



Press Release

City of Detroit • Mike Duggan, Mayor

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New Program to Assist Low-Income Water Customers

The Detroit Water and Sewerage Department (DWSD), as part of a regional program, will soon offer an innovative payment assistance plan to help low-income residents pay their water bills. The Water Residential Assistance Program (WRAP) launching March 1, will provide qualifying customers at or below 150 percent of the federal poverty threshold, with help in paying current and past-due water bills. WRAP is a Great Lakes Water Authority (GLWA) regional program offered in several counties including Wayne, Oakland, and Macomb. The program will be administered through the Wayne Metropolitan Community Action Agency in Detroit.

Eligible DWSD customers will receive a \$25 monthly bill credit with any arrearages frozen for 12 months. Customers who successfully make their monthly payments for one year will receive an additional credit of up to \$700 applied toward their arrears.

In addition, qualifying residents with water usage exceeding 20 percent of the average household water consumption in the city, are eligible for a free home water conservation audit. Based on the audit, customers may receive up to an additional \$1,000 for minor household plumbing repairs.

Participants may continue in the program for up to 24 months but must reapply annually.

The terms of the program which were recently approved by the GLWA board, will provide Detroit residents with approximately \$1.5 million of the \$4.5 million allocated for 126 municipalities in seven southeast Michigan counties.

"This is a game-changer for the region," said Gary Brown, director of the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department who helped negotiate the terms of the contract and who sits on the six-member regional water authority board.

"It is a very robust, comprehensive program that addresses all the issues I've seen in the past that caused people to fall out of a plan."

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Justin Wedes agrees. "The WRAP is a step in the right direction for a department that is showing positive signs of reforming itself," said Wedes, a community activist with Detroit Workers and Builders and a vocal critic of the water shutoff program in the past. "I'm optimistic that this additional assistance for many Detroiters coupled with much-needed debt relief and wraparound services like plumbing assistance will help DWSD towards the urgent goal of providing clean, affordable water to all of Detroit."

Approximately 44,000 of Detroit's 175,000 residential water accounts are on a payment plan, up from 9,000 a year ago. Residents on the plan are not subject to shutoff.

To apply for the WRAP, residents may call Wayne Metropolitan Community Action Agency (on or after March 1) at 313.386.WRAP (9727) or visit the website at www.waynemetro.org/wrap.

About The Detroit Water and Sewerage Department

The Detroit Water and Sewerage Department (DWSD) serves over 200,000 Detroit residential and commercial customers. DWSD's water network consists of more than 2,700 miles of transmission and distribution mains and nearly 3,000 miles of sewer collection piping.

To learn more about the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department or to request water services, make payments, or report water problems, call Customer Care at 313.267.8000 or visit www.detroitmi.gov/dwsd.

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