



Utility Assistance Programs 2009 Performance Report



City of Seattle • Mike McGinn, Mayor
Human Services Department • Mayor's Office for Senior Citizens

Utility Assistance Programs administered by the Mayor's Office for Senior Citizens are available to all eligible low-income Seattle City Light and Seattle Public Utilities customers, regardless of age. The purpose of Utility Assistance Programs is to help low-income residents get current and stay current on their utility payments. Programs highlighted in this report include:

- **Utility Discount Program (Low Income Rate Assistance):** Provides income-eligible Seattle City Light and Seattle Public Utilities customers with a 50 percent rate discount.
- **Project Share:** Helps income-eligible Seattle City Light customers avoid disconnection by providing one-time emergency payment assistance.

Highlights

Accomplished	2009 Performance Measures	2008	2009	Increase
✓	Increase the total number of low-income households served by the Utility Discount Program by 5+ percent over 2008	15,230	16,810	10.4%
✓	Increase low-income minority enrollment in the Utility Discount Program by 5+ percent over 2008	6,909	7,932	14.8%
✓	Provide emergency assistance to low-income residents who fall behind on their bills, at risk of electrical shut off	868	924	6.5%

Making a difference for low-income residents ...

2009 customer testimonials include:

- *Mayor and staff, thank you from the bottom of my heart. To you and your families, God bless. Your program is a great asset. It really helped me out of a bind. We would not have been able to survive without your help.*
- *Qualifying in the Utility Discount Program is a big help for a single parent like me, struggling to make ends meet every month. It has been tough living from one paycheck to the next.*
- *You made me feel that we weren't just one of the numbers in your statistics. You even called me to bring the good news about your decision to extend the services to us.*
- *Your very kind subsidies of my electric and water bills are so very much appreciated. I only get minimal unemployment benefits. I have closed off half of my room space so I only heat the other half. That saves electricity.*
- *I truly appreciate what you are doing and your understanding. You have proven to be very kind, considerate and helpful. I hope you know how much that helps for people experiencing difficult times.*

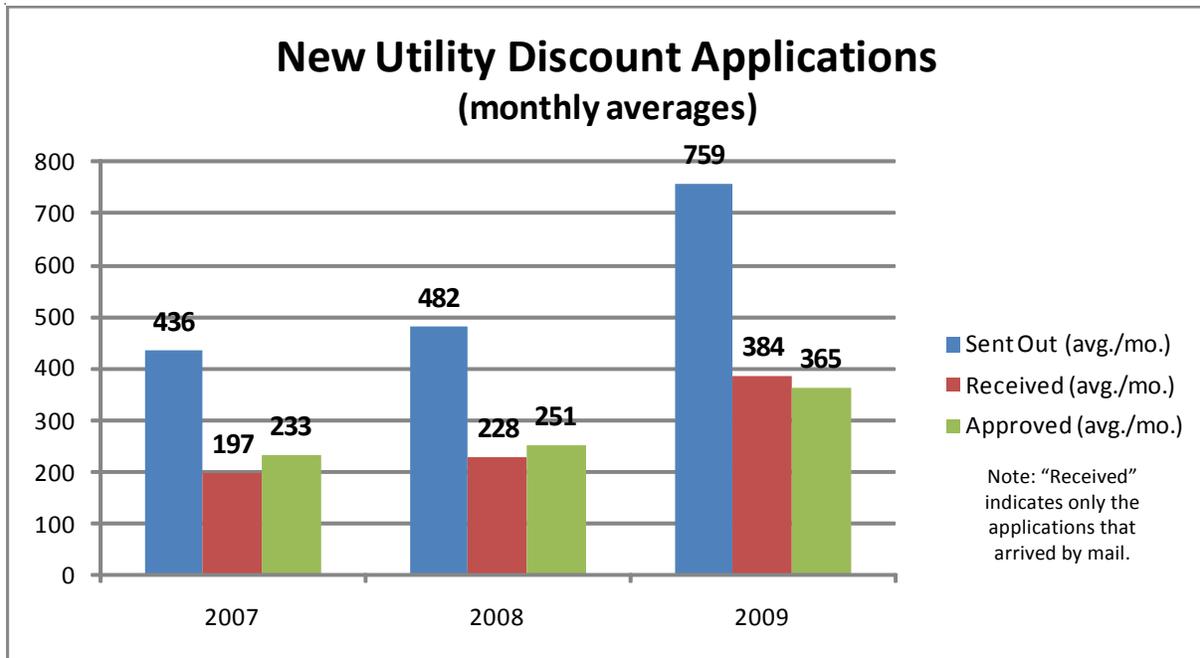


Utility Discount Program (Low Income Rate Assistance)

