

utility update

2021 Utility Rates Announced

Sewer, stormwater and water utility fees for 2021 were recently approved by the Columbus Sewer and Water Advisory Board and Columbus City Council, following a public hearing. The rate structure will allow the department to continue to provide quality water and sewer services and reinvest in Columbus’ aging infrastructure. It will also sustain an ongoing capital improvement program, which helps the quality of life in neighborhoods and also supports businesses and economic growth in the central Ohio area.

Major treatment upgrades to the city’s three drinking water plants have been completed by the Division of Water over the past few years to meet updated Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA) regulations and address infrastructure and future growth needs. Treatment plant improvements currently in construction at the Dublin Road and Hap Cremean water plants include the addition of ultraviolet disinfection. Backup power capability was recently put online at the Dublin Road plant and will be online the first quarter of this year at the Hap Cremean plant. The department plans to begin upgrading outdated meters for all water/sewer and city power customers in 2021, which will provide many customer benefits. Look for more information on this, known as the Enhanced Meter Project, in a future newsletter. Waterline rehabilitation and replacement projects will also continue to reduce waterline breaks and improve reliability.

In the Division of Sewerage and Drainage, many wet weather management plan improvements will continue in order to meet consent order requirements with the state to reduce sewer overflows. Many projects under the Blueprint Columbus program, the OEPA-approved green alternative to the original plan, are underway and planned in several Columbus neighborhoods. Following major upgrades at the city’s two wastewater treatment plants the past several years, at the Southerly Wastewater Treatment Plant the Chemically Enhanced Primary Treatment project was recently completed, which added 110 million gallons per day of high rate treatment capacity. Other ongoing improvements include upgrades to the city’s sanitary and stormwater collection systems.

This year’s rate structure includes modest increases: a 2% increase in water, a 3% increase in sewer, and a 1% increase in Columbus stormwater rates. An average consumption quarterly bill of \$295.15 in Columbus will go to about \$302.50, an increase of \$7.35 per quarter, or a 2.49% average increase. Approved low-income customers will see a 2.47% average increase, and outside Columbus customers a 2.51% increase. Differences in bills will vary based on actual water consumption. Columbus’ water and sewer rates remain some of the lowest in the region; our rates remain lower than Cleveland, Pittsburgh and Indianapolis. Columbus’ tap water -- meeting or surpassing all state and federal drinking water standards -- remains a great value at less than a penny a gallon.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic that began in 2020 with accompanying economic challenges, we know that some of our customers have found themselves not always able to pay all their bills. If you are among them, please visit a specially-created web page that includes assistance information at: <https://www.columbus.gov/payassist>. Payment plan arrangements and other forms of assistance are available, and our low income and senior discount programs will continue for those that qualify. If you do not have internet access, please call Customer Service for help at 614-645-8276, Monday - Friday, 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM. For your convenience, a low income discount application that could qualify you to receive 20% off future water and sewer consumption charges is on the reverse side. Income eligibility is based on 150% of the current federal poverty level.



Conservation tips are on our web site at [columbus.gov/utilities/conserve](https://www.columbus.gov/utilities/conserve). Everyone can save money on water/sewer charges by conserving usage.



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

2021 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 at 614-645-8276, email UtilityLeadRep@columbus.gov or visit columbus.gov/utilities.

Name: _____
Last First Middle

Address: _____
Number Street/Road Apartment #

City State Zip Code

Phone: _____ - _____ - _____

Email Address: _____

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/payassist>, call 614-645-8276 or email 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): _____