

City of Richmond, Virginia
Department of Public Utilities Rules and Regulations

MetroCare Water Assistance Program

I. Purpose.

This Regulation provides guidance for applying the provisions of City Code Sections 28-271 through 28-275 which authorize the Director of Public Utilities to implement the MetroCare Water Assistance Program to provide discounted water and sewer fees and charges for low-income customers. Pursuant to City Code Section 28-272 and 28-26, the Director shall adopt rules, regulations and guidelines to implement the Assistance Program and may amend such rules, regulations and guidelines from time to time, as the Director may deem necessary.

II. Definitions.

Applicant – The customer of record responsible for payment of water utility or wastewater utility service, or both, and who is the occupant at the premises for which application for assistance is made.

Assistance Program – The MetroCare Water Assistance Program.

Assistance Program Agency (Agencies) – an entity or entities designated by the Director to perform the functions set forth in Sections, III and IV of this Regulation.

City – City of Richmond, Virginia

DHHS Guidelines – Federal Income Poverty gross household income levels published by the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services

Director – Director of the City of Richmond, Virginia Department of Public Utilities.

Discounted Fee – The Credit applied against the water utility account, wastewater utility account, or both, for a low-income customer pursuant to the City of Richmond's Assistance Program.

DPU – City of Richmond, Virginia Department of Public Utilities.

Program Administrator – A DPU employee designated by, and acting on behalf of, the Director to manage the on-going operations of the Assistance Program.

Regulation – The MetroCare Water Assistance Program Department Regulation.

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III. Assistance Program Oversight and Management.

- A. Program Administrator Designation. The Director shall designate a Program Administrator to manage the Assistance Program as set forth in this section.
- B. Implementation Responsibility. The Director or Program Administrator shall oversee, and shall have responsibility for implementation of the Assistance Program in a manner consistent with this Regulation, City Code, and other applicable law.
- C. Assistance Program Agency Designation. The Director may designate one or more Assistance Program Agencies in accordance with applicable law to coordinate and provide management and administrative support for the Assistance Program.
- D. Determining Intake Locations. The Director or Program Administrator shall work with the Assistance Program Agency (Agencies) to determine intake locations which shall be used to receive and review customer applications, to determine eligibility, and to approve or deny such applications.
- E. Allocating Funds. The Director or Program Administrator shall determine the frequency and amount for allocating funds based upon consumer demand for the Assistance Program and available Assistance Program funding.
- F. Agreement Between Parties. DPU and the Assistance Program Agency (Agencies) shall enter into an agreement concerning the parties' respective responsibilities pursuant to the Assistance Program.

IV. Assistance Program Eligibility; Application Review, Approval, and Priority; Manner of Discounting Fees.

- A. Assistance Program Eligibility. The Assistance Program Agency (Agencies) shall use all the following criteria to determine Applicant Assistance Program eligibility for a Discounted Fee:
 - 1. The Applicant shall be a DPU water utility or wastewater utility customer of record, or both, who is the occupant at the premises for which application is made.
 - 2. The water service, or wastewater service, or both, shall be of the residential service classification.
 - 3. The Applicant shall have a total gross monthly household income, adjusted for family size, that is at or below 225% of the Federal Poverty

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Guidelines as published by the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services (the “DHHS Guidelines”) as applicable at the time of Assistance Program application and as adjusted for monthly income. The threshold maximum total gross monthly household income shall be the quotient calculated by dividing the applicable gross annual household income set forth in the DHHS Guidelines by the denominator 12.

- B. Application Review, Approval, and Priority. The Assistance Program Agency (Agencies) shall apply the following requirements in reviewing an application for a Discounted Fee, approving or denying an application, and prioritizing allocation of Discounted Fees to approved Applicants:
1. Receive Assistance Program applications and stamp each application with the date received.
 2. Review Assistance Program applications for completeness, including applicable signatures. The Assistance Program Agency (Agencies) shall not process any applications that do not include, at a minimum, all of the following supporting documentation:
 - (a) A valid photo identification of the Applicant issued by the United States or the Commonwealth of Virginia (e.g., a valid Virginia state driver’s license).
 - (b) The most recent bill for DPU water utility services or DPU wastewater utility services, or both, for the residential class of service, listing the Applicant as the customer of record of the premises for which application is made.
 - (c) The Applicant’s written statement that the Applicant is the occupant of the premises for which the application is made and attesting to the accuracy of the information contained in the application.
 - (d) Satisfactory written support for establishing the size of the household residing at the premises for which the application is made.
 - (e) Copies of recent paystubs, completed tax return forms, or other reasonable documentation to establish the Applicant’s household income.

