

Voluntary Compassionate Practices by Utility  
Companies to Protect Vulnerable Populations  
During COVID  
Kim Rikalo, SMUD Manager Residential  
& Assistance Delivery Programs



# About SMUD



community-  
owned  
**not-for-profit**  
for  
**70+**  
years



**focused**  
on programs, services  
and support for our  
**629,000**  
**customers**



**7** member  
Board of Directors  
elected by  
**you**



On average, **50%**  
carbon-free  
energy mix  
**committed**  
to  
**a clean energy**  
**future**

# How we're helping!

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## No Power Shut Off's

- Extended through January 4, 2021
- No Late Fees
- Residential and Commercial

## EAPR Guidelines

- Adjusted our guidelines so more customers can qualify
- Unemployment – Customer only needs to submit last paystub, instead of waiting for benefit letter
- Allowing one person households to qualify under two person income

## Flexible Payment Arrangements

- Extending payment arrangements for up to 24 months for our low income customers
- No deposit assessments due to late payments
- Outbound calls – We're here to help!!
  - Providing resources, and offering EAPR
  - Encouraged to apply for LiHEAP

# Other ways we're helping!

- Recertification EAPR/MED Rate
  - Paused
- Outreach
  - Virtual Presentations
  - Schools – Free lunch program
  - Food Banks – Drive thru pickup
- LiHEAP
  - Outreach
  - Data share
- EnergyHELP
  - Two new agencies
  - Funded through end of year (\$100K)

Estamos aquí para ayudar.

We're here to help.

**Estamos aquí para ayudar.**

Sabemos que muchos de ustedes están pasando por momentos difíciles. Mientras muchas opciones se agotan, estamos aquí para ayudarlo con opciones que pueden ayudar.

**No apagaremos la electricidad.**  
No desconectaremos la electricidad durante este tiempo de servicio, pero mantendrá el servicio.

**Mi cuenta**  
Puede acceder su cuenta en línea y pagar su factura.  
• Ver y pagar su factura  
• Establecer arreglos de pago  
• Revisar su uso eléctrico  
• Regístrese para recibir alertas de facturación

**Descuento de bajos ingresos**  
Nuestra Tarifa del Programa de Asistencia de Energía (EAPR) proporciona un descuento en la factura basado en el tamaño del hogar. Hemos ajustado los requisitos de asistencia de energía para que puedan calificar, solicitar y recibir el descuento.

Powering forward. Together.

**We're here for you**

We know many of you may be concerned about paying your bills during these challenging times. While much remains uncertain right now, one thing is for sure: we're here to help you through this with flexible billing options and discount rates.

**Not shutting off power for non-payment – through January 4, 2021**  
We will not disconnect power due to non-payment and we won't add late fees to your bill during this time. Customers who are behind on payment will still owe SMUD for service, but electric service will remain on at this time.

**My Account**  
You can access your account online 24/7.  
• View and pay your bill  
• Set up payment arrangements  
• Check your usage  
• Sign up for outage and billing alerts

**Flexible payment plans**  
If you are able, please continue to make your payment on time. For customers experiencing financial hardship, you can set up payment arrangements online or give us a call at 1-888-742-7683. Assistance is available in additional languages if needed, please just ask.

Learn more about how we're helping at [smud.org/HereToHelp](https://smud.org/HereToHelp).

Powering forward. Together.

SMUD

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# Virtual Energy Education

## ES Virtual Appointments

- Prioritized high usage customers
- Prioritized additionally by Electric Bill Burden (EBB) & Time of Day (TOD) impact
- 34% take rate

## Examples of Resolutions

- Improperly utilizing thermostat with heat pump HVAC
- Slab leak – Meter data and conversation revealed a major slab leak in kitchen
- Refrigerator was non working and within warranty period. Followed up with vendor to resolve
- Thermostat use and education on properly setting the thermostat to optimize for Time of Day

