



**Gary A Brown**

*Director*

735 Randolph Street, Detroit, MI 48226

313-224-4758 • [gary.brown@detroitmi.gov](mailto:gary.brown@detroitmi.gov)

TO: The Honorable Detroit City Council President Brenda Jones

FROM: Gary Brown, Director  
Detroit Water & Sewerage Department

DATE: February 14, 2020

RE: Response to WRAP Program Expansion Questions and Concerns

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The Detroit Water and Sewerage Department responds to the Honorable President Jones' questions regarding the WRAP expansion as follows:

1. How many Detroit residents are represented in the 6% delinquent payment percentage?

ANSWER: Our data is a “snapshot in time” and our current data indicates 12,000 accounts are not in good standing and may be subject to service interruption.

2. Of the 6%, how many are at the \$750 delinquent balance service interruption stage?

ANSWER: Same answer as #1 above.

3. How are residents notified of WRAP?

ANSWER: When residents receive a bill indicating a delinquent balance they are directed to DWSD's website for payment assistance options, including WRAP.

<https://detroitmi.gov/departments/water-and-sewerage-department/bill-assistance-and-credits/how-do-i-keep-my-water-flowing>

Also, ten days before a resident is scheduled for service interruption, a door hanger is placed at the home which also includes information about WRAP and how to contact Wayne Metropolitan Community Action Agency. A second door hanger is placed at the home after service interruption, which also provides information about WRAP. Payment assistance information, including WRAP, is placed at locations throughout the City and at all community meetings. Customer service representatives at community meetings are able to answer questions. DWSD not only attends City hosted community meetings but also those hosted by nonprofit organizations, block clubs and other groups. Wayne Metro representatives attend many events, as well.

Residents have also been informed of WRAP and other customer assistance programs through separate mailings, Detroit targeted digital media advertising and media stories.

4. How many residents are currently receiving WRAP funds?

ANSWER: Over 17,000 Detroit households have enrolled in WRAP in the past four years. Currently, there are 3,300 Detroit households in the program.

5. How are WRAP funds administered?

- a. Are they one-time funds or monthly support funds?

ANSWER: During a 12-month period, WRAP will:

- Provide a \$25 credit toward the customer's monthly bill for 12 months (a total of \$300);
- Freeze the past due amount for 12 months upon successful adherence to the payment plan;
- Apply up to \$700 toward the customer's past due amount after customer makes payments for 12 consecutive months per the agreement (the first installment of \$350 is applied after the first month of enrollment);
- Conduct a water conservation audit if the household water usage exceeds 20% of the average household water consumption in the city which, under the expanded plan, may include an average of \$1,500 in water conservation and minor home plumbing repairs; and
- Offer an additional 12 months (no more than 24 months total per household) if customer remains eligible that will include the \$25 monthly bill credit and financial assistance toward arrears up to \$700 (if customer continues to have an outstanding past due balance).
- Additionally, households who have successfully completed the two-year program and a senior citizen is the primary account holder, the \$25 monthly bill credit will be applied to their DWSD account indefinitely.

Wayne Metro administers the program and advises DWSD monthly when to credit a customer's account. Wayne Metro administers the plumbing repairs program.

6. Will the increase in WRAP funds address all 6% of the residents in delinquent status?

ANSWER: It depends on whether the household meets the eligibility requirements for WRAP. DWSD does not collect household income information. Wayne Metro estimates an additional 5,000 households will be eligible for WRAP under the expanded program criteria. For customers whose income exceeds eligibility requirements, they may enter into a payment plan with DWSD. The department also partners with the Human Utility, the Michigan Department of Health & Human Services, THAW, and United Way, the WAVE Fund and the Wayne County Veterans and Soldiers Relief Trust Fund to provide additional resources to residential households to maintain their water service.

7. How are water shut offs implemented?

ANSWER: Accounts with delinquent debt of \$750 or more are identified and scheduled for service interruption. DWSD delivers a door hanger to each home subject to service interruption at least one week before the scheduled interruption date. If the customer: (1) contacts Wayne Metro to apply for WRAP and schedules an appointment, (2) pays their bill or (3) comes into DWSD to set up a payment plan, then the work order is marked "void" and service interruption will not occur. If the customer does not take action, then service interruption will occur. After service interruption, DWSD returns to the home with a second door hanger and the workers who visit each home make a record and take a photo if the home is abandoned/vacant. If the workers who visit the home make contact with an occupant, they will talk with the occupant to ensure they understand help is available to restore water service.

GB/DNP