



City of Arts & Innovation

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Riverside Public Utilities Honored with Community Service Award

Sue Kelly Community Service Award recognizes utility and its employees

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – Riverside Public Utilities has been honored for community service by the American Public Power Association, which seeks to recognize utilities that demonstrate commitment to the local community.

The Sue Kelly Community Service Award is presented annually to community-owned utilities that excel in community service and volunteerism. Established in 1990, the award honors utilities and their employees who engage in activities that benefit the local community, demonstrating dedication beyond standard utility services.

RPU made its case with judges by pointing out the many ways in which RPU is a key contributor to the community. In addition to keeping the lights on and the water flowing, RPU is committed to helping to ensure that all Riversiders have access to a thriving city through assistance programs, rebates, information accessibility, outreach, education, and key account support.

“This award certainly is timely, coming as [RPU expands its Public Benefits Program](#) to its largest level in more than 30 years,” Mayor Patricia Lock Dawson said. “It reflects the same commitment to serving our community that this award recognizes. RPU continues to provide customers with the tools and resources they need to save money, improve energy efficiency, and build greater resilience at home.”

RPU has provided support to residential low-income customers for more than 35 years. The Sharing Households Assist Riverside’s Energy (SHARE) program was established in 1989 for low-income customers who need help with bills. RPU also provides a Utilicare program for customers who require certain life-sustaining electric medical devices. This program provides an adjusted electric rate schedule to households using these electronic devices to help offset additional utility expenses.

Residential direct-install programs also assist low-income customers. The Energy Savings Assistance Program (ESAP) provides qualified customers with new, no-cost energy savings devices such as whole house fans and refrigerators directly to their home. The same income qualification applies to both SHARE and ESAP programs, making it easy for customers to qualify for both programs.

A relatively new program, created in 2024, provides energy-saving improvements to customers living in mobile homes or multi-family accommodations. The Mobile-Home and Multi-Family Energy Efficiency Program is a direct-install program that provides no-cost energy efficiency measures.

RPU also ensures that messaging and other materials are accessible to the public. Outreach materials are provided in English and Spanish, including bill inserts, application forms, direct mailers, and event materials. RPU assistance and general rebate materials are available in both Braille and Large-Format print, and RPU staff has created a guide to help staff create color-blind friendly materials.

In 2025, RPU's Customer Engagement team attended 75 local events, reaching almost 200,000 people. RPU also is in the classroom, providing energy and water conservation curricula to school districts teaching young Riversiders. Staff also provide in-home visits to customers who cannot easily come into the office to access application forms.

The Sue Kelly award is highly regarded within the public power industry as it highlights the social responsibility of utilities and encourages a culture of volunteerism and community engagement. By recognizing these efforts, the Sue Kelly Community Service Award promotes stronger community ties, educational support, and civic leadership among public power utilities across the United States.

"RPU is honored to receive the Sue Kelly award because it recognizes entities that are doing the things that make public utilities so valuable to their customers," General Manager David A. Garcia said.

"RPU is deeply embedded in the community, and this recognition is an example of that."