



June 2022 | Oregon

# Connections

## Washer incentives

**ENERGY STAR®** certified front-load clothes washers use about 33% less water and 25% less energy than standard models, helping you lower costs with every load.

Our partner Energy Trust of Oregon works with select retailers to provide price discounts, improved financing options, and other benefits at the time of purchase for ENERGY STAR certified front-load clothes washers.

Visit [energytrust.org/appliances](http://energytrust.org/appliances) to learn more and find a retailer in your area or call (866) 368-7878.



## Local treasures with Pia: Oregon Credit Counseling

**When Bill Ihle started out as CEO and Executive Director of Consumer Credit Counseling Service of Southern Oregon, there wasn't much for him to manage.** The agency—which is a recent recipient of Avista Foundation funding toward its Financially Fit Women's program—was floundering, and Ihle went looking for a local partner.

He connected with United Way, an organization he was very familiar with, and learned that there was a huge need for financial education for low-income populations. "We started programs on financial literacy for anyone 30 and younger, but now it's mostly women we serve," Ihle said. Women often suffer significant financial setbacks if they divorce, Ihle said. Some have never had a checking account or a budget, and they've been in relationships where the husband managed all the money.

"Our clients, I'd say more than 80 percent come from extreme low-income households," Ihle said, "but the programs are open to anyone." About 50 percent of those who set up an appointment don't come in. "People will talk about their cancer and how their kids are in jail, but they will not talk about money problems," Ihle said. "They may feel a deep sense of personal shame."

*At Avista, we recognize our unique position gives us the chance to contribute in an impactful way and make a real difference in people's lives. Since 2002, the Avista Foundation has made grants totaling over \$13 million to organizations that support vulnerable and limited income populations, education, and economic and cultural vitality. For more information on grant applications and geographical areas covered, please visit [avistafoundation.com](http://avistafoundation.com).*

But there is no shaming at Consumer Credit Counseling Services of Southern Oregon. Ihle said it's very important to the agency that everyone is treated with dignity and compassion. "We don't judge you. We ask how we can help you," Ihle said.

Of the clients who complete the program, 37 percent pay down their debts, 32 percent improve their credit and 13 percent report being able to purchase a car. "That means they can get to a medical appointment, and take the kids to school," Ihle said. "In the very rural communities having a car also means you can get to a job. It means everything."





## Renewable Natural Gas

**As a focus on clean energy continues to grow at the national, regional and local levels, Avista is moving our clean energy strategy forward.** Our customers and communities continue to express interest in how Avista is planning for the future and the long-term sustainability of our communities.

Last year Avista announced our aspirational goals to reduce natural gas emissions 30% by 2030 and to be carbon neutral in our natural gas operations by 2045. These goals built on the clean electricity goals we set in 2019.

Keeping costs affordable will continue to be central in how we move forward, and innovation and new technologies are necessary to achieve these goals. At the same time, we recognize the value of a diverse portfolio and energy mix today and in the future and that achieving these goals will require a multi-faceted approach.

Avista's approach to reducing natural gas emissions includes investing in new technologies, like renewable natural gas (RNG), hydrogen and other renewable biofuels. While we continue to evaluate how to best integrate RNG into our gas supply portfolio and research hydrogen as another renewable fuel, we are also expanding our customer facing options.

Our Washington and Oregon natural gas customers can now elect to participate in our renewable natural gas program. Participation in the program allows customers to continue to receive all of the great benefits associated with natural gas, with the same level of reliability and a lower carbon footprint.

Visit [myavista.com/RNG](https://myavista.com/RNG) for more information and to enroll.

## Moving soon?

**Investigate potential energy-use costs with our high-low average tool.** Compare the highest, lowest and average bill amounts for the last 12 months of up to three residential addresses. It will give you a good idea of what you can expect—and could lead you to think about ways to use energy more efficiently. Visit [myavista.com/HLA](https://myavista.com/HLA) to try out this feature for yourself.

## Connect with us

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## Do you need help paying your bill?

We understand that there may be instances where customers find themselves facing financial difficulties. Avista partners with community agencies to provide financial assistance, plus we offer other services to help you manage and pay your bill such as **Comfort Level Billing, Preferred Due Date, and Payment Arrangements.** We're here to help. Please call us at (800) 227-9187 to discuss your options with a Customer Service Representative or visit [myavista.com/assistance](https://myavista.com/assistance) for more information.

**We have options.**

