

Helping neighbors . . . with a helping hand.

A Helping Hand for those in Crisis ~ City of Port Orchard

The Helping Hand Utility Assistance Program seeks to help families and individuals cope with crises, secure needed resources, and find stability. The City has partnered with Kitsap Community Resources (KCR) in an effort to avert shutting off water/sewer service and help people better manage their utility costs.

The program provides an entry point to a network of essential services, covering a wide range of needs. For more information on water/sewer helping hand, including eligibility requirements, please contact the City of Port Orchard or KCR.

Our Program

Our program proactively seeks to avoid a shutoff of water/sewer utility services for customers of the City of Port Orchard. Federal guidelines for low-income and poverty levels determine eligibility based on annual income and the number of adults and children within the household. In order to help the City and the customer avoid unnecessary cost, and allow time to qualify, individuals must contact the City or KCR prior to having their water/sewer shutoff.

How it Works

Eligible rate payers receive immediate help with a onetime waiver of their current water/sewer bill. Water/sewer utilities services are not curtailed. Participants enter into a monthly "Budget Billing" that smoothes out future billing demands. Rather than paying every other month participants pay a set budgeted amount that is adjusted yearly. Customers are encouraged to enter into the automatic payment program. Participants receive counseling from KCR on a wide range of resources that help individuals and families cope and better manage through difficult times. Budget Billing will appeal to those individuals who desire to stay in their home and are looking for options to balance their household related expenses. The household must remain occupied by the qualifying resident. A landlord cannot apply for the Helping Hands Program on behalf of their tenant.

The City encourages customers to stay in the Budget Billing Program as a long-term solution, providing a consistent billing amount and payment schedule. If the customer is not able to maintain a timely payment schedule, their enrollment in the Budget Billing Program will be jeopardized. Delinquent payments may result in discontinuation of the program and disconnection of service. The 1st late payment will result in a letter sent to the enrolled customer as a notification. A 2nd late payment will result in a letter to KCR and the enrolled customer stating that the customer is removed from the program.

Contact the City of Port Orchard Utility Billing Department for additional information or KCR to fill out an application form. Be prepared to provide additional information regarding your personal financial condition, including verifying household income.

The Program does not include the following:

Penalties, late fees, turn off fees, or other administrative charges
Charges for excessive water consumption
Storm Drainage Assessment charges
Charges for damaged meters
Landlords paying the utility bill

Defined terms

KCR - Kitsap Community Resources 845 8th Street Bremerton, WA 98337. Kitsap Community Resources is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation and a member Washington State Community Action Partnership.

Eligibility requirements – Program rules, criteria, and administration guidelines set forth in partnership with KCR and the City of Port Orchard.

Eligible rate payer - a single connection where one customer meeting applicable federal low income and poverty guide lines is being served through a meter and the billing is based upon flow through that meter. A single sewer account meeting applicable program criteria.

Water/sewer utility services for customers – a tenant which is required to pay utility services based upon a fully executed tenant-landlord agreement. An owner-occupied single family residency.

Single water connection - a $\frac{3}{4}$ inch water meter servicing only one residential unit.

Single family residence- the only residence that is serviced by a $\frac{3}{4}$ inch water meter.

Onetime - means a waiver of one bimonthly base rate of a single $\frac{3}{4}$ inch connection where one residential utility customer, including members of the same household, are being served through a meter. A onetime waiver, of one single residential sewer account charge, that meets applicable program criteria.

Current water / sewer bill – a bimonthly base rate that is not delinquent.

Low income – Federal guidelines for low income and poverty levels as determined for Kitsap County by KCR.

City Administrative Rules – program administrative rules.

City Helping Hands program administrator – The City Treasurer in conjunction with the City Public Works Director.

Utility Committee – the City of Port Orchard Council Utility Committee consisting of three members with oversight of water, sewer, and storm drainage utilities.



City of Port Orchard
216 Prospect Street
Port Orchard, WA 98366
360-876-5139

About Helping Hands

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If the customer is not able to maintain a timely payment schedule, their enrollment in the Budget Billing program will be jeopardized. Delinquent payments may result in discontinuation of the program and disconnection of service.

Requirements

- Customer must receive water and/or sewer utility service from Port Orchard
- Customer must qualify under federal guidelines for low income and poverty levels as determined for Kitsap County by KCR and bring in a voucher from KCR
- Participate in budget billing through the city
- Be an owner or tenant occupied single family residency
- Be responsible for payment of utility services based upon a fully executed landlord-tenant agreement
- Household must remain occupied by the qualifying resident
- Customer must conform to City and KCR program administrative rules
- Be aware of water conservation methods and programs
- Make timely repairs or notify landlord or City of leaks
- Delinquent payments may result in discontinuation of the program and disconnection of service

The program does not include the following exclusions:

- Penalties, late fees, turn off fees, or other administration charges
- Charges for excessive water consumption
- Storm Drainage Assessment charges
- Charges for damaged meters
- Landlords paying the utility bill

Your signature below acknowledges the program guidelines listed above.

Water / Sewer customer Signature

Date

Service Address _____

Utility Account No. _____

