



For Immediate Release

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Harlingen Establishes Hardship Assistance Program

HARLINGEN, Texas—The Harlingen City Commission today approved the creation of a Hardship Assistance Program that will help residents that find themselves in a financial bind due to the Coronavirus Pandemic.

The program was unanimously approved during a Special Meeting of the Harlingen City Commission held earlier today and earmarks \$225,000 to help Harlingen residents who have overdue utility, rent, or mortgage bills.

Thousands of Texans have lost their jobs or have been temporarily laid off due to COVID-19, including many in Harlingen. Mayor Chris Boswell says through this program, the City aims to help Harlingen residents make ends meet. “I am very pleased that the City of Harlingen is setting aside CARE funding to assist those hit hardest by the COVID-19 pandemic. A lot of community members are hurting.”

The program, to be funded through the CARES Act COVID Relief Funds, will provide financial assistance for utility payments including water/sewer, gas, electric, as well as, rent, and mortgage payments.

Harlingen residents may qualify for up to three months of assistance for over-due accounts from March 1, 2020, through December 30, 2020. The program will also provide up to three months of rental or mortgage assistance not to exceed \$1500 per month for eligible Harlingen residents.

The City has entered into a contract with Loaves and Fishes of the Rio Grande Valley who will administer the program at no cost.

There are no income qualifications for this program and the assistance is not limited to only one overdue bill. The bills will be paid directly to the utility provider and landlords/property managers or mortgage companies. Business accounts are not eligible for assistance through this program.

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Interested residents will have to fill out an application by visiting Loaves and Fishes located at 514 South E. Street. The following documents will be required:

- ✓ Copy of TDL or State ID Card or other state or federally issued ID for all household members over age 18
- ✓ Copy of proof of citizenship or legal residency for all household members
- ✓ Copy of the last two bi-weekly pay stubs or last four pay stubs for weekly pay for household members over age 18
- ✓ Copy of most recent unemployment payment
- ✓ Copy of most recent Payroll Protection Program payment
- ✓ Copy of award letter for SSA, SSI, VA or VA Disability, retirement & pension funds
- ✓ Copy of most recent bank statement for all accounts held by household members
- ✓ Copy of current child support order and statement of amounts received
- ✓ Copy of award letter for Food Stamps
- ✓ Copy of most recent utility bill for which assistance is being requested
- ✓ Copy of notice form employer relating to the reduction of work hours/employment/business closure due to COVID-19
- ✓ Copy of current rental/lease agreement executed before March 1, 2020
- ✓ Copy of mortgage loan executed before March 1, 2020

To make an appointment or for more information about the required documents residents can call Loaves and Fishes at (956) 423-1014.

The City Commission has authorized the City Manager to add \$50,000 to the program should the initial funds be depleted before December 30, 2020.

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