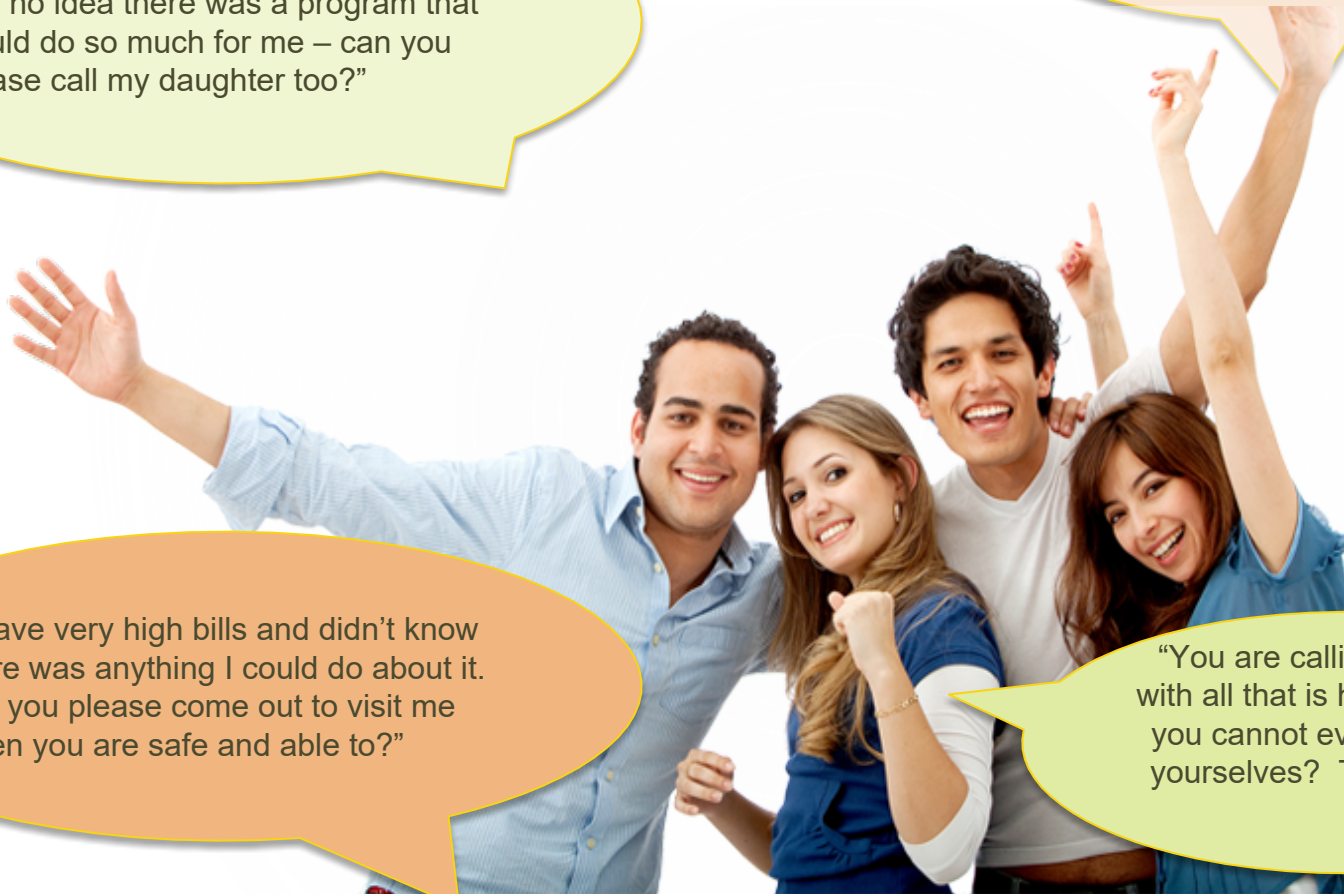
# Making a Difference

“Thank you for reaching out to me! I had no idea there was a program that would do so much for me – can you please call my daughter too?”

“I appreciate you looking into my problem with the compressor and any help that you are able to give me. It will make the difference between having a good life- even though we are homebound- and one that is totally stressed out. Thank you for your help!”

