



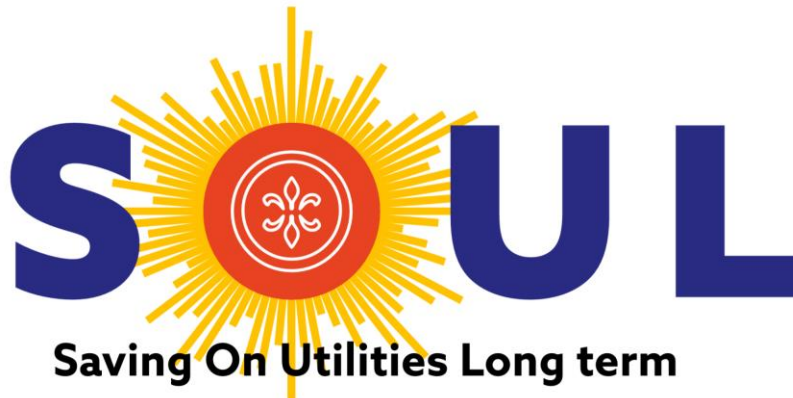
News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 10, 2020

City of LaGrange Partners with Groundswell and EEtility to Launch SOUL Pilot Program

LaGrange, Ga. July 10, 2020 – The City of LaGrange is partnering with Groundswell and EEtility to launch the SOUL, or Save On Utilities Longterm, pilot program. SOUL was created to help cut energy costs by making housing units more energy efficient.



Funds have been allocated to enable approximately 60 renters and/or homeowners with above-average utility bills to complete comprehensive energy improvements through this pilot program beginning July 7th.

The City of LaGrange continues to be ranked among the lowest cost utility providers in the state, but some residents still struggle to pay

high utility bills due to energy usage. City leaders recently conducted a housing survey to understand the cause and identified energy inefficiency as a leading factor.

“We’ve listened when people have shared their hardships, and finding a sustainable way to help LaGrange residents with the highest bills is a priority,” said LaGrange Mayor Jim Thornton. “We’re glad to bring SOUL to the community, and we’re optimistic about its potential to help more people enjoy a more affordable and better quality of life.”

Eligible residents who enroll in SOUL will receive a free in-home energy assessment that includes the installation of basic energy efficiency measures such as new LED light bulbs and water heater insulation. Based on the results of the energy assessment, SOUL participants may have the option for additional improvements to be installed including attic insulation, weather sealing, and new heating and cooling equipment all of which will be paid for up-front by the SOUL program.

SOUL participants will pay back the cost of energy efficiency improvements over time through energy savings with a portion of the savings going directly into their pocket.

“The SOUL pilot program uses future energy savings to pay for energy efficiency improvements,” said City of LaGrange Utilities Director Patrick Bowie. “It’s a straightforward and financially sustainable way we can serve residents by making utility bills more affordable.”

The program will be paid for by community development funds that are set aside to specifically benefit low to moderate income residents.

The SOUL Program will be operated by EEtility, an energy efficiency leader that is already serving many small towns and rural communities across the Southeast. Local nonprofit Groundswell, in collaboration

with Destination Design School, a design education center specializing in family and youth equitable economic development, will engage community residents to share information about the program and provide enrollment support.

The City of LaGrange will be sending letters to utility customers in low and moderate income neighborhoods who pay at least 20 percent or higher than the city average on their monthly utility bill.

If you are interested in participating in the SOUL pilot program or would like to learn more about the program, visit www.lagrangesoul.com or call (706) 413-1642. You can also email lagrangeSOUL@groundswell.org.

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