

City of Gardena

## Residential Utility & Nutrition Assistance Program

### **GUIDELINES**



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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>I.</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>II.</b>	<b>PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>III.</b>	<b>PROGRAM ASSISTANCE.....</b>	<b>3</b>
	A. Utility Assistance .....	3
	B. Grocery Assistance .....	3
<b>IV.</b>	<b>PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY .....</b>	<b>4</b>
	A. Eligible Applicants .....	4
	B. Low- And Moderate-Income Definition.....	4
	C. Conflict of Interest .....	5
<b>V.</b>	<b>APPLICATION PROCESSING .....</b>	<b>5</b>
	A. Program Marketing and Outreach.....	5
	B. Application Documentation.....	5
	C. Application Process.....	6
	D. Applicant Confidentiality .....	6
	E. Dispute/Resolution Appeals Procedures .....	7
	F. Exceptions/Special Circumstance .....	7
	G. Approval and Disbursement of Funds .....	7
	H. Equal Opportunity.....	7

**CITY OF GARDENA**  
**RESIDENTIAL UTILITY & NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM GUIDELINES**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

The City of Gardena's COVID-19 Residential Utility and Nutrition Assistance Program provides financial assistance to low- and moderate-income residents with an emphasis on those negatively impacted by COVID-19. This program offers a one-time grant to residents for the payment of electricity, gas, water, and/or trash utilities. The program also offers eligible residents' access to groceries and essential need products. Utility payments will be made directly to utility providers on behalf of the qualified resident. Residents are not expected to pay back this assistance. Awards will be based on the availability of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and/or CARES Act CDBG-CV funds. Applicants will need to submit an online application and documentation to receive assistance.

The program is funded through CDBG and supplemental CARES Act CDBG-CV funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development as eligible under Section 105(a) 17 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974. The City of Gardena's COVID-19 Residential Utility Assistance Program meets the national objective of benefiting persons or households of low- to moderate-income.

**II. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION**

The City's Recreation and Human Services Department staff will serve as the primary contact for implementation of the program guidelines. The City will:

- Market the Program;
- Accept and process applications;
- Ensure applicants meet eligibility requirements;
- Recommend approval of grants;
- Ensure disbursement of grant funds;
- Maintain grant files and fiscal records for five years;

**III. PROGRAM ASSISTANCE**

Combined assistance for utility and nutrition assistance is limited to \$500.00 per household. Therefore, if a household uses the maximum of \$400 for the payment of utilities then only \$100 is available for nutrition assistance. Likewise, if the household receives \$300 in food pantry assistance, then only \$200.00 will be available for utility assistance.

**A. Utility Assistance**

Utility assistance is limited to \$400.00 per eligible household for the payment of trash, water, gas, and electric utilities. Payment will be made directly to the utility provider such as Southern California Edison, Southern California Gas Company, Golden State Water Company and Waste Resources of Gardena.

## **B. Grocery Assistance**

Grocery assistance will be provided to eligible households through the City of Gardena food pantry. Eligible households will be provided with nonperishable food items with a value not-to-exceed \$150 per person in the household.

## **IV. PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY**

### **A. Eligible Applicants**

Under federal regulations, use of CDBG funded activities must meet the national objective of benefit to low- and moderate (“low-mod”) income benefit. For the purpose of this Program, the applicant must meet the following minimum requirements:

1. Applicant has been negatively impacted as a direct result of due COVID-19.
2. Applicant’s household current gross annual income must at or below 80% of the Los Angeles median income, adjusted for household size;
3. Applicant’s primary residence is in the City of Gardena’s jurisdictional limits; and
4. Applicant submits a completed, signed application and all required support documentation by the due date and time (application may be signed electronically).

### **B. Low- And Moderate-Income Definition**

Low- and moderate-income households for the purpose of this program must have a gross annual household income at or below that shown in the table below, as adjusted for household size.

<b>HUD LOW-MODERATE INCOME (LMI) LIMITS</b>			
Household Size	Maximum Income	Household Size	Maximum Income
1	\$63,100	5	\$97,350
2	\$72,100	6	\$104,550
3	\$81,100	7	\$111,750
4	\$90,100	8	\$118,950
Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. These income figures are subject to change annually (last updated: 4/02/20).			

The projected annual gross income of the applicant’s household will be used to determine whether it is within the income limits above. Income to be included are salaries and wages, disability and state unemployment benefits. Please refer to Attachment A, 24 CFR Part 5.609, for a guide on what incomes to count and what incomes are excluded.

### **C. Conflict of Interest**

Applicants shall not be an employee, agent, consultant, officer or elected official or appointed official of the City who exercises or have exercised any function or responsibilities with respect to activities relating to this Program or who are in a position to participate in a decision-making process or gain inside information with regard to these activities, may obtain a financial interest or financial benefit from this Program, or the proceeds from such activity, either for themselves or those with whom they have business or immediate family ties, during their tenure or for one year thereafter.

## **V. APPLICATION PROCESSING**

### **A. Program Marketing and Outreach**

The City will conduct program marketing. Examples of marketing include media coverage with ads in local papers and distribution of marketing brochures to local chamber of commerce, and business networking organizations. Social media marketing will include Facebook and the City's website.

### **B. Application Documentation**

The application will include information to document eligibility including but not limited to:

1. Valid California driver's license or identification card or other identification showing name of person applying.
2. Self-certification documenting negative affect on household due to COVID-19.
3. Self-Certification of current monthly income for:
  - i. Working adults
  - ii. Adults with other income such as unemployment (state and federal), social security, disability, pension, other income, etc.
  - iii. Self-employed persons
4. Most recent three months recent utility bills for all providers for which utility assistance is being requested. (Utility bills must be in the name of the person(s) whose identification is provided.)

### **C. Application Process**

The City will accept applications on a first-come, first-serve basis until funding is exhausted.

**Application Submittal** - Submit the application and copy of all required supporting documentation: On-line at <http://www.123formbuilder.com/form-5594680/form>.

#### **D. Applicant Confidentiality**

All personal financial information will be kept confidential. Program participant files with personal confidential information will be kept in locked secured storage units.

#### **E. Dispute Resolution/Appeals Procedure**

Any resident applying for a financial assistance grant through the CDBG program has the right to appeal if their application is denied. The appeal must be made in writing to the City. A written response to the appeal will be provided to the applicant by the City within 30 days of receipt of the applicant's appeal letter.

#### **F. Exceptions / Special Circumstances**

Exceptions are defined as any action which would depart from policy and procedures stated in the guidelines. The City reserves the right to make exceptions but must comply with federal program requirements for household assistance.

#### **G. Approval and Disbursement of Funds**

Once applicants are determined eligible, the Program Administrator will contact the household for execution of paperwork and subsequent disbursement of funds. Funds will be disbursed directly to the utility provider.

#### **H. Equal Opportunity**

This Program will be implemented in ways consistent with the City's commitment to state and federal equal opportunity laws. No person shall be excluded from participation in, denied the benefit of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity funded in whole or in part with CDBG program funds on the basis of his or her religion, religious affiliation, age, race, color, ancestry, national origin, sex, marital status, familial status, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, or other arbitrary cause.