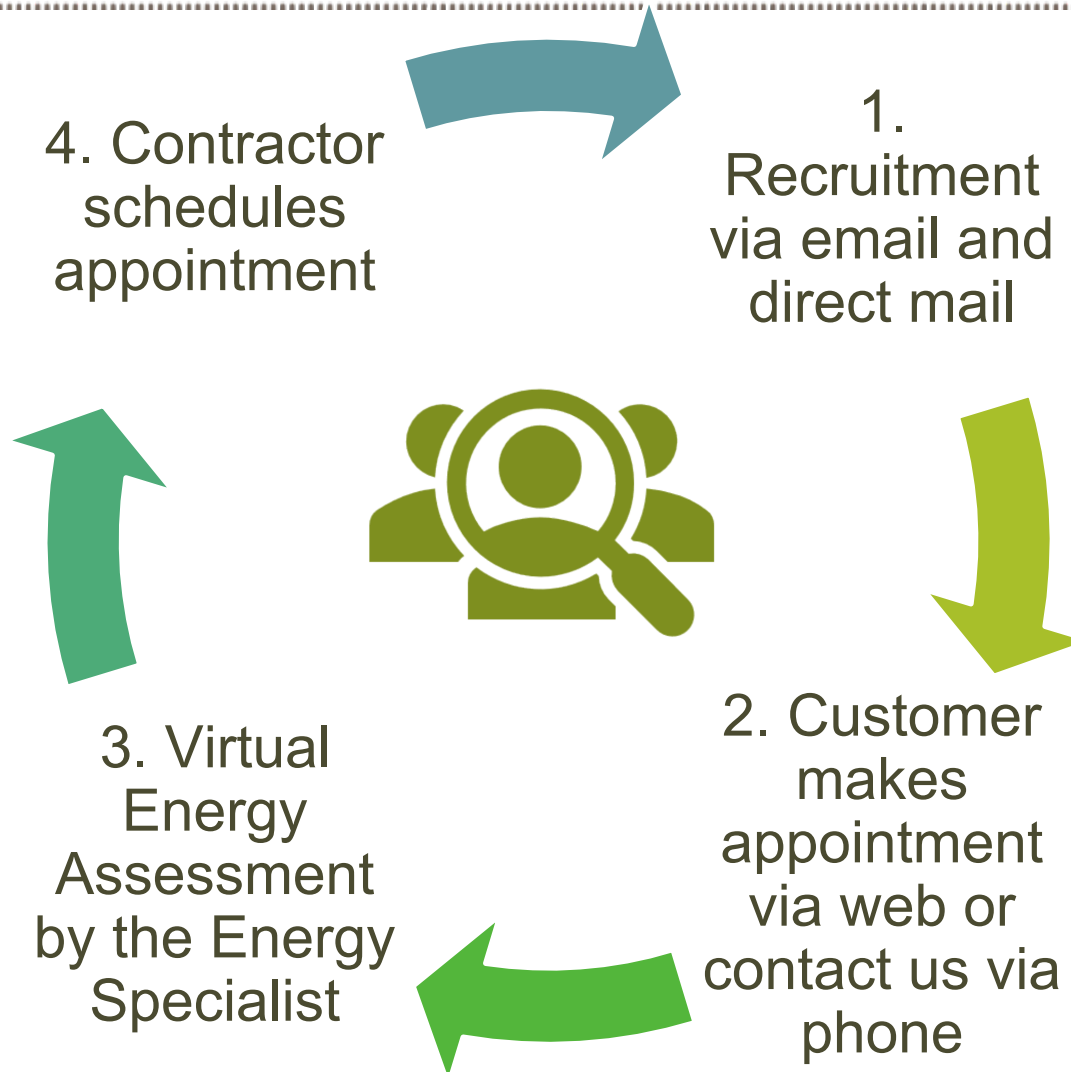
“I have very high bills and didn't know there was anything I could do about it. Will you please come out to visit me when you are safe and able to?”

“You are calling to help me with all that is happening, and you cannot even be at work yourselves? Thank you!”

