

City of Richmond, Virginia  
Department of Public Utilities Rules and Regulations

MetroCare Water Assistance Program

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**I. Purpose.**

This Department regulation provides guidance for applying the provisions of City Code Sections 106-260 through 106-264 which authorize the Director of Public Utilities to implement the MetroCare Water Assistance Program to provide discounted water and sewer fees and charges for low-income customers. Pursuant to City Code Section 106-261, the Director shall establish rules, regulations and guidelines to implement the Assistance Program and may amend such rules, regulations and guidelines from time to time, as the Director may deem necessary.

**II. Definitions.**

**Applicant** – The customer of record responsible for payment of water utility or wastewater utility service, or both, at the premises for which application for assistance is made.

**Assistance Program** – The MetroCare Water Assistance Program.

**Assistance Program Agency (Agencies)** – an entity or entities designated by the Director to perform the functions set forth in Sections, III and IV of this Regulation.

**DHHS Guidelines** – Federal Income Poverty gross household income levels published by the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services

**Director** – Director of the City of Richmond, Virginia Department of Public Utilities.

**Discounted Fees** – Credits applied against the water utility account, wastewater utility account, or both for low-income customers pursuant to the City of Richmond's Assistance Program.

**DPU** – City of Richmond, Virginia Department of Public Utilities.

**Program Administrator** – The MetroCare Assistance Program Administrator designated by the Director to manage the on-going operations of the Assistance Program.

**Regulation** – The MetroCare Water Assistance Program Department Regulation.

City of Richmond, Virginia  
Department of Public Utilities Rules and Regulations

MetroCare Water Assistance Program

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**III. Assistance Program Oversight and Management.**

- A. The Director may designate a Program Administrator to manage the Assistance Program as set forth in this section.
- B. The Director or Program Administrator shall oversee, and shall have responsibility for implementation of the Assistance Program in a manner consistent with this Regulation, City Code, and other applicable law.
- C. The Director may designate one or more Assistance Program Agencies in accordance with applicable law to coordinate and provide management and administrative support for the Assistance Program.
- D. The Director or Program Administrator shall work with the Assistance Program Agency (Agencies) to determine intake locations which shall act on behalf of the Director to receive and review customer applications, to determine eligibility, and to approve or deny such applications.
- E. The Director or Program Administrator will determine the frequency and amount for allocating funds based upon consumer demand for the Assistance Program and available Assistance Program funding.
- F. DPU and the Assistance Program Agency (Agencies) shall enter into an agreement concerning the parties' respective responsibilities pursuant to the Assistance Program.

**IV. Assistance Program Eligibility; Application Review, Approval, and Priority; Manner of Discounting Fees.**

- A. The Assistance Program Agency (Agencies) shall use all the following criteria to determine Applicant Assistance Program eligibility for discounted fees:
  - 1. The Applicant shall be an active DPU water utility or wastewater utility customer of record, or both.
  - 2. The Applicant shall be both the resident and the customer of record of the premises for which application is made.
  - 3. The water and wastewater service, or both, shall be of the residential service classification.

City of Richmond, Virginia  
Department of Public Utilities Rules and Regulations

MetroCare Water Assistance Program

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4. The Applicant shall have a total gross monthly household income, adjusted for family size, that is at or below 225% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines as published by the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services (the "DHHS Guidelines") as applicable at the time of Assistance Program application and as adjusted for monthly income. The threshold maximum total gross monthly household income shall be the quotient calculated by dividing the applicable gross annual household income set forth in the DHHS Guidelines by the denominator 12.
- B. Application Review, Approval, and Priority. The Assistance Program Agency (Agencies) shall apply the following requirements in reviewing applications for discounted fees, approving or denying applications, and prioritizing allocation of discounted fees to approved Applicants:
1. Receive Assistance Program applications and stamp the applications with the date received.
  2. Review Assistance Program applications for completeness, including applicable signatures. The Assistance Program Agency (Agencies) shall not process any applications that do not include, at a minimum, all of the following supporting documentation:
    - (a) A valid photo identification of the Applicant issued by the United States or the Commonwealth of Virginia (e.g., a valid Virginia state driver's license).
    - (b) A current bill for DPU water utility services or DPU wastewater utility services, or both, for the residential class of service, listing the Applicant as the customer of record of the premises for which application is made.
    - (c) The Applicant's written statement that the Applicant is the resident of the premises for which the application is made.
    - (d) Satisfactory written support for establishing the size of the household residing at the premises for which the application is made.

