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Philadelphia Launches New, Income-Based, Tiered Assistance Program

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PHILADELPHIA- The City of Philadelphia today announced a new affordability program for low-income customers and those with special hardships to help reduce their monthly water bills. The Tiered Assistance Program (TAP) provides customers with significant savings by offering a consistent bill based on their income. Applications will be available beginning July 1.

“TAP improves upon the City’s existing customer assistance programs by easing the financial burden on City residents most in need,” remarked Mayor Jim Kenney. “We are committed to making basic human services affordable for all citizens of Philadelphia, and this program is designed to do just that, which benefits the city as a whole.”

Program highlights:

- Customers do not have to be behind on their bill
- Expanded eligibility; approximately 60,000 customers are now eligible
- More ways to apply: Online, in-person and by mail
- Income-based, consistent monthly bill
- Past due amounts are suspended and not enforced upon while enrolled in the program
- Only a single application is required

“Safe drinking water is a basic human right, and I am so proud that Philadelphia is leading the nation with this landmark program. By encouraging conservation and compliance through income-based, fixed water bills, TAP will help low-income Philadelphians avoid foreclosure and maintain their access to safe water,” Councilwoman Maria D. Quinones-Sanchez said.

TAP will replace the current Water Revenue Assistance Program (WRAP) and the City grant will no longer be available. Current WRAP customers will be allowed to stay in that program if they recertify, however new customers cannot enroll. All customers are encouraged to apply for assistance, as there may be a better program that suits their needs.

“We’re excited to introduce this new program that will help those customers in need maintain their water service,” said Water Commissioner Debra McCarty. “Providing safe, clean water to the citizens of Philadelphia while keeping rates affordable remain part of our core mission and TAP allows us to keep that commitment to our customers.”

TAP is for residents whose income falls below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), which is equivalent to \$3,075 in monthly income for a four-person household. However, higher household incomes with a Special Hardship, may still qualify. But customers don’t have to figure out which program they fall into because trained representatives will do that for them. All customers who are struggling to pay their water bill should apply.

“The TAP program offers a great opportunity to assist those who are struggling to pay their water bill,” said Frank Breslin, Revenue Commissioner and Chief Collections Officer. “Having a standard monthly bill will allow customers to better budget their finances which will lead to a decrease in delinquencies.”

In addition, the Water Department and the Water Revenue Bureau are working with several partners who have been trained and are willing to provide assistance to customers who need help filling out an application. These partners include Community Legal Services, Energy Coordinating Agency, Utility Emergency Services Fund and Neighborhood Energy Centers.

“CLS is proud to stand with Philadelphia’s courageous leaders as we take this momentous step toward ensuring water affordability for low income families in Philadelphia,” said Debby Freedman, Executive Director of

Community Legal Services. “For the first time, struggling families will have access to water bills based on their income and an opportunity to avoid the devastating consequences that result from unaffordable bills.”

For more information on TAP, please call 215-685-6300 or visit www.phila.gov/water-bill-help on or after July 1.

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The Philadelphia Water Department

The Philadelphia Water Department supplies water, wastewater, and stormwater services to the City of Philadelphia. www.phila.gov/water.

Department of Revenue

The Department of Revenue is responsible for the collection of all revenue due to the City of Philadelphia, and all tax revenue due to the School District of Philadelphia. This includes the billing and collection of water and sewer charges.

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