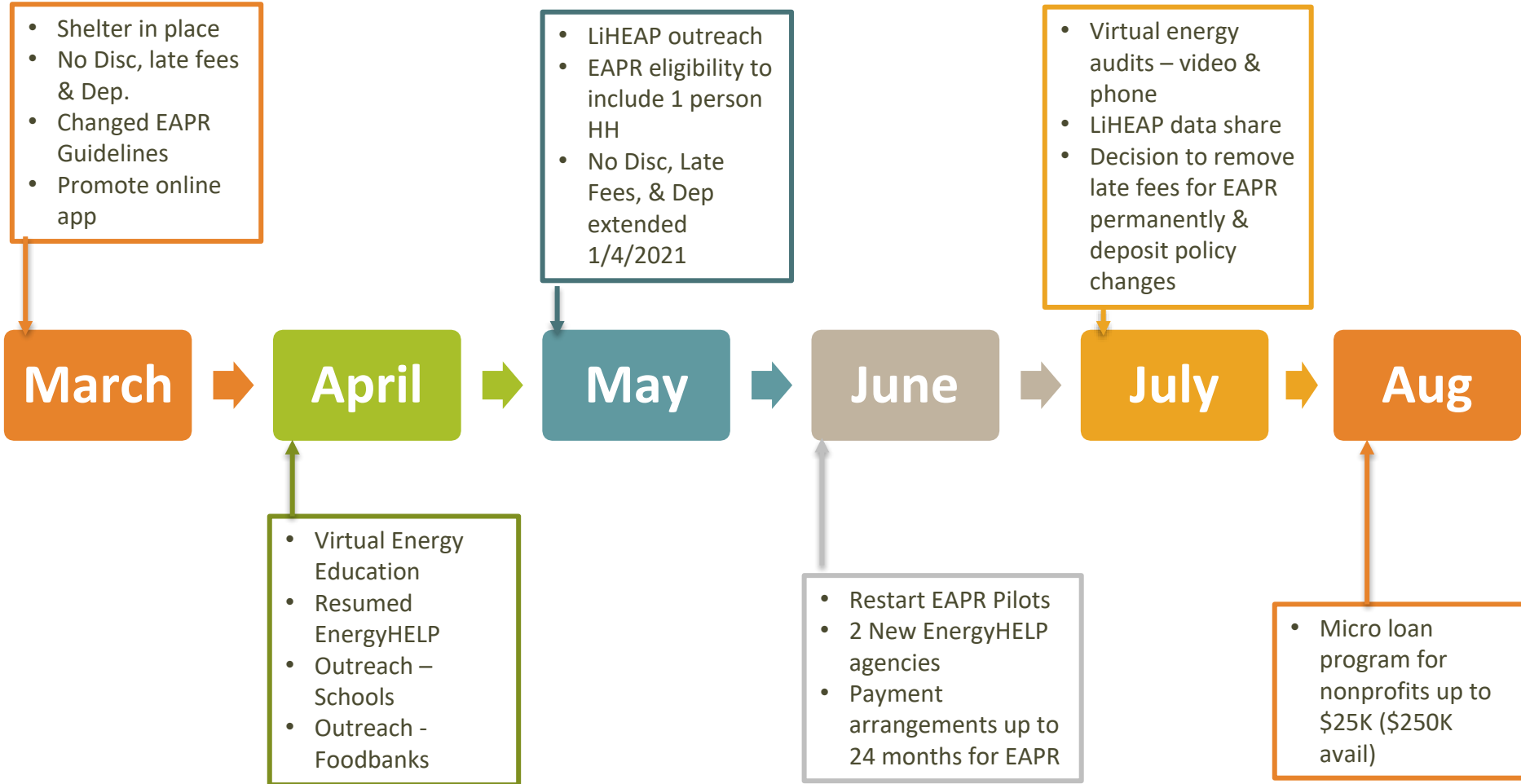


# Virtual Energy Assessment + Contractor

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# Weathering the change





# Stay safe videos

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- Videos available on SMUD.org
  - Offering various ways we can help
  - Encouraging Social Distancing




# Continuing the Learning

- SMUD.Org
- SMUD.Org/Coronavirus
- SMUD.Org/lowincome
- Stay Safe Video
  - ✓ <https://vimeo.com/user8889620/review/403877560/538f7445a7>
- STEAM Education
  - ✓ [www.smud.org/en/In-Our-Community/Workshops-and-education-resources/Teachers-and-students/Parent-resources](http://www.smud.org/en/In-Our-Community/Workshops-and-education-resources/Teachers-and-students/Parent-resources)

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# Appendix: STEAM education – Teacher and student resources



SMUD partnered with the National Energy Education Development Project (NEED) to bring fun, energy-focused activities for study-at-home learners.

New K-12 lessons are posted a few times every week to keep children engaged. Each will include a short reading activity, a worksheet and additional learning resources.

