
RPU'S OUTREACH TO THE LOW-INCOME COMMUNITY

October 20, 2017 | 2:30-4:00pm
Mission Square
3750 University Avenue, Riverside
5th Floor Multi-Purpose Room

MEETING ATTENDEES

Community Leaders

Lida Cinq-Mars, Community Action Partnership of Riverside County
Ninfa Delgado, Latino Network/Riverside Community Health Foundation
Tom Donahue, Family Service Association
Matt Friedlander, Habitat for Humanity Riverside
Steve Hemenway, La Sierra University Church/Community Connect
Bambi Tran, GRID Alternatives Inland Empire
Judith Vails, Janet Goeske Foundation
Lin Vong, Community Action Partnership of Riverside County
Lisa Walcker, Riverside County Children Services Division

Riverside Board of Public Utilities Members

David Austin, Board Chair
Jennifer O'Farrell, Board Vice Chair
Andrew Walcker, Board Member

Riverside City Staff

Al Zelinka, Assistant City Manager
Alexander Nguyen, Assistant City Manager
Emilio Ramirez, Deputy Director, Community & Economic Development
Michelle Davis, Housing Authority Manager, Community & Economic Development
Michelle Guzman, Project Manager, Community Development - Housing
Margarita Cornejo, CDBG Project Coordinator

Riverside Public Utilities Staff

Girish Balachandran, RPU General Manager
Kevin Milligan, RPU Deputy General Manager
Kevin Palmer, RPU Business Relations Manager
Andrew Markis, RPU Principal Account Manager
Tracy Sato, RPU Integrations Manager
Justin Scott-Coe, RPU Integrations Manager
Teresa Rosales, RPU Customer Relations Coordinator

ACRONYMS

CAP: Community Action Partnership
CDBG: Community Development Block Grant
ESAP: Energy Saving Assistance Program
FPL: Federal Poverty Level
HUD: Housing and Urban Development
LIHEAP: Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program
RPU: Riverside Public Utilities
SHARE: Sharing Households Assist Riverside's Energy
SoCal Gas: Southern California Gas Company

Meeting Notes

OPENING COMMENTS AND BACKGROUND

Review of the Proposed Rate Plan / Introduction of Low-Income Strategy

Mr. Balachandran provided a review of the proposed Rate Plan and current outreach activities.

Ms. Sato reviewed the outcomes of the first meeting held on September 22, 2017 (please refer to previously circulated meeting notes). She then introduced a proposed strategy for addressing the impacts of RPU's proposed Rate Plan on the low-income community. The following key components were:

- Coordination with community partners, the City, and customers
- Programs including bill assistance and energy and water efficiency programs
- Outreach and Communications strategies to include technology, training, and education
- Benchmarking and Metrics that will help to define the communities needs as well as demonstrate program success and inform future program and strategy design

PRIORITIZE PROGRAMS AND ACTIONS – INTERACTIVE SESSION

Meeting attendees participated in an interactive session to prioritize actions and strategies identified at the September meeting. Programs and actions were briefly described and categorized for implementation either immediately with the proposed Rate Plan or longer-term in the next and future years.



Meeting attendees engaged in an activity to prioritize which programs or actions the RPU should take by identifying those considered their highest priority. Dot stickers placed by attendees indicated the level of priority – green indicated highest priority and yellow middle priority.



Activity Results

Activity voting and results are shown on the table beginning on page 5. Comments and questions identified by the group are included in the table and will be considered and where possible included in the final implementation plan. In summary, the highest priorities for the group were:

