

Customer Bill Assistance Rate Hearing

December 1, 2025

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Why we are here

- Recommendation to expand customer bill assistance program
- Public comment opportunity
- Gather feedback and confirm next steps



Actions to date



Oct. 20

- Staff presented proposed 2026 Clean Energy Implementation Plan (CEIP) to reduce energy burden to customers
- Bill assistance included as specific action and recommended by local stakeholder group

Nov. 17

- Staff presented initial program design principles and draft program expansion

Dec. 1

- Public hearing

CEIP Implementation Recommendation

Building on the benefits all customers receive through below-cost electric rates, offer enhanced support through a 25% discount to customers with income less than 80% of the area median income. Supports SD-04.c, Provide assistance for cost-burdened customers.

System	25% Discount ¹	Estimated Annual Program Cost
Electric	~\$17.50/month	~\$1,300,000

Also, implement program for Water and Wastewater retail systems in alignment with SD-06.c, Ensure customers are treated consistently and receive fair value, regardless of the services they are receiving.

System	25% Discount ²	Estimated Annual Program Cost
Water	~\$14.00/month	~\$166,000
Wastewater	~\$24.00/month	~\$14,000

¹ Based on average bill amount of \$70/mo electric

² Based on average bill amount of \$56/mo water, \$96/mo wastewater

Improved Customer Assistance

Program Eligibility	Current Program	Proposed Updated Program
Income level	~50% Average Median Income	Less than 80% Average Median Income, household adjusted
Non-income qualifiers	Residential senior or disabled	All residential
Application methods	Manual application form, meeting (in-person or virtual) with program administrator	Online via secure portal, mobile accessible, in-person application opportunities remain available
Strategic Directive Alignment	Limited	Yes
Consistent with CEIP recommendation	No, due to limited reach by non-income requirements	Yes
CETA qualifying	No, due to limited reach by non-income requirements	Yes

Implementation Details

- ☐ Assistance limited to one meter/service agreement, per service type, per household
 - Discounts applied to Basic and Energy charges only
- ☐ Leverage advanced metering data to monitor energy burden reduction
- ☐ Additional considerations under review
 - Applicability to Stehekin service area
 - Potential impacts to overall conservation goals
- ☐ Contract for online capabilities
 - Secure, application questionnaire
 - Mobile-first enrollment program
 - Leverage categorical eligibility
- ☐ Offer self-certification with periodic audits
 - Periodic audits conducted by vendor will require formal proof of income
- ☐ Tailor and enhance community outreach
 - Mobile-first outreach deployment
 - Partner with community agencies
 - Social media presence

Public Hearing Comment



Next steps

- ✓ Board preview (Nov. 17)
- ✓ Public hearing (Dec. 1)
- ☐ Address comments received & complete program design
- ☐ Resolution to the Board
- ☐ Implementation (Q1 2026)
 - ☐ Including community awareness campaign



Appendix

Bill Assistance Program

Example: Rate/Cost Impacts

	Electric	Water	Wastewater
Rate Revenue (2026 Budget)	\$78,500,000	\$9,500,000	\$1,000,000
Rate Increase Revenue (3% Electric, 4% Water & Wastewater)	\$2,286,408	\$365,385	\$38,462
Bill Assistance Program Cost Estimate	\$1,300,000	\$166,000	\$14,000
Equivalent Rate Impact to Cover Program Cost	1.7%	1.7%	1.4%

Does not include other customer programs in the Clean Energy Implementation Plan draft

Current program summary

System	Low-Income Senior/Disabled	Avg. Annual Customers	Avg. Annual Discounts	Avg. Discount %
Electric	\$11.00	1100	\$110,000.00	~15%
Water	\$12.00	160	\$ 20,000.00	~17%
Wastewater	\$13.00	9	\$ 1,000.00	~13%

- Discounts set by the Board (originally adopted in 1989)
 - Income threshold for senior discount = \$48,000
 - Income threshold for disabled discount = \$40,200
- Program administrated by Chelan-Douglas Community Action (CDCAC)
 - In-office appointment at CDCAC to determine eligibility
 - Proof of identification, age, and income required
- Additional support available through Helping Hand
- Low enrollment
 - Based on estimated eligible households, ~10% are receiving discounts



FY 2025 INCOME LIMITS DOCUMENTATION SYSTEM

[HUD.gov](#) [HUD User Home](#) [Data Sets](#) [Fair Market Rents](#) [Section 8 Income Limits](#) [MTSP Income Limits](#) [HUD LIHTC Database](#)

FY 2025 Income Limits Summary

FY 2025 Income Limit Area	Median Family Income Click for More Detail	FY 2025 Income Limit Category	Persons in Family							
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Wenatchee- East Wenatchee, WA MSA	\$96,500	Very Low (50%) Income Limits (\$) Click for More Detail	33,800	38,600	43,450	48,250	52,150	56,000	59,850	63,700
		Extremely Low Income Limits (\$)*) Click for More Detail	20,300	23,200	26,650	32,150	37,650	43,150	48,650	54,150
		Low (80%) Income Limits (\$) Click for More Detail	54,050	61,800	69,500	77,200	83,400	89,600	95,750	101,950

NOTE: **Chelan County** is part of the **Wenatchee-East Wenatchee, WA MSA**, so all information presented here applies to all of the Wenatchee-East Wenatchee, WA MSA.

The **Wenatchee-East Wenatchee, WA MSA** contains the following areas: Chelan County, WA; and Douglas County, WA.

Utility	Eligibility method	Discount	Income threshold	Details	Administration
Douglas PUD	Income based	\$10 per month	80% AMI		In-house, proof of income required
Grant PUD	Income based	20% per month	80% AMI	Requalify every 3 years	In-house – considering streamlining
SnoPUD	Income based	25 – 50% per month	80% AMI	Auto-qualify with proof of WIC, HUD housing, free/reduced lunch programs, etc.	In-house, mail or fax supporting docs
Benton PUD	Senior, disabled, veteran	10 – 25% per month	150-225% FPL	Tiered discounts increase as income levels decrease	In-house, in-person or mail
Tacoma	Income Based	Up to \$28/month electric	80% AMI	Potential increased discounts if payments made timely	
	Senior/disabled	35% per month	80% AMI		

Utility	Eligibility method	Discount	Income threshold	Details	Administration
Franklin PUD	Senior/disabled	15-30% per month	125% FPL	Requalify every 3 years	Community agency
Clark PUD	Income	% based on income, late fees waived			In-house
	Senior	Up to 75% of previous winter's bills		NTE \$500/annually	In-house
Seattle City Light	All low-income	60% discount	70% State Median Income	Provide proof of income or auto-qualify if enrolled in other income based programs	Unknown
Avista	All	16-94%	80% AMI or 200% FPL	Requalify every 2 years	In-house and CA
PSE	All	Up to 6 tiers 5-45%			