

# Round-Up Frequently Asked Questions

## ROUND-UP FAQ

### What is Round-Up?

Round-Up is a voluntary program that puts your change to work helping others in the communities we serve. Jellico Utilities (JU) automatically rounds your bill to the next dollar and sends that money to Caring Hearts, a program sponsored by JU to help customers who are having difficulty paying their utility bills in the communities we serve. JU's Resolution 2020-11 passed on September 29, 2020 to authorize the implementation of the Round-Up Program.

Round-Up is authorized by Tennessee Public Chapter No. 508, subdivision (e)(1), which reads as follows:

“In addition to the authority granted under otherwise applicable law, a municipality operating an electric plant may, acting through the authorization of the board or supervisory body having responsibility for the municipal electric plant, accept and distribute excess receipts for bona fide economic development or community assistance purposes pursuant to programs approved by the board or supervisory body, which programs may include, but are not limited to, programs in which utility bills are rounded up to the next dollar when the amount of any excess receipt due to rounding is shown as a separate line on the utility bill.”

### How does it work?

1. Funds originate from rounding up your monthly bill to the next whole dollar. If your bill is \$98.83, it is rounded up to \$99.00 even. The roundup amount is shown on your bill.
2. That additional .17 cents is deposited into an account which is administered by an independent Caring Hearts Board of Directors.
3. Funds are used only for charitable purposes, such as payment relief, for JU's customers in need, for their utility bills.

### Why should I participate in Round-Up?

Your “spare change” can help change our community for the better for less than \$12 a year. Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

helps people in our communities stay safe and healthy through tough times by assisting households with low incomes, particularly those with the lowest incomes that pay a high proportion of household income for home energy, with their utility bills.

### **What if I don't want to participate?**

Round-Up is a voluntary program, and you can choose not to participate at any time.

### **How do I Opt-Out of the Round-Up Program?**

- In person at the Administrative Office, located at 410 South Main Street, Jellico, TN 37762.
- By phone at 423-784-8431, Monday – Friday 8am – 4pm.
- Email at [customerservice@jellicoutilities.com](mailto:customerservice@jellicoutilities.com)

### **What if I have been participating, but I change my mind? Can I get my money back?**

Yes. If you change your mind, JU will credit your account for up to **3 months** of your most recent donations. Because funds collected through the Round-Up Program are promptly disbursed to help individuals in need, JU cannot provide refunds beyond this period. If all participants were to request full refunds after funds have already been distributed, the program would be unable to operate effectively and support the community as intended.

### **What if I decide later that I want to start participating again?**

You can choose to re-join the program at any time. Just contact Customer Service by phone or email.

### **If I have multiple accounts will they all be rounded up?**

Yes. Every account will be rounded up to the nearest dollar.

### **Are my donations tax deductible?**

JU can't offer tax advice, but Round-Up donations can generally be considered tax deductible, charitable contributions.

### **How do I know how much of my bill is going to Round-Up?**

Your monthly billing statement will have a line listing Round-Up and the amount that rounds your bill up to the next dollar.

### **How much money does JU estimate Round-Up will raise each year?**

Assuming an average contribution of 50 cents per month and a customer

participation rate of 50 percent, the program could raise more than \$1,000 a month, or \$12,000 a year, to help support communities we serve.

Although the example above uses 50 cents, the actual Round-Up amount could vary from one cent a month to a maximum of 99 cents a month. Multiplied by 12 months, customers yearly donations could range from a minimum of 12 cents to a maximum of \$11.88.

### **Why did JU start the Round-Up program?**

To help improve the lives of the communities we serve.

### **Who administers the program?**

[Caring Hearts](#) a public charity organization which is tax exempt.

JU manages the process to round up bills and sends 100 percent of the money collected to Caring Hearts. Caring Hearts takes applications from low-income customers that meet federal program guidelines of eligibility and manages according to those guidelines.

Caring Hearts is a public nonprofit agency that offers assistance to low-income customers of JU. The Caring Hearts Board of Directors are independent from Jellico Utilities Board.

### **Why did JU decide to automatically enroll customers in Round-Up instead of waiting for customers to sign up?**

JU wanted to be able to provide as much support as possible for the communities we serve. Research into similar programs at other utilities showed that the most effective ones started by automatically enrolling all customers but allowing them to stop participating at any time. Programs that take that approach have significantly higher participation rates, even after allowing for customers who choose not to participate. JU offers several easy ways customers can unenroll from Round-Up participation. In addition, customers who decide to opt out can receive refunds of any contributions they have made to Round-Up for a period of up to 12 months.