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3. Approve or deny each application based on the information contained therein, consistent with the Assistance Program eligibility requirements set forth in Section IV.A of this Regulation.
 4. Prioritize the Discounted Fees to approved Applicants based upon the following criteria:
 - (a) The date on which the application is received, according to the application's date stamp.
 - (b) For applications received the same day, those applications reflecting a household income that is the furthest below 225% of the DHHS Guidelines for the household size shall receive first priority.
- C. Revoking Assistance Program Application. The Director shall revoke an approved Discounted Fee if it is determined that (i) the Applicant does not meet the eligibility criteria outlined in Section IV.A., (ii) the Applicant committed an unlawful act as set forth in City Code Section 28-2, or (iii) both. The Director shall provide the Applicant with written notice of any revocation of an Assistance Program Discounted Fee within 30 days of the Director's determination.
- D. Applying a Discounted Fee. The Discounted Fee shall be applied in the following manner:
1. The Discounted Fee provided pursuant to the Assistance Program shall consist of a credit applied against the approved Applicant's City water utility account or wastewater utility account, or both. Such credit shall not be applied against utility account deposits or in connection with any bill dated more than one calendar year prior to the date of the Assistance Program application.
 2. Approved Applicants shall receive credit for their water utility or wastewater utility charges, or both, for an amount equal to the balance of said charges, but no more than the Assistance Program maximum Discounted Fee.

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- E. Additional Assistance Program Agency Requirements. The Assistance Program Agency (Agencies) shall ensure compliance with the following additional Assistance Program requirements:
1. No Applicant shall be approved for an Assistance Program Discounted Fee more than once during any given fiscal year.
 2. No Assistance Program Discounted Fee provided to an Applicant shall exceed the maximum amount as determined by the Director or Program Administrator.
 3. Any Applicant whose application has been denied by the Assistance Program Agency (Agencies) shall be ineligible to reapply for an Assistance Program Discounted Fee until at least three months from the date of denial of the application, absent the Applicant showing good cause for reconsideration.
 4. The Assistance Program Agency (Agencies) shall provide to the Program Administrator a daily report listing approved Discounted Fees, or credits, or both, for Applicants in a format prescribed by DPU.
 5. The Assistance Program Agency (Agencies) shall provide to the Director and Program Administrator a monthly financial report detailing all Assistance Program applications, approvals, and denials.
 6. The Assistance Program Agency (Agencies) shall provide to the Director and Program Administrator other reports and information concerning the Assistance Program activities as the Director or Program Administrator reasonably requests.

V. Assistance Program Funding

- A. Assistance Program Fund Sources. Assistance Program funds may come from any or all of the following sources set forth below. Proposed funding sources may require additional City approvals.
1. General Fund contributions.
 2. Event fundraisers.

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3. Customer donations received through DPU's customer bill payment remittance process and other gifts to the City in support of the Assistance Program.
 4. Additional sources as may be otherwise authorized by law.
- B. Processing and Accounting for Assistance Program Funds. DPU will process and account for Assistance Program funds using its Customer Information System (CIS) bill remittance processing function and Financial Accounting System (FAS) policies and procedures as appropriate for the Assistance Program fund sources. The Director or Program Administrator shall regularly review the accounting procedures to determine the need for updates as a result of changes in technology, business process controls, accounting standards, and policies and procedures.
- C. Certification of Maximum Discounted Fee. The Director or Program Administrator shall certify the maximum Discounted Fee amount, from time to time, based upon the availability of Assistance Program funds and the consumer demand for Discounted Fees.
- D. The Assistance Program fiscal year will coincide with the DPU fiscal year.

VI. Audit

- A. Retaining Records. The Assistance Program Agency (Agencies) shall retain records of the disposition of all Assistance Program applications, whether they are approved or denied. The Third Party Administrator shall not release any records retained in connection with the Assistance Program to any party other than the Director, Program Administrator, and City Internal Auditor unless required to do so by operation of law and, prior to so releasing any such records, the Third Party Administrator shall provide the Director with sufficient notice intended to provide the Director the opportunity to comment and oppose such release.
- B. Annual Review. The Director and Program Administrator shall have the right to review Assistance Program Agency (Agencies) locations, practices, and site recordkeeping at least once in each 12-month period, and to recommend or require changes as determined by the review.
- C. Internal Auditor. The City Internal Auditor shall have the right to audit the Assistance Program as necessary, including, upon reasonable notice, the right to access the records of the Assistance Program Agency (Agencies).

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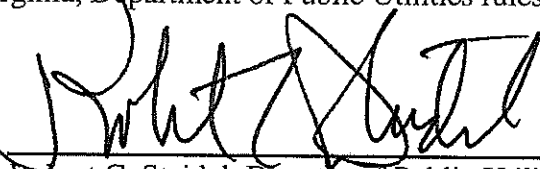
VII. Special Provision

Nothing in this Regulation shall be construed to limit or alter the Director's discretion or authority, as otherwise required or permitted by law.

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This Regulation shall become effective June 6, 2016, and shall replace the MetroCare Water Assistance Program Regulation that was adopted on March 12, 2015. This Regulation shall also supersede, to the extent necessary, any and all other conflicting City of Richmond, Virginia, Department of Public Utilities rules, regulations, policies, and guidelines.

Approved:



Robert C. Steidel, Director of Public Utilities, City of Richmond, Virginia

Date:

6 June 2016