



Covid-19 Customer Assistance

May 28, 2020

Eugene Water & Electric Board



About EWEB

- Founded in 1911, EWEB is Oregon's largest customer-owned utility.
- Municipal utility with independent elected board.
- Serving Eugene and the McKenzie River valley area.
- Operate not for profit, our customers are our shareholders, cost based rates.

Utility Challenges during Covid-19

- Electricity and Water are Essential
- Health and Safety of Labor Supply
- Loss of Load and Revenue, and Unpaid Balances
- Customers in Crisis

Covid-19 Customer Assistance Package

- Suspension of shutoffs
- Suspension of late fees
- Job Loss Credit
- Increased funding
- Payment plans
- Crisis Funding
- Expanded proof of eligibility options
- Senior & disabled mail-in

Funding Expansion

- \$90k/month originally budgeted for Customer Care in Q2 2020.
- Responding to Covid-19, increased to \$260k for April, \$250k in May, \$220k in June.
- Customer Care has experienced high call volumes at the first of the month and expended allocated funds in as little as an hour.

Next Steps

- Enhanced Payment Plans for All Customer Classes
- Small Business Recovery
 - 1) Deferred Loan – Balance pay off plan, with first payment deferred up to 9 months; OR
 - 2) Reduced Payment Plan – For current accounts only, fixed payments 75-90% average bill amount.

Neither option is a grant. Time Frames subject to payment history and credit score.

Need for State and Federal Action

- EWEB has depleted resources to provide enhanced customer assistance in April-June 2020. EWEB has cost-based rates. Further customer assistance could require rate increases.
- The supplemental increase in federal LIHEAP will help low-income customers. The recent appropriation is less than in 2008 financial crisis.
- Unmet need would be a good use of Oregon's allocation of funds from the federal CARES Act.