

UTL-3.04 - Water/Sewer Crisis Assistance Program - [Printable Version](#)

WATER/SEWER CRISIS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Administrative Rule Adopted by Water Bureau Pursuant to Rule-Making Authority

ARB-UTL-3.04

I. Purpose of the Water/Sewer Crisis Assistance Program

The goal of the Water/Sewer Crisis Assistance Program is to augment existing assistance options to help ensure the provision of basic water/sewer services to low-income households in a non-chronic crisis situation. Specifically, this program will provide financial assistance to qualified customers whose water will be or has been shut off for non payment of their water/sewer bill to enable them to meet minimum payment requirements and have water service continued or resumed.

II. Definition of Terms

Gross Household Income: Before tax income as defined in the Housing and Community Services Oregon LIEAP Manual.

Federal Poverty Level: The current poverty level as established by the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare and adjusted annually, effective March 1 of each year, or as released by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

Water/Sewer customer: A household receiving water and/or sanitary sewer service as a direct customer of the Portland Water Bureau or Bureau of Environmental Services and who is directly responsible for payment of the water/sewer bill.

III. Administration

The Water/Sewer Crisis Assistance Program is administered by a non-City agency in partnership with the Portland Water Bureau Customer Services Division. The agency is selected on an annual basis and enters into a contract with the City for program administration. For the year beginning July 1, 2003 and ending June 30, 2004 the Multnomah County Community Action Program Office (CAPO) is the selected administrator. CAPO will work jointly with its' sub-contractors hereinafter referred to as Community Service Centers in administering the program.

The agency will work with potential applicants to screen all customers who can meet other payment alternatives. They will provide referrals to the agency once it is determined that no alternative exist. In addition a recommended assistance amount will be provided by the Water Bureau staff.

The agency will work with the customer to determine income eligibility and encourage participation in conservation workshops. The agency will disburse vouchers to eligible customers and instruct them on where to go to make payment for water/sewer service. In addition the agency will provide regular reports to the City regarding applicants name and address, number in households, whether applicant is senior or disabled, how many children under six years of age reside at the house, number of applicants, denials, voucher amounts, and number of voucher payments issued.

The agency and Water Bureau will work in cooperation to ensure smooth operations within all phases of the program.

IV. Eligibility

Applicants must be referred to the program by Portland Water Bureau Customer Services Division. In addition, the applicant must meet the following criteria to be eligible for assistance:

- Total gross household income must be within 60% of State medium income
- Applicant must be a Portland water/sewer customer
- Applicant must be the water/sewer customer responsible for payment of the water/sewer bill
- Applicant must have explored all options available through the Water Bureau Customer Services Division
- Applicant must be unable to meet alternative payment arrangements without assistance
- Applicant must make a match payment or minimum co-payment of \$20.00
- Applicant must have payment history with the Water Bureau
- Assistance is limited to once per calendar year per household

Recipients of assistance will be encouraged to attend water conservation workshops and install water efficient plumbing fixtures provided in conservation kits.

V. Application Process

Applicant will be referred to the appropriate Community Service Center by the Water Bureau based on residence location of applicant. At the time of referral, Water Bureau staff will enter remarks, a recommended assistance amount and co-payment amount on the applicant's account record in the billing system. The applicant must make an appointment with the Community Service Center Utility Assistance Representative (CSCUA) Rep. The CSCUA will call the Water Bureau to confirm referral and co-payment and assistance amounts. While making appointment, applicant will be asked to bring income documentation, and co-payment to their appointment. During the appointment, income eligibility will be determined and a voucher will be written to authorize eligibility.

VI. Determining Eligibility

Applicant will bring required documentation to appointment and CSCUA Rep will determine income eligibility as required by the Oregon Housing and Community Services LIEAP Manual Guidelines.

VII. Determining Assistance Amount

The amount of financial assistance provided will be determined on a case by case basis, considering the amount of the delinquent bill and the ability of the customer in making a match/co-payment and meeting payment arrangements. The amount will be limited to a maximum of \$75.00. Water Bureau staff will determine a recommended assistance amount at the time the customer is referred for crisis assistance and enter into the customer billing system account remarks. If deemed appropriate, the CSCUA may change the assistance amount with approval of the Water Bureau credit staff, however it must not exceed the \$75.00 maximum.

VIII. Voucher Disbursement and Processing

The Water/Sewer Assistance Program voucher will consist of a three part NCR form. Each copy of the form will describe how to handle. Vouchers will be processed as follows:

White Copy - Water Bureau Copy
 Yellow - Applicant Copy
 Pink Copy - Agency Copy

Once the voucher is written the case worker will instruct the client to deliver the Water Bureau copy and co-payment to the Water Bureau at:

1120 SW 5th Avenue
First Floor

At the time the voucher and co-payment are received, if the water service is shut off, Customer Service staff will contact field inspector with a request to have water service resumed.

IX. Reporting

CAPO's sub-contractors will report to CAPO on a quarterly basis. CAPO will report to the Funder by the 15th day of each quarter. Agencies will use CAPO's Quarterly Report Form which will identify applicants name, address, number in household, number of seniors, disabled, children under six, voucher amounts and number of voucher payments issued for that quarter.

X. Amending Policies/Procedures

These policies and procedures may be amended with approval of the program managers identified in the agreement for these services.

HISTORY

Filed for inclusion in PPD July 8, 2003.

Adopted by Water Bureau. Document dated June 26, 2003.