New Active Customers

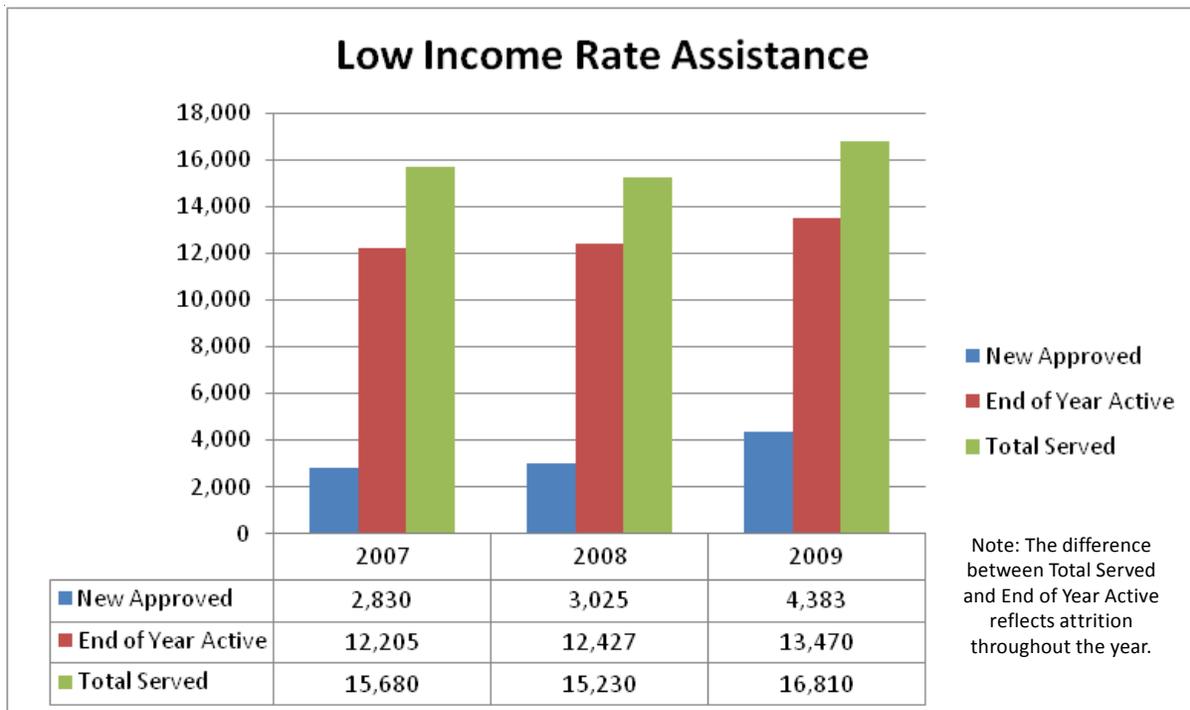
Significant media attention contributed to a major increase in new utility discount applications in 2009.

- The average number of utility discount applications requested each month (759) represents a 57.4 percent increase over the 2008 monthly average.
- New applications received per month increased by 68.8 percent over the monthly average in 2008.
- Applications approved per month in 2009 (365) increased by 45.5 percent over 2008.



Total Active Caseload

Aggressive outreach combined with high unemployment contributed to dramatic growth in the UDP caseload. The End of Year Active caseload increased by 8.4 percent in 2009 and continued growth is expected. In addition, the total number of households served during the year climbed by 10.4 percent.



Utility Discount Program Customer Profile

Household Size and Family Income

The average household size for families participating in the Utility Discount Program is 2.4 people. Single-person households make up more than half (51.5 percent) of all households. Households of one or two people make up more than 74 percent of the total.

