

**Puget Sound Energy**

**Attachment B to Low Income Program Outcome Compliance Filing**

**Report on Outreach Strategy and Program Outcome**

**of**

**Electric and Natural Gas Schedules 129**

**Crisis Affected Customer Assistance Program (“CACAP”)**

**For the Period of April 13, 2020 through September 30, 2020**

**Filed on May 28, 2021**

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## ***Introduction and Background***

Puget Sound Energy's ("PSE's") bill assistance program, the Crisis Affected Customer Assistance Program ("CACAP"), was approved by the Commission on April 10, 2020, under Dockets UE-200331 and UG-200332. PSE proposed the CACAP on April 6, 2020, in light of the potential customer financial impact due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The CACAP benefits were available to qualifying Customers on a first-come, first-served basis. The CACAP utilized the carry-over bill assistance funds from prior years under PSE's Schedule 129 Low Income Program. The CACAP was designed to provide bill assistance to Customers who were impacted specifically by the COVID-19 pandemic or by the measures taking by the governmental agencies in responding to the pandemic. The CACAP benefits were available to the following PSE residential Customers:

1. Residential Customers who were unemployed, partially unemployed or unable to work for COVID-19 pandemic related reasons, beginning on or after March 1, 2020; and
2. Residential Customers whose total household income was at or below 250% of the Federal Poverty Level ("FPL") guidelines, based on their household income prior to the month of application.

Beginning on April 13, 2020, Customers meeting both of the above criteria were directed to submit an application by creating and/or signing into their online PSE account either on [www.mypse.com](http://www.mypse.com) or via PSE's myPSE mobile app for smartphones or other mobile devices. They would then access the CACAP application within the Energy Portal<sup>1</sup> by following the link for bill-payment assistance. Customers were then able to upload supporting documents either by scanning them or photographing them to create a JPEG format picture file. Customers who were unable to complete the application process electronically were able to contact PSE to request a paper application or to apply over the phone.

PSE determined the CACAP benefit amount for each individual Customer based upon the total March through August 2019 PSE energy bills for the premise where the Customer resided at the time of application. If energy bills for the time period of March through August 2019 were not available, PSE calculated the benefit using a fixed average per-day charge. The CACAP funding was initially capped at \$7.8 million for electric service and \$7.0 million for natural gas service, with an overall CACAP spending cap across both electric and natural gas service of \$11 million.

On July 21, 2020, under Dockets UE-200672 and UG-200673, PSE filed revisions to the CACAP to increase the spending limit for the electric CACAP from \$7.8 million to \$12.3 million. Additionally, PSE's filing established an end date for the CACAP of September 30, 2020, although pending applications received on or prior to that date continued to be processed and benefits awarded to qualifying Customers. The Commission approved these revisions on July 30, 2020.

In its initial filing of the CACAP on April 6, 2020, PSE also committed to including reporting on its CACAP customer participation in its 2019-2020 Low Income Program Outcome Report compliance filing to be filed in May 2021 per Docket Nos. UE-011570 and UG-011571 (consolidated), Twelfth Supplemental Order. This reporting also includes a summary of PSE's CACAP outreach strategy as committed to in its April 6, 2020 filing.

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<sup>1</sup> Energy Portal: PSE's website where a customer can initiate their energy bill assistance application process: <https://www.pse.com/BPCC/signin>

### ***CACAP Effective Period and Reporting Period***

PSE’s 2020 Crisis Affected Customer Assistance Program under its electric and natural gas Schedules 129 was effective from April 13, 2020, through September 30, 2020. That is, customers could apply for the CACAP benefits until the end of September 2020. However, the processing of these customer requests did not stop until April 11, 2021<sup>2</sup>, as PSE had been working with customers since their initial CACAP application submittal to gather the documentation needed for their CACAP qualification. The discussions and results presented in this CACAP report reflect the customers who had applied for Schedule 129 benefits under PSE’s CACAP during the program period of April 13, 2020, through September 30, 2020, and the CACAP benefits distributed to these CACAP customers during the period of April 13, 2020 through April 11, 2021.

