

# Smart Discount Program

Portland City Council  
February 7, 2024





## The Problem:

*Addressing  
Affordability &  
Equity Challenges  
for Customers*

- Underperforming discount program
- Numerous program barriers
- Increased customer utility debt
- Failed payment plans
- Flat-fee discounts are inequitable
- Underutilizing data to help customers

## NIKOLAI



Mistrust of government cost him his discount.

**Without the discount his bill increased from \$70 per quarter to \$210 per quarter.**

## SARAH



Makes too much money, and does not qualify for the discount.

**She made \$95 over the income limit.**

## WATSONS



Making ends meet and constantly trying to avoid shut-off.

**Without the discount, their bill increased from \$220 per quarter to \$432 per quarter.**



# The Solution:

*A Data-Driven  
Approach to  
Affordability*

- **Innovate:**
  - *Automatic, data-driven* bill discounts
  - *Remove barriers* to affordability
  - *Manageable and affordable bills*—minimizing the likelihood of disconnection
- **Help more people:**
  - *Targeted, percentage-based* discounts
  - *Equitable access* to essential services
- **Spend money wisely:**
  - *Use existing funds* to deliver outcomes
  - *No rate impact* to customers

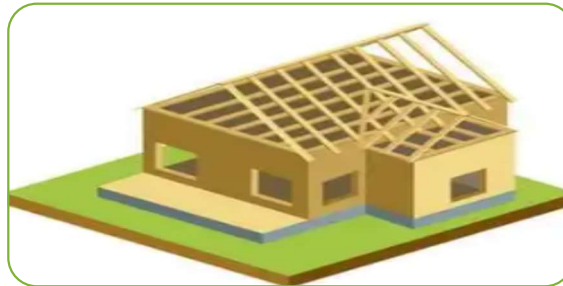


## The Return:

*Maximizing Benefits  
for Customers and  
the Community*

- Improves equity
- Eliminates barriers to affordability
- Streamlines allocation process
- Ensures efficient use of funds
- Reduces administrative burdens
- Enhances data-driven decision-making
- Creates capacity for more programming

# Creating a Path for Comprehensive Financial Assistance



## FOUNDATIONAL

- LINC
- Crisis Vouchers
- Clean River Rewards
- Leak Repair

## EXPANDED

- LINC Senior & Disabled
- Crisis Vouchers
- Clean River Rewards
- **Leak Repair**
- **RAMP**
- **Smart Discount**

## COMPREHENSIVE

- LINC Senior & Disabled
- Crisis Vouchers
- Clean River Rewards
- RAMP
- Smart Discount
- **Home Audit + Leak Repair**
- **PayMatch**
- **BizAssist**
- **Market Rate - Multifamily**

# Key Dates

## Winter & Spring 2024

- Council Approval
- Begin customer communications
- Finalize Smart City Privacy Impact Assessment

## Fall 2024 to Winter 2025

- Randomized trials to test and adjust model

## Spring 2025 to Summer 2026

- Run Smart Discount Program
- Complete initial analysis and reporting



# The Ask



- **Approve BES and PWB to:**

- Temporarily pause enrollment in the current financial assistance program—allowing for a seamless transition of customers to the Smart Discount Program
- Offer bill discounts ranging from 5% to 80% to eligible customers
- Execute a Contract-Specific Special Procurement with SERVUS up to \$350,000 to run the discount model and provide program support



# Questions

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