

Financial Assistance Program

HISTORY:

Started in 1995 over concerns the impact that the Big Pipe Project would have on rates and affordability for Low-Income Customers. For over 20 years the Portland Water Bureau has been one of the few utilities in the nation to offer a low-income financial assistance program and is recognized as a leader in the area.

Eligibility:

Gross household income by family size determines eligibility.

Currently we use 60% State Median Income by household size. Consistent with Energy Assistance.

This is available to all customers that receive a water/sewer bill from the City of Portland who live in the property and are responsible for the bill.

Bill Discount:

Eligible customers receive an average of \$149 discount on a quarterly billing.

They will receive the discount for 2 years before needing to re-apply. The bureau mails out an application packet 2 months prior to the discount ending so the customer can continue the discount program if they still qualify.

Honored Citizens are senior and Social Security or Disability do not have to re-apply every 2 years. They are given an extended termination date.

Crisis Voucher:

For those that are still unable to pay their bill and in the threat of shut off can receive a \$150 crisis Voucher once in a twelve-month period. This is in addition to the quarterly discount.

Fixture Repair:

The Water Bureau funds the program but Multnomah County's Weatherization group administers the program since they have licensed plumbers on contact.

We will pay to repair all water leaks including underground and behind the wall leaks.

Establish Eligibility:

Make an appointment to apply at one of our 8 Community Service Centers.

Go to the Water Bureau website, www.portlandoregon.gov/water and complete the online application. Remember to submit the appropriate income documentation. The Water Bureau will receive the application and process it.

For customers who would rather a paper application, they can call Customer Service at 503-823-7770 and request an application packet by mail.

Utility Safety Net:

Emergency payment plan for customers in a temporary financial crisis due to:

Change in employment status – laid off, reduced hours, reduced wages, injury etc.

Change in family status – Divorce, separation, death of spouse/partner

Medical expenses or other personal emergencies

Available to all residential customers

Benefits:

Initial \$50 credit

Waiver of delinquency charges for previous 3 months

Interest free payment plan for 12 months

Up to \$300 credit at the end of the payment plan

Conservation:

We provide information and water conservation devices designed to help lower sewer and water bill. Devices include shower heads, faucet aerators and toilet devices. Information is online or call the Water Bureau.

Program enhancements are scheduled to be implemented soon.