1. Aligning eligibility requirements for programs.
 - a. Votes: 11 high priority, 5 middle priority
 - b. Description: The initial proposal is to raise the eligibility from 150% of the federal poverty level to 200% – consistent with other programs offered by community partners including CAP and SoCal Gas. In the future, the program alignment may include CDGB and HUD eligibility.
2. SHARE program enhancements.
 - a. Votes: 8 high priority and 7 middle priority votes identified providing both annual and monthly rebates as a priority. Two high and one middle priority vote prioritized the monthly rebate only.
 - b. Description: The design of this program is being developed; however, the concepts of both annual assistance and monthly rebates were presented to the group. The group prioritized RPU offering both programs.
3. Portfolio of programs.
 - a. Votes: 6 high and 8 middle priority votes
 - b. Description: This concept will be to develop a means by which customers can apply on one application and receive approval through of all eligible programs.
4. Affordable housing incentive.
 - a. Votes: 4 high and 10 middle priority votes
 - b. Description: Development of a new program that will provide incentives for affordable housing that provides increased energy and water efficiency.
5. ESAP enhancements, both for immediate action and short and long term implementation
 - a. Votes: Immediate action – 9 middle priority votes | Short and Long-term – 10 middle priority votes
 - b. Description: For immediate action, the ESAP would increase eligibility and outreach. In the longer term, the program would be enhanced with possible increases in rebates, new rebate options, and a continued outreach effort.
6. Fully developing community partnerships, ongoing stakeholder process, training and enhanced outreach were all identified as higher-level priorities as well.

7. Preparing a needs assessment, developing a demonstration house, and financing options were all also prioritized but at lower levels.
8. New programs and ideas raised by the group included the following:
 - a. Basing the amount of a rebate or benefit on the level of need up to a maximum amount.
 - b. Education on energy and water conservation
 - c. Advanced metering awareness
 - d. Use of O-power
 - e. Circle of support – one place for customers to go to receive assistance from RPU as well as other community services
 - f. Energy efficiency mortgage HUD program
 - g. Job training & paid internships in energy and solar for low-income residents
 - h. Tax incentives
 - i. Income increase programs
 - j. Provide rebate to City and Non-profit agencies for purchase of refrigerators for homeless individuals exiting life on the streets
 - k. Community solar projects just for low-income subscribers

Questions

- ❖ **What is the number of customers currently enrolled in the SHARE and ESAP programs?**
 - Currently there are about 4,400 customers receiving SHARE support and about 50-100 customers annually receiving ESAP support.
- ❖ **What is the number of customers projected to be eligible to receive SHARE and ESAP but not being served?**
 - The 2016 American Community Survey, 1-year estimates identify about 13,000 families have household incomes of 150% of the federal poverty level. This number of families may not currently translate to customers as there may be multiple families living in a single household. Additionally, this number does not reflect non-family households that may also be customers. Despite this limitation, using this number a gage, about 30% of RPU's customers that are currently eligible for the program are participating.
- ❖ **What is the number of renters or multi-family customers?**
 - The 2016 American Community Survey, 1-year estimates identify the following information for the City area. RPU does not identify whether a customer is a renter or owner.

Structure Type	Owner	Renter	Total
1-unit structures	45,727	18,486	64,213
2-or-more-unit structures	296	24,702	24,998
Mobile homes and all other types of units	1,580	569	2,149
Total	47,603	43,757	91,360

*Next meeting expected in
 December 2017 or January 2018*








Date and time to be determined

INTERACTIVE SESSION – VOTING RESULTS AND COMMENTS

For Immediate Implementation

Program or Action	Priority Votes	Comments and Questions
Policies Actions & Strategies		
Align Eligibility Change existing eligibility from 150% of FPL* to 200% of FPL		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alignment of community programs for home efficiency programs • Consider eligibility based on HUD’s low-income levels • In general, better alignment of eligibility is important • How to apply “Streamline Riverside” to an RPU user? What does the consumer need to manage their utility costs / One-stop shop • *Renters*
Portfolio of Programs One application, qualifies for all programs		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide appropriate referral to customers as a holistic approach to resolve other financial issues • Partnership
Enhanced Outreach Additional outreach in the community / “go to them” approach	<p>(2 votes specifically for 3rd comment)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible location to reach more customers by having a “hub” or staff at the Family Resource Center or other Community Centers • Fear of government programs because of immigration status • Churches / grocery stores / 99¢ Store / convenience stores
Training for Staff & Community Partners		
SHARE Program Enhancements (Bill Assistance)		
Annual Assistance Currently \$150 / once per year to qualified applicants		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefit amount (increase) • Change to per # household numbers and income they make – refer to LIHEAP thresholds for levels
Monthly Rebate New program to provide on bill rebate to low income qualified customers		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rebates : discount to vulnerable populations, senior/disabled
Both Provide both the annual assistance and monthly rebate		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SHARE / ESAP: Questions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of Riverside residents enrolled? 2. Number of projected not being served but eligible?
ESAP (Energy Saving Assistance Program)		
Improving Eligibility and Outreach Result will be increased participation		

