

# Department of Public Utilities

## Utility Assistance Program (UAP)

- The Energy Assistance Program (EAP) or Utilities Assistance Program (UAP) has been in place for at least the past 30 years. The policy for this program can be found under General Rule (GR) -18, last revised 10/16/2019.
- Last year \$7,152 was given out in assistance to LAC Utility Customers, and \$5,800.47 was donated.
- As of 5/11/2020, \$13,721 has been given out as assistance, an increase of 92% from last fiscal year, and \$13,422 has been donated to the program, an increase from FY2019 of 131%.

	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019 *	5 Year Avg. **	FY 2020
Beg Balance	23,763.25	25,073.54	27,988.51	27,366.20	25,173.26		23,821.73
Contributions/Donations	8,184.63	8,182.92	9,161.77	7,664.25	5,800.47	7,798.81	13,422.19
Assistance Given	6,874.34	5,267.95	9,784.08	9,857.19	7,152.00	7,787.11	13,720.76
Ending Balance	25,073.54	27,988.51	27,366.20	25,173.26	23,821.73		23,523.16

\* Per the GL

\*\* 5 year average for FY 2015 – FY 2019

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- The Utility Assistance Program (UAP) was established to provide assistance to qualified:
  - 1) Low income residential customers of the Utility during the periods of October 1 through March 31,
  - 2) Year-round for citizens over age 65 or account holders qualified through the Social Security Administration for Supplemental Security Income (SSI), or
  - 3) One-time assistance to account holders who demonstrate need due to unforeseen and unusual circumstances.
- Funding is donated voluntarily from customers.
- To qualify for monthly assistance under items 1 & 2, the household income of the applicant must be below 50 percent of the median household income for the Los Alamos Census Designated Place (CDP) . DPU will verify income levels by requesting copies of tax returns, pay stubs, or other suitable documentation.
- To qualify for monthly assistance under item 3, customers must demonstrate a financial hardship due to unforeseen circumstances.

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- GR-18 states the following:
  - The annual assistance period will be October 1 through the following March 31 of each year, or October 1 through the following September 30 for year-round assistance. A new application will be required each year. In September the Utility will determine eligibility for winter or year-round assistance and calculate the maximum allocation for each applicant.
  - One-time assistance payments will be considered as applications are received, if funds are available.
  - Applications received during an annual assistance period will be considered for the remainder of the current assistance period if funds are available. If the total allocation thus calculated exceeds projected funds available, the allocations will be reduced on a pro-rata basis.
  - In no case will assistance payments exceed contributed funds available at the time the assistance payment is credited to the customer's account.

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- Assistance provided will be up to 30% of the customer's average bill for consumption of water, gas, electric and sewer during the previous winter months of October through March, with a maximum of \$125.00 assistance per month and a minimum of \$15.00 assistance per month for those who qualify. The monthly credit will be limited by the customers total bill for utilities services for each individual month.
- One time assistance is provided once per qualifying event, but a customer can apply again if another qualifying event occurs.
- There are other public and private programs in Los Alamos County and New Mexico that can help with utility costs. Some we have worked with in the past are listed on our website and provided to customers who apply for the UAP.
  - New Mexico Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) - LIHEAP assists eligible families with their heating and cooling costs and is administered by the NM Human Services Department.
  - LA Cares
  - Self-help Inc. (Includes Salvation Army)

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- As of May 2020, 29 customers have been approved for 6 months of assistance, 8 customers have been approved for yearly assistance, and there has been 1 customer who received 1 time assistance.
- Staff spends approx. 4 to 5 hours a week on UAP related tasks, including consulting with customers, reviewing applications, processing EAP payments into Tyler Cashiering and entering credits onto customers' accounts in MUNIS.

	OCT 2017 - SEP 2018	OCT 2018 - SEP 2019	OCT 2019 - SEP 2020
6 Month Assistance	27	15	29
Yearly Assistance	12	8	8
One Time Assistance	1	2	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>38</b>



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- Donations are currently made 3 ways. Monthly donations of set amounts that are applied to a customers utility bill, an additional amount added to a utility payment made via drop box or mail in or in person, or the one time “Donate Now” button.
- In April of 2020 the “Donate Now” button was introduced to the DPU website. Since then, the public has donated \$3,091 through this avenue.
- Scheduled monthly donations total \$185 a month from 26 customers.

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**DONATE NOW**  
UTILITIES ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

If you'd like to help others who may be having trouble paying their utility bills, please consider donating to the Utilities Assistance Program (UAP). "Donate Now" will take you to our Paymentus bill payment portal, where you can now click on a Utilities Assistance Program button to make a donation. You *do not* have to be a current LAC DPU customer to donate. Thank you for helping our community!

[> Learn more about the UAP or request assistance.](#)