

CITY OF VINELAND

ORDINANCE NO. 2021- 17

ORDINANCE PROVIDING ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO GOLD STAR FAMILIES IN RECOGNITION OF THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE MADE BY THEIR LOVED ONES ON BEHALF OF OUR COUNTRY AND CITY OF VINELAND.

WHEREAS, our military personnel keep this Country, State and Community free and safe so its citizens may enjoy the rights and privileges bestowed upon them through the United States Constitution and the Constitution of the State of New Jersey ; and

WHEREAS, this responsibility undertaken by our military personnel comes with a heavy burden and sacrifice which also affects their families and personal life; and

WHEREAS, in 1918 President Woodrow Wilson authorized a suggestion made by Women's Committee of the Council of National Defenses, that mothers who lost a child who served in a war could wear a traditional black mourning armband with a gold gilt star which began the recognition of Gold Star Family as families of military members who have died in the line of duty and is meant to honor the service member's ultimate sacrifice while acknowledging their family's loss, grief and continued healing; and

WHEREAS, in 1936, President Franklin D. Roosevelt further recognized the sacrifice of Gold Star Families and designated the last Sunday of September as National Gold Star Mothers Day, an honor no one wants; and

WHEREAS, a Gold Star Family is the immediate family members of a fallen service member who died while serving in a time of conflict; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and City Council recognize the sacrifices of the men and women in our military and the continued suffering and grief felt by their Gold Star Family members and other loved ones and find it necessary to provide a benefit to assist the Gold Star Families in honor of their sacrifice.

WHEREAS, the City Council finds it to be in the best interest of the City and its citizens.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the City Council of the City of Vineland that all Gold Star Families as defined herein and subject to the conditions set forth herein, shall receive a reduction of 10% of the monthly electric bill and 10% of the monthly water bill for service to their primary residence.

I. DEFINITIONS

A. A Gold Star Family shall mean the mother, father, spouse and/or child of a fallen United States Military Service Member who died while serving in the time of conflict living in the City of Vineland.

B. Primary Residence shall mean a person's legal residence for purposes of income tax, driver's licenses, voter registration among other criteria. A person shall not have more than one Primary Residence. Other determining factors are one's mailing address and time spent at the residence per year.

C. Vineland Resident shall mean a person who maintains the City of Vineland as his/her Primary Residence.

D. Utility Bills shall mean those electric and water utility bills incurred at the Primary Residence of the deployed military personnel.

II. REDUCTION IN ELECTRIC AND WATER BILLS DURING DEPLOYMENT

All Gold Star Families, as defined herein, shall be entitled to a reduction of 10% on their electric bill and 10% on their water bill from the date of the loss of their family member and completion of all requirements specified herein after, on a per month basis for their Primary Residence only (Utilities Reduction). The Utilities Reduction shall not be cumulative.

III. QUALIFICATION FOR UTILITY REDUCTION

A. In order to qualify for the Utilities Reduction, the Gold Star Family must provide proof that (1) the City of Vineland is his/her Primary Residence and (2) he/she must provide copies of documentation indicating qualification as a

CITY OF VINELAND

Gold Star Family as defined herein. Upon providing adequate proof in the sole discretion of the Director of Municipal Utilities, the Gold Star Family shall receive a reduction of his/her electric and water bills for so long as they meet the qualifications specified herein for such bills incurred subsequent to approval of the Director.

- B. To insure the integrity and honor of a Gold Star Family, the applicant shall further execute a certification in the form provided by the City of Vineland that he/she meets the qualifications as set forth herein for said Utilities Reduction.
- C. The Utilities Reduction shall discontinue in the event the electric or water billing payment is more than 30 days delinquent and no repayment agreement has been reached between the Director of the municipal utilities and the Gold Star Family.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED that any Ordinance or portions thereof that are inconsistent herewith shall be deleted and void to the extent of such inconsistencies and the terms of this Ordinance shall supersede the same.

This Ordinance shall take effect upon adoption and publication according to Law.

Passed First Reading:

Passed Final Reading:

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President of Council

ATTEST:

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Keith Petrosky, City Clerk