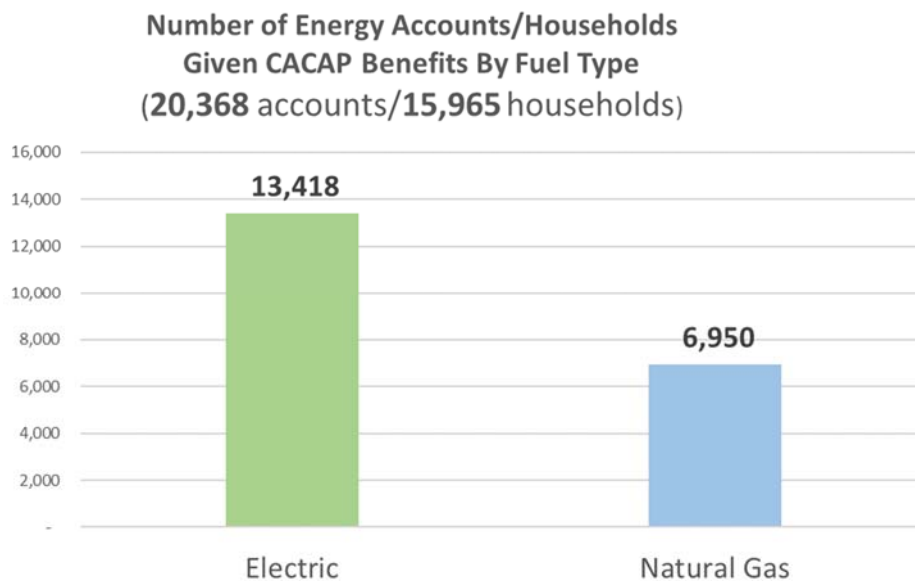
### ***Description of CACAP Benefits***

#### **CACAP Benefits by Fuel Type**

The following table shows the number of PSE residential customers who received benefits from PSE’s 2020 CACAP.

Electric energy accounts:	13,418
Natural gas energy accounts:	6,950
Total	20,368

The number of eligible households that received CACAP benefits is lower than the sum of the two numbers above since some households are both PSE natural gas and electric customers. The total number of households that received benefits is 15,965, i.e., there are 4,403 CACAP households that received both PSE electric and natural services under the 2020 CACAP. The chart below is a comparison of the number of customers who received benefits by fuel type.

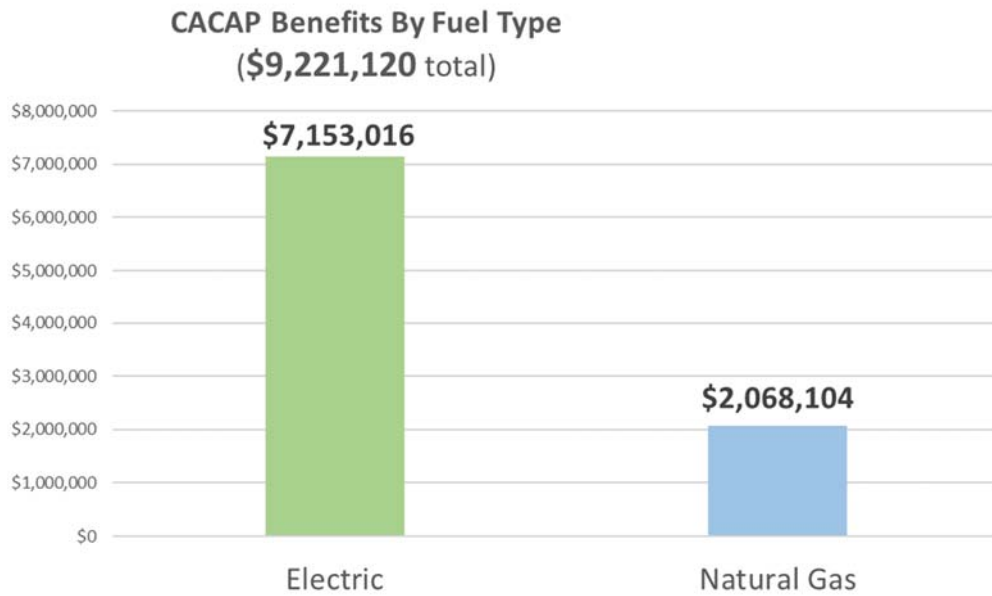


<sup>2</sup> After the Commission approval of PSE’s 2021 CACAP under Docket UE-210138 and Docket UG-210137, which became effective on March 28, 2021.

