



Agenda Item: 16.D
Date of Meeting: May 11, 2026
Department: Finance

STAFF REPORT

To: City Council
From: Ethan Aukee
Subject: **Review of the Utility Rate Assistance Program Application Form**
Prepared On: April 28, 2026
Attachments: Utility Rate Assistance Program Application Form

Background/History:

The City has updated the Bishop Municipal Code and adopted a resolution establishing an updated Utility Rate Assistance Program. City staff has also developed the internal documents and administrative processes necessary for the program to begin on July 1, 2026.

At a prior City Council meeting, the City Council requested an opportunity to review the application form before open enrollment begins. The proposed application form is attached for Council review.

City staff intend to begin marketing open enrollment for the program on May 15, 2026, provided the application form has been finalized by that date.

Analysis/Discussion:

The proposed application form collects applicant information, utility account information, certification of eligibility, program acknowledgements, applicant certification, City approval and determination of program enrollment period.

The eligibility certification section identifies six programs that may be used to certify an applicant's eligibility for the City's Utility Rate Assistance Program. A seventh option, titled "Other/Unlisted," is included for applicants who are enrolled in a similar qualifying assistance program that is not specifically listed.

Use of the "Other/Unlisted" option is subject to review and approval by the Finance Director and the City Administrator. Staff will retain documentation for any approvals granted under this option to ensure consistency and provide precedent for evaluating future applications.

Impacts to Council Goals and Strategic Planning Priorities:

The updated Utility Rate Assistance Program supports the City Council's goal of maintaining

essential City services in a manner that is financially responsible, administratively transparent, and responsive to community needs. The program provides a structured mechanism to assist qualifying utility customers while preserving clear eligibility standards, documentation requirements, and internal controls.

Review of the proposed application form also supports effective program implementation by ensuring that the City Council has an opportunity to confirm the program is being administered consistent with the adopted ordinance, resolution, and intended policy direction before open enrollment begins.

Budget Impacts:

There is no direct budget impact associated with review of the proposed application form.

Program costs associated with the Utility Rate Assistance Program will be incorporated into the Fiscal Year 2026-27 budget. The fiscal impact will depend on the number of approved applicants and the total amount of utility rate assistance provided during the fiscal year. Staff will monitor program participation and related costs to ensure the program is administered within the funding authorized by the City Council.

Legal Review:

The City Attorney has reviewed this item and finds that the recommended action complies with the law.

Recommended Action:

Review the proposed Utility Rate Assistance Program application form and provide direction to staff regarding any desired revisions prior to the commencement of open enrollment.

Approved By: Ethan Aukee 4/28/2026

Approved By: Robin Picken 4/28/2026

Approved By: Dean Pucci 5/6/2026

Approved By: Pam Foster 5/6/2026