

## IMPACT STATEMENT

**Date:** April 19, 2018

**Council Date:** May 23, 2018

**Legislation Title:** Authorize an Intergovernmental Agreement with Home Forward for an annual amount of \$640,000 to assist City of Portland utility customers that encounter barriers in paying water and sewer services (Ordinance)

**Contact Name:** Kathy Koch, Customer Service Director

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**Presenter Name:** Gabriel Solmer, Deputy Director

**Purpose of proposed legislation and background information:**

The Portland Water Bureau is committed to serving all customers with clean, safe and reliable water. The Bureau of Environmental Services provides sewage and stormwater collection and treatment services to accommodate Portland's current and future needs. The Water Bureau bills for water, sewer and stormwater services, and provides customer assistance for both utility bureaus.

The City's low-income discount program often is not an option for tenants who live in multi-family units because they may not receive a bill as a direct customer. Despite paying for water and sewer services through rent payments to landlords or property management companies, these customers cannot access the Water Bureau's low-income assistance services because they do not receive a bill that can be credited with a discount or a crisis voucher.

The need to extend utility bill relief to tenants in multi-family units is growing. In 2017, Commissioner Nick Fish tasked the Water Bureau with identifying a mechanism with which to reach multi-family tenants. Partnering with Home Forward was identified as one approach since they provide a Short-Term Rent Assistance (STRA) to households that are homeless or at risk of homelessness. STRA includes Crisis and Emergency Services, Rapid Re-Housing, and Homelessness Prevention Services. For tenants at risk of eviction and homelessness due to non-payment of rent, STRA provides immediate resolution in the form of direct payment to landlords or a property management company.



The City of Portland Water Bureau and the Bureau of Environmental Services are proposing to partner with Home Forward by entering into an Intergovernmental Agreement to support the STRA program with providing assistance with water, sewer and stormwater services to those households in need.

**Financial and budgetary impacts:**

Contingent upon City Council authorization, the City desires to enter into an Intergovernmental Agreement with Home Forward for an annual not-to-exceed amount of \$640,000. Funding is available in the City's Fiscal Year 2018-19 and, as required, will be requested in future fiscal year budgets by the Water Bureau and Bureau of Environmental Services. The Intergovernmental Agreement allows the City to provide Home Forward the financial assistance needed to assist households with rent assistance one time during 12 month period, which relates to water and/or sanitary sewer services because it provides similar assistance in paying water, sewer and stormwater bills as other low-income customers who receive a bill and can access the City's discount and voucher programs. Also, the Intergovernmental Agreement supports the City's Strategic Plan goals for assisting homeless individuals and families and low-income renters and homeowners.

**Community impacts and community involvement:**

Home Forward partners with more than 100 community agencies in the public, nonprofit and private sectors. Home Forward manages programs that provide assistance to households that are homeless or at risk of homelessness in Multnomah County. Through STRA, Home Forward contracts with nineteen community based service providers to select participants and deliver assistance to eligible households. Each funded agency will receive a portfolio of these resources to allow providers maximum flexibility to tailor the STRA assistance to the unique needs of the people they serve.

There are no significant concerns or objections to this legislation and there are no anticipated speakers for this item at City Council.

**100% Renewable Goal:**

This action does not affect the City's total energy use. This action does not affect the City's renewable energy use.

**Budgetary Impact Worksheet**

**Does this action change appropriations?**

- ☐ YES: Please complete the information below.  
☒ NO: Skip this section

Fund	Fund Center	Commitment Item	Functional Area	Funded Program	Grant	Sponsored Program	Amount

  
 Michael Stuhr, P.E., Administrator

  
 Date