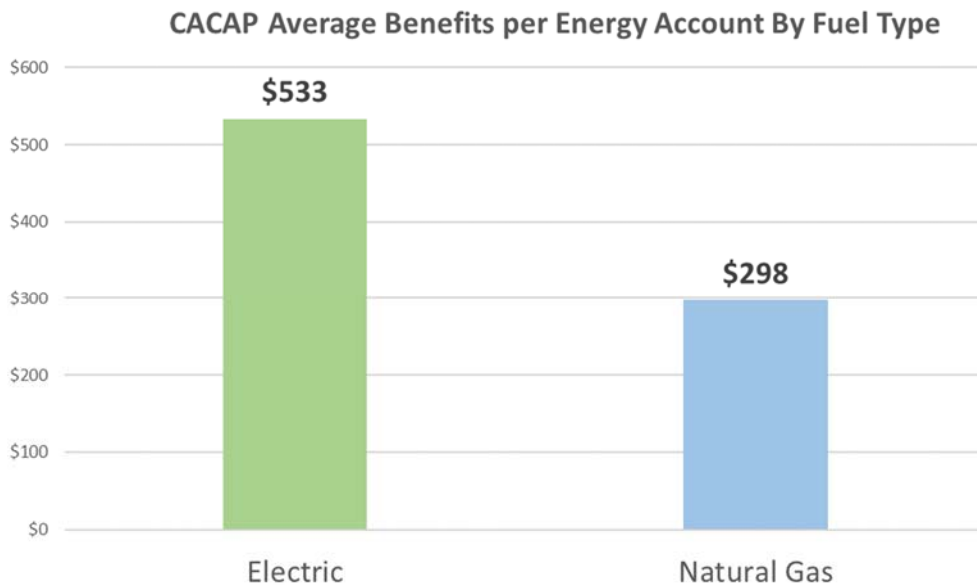
The number of eligible customers that received CACAP benefits as percentage of the total number of residential customers by electric and natural gas is 1.30% (13,418 out of 1,035,926) and 0.88% (6,950 out of 789,340), respectively.

The total dollar amount of CACAP benefits distributed to customers was:

Electric	\$7,153,016
Natural Gas	\$2,068,104
Total	\$9,221,120



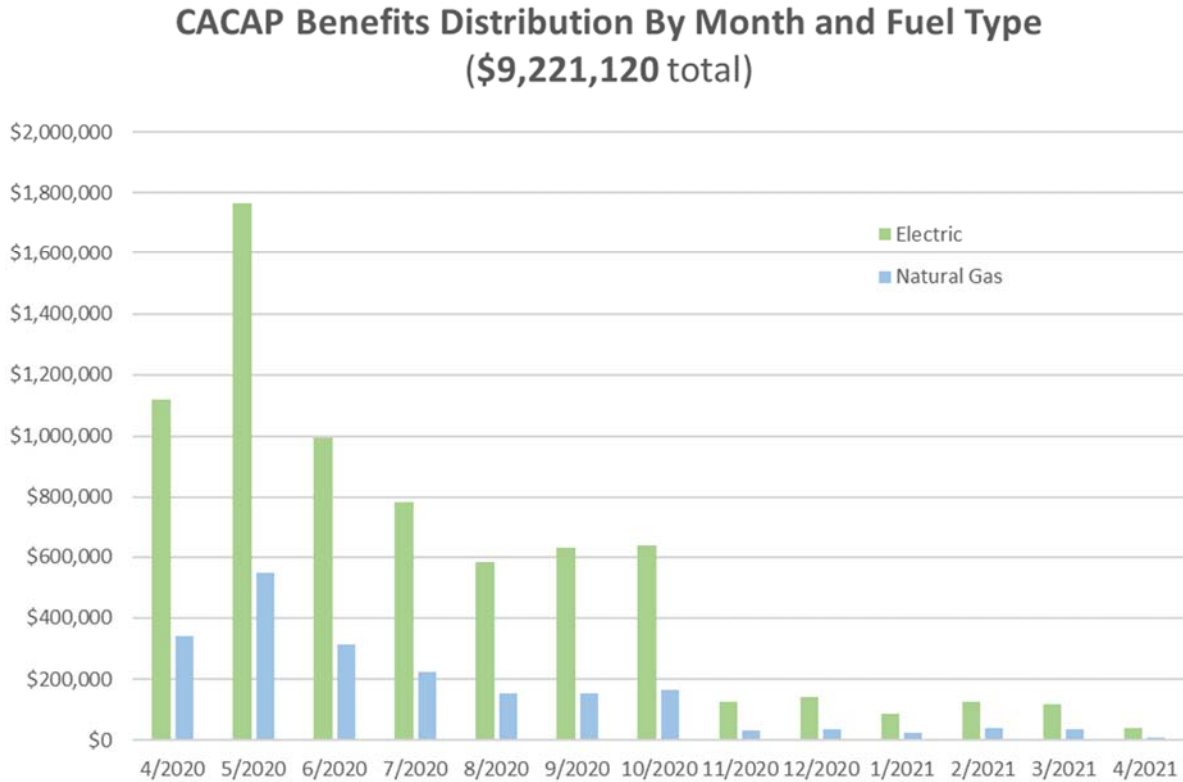
The average level of CACAP benefits by electric and natural gas energy account is \$533 and \$298, respectively.



