

MILPITAS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Frequently Asked Questions



How secure is my personal information?

The City of Milpitas takes its responsibility to safeguard Milpitas Assistance Program customers' personal information very seriously. Personal information is encrypted and stored in a highly secure database, using the SeamlessGov platform. Data in transit is encrypted using a standard SSL/TLS certificate. Data is stored in a SOC 1 Type II, SOC2 Type 1 and ISO 27001 Amazon AWS Datacenter. Personal medical information is accessible only to the City of Milpitas Social Services staff who approve applications. Once information is no longer needed, it is immediately and permanently erased from our database.

Am I guaranteed the same discount every year?

No. The City allocates a certain amount of funding support to the Program each year, and the total amount available may change from year to year, depending on factors such as City expenses, resident needs and other factors. As a result, City Council may change the discounts offered to residents and the eligibility requirements. Tier 1 and Tier 2 customers must reapply every year. Tier 3 customers may only reapply once per hardship.

What does 'per hardship' mean?

Tier 3 customers' eligibility is based on a specific temporary financial hardship, such as job loss or loss of the primary wage earner. The expectation is that most Tier 3 customers will overcome the temporary hardship fairly quickly, so their initial eligibility is only for six months. They can re-apply for a second six months under the temporary financial hardship category as needed. But after one year, families who still need help will if help is still needed after one year, the family will be eligible to apply under Tier 2. A family can apply again under Tier 3 only if a they experience a different hardship. For example, a family could initially qualify in January for 6 months of eligibility because of a job loss. The parent may find a new job to replace the lost income and leave the program. Then a child's serious illness may require the parent to quit the job to care for the child. The illness is considered a different hardship, so the family would be eligible apply again.

How much is this program costing the City, and where is the money coming from?

If the program is used to maximum capacity, the City will spend just under \$300,000 in Fiscal Year 2019-2020 to assist Milpitas families. Money has been allocated by City Council specifically for this purpose, as part of the budget process. Money for the Recreation programs includes

some general fund money and money donated by individuals and organizations for the Recreation Assistance Program. Money for Water Utility discounts is taken from late fees paid in the previous fiscal year. Money for the Residential Building Permit Fee is allocated from the general fund.

Can I get a retroactive discount on fees I've already paid?

Unfortunately, no. Because funding is budgeted by fiscal year and awarded in the order applications are received, we cannot provide reimbursements for fees already paid. Your discount is applicable only on fees incurred from the date of award until date of expiration.

Can I qualify for Temporary Hardship if I have money tied up in assets (home, 401K, pension)?

It depends. Temporary Hardship is based on your monthly income dipping to at or below the threshold for a low-income family for the Milpitas area. There is no requirement that you liquidate property assets or take an early withdrawal from a 401K or pension. However, if you are already receiving payments from a 401K or pension or reverse mortgage, those are considered part of your income.

If I am a homeowner renting a room to someone, is the renter considered part of my household? Renters do not have to be counted as household members, and you do not need to report the renter's income as part of the household income. However, the rent paid by the renter is part of the household income. The homeowner would list it as other income.

Can funds be used for anything else (mortgage, home repairs, etc.)?

MAP does not award funds to individuals or third parties. MAP is a discount program, reducing your fees owed to the City. If you are not using one of the fee-based City services covered under the program, there is nothing to discount. For example, MAP provides discounts on residential permit fees for installation of replacement water heaters, furnaces and air conditioners, but it does not provide funds directly to homeowners or a third party (i.e. Home Depot) to assist with the purchase of the units themselves. MAP provides discounts on City-run recreation programs, but it does not provide discounts on recreation programs that are registered directly through a third-party provider, even if those programs take place on City property or are advertised at an event on City property.

What if I don't have an email account?

We strongly suggest you get an email account so we can communicate with you about the program. However, if you don't have one yet, use ours: map@ci.milpitas.ca.gov. You may be required to come into the office to complete the application process.