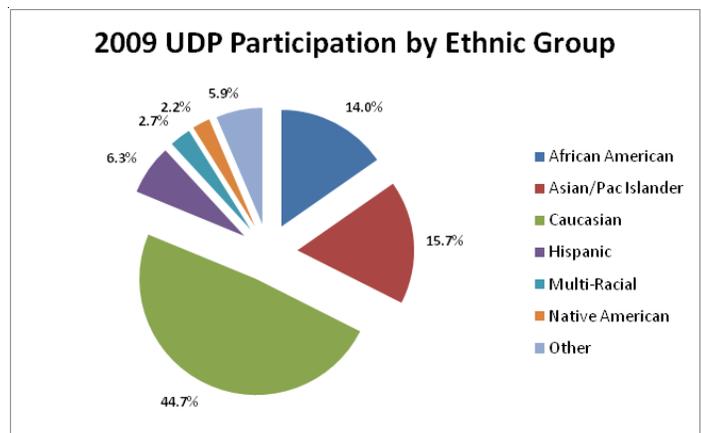
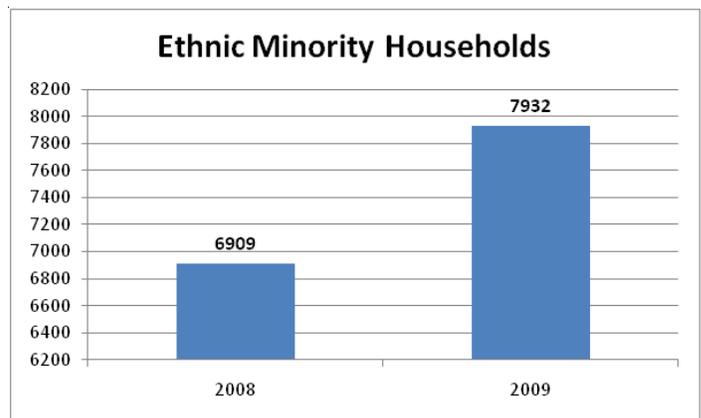
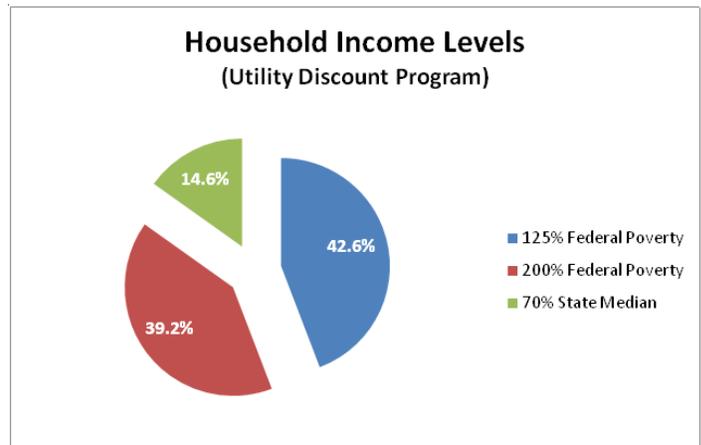
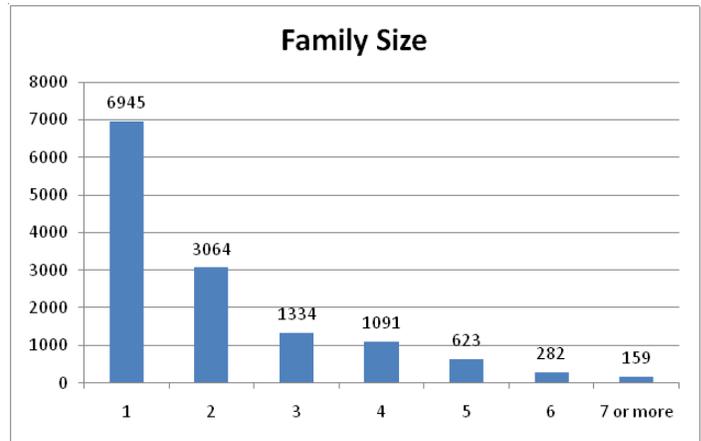
The average household income for families in the Utility Discount Program is \$1,590 per month. More than 82 percent of these families have a monthly income less than 200 percent of Federal Poverty Level (FPL). For a three-person household this equates to \$3,025 or less per month. Nearly 43 percent of all households are living on less than 125 percent of FPL.

Housing Status

Fifty-eight percent of Utility Discount Program applicants are homeowners; 42 percent are renters. Average housing cost is \$604/month, representing 38 percent of total income.

Race & Ethnicity

Outreach to people of color and residents with limited English continues to be a high priority for the Mayor's Office for Senior Citizens. Energy & Utility Assistance brochures in 11 languages provide comprehensive information about utility assistance programs (City and other). Proactive outreach to communities of color resulted in a 14.8 percent increase in minority participation.



