



401 South Park Avenue • Winter Park, Florida 32789

407-599-3234 • 407-599-3436 fax
cityofwinterpark.org

Administration

Winter Park COVID-19 Crisis Response Proposal

As we continue to monitor the status of coronavirus (COVID-19) and its impact on Winter Park, we are working diligently to protect our community's health, both physical and financial. To that end, I am proposing a multi-pronged approach to address community needs:

RESIDENTIAL SUPPORT

- Utility bill payment assistance: Heart of Florida United Way 211 Program: The city will provide up to \$50,000 in direct and matching grants to this free and confidential support line connecting Winter Park residents in need with utility bill payment assistance.
 - The city will make a direct contribution of \$25,000 to the program and put up another \$25,000 in dollar for dollar matching funds to match community contributions over the next 90 days.
 - City support will go towards assisting eligible Winter Park residents with up to \$650 of utility bill costs.
 - More information on the program can be reached through www.hfuw.org/gethelp/.
- Suspension of late fees, interest rates and disconnects: No late fees or interest rate payments will be charged and no utility service disconnects will be made for non-payment through May 31, 2020. Customers can contact Utility Billing customer service for flexible repayment options.
- Electric fuel rate reduction: Supporting both the city's residential and commercial customers, a temporary one-month suspension of electric fuel costs on all customers' bills will be enacted. This is on top of the recently approved 27% reduction in fuel costs already in place. Fuel cost make up approximately 18% of a residential customer's bill and 22% of commercial customer bills. Note, this comes from the fuel cost rate stabilization fund and is a return of over-recovery of fuel costs. Normally the city would "refund" it over a 12 month period, but this proposal is to do it all in one month to grant an immediate relief.

BUSINESS SUPPORT

- Micro-Loans: In partnership with the Winter Park Chamber of Commerce and members of the Winter Park community, the city will contribute up to \$500,000 in matching support for locally raised funds to support \$5,000 micro-loans to struggling small businesses. An executive board of community leaders would be formed to formalize and oversee the program and a local bank will most likely be used to administer the funds. Some general provisions to qualify will include, it must be a small business (not yet fully defined), it will apply city-wide not just in the CRA, businesses do not have to be a Chamber member, and applicants will have to have already applied for the CARES Act program. The City would make its community improvement fund (501(c)(3)) available to receive the matching funds if deemed appropriate.
- Utility Assistance Program: The city will create a \$1 million small business utility payment assistance program, providing up to the average of one month's electric & water/sewer utility bill as a credit, not to exceed \$5,000 per business. Any business that was closed or

is a restaurant that had to limit operations due to government order, and has less than 100 employees and is defined as a small business by the Small Business Administration, will be eligible for support. The City would administer this program.

- Utility Support: No late fees or interest rate payments will be charged and no utility service disconnects will be made for non-payment through May 31, 2020. Eligible customers can apply for this program through Utility Billing customer service. The customer will be placed on a repayment plan for the deferred amount less any grant from the above assistance program.
- Electric fuel rate reduction: As stated above, supporting both the city's residential and commercial customers, a temporary one-month suspension of electric fuel costs on all customers' bills will be enacted. This is on top of the recently approved 27% reduction in fuel costs already in place. Fuel cost make up approximately 18% of a residential customer's bill and 22% of commercial customer bills. Note, this comes from the fuel cost rate stabilization fund and is a return of over-recovery of fuel costs. Normally the city would "refund" it over a 12 month period, but this proposal is to do it all in one month to grant an immediate relief.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

- Food & Hunger: To address food insecurity, the city will make a \$50,000 contribution and work with the 4Rivers Feed the Need initiative and Second Harvest Food Bank to create a Winter Park specific food assistance program.
- Free Wi-Fi Connectivity: To promote digital inclusion and in partnership with Frog Telecommunications, the city is providing for an early launch of free and fast public Wi-Fi available in Central Park and Shady Park, to be completed within four weeks. This item was already budgeted. This is just an acceleration of that project.

RECOVERY SUPPORT

- Public Support: The city stands ready to support the community as we recover from this crisis, through maintaining all public health, safety, and community areas in top condition with regular police presence, superb emergency response, quality maintenance of parks and landscaped areas, and pressure washing of the downtown core.
- Business Façade Matching Grants: The city's CRA will continue to support its successful Business Façade Program for physical improvements to business locations. Information on the program can be found here: www.cityofwinterpark.org/cra
- Energy Efficiency: The city, under its Sustainability Division, is offering \$30,000 in \$500 payments for businesses willing to apply to Green Business Program. The program promotes energy audits and offers suggestions with no requirement to make changes.