

2015 Utility Rates Allow Capital Improvements to Continue

Columbus utility rates approved by City Council and the Sewer and Water Advisory Board will provide the necessary funding for the department to continue with water, sewer and stormwater capital reinvestment. The new rates support compliance with Ohio EPA regulations such as revised drinking water rules and continued progress on the Wet Weather Management Plan. At the same time, the need exists to continue replacement and rehabilitation of aging water and sewer lines.

Rate adjustments effective January 1st are: a 3% increase for water, 3% for sewer, and a 1% increase to the Columbus stormwater utility fee. The overall average increase for in-city customers is 2.89%, which will average about \$7 per quarter for typical water consumption. Suburban (outside Columbus) water and sewer customers will also see average increases of around \$8 per quarter. Differences in bills will vary based on the amount of water used.

Improvements underway include numerous upgrades at the city's three water plants, where over \$300 million is being invested on treatment upgrades. The Division of Water is also responsible for maintaining around 2,500 miles of Columbus water lines and another 1,000 miles in contracted suburban areas. An estimated \$150 million is planned on rehabilitation and replacement of the city's water distribution system over the next five years. While improvements at the plants were driven by new drinking water requirements, the additional treatment facilities will provide additional benefits, such as additional capabilities for treating surface water issues like algae.

The Division of Sewerage and Drainage maintains around 4,500 miles of storm, sanitary and combined sewers and operates two wastewater treatment plants. To date, all required deadlines for the two consent orders with the State of Ohio to reduce sewer overflows into waterways have been met. However, much work remains on the 2005 40-year Wet Weather Management Plan. The five-year capital budget contains over \$1 billion for wastewater plant and sewer collection system upgrades.

Columbus stormwater improvements will also continue to address neighborhood flooding, and future stormwater management regulations are expected to have an increased emphasis on green infrastructure.

Columbus' water and sewer rates remain some of the lowest in the region. Tap water is a great value at less than a penny a gallon, as compared to many other products like milk, ranging from \$3.50 to \$3.75 a gallon.

The 20% sewer and water discount 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 a senior discount. For more information, please call Customer Service at 645-8276 or visit our Web site at utilities.columbus.gov, where water conservation ideas are also available. All customers can help control their costs by reducing water usage.



Please join us on Facebook (Columbus Public Utilities) and Twitter (@cdpu)

Please report suspected water line breaks to 311 or 645-8276.

2015 LOW INCOME WATER/SEWER DISCOUNT APPLICATION

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 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): _____

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.utilities.columbus.gov.