

Changes to Senior Discount Program for Utility Bills

The St. Helens City Council recently adopted changes to the senior discount program offered on the City's utility bill for water service. Individuals who were receiving the senior discount prior to December 4, 2013 and who continue to meet the age and primary residence rule will now be given a flat \$20 credit on their bi-monthly utility bill (\$10 per month). No new customers will be eligible for the program.

These changes are due to increasing costs to fund the senior discount program and a desire to offer assistance to customers facing emergency financial situations that threaten to shut off their water service.

The senior discount program is funded through annual fines collected on utility bills for late payments. The program as it used to exist (a credit for any water used up to 1,362 cubic feet), cost the City \$160,000 annually, while total annual fines collected is \$95,000.

Under the new system, the senior discount program is expected to cost \$84,000 annually. The remaining \$11,000 in fines collected will be used to provide one-time emergency assistance to qualifying customers.

Changes to the senior discount program will appear on the utility bills that are mailed out in late June 2014.

If you have any questions about these changes, please contact City Hall at 503-397-6272.