

Relationships: Not Just for Key Accounts



Intergovernmental Relationships
for Providing
Utility Assistance Funding
to CPS Energy Customers

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Goal

To facilitate providing utility assistance funding to customers in need.



CPS Energy Customer Assistance Programs: A Historical Perspective

There are two major programs used to provide utility funding to CPS Energy customers:

1. Project WARM – Established more than 20 years ago with a \$7.5 million trust, the program is administered by the City of San Antonio (COSA) exclusively for City of San Antonio residential customers. Monies from this project assist senior citizens, families with young children, cases where extreme medical conditions exist, and disabled individuals.



CPS Energy Customer Assistance Programs: A Historical Perspective - Continued

Project WARM funding assisted
approximately 805 households totaling
\$120,794.92 in 2006



CPS Energy Customer Assistance Programs: A Historical Perspective - Continued

2. Residential Energy Assistance Program (REAP)

Initiated in 2001, REAP is a non-profit (501c3) organization with a Board consisting of the CPS Energy General Manager & CEO, the San Antonio Mayor, and County Judge. As developed, REAP has a ten-year commitment to provide \$1 million annually to this fund. \$500,000 of the commitment is used to provide direct funding for qualifying customers, while the remaining \$500,000 is placed in a trust currently managed by the San Antonio Area Foundation. At the end of the 10-year period, it is believed that the earned interest will fund REAP in perpetuity.



CPS Energy Customer Assistance Programs: A Historical Perspective - Continued

The \$500,000 in REAP funding that is used to assist customers with utility bills is managed by CPS Energy via COSA and Bexar County.

- 82% of the \$500,000 goes to COSA and 18% goes to Bexar County.
- These percentages represent the percentage of customers living within San Antonio's city limits and those living in Bexar County.



CPS Energy Customer Assistance Programs: A Historical Perspective - Continued

2006 REAP Funding and Assistance

	<u>City of San Antonio</u>	<u>Bexar County</u>
•REAP pledges	\$802,031	\$31,369
•Total households served	5,502	146
•Families with young children	2,097	30
•Medical equipment/critical care	146	2
•Disabled	2,507	83
•Elderly	1,217	31

REAP also receives dollars from the generosity of our customers. In 2006, CPS Energy customers contributed \$62,461 to energy assistance for low income customers. These funds are allocated to the City and Bexar County based on the percentage of customers residing within the respective areas.



What We Were Already Doing ...

- The Contact Center provides COSA, Bexar County and other assistance agencies an “Agency” priority telephone number for their exclusive use.
- The Contact Center takes pledges over the phone and provides authorized agencies appropriate customer information related to assistance issues (e.g., account balance information and account status)
- CPS Energy provides limited access to select CIS screens, allowing authorized Bexar County or COSA employees to enter pledge dollars directly into CPS Energy’s billing system. If the funding is sufficient, the pledge suspends further collection/disconnection activity on customers’ accounts.



What We Wanted to Improve....

Our relationships
with both
Bexar County and COSA.



Relationships:

Working Together – Making it work

- Established meetings of introduction with key staff
 - Bexar County, COSA, and CPS Energy attended
- Discussed purpose, goals, and objectives that both sides wanted to achieve
- Wrote plan of action to achieve outcomes
- Assigned deliverables
- Scheduled “tuning” meetings to gather feedback and make adjustments



Relationships:

Working Together – Making it work

- Currently, provide Bexar County office space in walk-in facilities to facilitate customer meetings with Bexar County for funding assistance
 - Via the Contact Centers (Call Center and Walk-ins), CPS Energy personnel identify customers who need assistance and schedule appointments for Bexar County Case Workers at one of CPS Energy's Walk-in facilities
 - Bexar County rotates Case Managers between Walk-in facilities to ensure easier accessibility to customers throughout the city and county
- Continuous discussions with COSA regarding “tuning” of eligibility requirements (exhibit more flexibility)



Relationships:

Working Together – Making it work

- Continuous dialogue with both agencies
- Open communication concerning changing environment
- Accept feedback
- Implement changes that have been agreed to
- Follow through on commitments
- Revisit to discuss all of the above



Summary

Remember to communicate and revisit to ensure that the relationship continues to grow.

Key ingredient to making it work

COMMUNICATION!!!



Other Assistance Programs

◆ Critical Care

Our Critical Care Program tries to minimize potential risks to customers who use electrically operated medical equipment in their homes and/or whose physicians have verified that continued electric and/or gas service is critical to the occupant's health. While we can't promise to maintain continuous service at all times due to storm damage, accidents, etc., we do attempt to minimize potential risks.

◆ Disabled Citizens Billing Program

Disabled Citizens Billing Program grants disabled customers (SSI) additional time to pay the net amount of their utility bill. Under this program, eligible customers are able to better coordinate the timing of their CPS Energy bill payment with receipt of their income.

◆ Senior Citizens Billing Program

Customers who are at least 60 years old can have extra time to pay their utility bill without a late fee. Those who qualify for this program are allowed 26 days to pay their bills, to give them time to receive their Social Security checks.

◆ Gift Certificates

While perhaps not an “assistance program” per se, individuals can purchase gift certificates for anyone to use toward a CPS Energy utility bill. CPS Energy Gift Certificates pay for gas and electric bills, and are available in amounts of \$10, \$25, \$50 and \$100. Certificates can be bought at any of our customer service centers. The certificates can be redeemed by mailing them in with a utility bill or by bringing them to a customer service center; however, they may not be redeemed for cash. For security, they are numbered and marked with an embossed stamp, and photocopies are not accepted.



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