

2023 Improvements and Utility Rates Announced

Sewer, stormwater and water rates for 2023 were approved last fall 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' water and sewer infrastructure. Revenue will fund the ongoing capital improvement program, which helps the quality of life in neighborhoods and also supports economic growth in the central Ohio area.

Replacement or rehabilitation to aging waterlines will continue to reduce breaks and improve reliability. Design begins on a long-planned fourth water plant northwest of the city near the Scioto River in Delaware County to accommodate a continually growing central Ohio. The Division of Water now serves 1.3 million water customers, a number expected to grow in coming years. Major treatment facility upgrades to the existing three water plants were completed over the last several years to meet water demand and EPA regulatory requirements. The rate adjustments will also help the division meet increased water treatment chemical costs the industry is experiencing.

In the Division of Sewerage and Drainage, wet weather management plan improvements will continue in order to meet ongoing consent order requirements with the state to reduce sewer overflows. Projects under the Blueprint Columbus program, the OEPA-approved green alternative to the original plan, are underway and in planning in numerous Columbus neighborhoods. Construction on the Lower Olentangy Tunnel sewer project, which began in 2021, will continue through 2026. Other reinvestments include improvements to the city's sanitary and stormwater collection systems.

This year's rate structure includes: a 4% increase in water, a 5% increase in sewer, and a 2% increase in stormwater rates (only collected in Columbus). An in-city Columbus customer using 30 ccf (hundred cubic feet, average for a family of 4), will see an increase of around \$14.07 a quarter. Smaller households with consumption of 17 ccf will be around \$9.05 more per quarter. Approved low-income customers will see an average increase of



Dublin Road Water Plant

\$7.77 - \$11.79 a quarter, depending on household size and consumption. Outside-city contracting suburban communities would see average increases of \$9.87 - \$15.75 a quarter, again depending on consumption.

Discounts for qualifying low income and senior customers will continue to be available. Approved customers receive 20% off water and sewer consumption charges. Seniors receive an additional discount with water service fees waived. An application with maximum income levels at the time of writing is on the back; please note that federal poverty #s are expected to be adjusted soon so please check our web site for maximum income updates. Customers can also apply online at <https://www.columbus.gov/payassist/>, where other resources for those having difficulty paying their utility bills can be found. A multi-family property discount program is also available.

Columbus' water and sewer rates remain among the lowest in the region as compared to Cleveland, Indianapolis and Detroit. Columbus' tap water, meeting or exceeding all state and federal drinking water standards, remains a great value at less than a penny a gallon.

For questions, please call Customer Service weekdays 7AM - 6PM at 614-645-8276, email UtilityLeadRep@columbus.gov, or visit our web site at columbus.gov/utilities. Everyone can save money on water/sewer bills by conserving water. Conservation tips can be found at columbus.gov/utilities/conserve.



2023 LOW INCOME WATER/SEWER DISCOUNT APPLICATION

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. Additional information about this program can be found at columbus.gov/payassist, where you can learn about other programs you may qualify for.

1. You must have a total income of less than 150% of the U.S. Bureau of Census poverty level (see below). 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

<u>Household Size</u>	<u>Maximum Income*</u>
-----------------------	------------------------

** expected to be raised in early winter - check web site for updated #s*

1	\$21,146
2	\$28,016
3	\$32,747
4	\$41,363
5	\$47,765
6	\$53,294
7	\$58,437
8	\$66,311
9 or more	\$78,579

Note: if age 60+ you may also qualify for a senior discount

Please send *copies only* of the above and this application to the following address (copies will not be returned), or apply online from columbus.gov/payassist, or email application to UtilityLeadRep@columbus.gov:

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): _____.