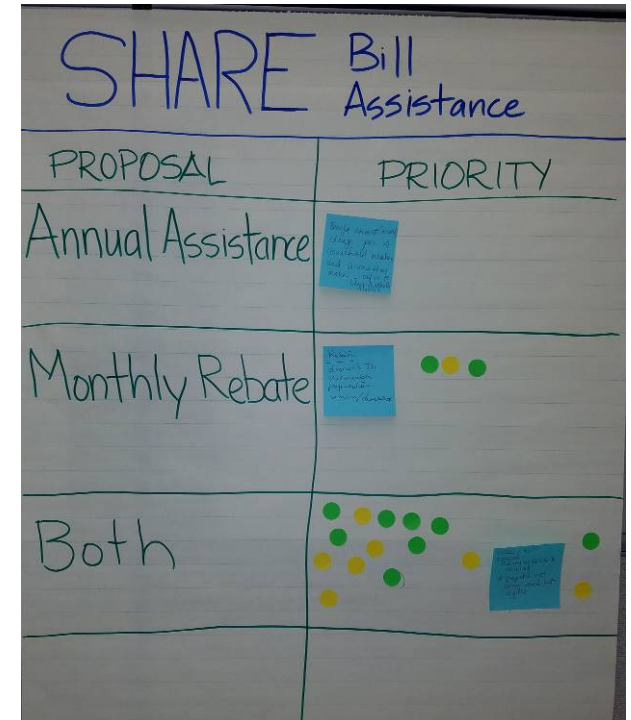
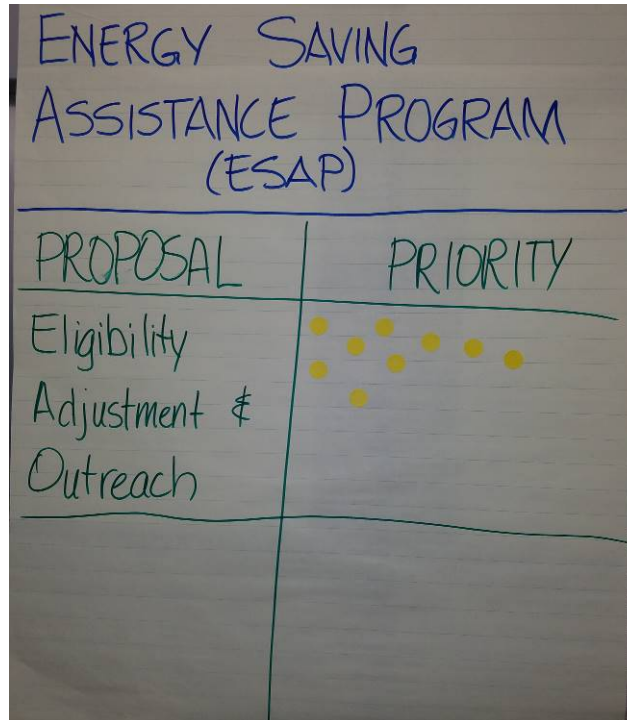
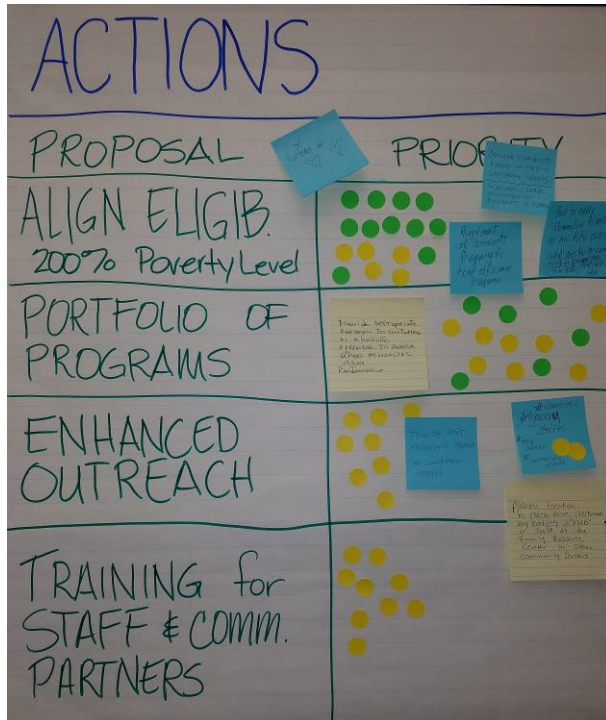
For Short and Long Term Implementation

