



*City of Arts & Innovation*

# News Release

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## **Riverside Public Utilities Recognized for Excellence in Communications**

*American Public Power Association Commends RPU for Braille and Large-Type Marketing Materials*

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – Riverside Public Utilities (RPU) was recently recognized for excellence in communications for its efforts to make rebate and other forms more accessible to blind and visually-impaired customers by converting them into Braille and large-type formats.

The American Public Power Association bestowed the Award of Excellence in Public Power Communications to RPU's Customer Engagement Team as part of its effort to celebrate public power providers that excel in communicating to their customers and the public.

"RPU prides itself on being accessible to its customers, and this effort is the latest example of that," said RPU General Manager David A. Garcia. "I commend the Customer Engagement Team for seeing a need and filling it."

RPU recognized the need for these products, given that almost 13 percent of Riverside's population is above the age of 65, and an estimated 2.3 percent are vision disabled. RPU developed Braille materials to support blind residents and learned along the way that customers who are not blind but find it difficult to read standard-print sized materials would benefit from large-type format printing.

To assist both groups of customers, RPU decided to produce a selection of materials in both Braille and large-type format. The large-type materials were printed in both English and Spanish and are much easier to read by those with diminished vision.

"This personalized approach to customer care is one benefit of having a local municipal utility," RPU Board Chair Gil Ocegueda said. "We are able to best serve our customers because they are our neighbors and friends. I applaud the RPU Staff for their efforts, devotion and work to best serve our community's needs -- another proud moment for RPU."

The materials have been distributed to City libraries, utility payment counters, the Janet Goeske Center, and the Blindness and Support Services location on Beatty Drive. For customers using the

RPU website using dedicated accessibility software, the Assistance and Rebate webpages also inform them that materials for visually impaired customers are available upon request.

APPA commended RPU for recognizing that it serves a diverse community when delivering water and energy across the City of Riverside, with a large population and a variety of language and communication needs.

RPU had previously added additional languages and formats to its messaging, including Spanish in all customer-facing outreach materials, including applications, forms, emails, flyers, and social media to help connect with our large Spanish-speaking community.