



# MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** 7/17/2023

**TO:** Kayla Schott-Bresler, Strategic Initiatives Manager

**FROM:** Lauren Clemens, Climate Action Manager, Natural Resources

**RE:** ARPA Request- Climate Action- Residential Electrification

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This memo serves to provide further project details to allocate \$150,000 of the \$250,000 American Rescue Plan climate action request towards a residential electrification partnership project as discussed at the Public Works- Executive's Office climate action coordination session on July 14<sup>th</sup>.

The prior request to Council was submitted in April and requested \$250,000 in additional funding for the climate action program. Based on further discussion with program partners, including City of Bellingham and Opportunity Council, \$150,000 is requested from that allocation to add Whatcom County as a partner for a low-income residential electrification program. Additional local funds will be provided by the City of Bellingham to match the federal funds from the County's and City's Energy Efficiency and Conservation Grant Program allocations. The remaining \$100,000 in requested climate ARPA funds will be part of a departmental request to support hiring a Natural Resources Grant Manager.

The City and Opportunity Council are partnering to develop a Home Electrification Pilot Program (HEPP) to install electric appliances in qualified low-income homes. Opportunity Council will act as the program administrator and provide outreach to income verified households. The income qualification guidelines will ensure these recipients are eligible for federal weatherization funds, utility rebates and for federal and state electrification rebates available in 2024. Funding from the County will expand the service area of the contract to include additional homeowners within the County, but outside City limits.

Participating homeowners will receive wrap-around services to support their conversion to electric appliances, including, but not limited to a home electrification site visit and report, as well as individualized counseling about the best opportunities to improve indoor air quality, reduce emissions, and if applicable, lower utility bill payments. Weatherization assessments will happen concurrently and the homeowners that decide to move forward with installation will receive support from Opportunity Council to manage the installation contract and conduct an inspection for each installation to ensure quality workmanship. Examples of equipment that may be installed based on needs include, but are not limited to: ductless heat pumps, heat pump water heaters, induction ranges, heat pump dryers, and if applicable, electric vehicle chargers.

The Whatcom County Climate Action Plan calls for supporting existing organization's efforts in decarbonization and partnering to accelerate and advance this work. The buildings and energy section's goals include, "increasing support of non-profit organizations that provide energy efficiency upgrades to residential and commercial buildings." Given this project's focus on reaching underserved populations in the City and County, it is well aligned with the goals of the ARPA funding. Thank you for your consideration of this request.