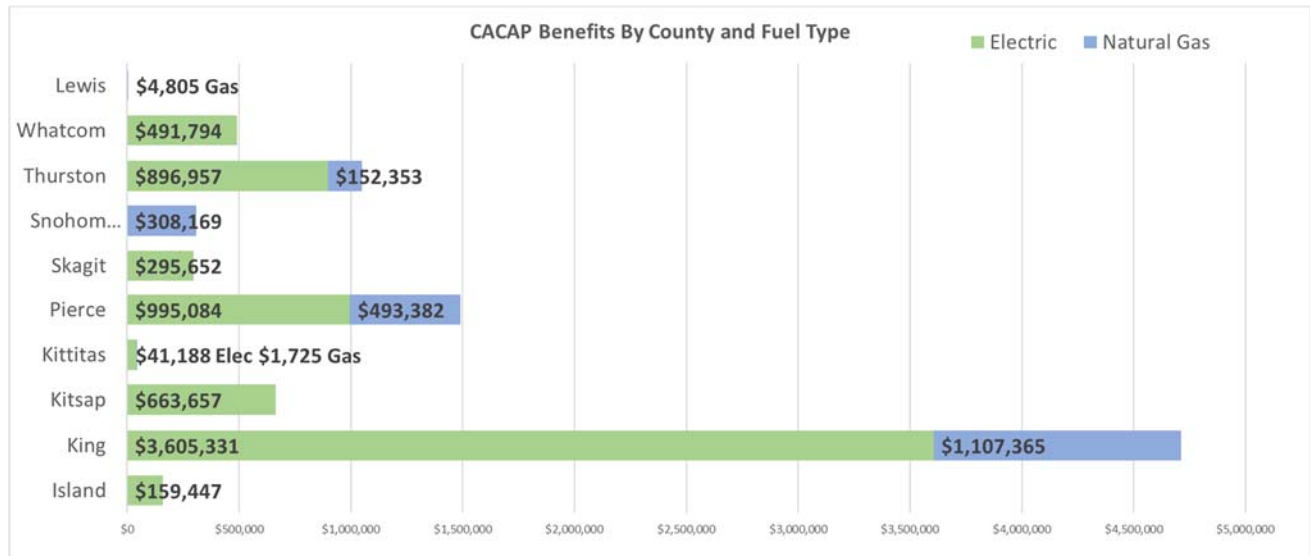
## Monthly Pattern of Distribution of CACAP Benefits

The following chart shows the monthly pattern of distribution of CACAP benefits to eligible PSE customers during the program period by fuel type.

### CACAP Benefits by County Area



The chart below shows the CACAP benefits for the various county areas in PSE’s service territory. King County has highest the CACAP benefits whereas Kittitas and Lewis Counties have the lowest CACAP assistance amounts.



