

## 2020 Utility Rates Announced

Rates for 2020 sewer, stormwater and water utility fees were recently approved by the Columbus Sewer and Water Advisory Board and Columbus City Council, following a public hearing. The revenue generated will allow the Department of Public Utilities to continue to provide quality water and sewer services and maintain a responsible capital improvements plan, budget and debt service that enhances the quality of life for all residents and supports economic development in the Columbus area.

Major treatment upgrades to the city's three drinking water plants have been completed over the past few years to meet updated Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA) regulations and address aging infrastructure and future growth needs. A water master planning process is underway in the Division of Water that will, among other things, recommend timing for a fourth water plant planned near the O'Shaughnessy Dam in Delaware County. Other water plant treatment improvements in progress or planned include the addition of ultraviolet disinfection, chlorine-to-hypochlorite conversion projects, electrical upgrades, and a new clearwell. Reinvestment into the city's water distribution system will also continue with waterline replacement/rehabilitation projects, along with various booster station and water tank improvements.

In the Division of Sewerage and Drainage, following major upgrades at the city's two wastewater treatment plants over the past several years, various wet weather management improvements will continue in their objective of meeting consent order requirements, entered into with the State of Ohio, to reduce wet weather overflows. Blueprint Columbus, the 2015 OEPA-approved green alternative to the original wet weather plan, is now underway in various phases in seven Columbus neighborhoods. At the Southerly Wastewater Treatment Plant, the Chemically Enhanced Primary Treatment project, currently in construction, will add 110 million gallons per day of high rate treatment capacity. The Lower Olentangy Tunnel, which will capture and transport wet weather flow to the plants for treatment, is anticipated to begin construction later this year. These major improvements are in addition to the continued upgrades to the city's sanitary and stormwater collection systems.

Other improvements the department has budgeted that the 2020 rates support include enhanced water meters and electric meters (for customers on the city's power system), which is in the early stages and will eventually replace all meters that are becoming obsolete. The budget also includes some staffing additions like in our call center to help reduce customer wait times.

The 2020 rates include modest increases: a 3% increase in water, a 3% increase in sewer, and a 2% increase in Columbus stormwater rates. An average water consumption bill in Columbus will see an increase of about \$8.46 a quarter (\$7.11 for approved low income customers). Contracting water/sewer suburban customers outside the City of Columbus will see about a \$9.46 increase a quarter, based on average consumption. Differences in bills will vary based on actual water consumption. Despite these increases, Columbus' water and sewer rates remain some of the lowest in the region; our rates remain lower than Cleveland, Indianapolis, Philadelphia, and Pittsburgh. Columbus' tap water -- meeting or surpassing 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 assistance programs such as HEAP may be eligible to receive a 20% discount on water and sewer consumption. An additional senior discount is available for those 60 and older who qualify. A multi-unit discount program is also available for multi-family buildings and master metered properties. For more information, please see the reverse side of this newsletter and visit <https://www.columbus.gov/utilities/customers/Utility-Discout-Programs/>. Conservation tips are also available on the website. Everyone can save money on their water/sewer bills by conserving their usage of water.



Please follow us on Facebook (Columbus Public Utilities) and Twitter (@CDPU)

## 2020 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/](http://www.columbus.gov/utilities/).

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Last First Middle

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Number Street/Road Apartment #

\_\_\_\_\_ City State Zip Code

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

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 have a total income of less than 150% of the U.S. Bureau of Census poverty level (for current maximum income #s, visit <https://www.columbus.gov/utilities/customers/Utility-Discout-Programs/>, call 614-645-8276 or email [UtilityLeadRep@columbus.gov](mailto:UtilityLeadRep@columbus.gov)). 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 *or*
2. 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 Assistant (LIHEAP)
  - Home Energy Assistance (HEAP)
  - Ohio Works First
  - Public Housing Benefits

**Please send copies only of the above and this application to** (copies will not be returned):

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): \_\_\_\_\_