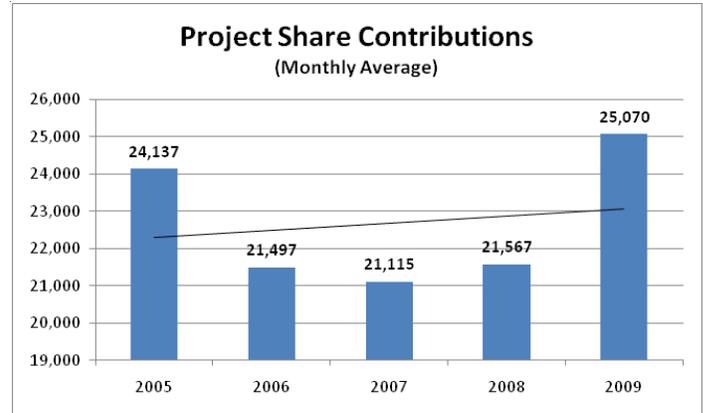
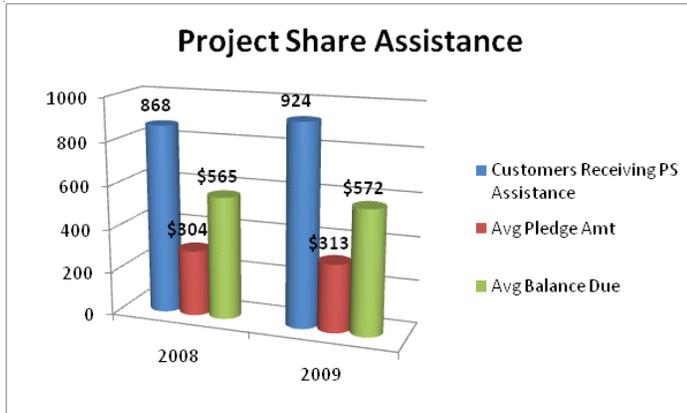
SPU Emergency Assistance Program

Seattle Public Utilities offers emergency payment assistance to residential customers who face water disconnection. Utility Assistance Program staff in the Mayor's Office for

Senior Citizens provides comprehensive service by reviewing every SPU Emergency Assistance Program account for possible savings on water and electricity through the Utility Discount Program. In addition, staff promote Seattle Public Utilities' low-flow toilet program that helps customers conserve water and save money.

Project Share

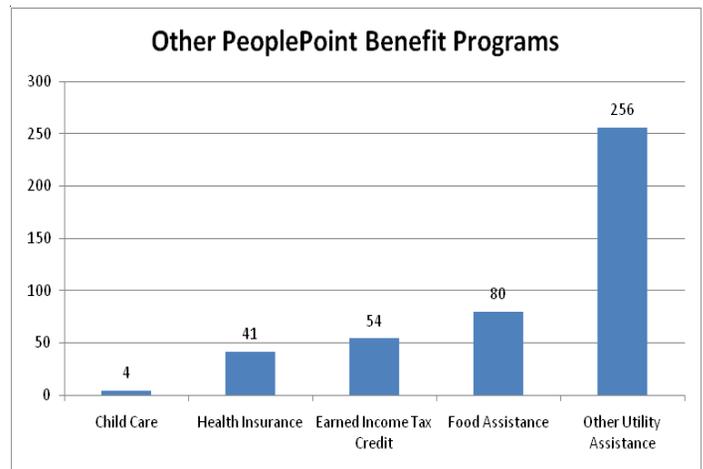
The total number of customers receiving Project Share assistance in 2009 (924) increased by 6.5 percent over the previous year (868). Project Share is funded by contributions from Seattle residents. Project Share is registered as a charitable organization with the State of Washington. Donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by the Internal Revenue Service. Project Share devotes 100 percent of its donations to direct assistance.



NOTE: The 2009 increase is due to a single one-time contribution of \$40,000. Not counting that contribution, the 2009 average was \$21,736.

PeoplePoint Outreach

In addition to their primary responsibilities for the Utility Discount Program and Project Share, program staff helped 435 customers with referrals and access to other public benefit programs including health insurance, food assistance and child care. Through the PeoplePoint referral network, utility assistance customers are able to take advantage of additional savings and improve their family financial condition.



For more information, contact:

Mayor's Office for Senior Citizens
 Central Building Suite 350 • Seattle, WA 98104
 Tel. 206-684-0500 • TTY 206-223-2778 • Fax 206-684-0494
 seniors@seattle.gov • www.seattle.gov/seniors

Utility Assistance Programs
 Tel. 206-684-0268 • TTY 206-223-2778 • Fax 206-621-5012
 UDP@seattle.gov • www.peoplepoint.info

PeoplePoint
 Tel. 206-684-0355 • TTY 206-223-2778 • Fax 206-621-5012
 peoplepoint@seattle.gov • www.peoplepoint.info