### ***PSE Customer Access Center Agent Communications***

Puget Sound Energy did not provide specific phone answering scripting to its Customer Access Center agents about the CACAP. However, communication alerts were sent to all agents on April 14, 2020, April 17, 2020, April 20, 2020, and June 19, 2020, which provided an overview of the CACAP and included a link to a CACAP FAQ page at PSE’s intranet that includes an overview of the CACAP and instructions on assisting customers who inquired about CACAP.

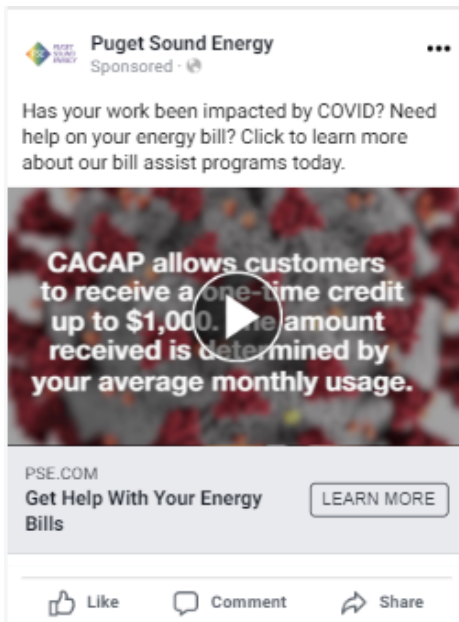
Based on agent interaction records, a total of 15,293 incoming calls related to the CACAP were handled by Customer Access Center agents in 2020.

### ***CACAP Outreach Strategy***

During the 2020 CACAP period, April 2020 through September 2020, Puget Sound Energy made customers aware of the CACAP through bill inserts, bill mailing envelopes, bill-print messages, and in-person conversations.

The samples below illustrate some of the communications used to raise awareness about PSE’s CACAP.

