Recertification Reminders
- Discount Moves with Household

IDT or Program Implementation Challenges:

- Taking longer than expected to implement some of the strategies and understand the impacts
- Complexities exist in the work, especially around data sharing and auto-enrollment
- Need to be especially careful with rate-payer funds



Outreach

- Personalized, targeted direct mail letters
- Bill inserts (March through April and September through October)
- SPU “At Your Service” UDP included in January and May
- Outbound calls
- Housing Partnership Program
- Development of additional community partnerships
- Developed new auto-enroll pilot
- Onsite Enrollment events at affordable housing buildings
- Seattle City Light Facebook campaign
- SPU contact center referral contest
- School campaign
- Bi-monthly e-news updates to stakeholders
- Developed general low-income program rack card
- Annual Energy Summit
- Fee for service pilot (HDS HSJI Funds)



Targeted Direct Mail

Seattle City Light

Assistance Programs

You may be eligible for help paying your electric bill. Seattle City Light has several ways to help customers.

Utility Discount Program:
(206) 684-5788
seattle.gov/light/UDPdiscount

Income-qualified customers receive two great discounts:

- 60% off your Seattle City Light bill
- 50% off your Seattle Public Utilities costs

Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP): (800) 348-7144
Assistance with heating bills between November and June.

Emergency Low-Income Assistance (ELIA): (206) 684-3688
One time per year assistance with electric bills.

Project Share: (206) 684-3000
One-time emergency assistance for customers with a pending shut-off notice.

Budget Billing Plan: (206) 684-3345
Average your utility bill over 12 months, to spread out your utility bill payments.

Home Weatherization Program:
(206) 684-0244
Free home weatherization for income-eligible homeowners and renters who use electric heat.

seattle.gov/light

Seattle City Light

Conservation Resources

Energy Advisors: (206) 684-3800
Call for energy efficiency and energy information.


Seattle City Light Rebate: (206) 684-3800
Save money on efficient appliances, pumps and more.

Refrigerator Recycling: (206) 233-2600
Get money to recycle your older, inefficient second refrigerator that is in running condition.

Tips for lowering your utility bill and saving energy

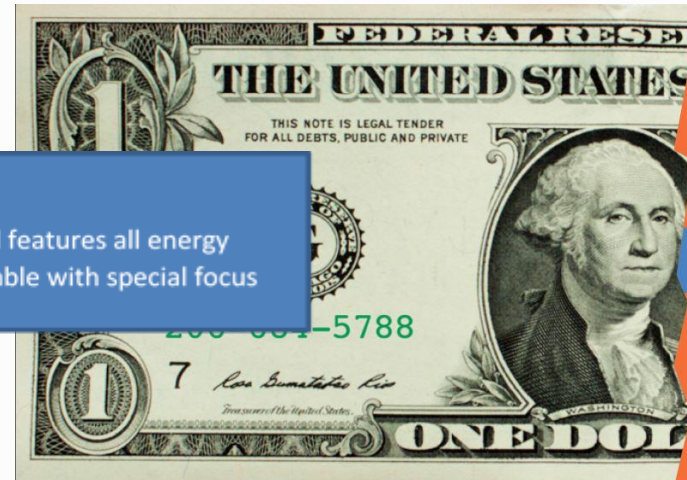
- Replace incandescent light bulbs with energy-saving LED lights.
- Set your thermostat for 65 - 70 degrees during the day and 50 - 60 degrees at night.
- Caulk and weather-strip doors and windows.
- Insulate your home.
- Set water heater at 120 degrees.
- Wash clothes in cold water whenever possible.
- Only run your dishwasher with a full load of dishes.
- Open draperies and shades in sunny windows. Close them at night.
- Use portable heaters only in small areas for short periods of time.

seattle.gov/light



Rack Card

Seattle City Light rack card features all energy assistance programs available with special focus on LIHP



Cut your utility bills in half with two great discounts!

- Save 60% off your Seattle City Light bill
- Save 50% off your Seattle Public Utilities costs

You could save hundreds of dollars per year with the City of Seattle Utility Discount Program. The average participant saves between \$500 and \$1,000 per year.

Bill Insert
Mailed to all City Light customers two times per year. Estimated 350,000 households.

City of Seattle

UTILITY DISCOUNT PROGRAM

Call (206) 684-5788 today to cut your bills in half.

Income-qualified customers receive a rate discount on their bills through the Utility Discount Program. Call for a confidential review to see if you qualify.

If you don't qualify, you can help us reach those who do. Please share with someone who may benefit from this program.

Interpretation services are available.
Servicios de interpretación son disponibles.
Доступны услуги по устному переводу.
Giải thích dịch vụ có sẵn.
可提供口譯服務

Household Size	Gross Monthly Income	Gross Yearly Income
1	\$2,570	\$30,840
2	\$3,360	\$40,320
3	\$4,151	\$49,812
4	\$4,941	\$59,292
5	\$5,732	\$68,784
6	\$6,523	\$78,276

Customers who receive direct federal housing subsidy with utility allowance including Section 8 and Shelter Plus Care do not qualify.




To Enroll in the Utility Discount Program or for More Information

Web: <http://www.seattle.gov/udp>

Call: 206-684-0268 (TTY/TDD 206-233-2778)

Email: udp@seattle.gov

In Person:

810 3rd Avenue, Suite 350

Seattle, WA 98104

(8:30am – 4:00pm; Monday - Friday)

