



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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City of San Diego Resolves Utility Billing Error

CITY IT CONTRACTOR INADVERTENTLY CHARGED APPROXIMATELY 690 CUSTOMERS WHILE APPLYING COVID RELIEF CREDITS

SAN DIEGO – This week the City of San Diego is issuing refunds to resolve a billing error that impacted approximately 690 Public Utilities Department customers who qualified for federal COVID relief credits on their accounts. The error was caused by a contractor working with the City's Department of Information Technology (IT) and was reported to Public Utilities on June 4.

Instead of applying credits to qualifying customer accounts through a federal COVID relief program, funds were inadvertently deducted from some customer bank accounts.

"We took immediate action to address this mistake, and we sincerely apologize for the inconvenience that customers have experienced as a result of this issue," said Jonathan Behnke, Director of the Department of IT. "Over the past year we've been focused on improving customer service and communication with San Diegans. The Department of IT is implementing processes that will ensure this type of issue never happens again."

As of today, all impacted customers have been notified and refunds are being issued for any bank deduction over \$10. Customers with less than \$10 deducted will receive a credit on their bill. The City will also refund any bank overdraft charges or other fees or penalties that customers may have incurred and will seek reimbursement from the IT vendor for those costs.

Public Utilities serves approximately 283,000 residential and business customers. The Department is currently [taking steps to address](#) longstanding challenges related to technology and customer service. Currently, Public Utilities is in the process of developing a new online customer self-service portal and other technology enhancements to better serve residents and businesses.

Among those improvements, last year Public Utilities implemented new software to route phone calls more efficiently and help decrease call wait times to the customer service center, and to better track metrics to improve service. Additionally, increased staffing levels and new online services resulted in a drop in average wait times for customers contacting the utility. More information is available about customer service improvements and other technology upgrades on the [City's website](#).

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