

GUIDANCE and FAQs
PHASE 2 CARES ACT RESIDENTIAL UTILITY COST SUBSIDY PROGRAM

The second phase of the CARES Act Utility program differs from the first in that the Assembly has directed that this support be used for only residential account holders. In addition, this round of funding is not set at a specific amount, instead a total of \$1,000,000 will be evenly divided among all approved applications. Finally, in order to expand eligibility, the criteria for having an open account has changed from being open by March 15th to July 1st of this year. In order to comply with federal guidelines on spending CARES Act funding, the following outline eligibility requirements and policy and procedures apply to the PHASE 2 CARES ACT RESIDENTIAL UTILITY COST SUBSIDY PROGRAM.



**IF YOU APPLIED FOR AND RECEIVED A RESIDENTIAL
SUBSIDY IN THE FIRST ROUND PROGRAM
DO NOT APPLY AGAIN
THE PHASE 2 SUBSIDY WILL BE AUTOMATICALLY
APPLIED TO YOUR ACCOUNT.**

**For this round of utility subsidies, you must apply
online at www.cityofsitka.org**

Eligibility:

1. Only one application per household is allowed.
 - a. If a resident has two utility accounts, for example, the home they live in and a second home, the resident should apply for the subsidy for their primary residence.
 - b. If a resident has a home with two accounts, for example their primary account with Electric, Water, Wastewater, and Garbage Pickup and a second account with only Electric for their garage, the resident should apply only for the main account with full services.
 - c. Commercial accounts are not eligible for this subsidy.
 - d. The only eligible utility subsidy for harbor utility accounts is the residential subsidy for liveaboard status accounts. If your account is not set up as a liveaboard (which pays additional services) then your account is not eligible.

2. The applicant must be named on the account (as the applicant certifies to their economic hardship due to COVID-19) and they must be the ones to apply and to sign.
3. For the residential utility subsidy the applicant/household member must have resided continuously at the dwelling since **JULY 1, 2020** (if someone moves residences, but immediately (no more than 2 days have elapsed) opens a new account, then an application should be submitted with the new account number (with reference to the old account to prove an account has been open continuously)
4. All applicants must check the box certifying that they **have incurred** economic hardship due to the COVID-19 public health emergency
5. All applicants must check the box certifying that they **continue to face** economic hardship due to the COVID-19 public health emergency
6. Applications are due by **OCTOBER 16, 2020**

Frequently asked questions (FAQ)

Why shouldn't I apply again if I received the first subsidy?

As your application was already approved, that approval extends to the second round of subsidies. Resubmitting a duplicate application will take more time for staff review and will slow the application of the subsidy for everyone.

What if I received the first subsidy but moved?

Finance staff are tracking applicants who have moved to ensure the subsidy is applied to the new account, but you can call staff at 747-1818 to confirm. Please do not submit a new application.

How much is the subsidy?

The Assembly has set aside an additional \$1,000,000 for residential subsidies. This will be divided evenly among all applicants, but the estimated range is between \$300-\$500.

What constitutes economic hardship due to COVID-19?

The economic impact of the pandemic has been wide-reaching and is unique to each person and business. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- A person who has lost a job, has had hours cut back, has not been able to work for any COVID-19 reason, or has not been able to find work due to the impact of COVID-19 closures on the economy.
- A landlord who is unable to rent an apartment.
- A person who has incurred personal expense to ensure safety of themselves and family members.
- People who have incurred COVID-19 related increased expenses relating to health/mental health care during the pandemic
- Costs relating to meeting quarantine requirements
- Costs relating to falling ill with COVID-19
- A family that has incurred costs relating to ensuring children are able to attend school remotely.
- A business who was forced to shut down due to state mandates
- A business who feels it is unsafe to operate at the same capacity as before
- A business which is incurring additional expense due to cleaning or the need to purchase protective equipment.
- A business who is impacted by the COVID-19 related restrictions on cruise ships

Will you be sending acceptance letters?

No. However, if your application is rejected a staff member will call or email to let you know why (except for duplicate applications).

Can a subsidy be applied to a closed account?

Per federal guidelines, under no circumstance can a subsidy be applied to a closed account. If you are moving, please contact the finance department and we will ask you to submit an application with the new account number, so long as the account is opened within two days of closing the old account.

What happens if I close my account before a subsidy is used up?

As usually happens any amount owed or credit remaining on a closed account is the responsibility of the account owner. If there are funds remaining on your account, they may be transferred to a new account. If the account is closed and no new account opened, a check for the remaining credit will be issued.

Should I continue to pay my bill?

If you are able, we recommend that you pay all or part of your bill.

My utilities are included in my rent, can apply for the subsidy?

No, if the utility account is in your landlord's name, you may not apply. Your landlord can only apply for one account.

When will the subsidy be applied to my account?

Likely towards the beginning of November.

What if I don't have internet access?

The Sitka Public Library has computers for the public to use that have internet access. The application can also be filled out and submitted on a smart phone with data.

When is the deadline?

October 16, 2020

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Who can I speak to with any questions?

If your questions aren't addressed in this document, please call the Finance Department at 747-1859 or 1818