Lessons will cover topics like:

- Making electricity
- What are renewables?
- Wind, Hydro, Geothermal, Bio, Solar, Fossil fuels

Additional Classroom resources available online at [SMUD.org](http://SMUD.org)

Follow SMUD on Facebook for updates of added lessons



# **Voluntary Compassionate Practices by Utility Companies to Protect Vulnerable Populations During COVID**

Gerri Drummond, TECO Energy,  
Social Services/Credit & Collections Coordinator



# Pandemic Timeline

March 12<sup>th</sup> – WHO declares Pandemic

March 13<sup>th</sup> – Suspension of Disconnections

March 16<sup>th</sup> – TECO declares Level 3 Pandemic Response

March 17<sup>th</sup> – Team Members Transition to Working Remotely

March 26<sup>th</sup> – COVID-19 Share Donation – Special Assistance

March 30<sup>th</sup> – TECO declares Level 4 Pandemic Response



## We're with you through trying times.

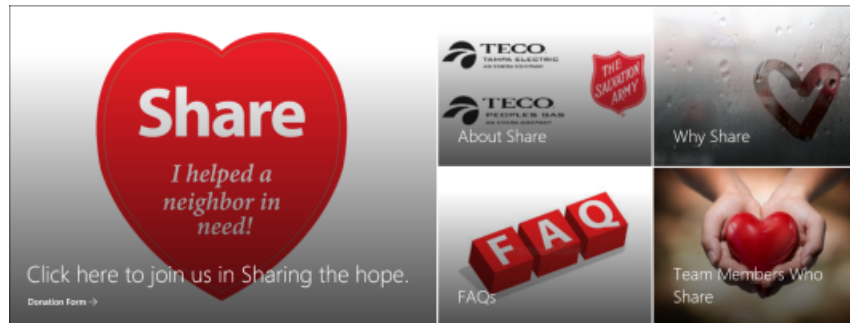
We understand these are difficult times for many of our customers. Some have lost jobs, some are struggling to care for loved ones, parents are learning to home school and so much more. To all our customers who are facing hardships, please know you are not alone and that the men and women at TECO are committed to helping you get through this uncertain time. To help assist customers having difficulty making utility bill payments, TECO recently donated \$1 million to COVID-19 relief, including \$500,000 to the Share program. Share is administered by the Salvation Army, specifically to provide utility bill assistance. In addition to funds provided by TECO, Share is funded by the generosity of our own employees, community partners like the [Tampa Bay Lightning](#), and customers just like you.





# Compassionate Practices

- One Million – COVID Donation
- Established In-House Process for Customer Assistance
- Created Partnerships for donations
- Working Safely at TECO
- Cross-Functional Team - develop a plan focusing on key aspects of resuming dunning



# In-House Process: Customer Assistance Team

- Amended contract with Salvation Army
- Developed Referral Application Form
- Incorporated LIHEAP Referral Process
- Document Upload – Virtual Assistance Process
- Verbal Consent
- Flexible Payment Arrangements on balances





# Partnerships

COI Energy – Vendor - \$50,000 donation

Tampa Bay Lightning – Community Power Play (assisting 91 Customers)

<https://youtu.be/DKdY4XdICO8>

## We are all in this together!





# Working Safely – Virtual Initiatives

- Minimizing Interactions
- Social Distancing Guidance
- Limiting face to face meetings
- No business travel
- Facial Coverings – Employee Safety Kit



# Cross-functional Team – Resuming Dunning

- Collections Team
- Communications Team
- Field Preparation Team
- System Changes Team
- Customer Impact Team

**We Are All In This Together!**



# Caring Really is Sharing

- ❖ **Increase in donations for Share Program**
  - Team Members
  - Customers
  
- ❖ **Increased awareness of need for assistance**
  - Team Member Stories: “Why I Share?”
  - Customer Stories – “How Share helped me!”
  
- ❖ **Strengthened relationships with Community Partners**
  - Partnering on referrals
  - Fast tracking access to Agency Portal

**We Are All In This Together!**



# Live Q&A

Submit a question to be answered by our speakers **LIVE!** Questions will be read aloud by the moderator. We will attempt to answer as many questions as possible.