#### **1. April 2020: Social Media Ad**



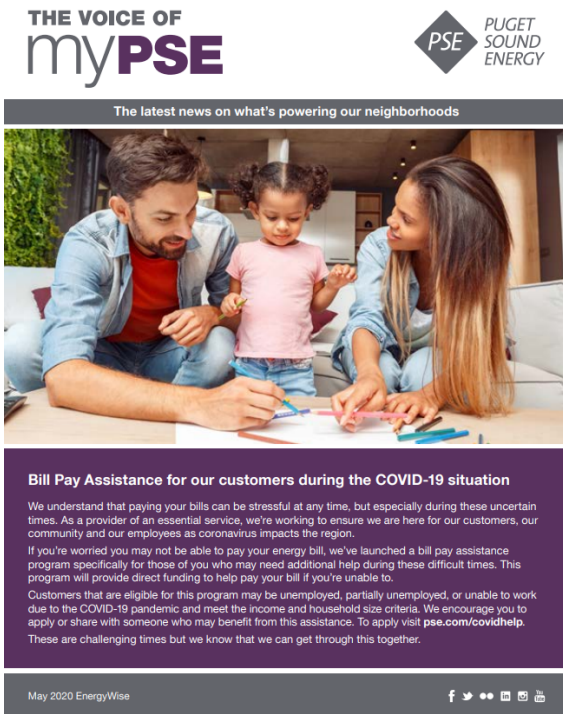
2. April 2020: Social Media Banner Ad



3. April 2020: Social Media Banner Ad

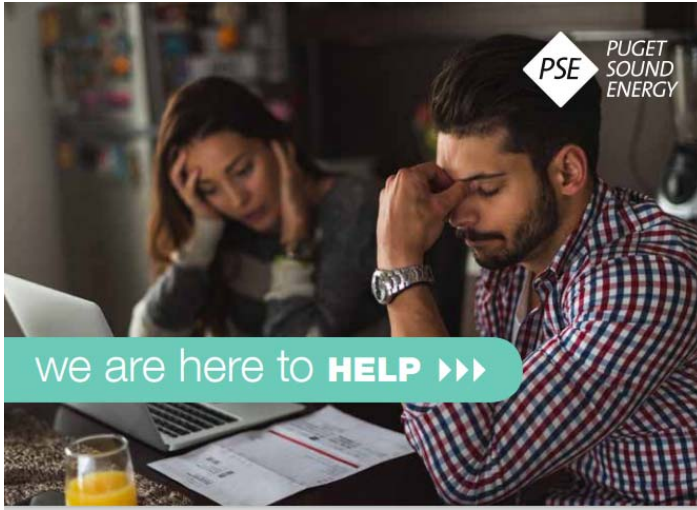


4. May 2020: Lead Article in The Voice





## 5. May 2020: Postcard



You may qualify for up to  
\$1,000 in bill credit from PSE

If you have recently lost your job, are partially unemployed, or unable to work, you may qualify for a one-time bill credit. Once approved, you'll see your energy credit on your next month's bill.

View income qualifications and apply:  
[pse.com/covidfund](https://pse.com/covidfund)

For application issues  
1-888-225-5773

energy | P.O. Box 97034 | Bellevue, WA 98009-9734

## 6. May 2020: Social Media Ad

**Puget Sound Energy**  
Sponsored · 🌐

Get help with your energy bills today. Click to learn more about our bill assist programs.

**CACAP allows customers to receive a one-time credit up to \$1,000. The amount received is determined by your average monthly usage.**

PSE.COM  
Get Help With Your Energy Bills [LEARN MORE](#)

Like Comment Share

7. **May 2020:** Email

## Apply for our COVID-19 assistance fund

Paying your bills can be stressful at any time, but especially during these uncertain times.

We've launched a COVID-19 program for our customers who may be unemployed, partially unemployed, or unable to work due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

This program will provide a one-time bill credit that can be applied to your PSE bill quickly.

Apply now or share with someone who may need this assistance.

[APPLY NOW](#)

**June 2020:** Social Media Ad



The image shows a Facebook social media advertisement for Puget Sound Energy. At the top left is the Puget Sound Energy logo, a green diamond with a white 'PSE' inside, followed by the text 'Puget Sound Energy' and 'Sponsored · 🌐'. To the right of the name are three dots. Below the header is the text: 'We've launched a bill pay assistance program specifically for those of you who may need additional help during these difficult times.' The main visual is a photograph of a man and a woman sitting at a wooden table in a kitchen, looking at a laptop. The man is wearing a striped shirt and glasses, and the woman is wearing a plaid shirt. At the bottom of the ad, there is a link 'PSE.COM/COVIDHELP', the text 'Click to learn how to apply' and 'Get help with your energy bills.', and a button labeled 'LEARN MORE'.

8. **June 2020:** Social Media Banner Ad



9. **June 2020:** Social Media Banner Ad



10. **September 2020:** Email to myPSE online accounts

## Your last week to apply for COVID-19 bill assistance

The CACAP program, launched to aid customers who are unemployed, partially unemployed, or unable to work due to the pandemic, is ending September 30th. So don't delay in submitting your application.

**Here's a quick overview:**

- It's easy to apply online
- Provide a photo ID and proof of reduced income or unemployment
- Once your application is approved, you could receive a one-time bill credit for up to \$1,000 on your next month's bill

Apply now or share with someone who may need this assistance.

**APPLY NOW**

## 11. September 2020: Postcard



### Don't miss your opportunity

Time is running out to complete your application for credit on your energy bill. Our 2020 Crisis Affected Customer Assistance Program (CACAP) will be retiring soon. Don't wait and let your application be denied.

Even if your circumstances have changed, we encourage you to complete your application and receive a credit of up to \$1,000 on next month's bill.

Missing paperwork? Have questions? We're here to help you complete your application and can be contacted by:

Email: [cacap@pse.com](mailto:cacap@pse.com) for questions or to attach application documents

Phone: 1-888-225-5773 for questions Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Web: [pse.com/covidfund](http://pse.com/covidfund)

If you have recently provided or uploaded your documents needed, thank you. We will be reviewing your application soon.

Puget Sound Energy | P.O. Box 97034 | Bellevue, WA 98009-0734

[pse.com/covidfund](http://pse.com/covidfund)

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## 12. April-September 2020: pse.com Homepage Banner