



Supporting Customers in Utility Account Recovery

**Joint Study Session of Tacoma City Council &
Tacoma Public Utilities Board**

February 1, 2022

Data as of 1/27/2022



Background

- Mayor Woodards and Governor Inslee issued separate utility disconnection moratoriums in March 2020:
 - Governor Inslee's moratorium ended September 2021
 - Mayor Woodards' moratorium remains in effect for all TPU customers
- \$2.4 million Emergency Assistance Program created quickly from Utility Funds.
- \$750k Tacoma small business program deployed from Tacoma CARES Funds.
- \$4.5 million in Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) funds distributed through partners.
- Staff is actively working with partners to apply COVID dollars to accounts.
- Multi-channel customer outreach throughout the pandemic, including thousands of calls and letters/postcards mailed.

Overview: Overdue Customer Balances

	Total Amount Outstanding by Jurisdiction	Outstanding Balances by Customer Segment and Jurisdiction					
		Commercial		Industrial		Residential	
		Owners	Tenants	Owners	Tenants	Owners	Tenants
Inside Tacoma	\$ 24,380,104.21	\$ 1,835,002.30	\$ 1,667,477.73	\$ 27,038.51	\$ 10,354.32	\$ 8,687,374.40	\$ 12,152,856.95
Outside Tacoma	\$ 7,089,399.39	\$ 271,347.92	\$ 203,587.28	\$ 6,213.63		\$ 2,730,579.38	\$ 3,877,671.18

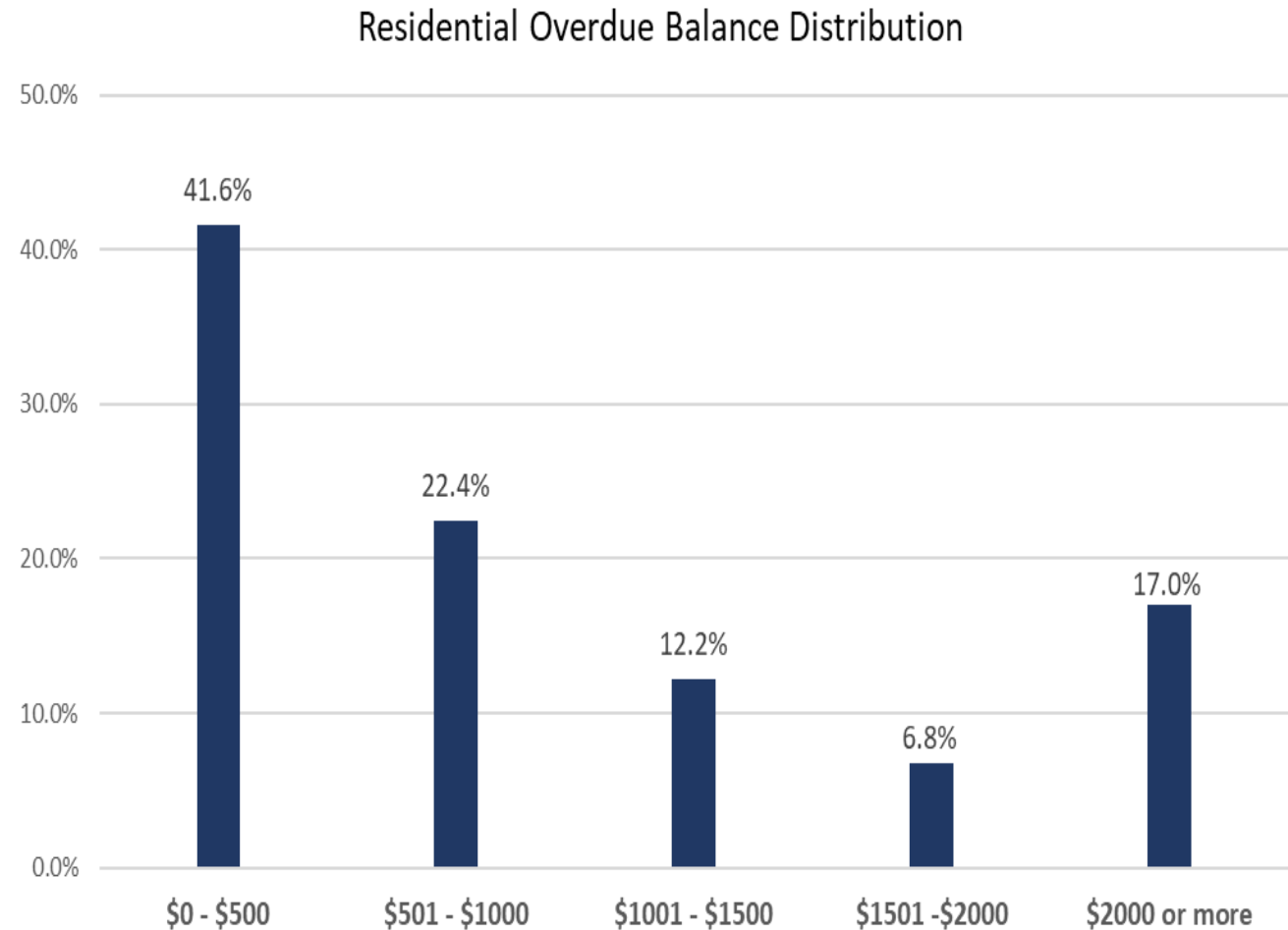
Inside Tacoma bills include 5 utility services.

Average Outstanding Balance by Customer Billing Segment and Jurisdiction			
	Commercial	Industrial	Residential
Inside Tacoma	\$ 2,733.85	\$ 6700.94	\$ 1,135.83
Outside Tacoma	\$ 1,093.25		\$ 649.64

Average Outstanding Balances by Customer Billing Segment Only			
	Commercial	Industrial	Residential
Inside + Outside Tacoma	\$ 2320.15	\$ 6700.94	\$ 964.65

Overview: Residential Accounts

- 28,609 residential customers have aging account balances
- 83% owe less than \$2000
- 64% owe less than \$1000
- \$964.65 average residential account balance
- Residential pandemic payment activity:
 - 18,190 have not made payment in the last 60 days
 - 14,753 have not made payment in the last 90 days
 - 1,383 have not made a payment since start of pandemic



● ● ● Post Moratorium Plan

- Mayor Woodards established a bridge period for TPU customers following the end of the Governor's moratorium.
- Once the utility disconnect moratorium expires, TPU customers will be set up on automatic, flexible 24-month installment plans for COVID balances.
- Late fees will not be collected on past-due COVID balances.
- TPU will continue communicating with customers through numerous channels to connect them with available assistance.
- Eligible households will be enrolled in recently expanded Discount Rate or Bill Credit Assistance Plan (BCAP) programs.

Next Steps

- Staff recommends advanced notice of moratorium expiration: April 1.
- *Goal: connect customers with funds for which they qualify and work with customers to keep services in place.*
- In February, TPU will mail approximately 28,000* letters to Residential Customers regarding the availability of assistance funds.
- In Mid-February, TPU will mail approximately 1,600 letters to Small / Mid-size Businesses informing them of their options.
- In March, TPU will deploy a canvassing company to go door-to-door and distribute information regarding assistance funds available.
- In March, TPU will transition customers to payment plans for past due amounts.