



CITY OF SHELBY  
BILL PAYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM  
*Neighbor Helping Neighbor*

The City of Shelby has a program in place to assist customers that are having difficulty paying their utility bills. The winter months bring anxiety and discomfort to many in our community because of the difficulty in paying winter heating bills. The Bill Payment Assistance Program will provide funds to our aged, infirmed, and low-income members of our community in situations of extreme hardship. This program provides the opportunity for neighbor to help neighbor during times of family crisis.

The program is funded by contributions made by City of Shelby utility customers who elect to add \$1 or more per month to their utility bill. All contributions are tax deductible. Customers can make contributions independently of their utility bills in our Customer Services Payments Department located at City Hall.

The City recognizes that it cannot be involved with the provision of social services; therefore the Bill Payment Assistance Program is provided in conjunction with the Cleveland County Department of Social Services (DSS). For a customer to be eligible for assistance from this program, they must apply to the Department of Social Services for assistance. All funds will be retained by the City, and disbursed on behalf of customers after proper notification of DSS. A utility customer may be eligible two times per calendar year for assistance, and total assistance per calendar year may not exceed \$700. This program does not supplant any federal, state, or local funds that may otherwise be available for assistance, but is to provide additional support should other funds not be available.

**Bill Payment Assistance Program for City of Shelby Utility Customers**  
*Neighbor Helping Neighbor*

The City of Shelby and the Cleveland County Department of Social Services (CCDSS) have a joint program to assist customers in paying utility bills. The funds for this program are provided by City customers in a manner that the City staff/Council has developed. Payments are authorized by the Department of Social Services social work staff from available funds set by the City. The supervisor and staff at Social Services approve payment to be made on behalf of the customer based on the guidelines established.

Assumptions agreed upon by staff of both agencies:

1. This will not be an entitlement program. Client's income must be verified (as appropriate) Income Guidelines, Social Worker judgement and a limit on funds per incident of crisis.
2. The federal, state and county funds will still be as available to City residents as they have been. The use of the program will not make a smaller percentage of City utility customers eligible for other programs.
3. This program is only available to City utility customers.
4. Financial criteria may be different for adults living w/o minor children, families with minor children and elderly clients as their eligibility for other programs are quite different and the needs are often different.
5. The normal use of this program will be to solve a non-reoccurring crisis. A utility customer may be eligible two times per calendar year for assistance. Maximum assistance is \$350. per household per emergency not to exceed \$700 per calendar year.
6. This City requests that their staff be consulted as a resource for information about the use or misuse and chronic nature of late or non-payments. Funds should not be used in cases involving meter tampering and theft of services. This information will be assessed by the social worker and supervisor with the information that is available to the social worker to ascertain the legitimacy of the clients' request; the social worker and CCDSS supervisor will make the decision.
7. The income level must be at or below current federal heating and cooling assistance guidelines.