

TO: Mike Van Milligen, City Manager
FROM: Randy Gehl, Public Information Officer
SUBJECT: Spring 2023 Promotion of Discounted City Utilities Program and Affordable Connectivity Program
DATE: March 14, 2023

INTRODUCTION

The Public Information Office is promoting two programs designed to assist income-qualified residents with monthly utility payments and internet access.

BACKGROUND

Through the **Discounted City Utilities Program**, the City offers income-qualified residential customers a reduction in monthly fees for all four City utilities (water, sanitary sewer, refuse collection, and storm water) of up to 50% of the base rate. Customers must submit an application for consideration and applications are renewed on an annual basis. The program is promoted on the back of all printed City utility bills and is regularly promoted in the City News newsletter, on CityChannel Dubuque, and social media.

The **Affordable Connectivity Program** (ACP) is a Federal Communications Commission (FCC) program that provides eligible households with a discount on broadband service and connected devices. The City of Dubuque created a webpage to help eligible residents find and enroll in the program and has been promoting the program to residents through City publications and social media since 2021.

Eligible households can receive:

- \$30 per month discount on wireless internet plans and a free phone
- OR \$30 per month discount on wired internet service to the home
- One-time discount of up to \$100 for a laptop, tablet, or desktop computer.

Residents may be eligible if someone in the household:

- Receives SNAP, Medicaid, or other government benefits, or
- Meets income guidelines, or
- Goes to a school where they receive free or reduced-price lunch and breakfast.

DISCUSSION

A new flyer/handout promoting both programs was developed in early March and was distributed electronically to all City departments. Staff were asked to share the publication and information with residents who could benefit as well and partner

organizations and agencies that work with those residents. The Office of Shared Prosperity and Neighborhood support is sharing the flyer with neighborhood association contacts and exploring other community distribution options. The flyer is also being translated into Spanish and Marshallese.

Nearly 21,000 copies of the flyer will be mailed with all printed City utility bills in the May 2023 billing cycle. The flyers are also displayed near the Utility Billing windows in City Hall. The two discount programs will also be promoted through large advertisements in the Telegraph Herald and Dubuque Advertiser in late March or early April 2023.

A short video featuring Mayor Cavanagh and promoting the Discounted City Utilities Program was produced in early March. It was shared on the City's social media channels and is airing on CityChannel Dubuque. The video can be seen at <https://youtu.be/7x9MaBVzEBg>

RECOMMENDED ACTION

No action is required.

Attachment:

Discounted City Utilities Program and American Connectivity Program Flyer