Program or Action	Priority Votes	Comments and Questions
Future Policies Actions & Strategies		
Prepare a Needs Assessment		
Fully Develop Community Partnership		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage partnership • Structure for collaboration
Ongoing Stakeholder Process	 (3 votes – yellow – for comment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnerships
Future Programs for Development		
Enhanced ESAP Changes to incentive amounts by equipment, more alignment with other programs		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASER Program • Low Income Solar Incentive Program
Financing Options Consideration of on-bill type financing or PACE		
Affordable Housing Incentive Provide incentives for housing that provide increased energy and water efficiency		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For both single-family and multi-family • New construction and rehab
Demonstration House(s) Project Develop a demonstration house		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tiny house development demonstration project

New Ideas

Program or Action	Priority Votes	Comments and Questions
New Ideas provided during the session		
Base amount of benefit on the need of the customer		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefit up to maximum amount • E.g. CDBG eligibility
Education on energy and water conservation		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Messaging needs to address the needs of the customers • Provide materials to partners to distribute
Advanced metering awareness		
O-Power Provide service to income qualified customers		
Circle of Support Have one place for customers to go and apply for and receive assistance – RPU with partners		
Energy Efficiency Mortgage HUD Program (EEM)		
Job training & paid internships in energy and solar for low-income residents	●	
Tax Incentives	●	
Income increase programs		
Provide rebate to City and non-profit agencies with rebates for the purchase of refrigerators for homeless individuals exiting life from the streets		
Community solar projects just for low-income subscribers		
Other thoughts		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure leaks • Number served in ESAP & SHARE that are duplicate • Number served in ESAP & SHARE vs. current number that can qualify • Renters – multi-family

Immediate Action (Photos)



Short and Long Term Actions and New Ideas (Photos)

NEW IDEAS

- Consider- amount of benefit set by need up to max eg. CDBG Eligibility
- Education on energy/ water conservation - msgs. need to address people
- Advanced metering awareness
- Opower.
- Materials to partners.
- Circle of Support.

(Note: The board also features several sticky notes with additional handwritten notes and a purple sticky note at the bottom left.)

FUTURE PROGRAMS

PROPOSAL	PRIORITY
Enhanced ESAP	High priority (many yellow dots)
Financing Options	Medium priority (few yellow dots)
Affordable Housing Incentive	Medium priority (yellow and green dots)
Demonstration House(s) Project	Medium priority (yellow dots)

(Note: The board includes several sticky notes, including a purple one at the top right and a blue one at the bottom right.)

FUTURE ACTIONS

ACTIONS	PRIORITY
Prepare Needs Assessment	Medium priority (yellow dots)
Fully Develop Community Partnership	High priority (yellow and green dots) Leverage partnership structure for collaboration
Ongoing Stakeholder Process	Medium priority (yellow and green dots)

(Note: The board includes a blue sticky note on the 'Ongoing Stakeholder Process' row.)