



Water and Energy Programs Amidst COVID-19: Spotlight on Arizona

Weatherization Leveraged Partnerships Project

Funded by the Department of Energy to offer training and assistance to the WAP network in designing private partnerships and programs that leverage the WAP.

<https://bit.ly/2EqB93w>

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What we can do for you

Support Your Creating or Improving Local/ Private Partnerships

- Facilitate connections to experienced peers
- Assist in data collection, messaging, and getting things off the ground
- Share Advocacy and Research Resources, Tools, and Templates
- Trainings and Webinars

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Today's Presenters

Mary Lou Rosales, Executive Director,
Community Action Human Resources Agency in
Eloy, Arizona

Cynthia Zwick, Executive Director, Wildfire

Shreyas Shah, Head of Growth, Prefix Health

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Water and Energy Programs Amidst COVID

Cynthia Zwick and Mary Lou Rosales

Ignite Lasting Change



ADVOCACY IS ESSENTIAL

At the Public Utility Commission

At the legislature

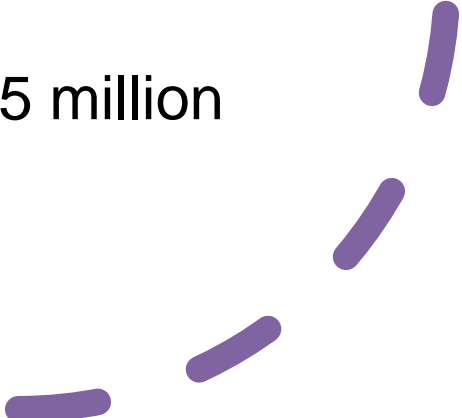
With our utilities – including water

With our state offices and elected officials

With our landlords and landlord advocates



Community Action Human Resources Agency (CAHRA)

- The agency serves Pinal County, a county between Phoenix and Tucson with 475,000 population
 - The county is growing in population due to economic growth with the establishment of Lucid, electric car manufacture and Nikola, manufacture of zero emission heavy trucks
 - The agency provides financial assistance, homeless services, weatherization, minor home repair, food pantry, distribution of senior food boxes
 - The agency has a budget of over \$5 million including new COVID funding
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Gap in Services: Funding for Water Payments


- ❖ During the pandemic, calls for assistance with water have increased by 25%
- ❖ Funding is scarce for this much needed resource especially during a pandemic that depends on water as a basic cleanliness necessity
- ❖ Although LIHEAP funding is available to pay water bills, it is only allowed if the household has an evaporative cooler. And then it can only be paid, if incurred for the months of May 1 through October 31

Global Water To The Rescue

- ❖ Funding is also available through a local water company, Global Water but only for households in the City of Maricopa and the Community of Red Rock
- ❖ Global Water initially only allowed \$250 per household and had strict eligibility criteria that made it very difficult to qualify households in need
- ❖ After major discussions and calls for change, the company did alleviate the criteria
- ❖ Maximum grant amounts are \$350 for water customers and \$350 for sewer customers.
- ❖ Customers may be assisted more than once and must fall within one of the customer assistance guidelines:
 - ~ Low Income Program Below 300% of federal poverty guidelines
 - ~ Deployed Service Member
 - ~ Disabled Military Veteran
 - ~ Furloughed Worker
 - ~ Medical Hardship
- ❖ Customer must not have a history of meter tampering or lock cutting within the last two years
- ❖ It has been a very successful program. Global Water increases funding as needed.

COVID Funding: A Blessing

CARES Funding has been awarded to the agency for rental assistance, utilities including water payments, sewer and trash. This funding is provided by:

- ❖ City of Eloy
 - ❖ City of Casa Grande
 - ❖ Pinal County
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Problem and Vision Statement

Problem Statement:

The current Utility Assistance workflow is difficult for clients to navigate, and puts a large administrative burden on caseworkers and on the Utility Companies. The system is fractured and requires duplicative work, and does not effectively target utility assistance funds to the most vulnerable populations at high risk for indoor heat related deaths. Finally, the current system makes it impossible for ecosystem organizations to realize efficiencies in collaboration, service, and communication.

Vision Statement:

To build a more effective way of delivering utility assistance **information and aid** to clients in order to **better help people in a crisis situation**, reduce heat related deaths, and realize efficiencies in the ecosystem.

Prioritized Goals

- 1. Ensure the most vulnerable population receives critical help**
- 2. Get clients help when they need it**
- 3. Make it easier for clients to apply for utility assistance**
4. Make it easier for caseworkers to do their work
- 5. Give clients more information about whether they are eligible and funds are available**
6. Make it easier for caseworkers to feel successful when they go home at night
7. Reduce caseworker turnover and burnout
8. Help CAP offices run more efficiently
9. Decrease cost of distributing funds
10. Reduce operational overhead throughout the system

How do you feel about the process as a whole?

- Depressed
- Stressed
- Anxiety really bad
- Worried
- Frustrated
- Overwhelmed
- Relieved
- Grateful
- Sad
- Lonely

I made 138 calls today. I wasn't able to get through. If people could walk in, instead of just call, that would be better. If I could stand in line, I'd feel like I'm making progress. I haven't found anywhere else but here to help me. Here, at least, I'm glad they told me a date and a time for a decision (Friday--in 4 days). But I only have until the end of today.

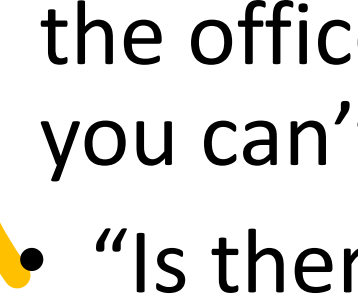
- 38 year old woman, single mother of two

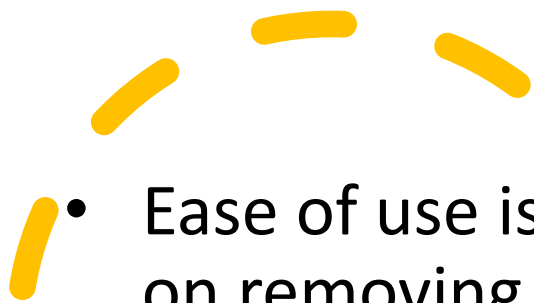
I've been on the phone since early this morning. Their phones were so busy. I called almost 40 times. Different numbers. Always busy. Then it would ring and a recorded message would play saying, "We are no longer accepting calls." I just have this week, and I'm trying not to get put out.

- 21 year old woman, mother unemployed for the first time



What could make this process easier on you?

- “Easier if someone answered the phone. Would’ve gotten the same information but would have saved gas.”
 - “If people could walk in, instead of just call.”
 - “Conference call instead of in person appointment in the office. Transportation is hard. You can’t get help if you can’t get there.”
 - “Is there another way to submit paperwork?”
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- Ease of use is important —> Focus on removing friction for users
 - Content degrades quickly (broken links, out of date phone numbers, etc.)
 - Technology doesn't solve ecosystem-level issues
 - Opportunity to do something nobody else has done



High Level Takeaways



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Additional Resources

- Applicable Resources, Tools, and Templates
 - [Utility Debt in the Pandemic: How to Change Shutoff and Collection Policy](#)
 - [Leveraging Your WAP: Why and How](#)
 - [Energy Awareness Month/WAP Day Toolkit](#)
- Recent/Upcoming Trainings and Webinars
 - [Weatherization Day Kickoff Webinar](#)

[Model Low Income Solar: Oregon](#) -- Oct 6 at 3pm ET

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Be in touch!

- About any challenges so we can find and share relevant resources and make connections to peers
- About successes so we can share as promising practices with others

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