

Water and sewer infrastructure upgrades to continue with modest rate adjustments

Sewer, stormwater and water utility rates approved by the Columbus Sewer and Water Advisory Board and City Council for 2018 will provide the necessary funding to continue various improvements planned and underway. For the past several years, Columbus has been meeting the challenges of keeping up with aging infrastructure needs while also accommodating growth and complying with increased environmental and drinking water regulations.

Major treatment upgrades underway the past few years at the city's two surface water plants are now operational. Ozone and biologically active filtration treatment facilities were added at the Dublin Road and Hap Cremean Water Plants. These upgrades provide additional treatment capabilities that help comply with drinking water regulations and reduce taste and odor events. An ion exchange process was also installed at the Dublin Road plant to reduce nitrate levels when high concentrations are found in the source water, the Scioto River. With construction of ultraviolet disinfection facilities also beginning this year at both plants, the investments will keep the city on the cutting edge of treatment technology, providing additional processes to even more effectively treat water for a variety of contaminants. Additionally, standby power projects will begin at Hap Cremean and Dublin Road this year which, once completed, will allow the Division of Water to maintain water supply during an extended power outage. Treatment upgrades at the Parsons Avenue Water Plant will be completed in 2018. A total of \$470 million is being invested in treatment facilities at the city's three drinking water plants to comply with updated EPA regulations and to ensure adequate water supplies for a still-growing region. An additional \$160 million was previously spent on a nine-billion-gallon-capacity upground reservoir near the Scioto River in Delaware County. The division also continues to replace or rehabilitate aging water lines in the water distribution system.

Blueprint Columbus, an Ohio-EPA-approved green alternative to the city's original 2005 Wet Weather Management Plan to comply with a consent order with the state requiring sanitary sewer overflow reduction, is underway. This four-strategy approach includes green infrastructure, home sewer lateral lining, roof water redirection and sump pumps to address the numerous wet weather issues in many Columbus neighborhoods. Implementation will continue over the next 20 years in older areas where heavy rain can overwhelm the sanitary sewer system. Learn more at columbus.gov/blueprint. Replacement and rehabilitation of aging sewer lines also continues. Other work overseen by the Division of Sewerage and Drainage includes continuation of wastewater treatment plant upgrades and various stormwater improvement projects to reduce flooding.

In order to finance the debt on all of the improvements, modest rate increases approved effective January 1st are: a 1% increase for water, 2% for sewer, and a 1% increase for Columbus stormwater customers. The overall average increase for Columbus customers is 1.5%, or about \$4.22 per average quarterly residential bill. Contracting communities outside Columbus will see average increases of about \$4.57 quarterly for water and sewer. The average increase for customers in the low income discount program is \$3.54 a quarter. Differences in bills vary based on actual water consumption. Despite these increases, Columbus' water and sewer rates remain some of the lowest in the region. Columbus' tap water -- meeting or exceeding all state and federal drinking water standards -- remains a great value at less than a penny a gallon.

The sewer and water discount program for qualifying low income customers will continue. Customers who qualify for other programs such as heating assistance and food stamps may be eligible. An application is included on the reverse side. Customers 60 or older who qualify for the low income discount may also be eligible for an additional senior discount. For more information, please call Customer Service at 614-645-8276 or visit columbus.gov/utilities, where water conservation tips are also available. Everyone can save on their bills through conservation.



2018 LOW INCOME WATER/SEWER DISCOUNT APPLICATION

Please note: if you are age 60 or older and qualify for the Low Income Discount Program, you may also qualify for a Senior Citizen Discount. For questions regarding the discount programs or your bill, please contact Customer Service Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. at 311, 645-3111, 645-8276 or visit www.columbus.gov/utilities/.

Name: _____
Last First Middle

Address: _____
Number Street/Road Apartment #

_____ City State Zip Code

Phone: (____) _____ (with area code)

Number of people in household: _____

Account number (from water bill): _____

To be eligible for the low income discount program, applicants must have an active City of Columbus water or sewer account for their residence in their name (or spouse's name) AND must meet at least one of the following requirements:

1. You must be currently enrolled in a qualifying low income program and provide current letter of participation from one of the following programs (must be dated and include name):

- Food Stamp Benefits
- Ohio Medicaid
- Low Income Energy Assistance (LIHEAP)
- Home Energy Assistance (HEAP)
- Ohio Works First
- Public Housing Benefits - OR -

2. You must meet the Federal Poverty Level with your household income, which is defined as the total gross income of all household members over the age of 18. You must provide current proof of household income with the following for all household members over 18 (must be dated and include name):

- Income Tax Return
- W-2 Forms
- Benefit Letter from Social Security
- Pension Award Statement

Documents submitted with this application will NOT be returned. Send *copies only* to:
Columbus Department of Public Utilities
Customer Service Center
910 Dublin Road
Columbus OH 43215

The information associated with this application has been examined by me, and is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, true, correct and complete.

Applicant signature: _____

Date: _____

Prepared by signature (if different from applicant): _____