City of Richmond, Virginia  
Department of Public Utilities Rules and Regulations

MetroCare Water Assistance Program

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- (e) Copies of recent paystubs, completed tax return forms, or other reasonable documentation to establish the Applicant's household income.
- 3. Approve or deny each application received based on the information contained in the application, in compliance with the Assistance Program eligibility requirements set forth in Section IV.A of this Regulation.
- 4. Prioritize the discounted fees to approved Applicants based upon the following criteria:
  - (a) The date on which the application is received, according to the application's date stamp.
  - (b) For applications received the same day, those applications reflecting a household income that is the furthest below 225% of the DHHS Guidelines for the household size shall receive first priority.
- C. The Director shall revoke an approved Assistance Program application and associated discounted fees in the event the Director determines that the Applicant no longer meets the Assistance Program eligibility requirements set forth in Section IV.A of this Regulation, or if the Applicant has committed any unlawful act as set forth in City Code Section 106-2. The Director shall provide the Applicant with written notice of any revocation of Assistance Program discounted fees within 30 days of the Director's determination.
- D. Discounted fees shall be applied in the following manner:
  - 1. Discounted fees provided pursuant to the Assistance Program shall consist of credits applied against the approved Applicant's City water utility account or wastewater utility account, or both. Such credits shall not be applied against utility account deposits or in connection with any bill dated more than one calendar year prior to the date of the Assistance Program application.
  - 2. Approved Applicants shall receive credit for their water utility or wastewater utility charges, or both, for the equivalent of up to three (3) months of service, not to exceed the Assistance Program maximum discounted fee amount as determined by the Director.

City of Richmond, Virginia  
Department of Public Utilities Rules and Regulations  
MetroCare Water Assistance Program

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- E. The Assistance Program Agency (Agencies) shall ensure compliance with the following additional Assistance Program requirements:
1. No Applicant shall be approved for Assistance Program discounted fees more than once during any given fiscal year.
  2. No Assistance Program discounted fees provided to an Applicant shall exceed the maximum amount as determined annually by the Director.
  3. Any Applicant whose application has been denied by the Assistance Program Agency (Agencies) shall be ineligible to reapply for Assistance Program discounted fees until at least three months from the date of denial of the application, absent the Applicant showing good cause for reconsideration.
  4. The Assistance Program Agency (Agencies) shall provide to the Program Administrator a daily report listing approved discounted fees/and or credits for applicants in a format prescribed by DPU.
  5. The Assistance Program Agency (Agencies) shall provide to the Director and Program Administrator a monthly financial report detailing all Assistance Program applications, approvals, and denials.
  6. The Assistance Program Agency (Agencies) shall provide to the Director and Program Administrator other reports and information concerning the Assistance Program activities as the Director or Program Administrator reasonably requests.

**V. Assistance Program Funding**

- A. Assistance Program funds may come from any or all of the following sources set forth below. Proposed funding sources may require additional City approvals.
1. General Fund contributions.
  2. Event fundraisers.

City of Richmond, Virginia  
Department of Public Utilities Rules and Regulations

MetroCare Water Assistance Program

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3. Customer donations received through DPU's customer bill payment remittance process and other gifts to the City in support of the Assistance Program.
  4. Additional sources as may be otherwise authorized by law.
- B. DPU will process and account for Assistance Program funds using its Customer Information System (CIS) bill remittance processing function and Financial Accounting System (FAS) policies and procedures as appropriate for the Assistance Program fund sources. The Director shall regularly review the accounting procedures to determine the need for updates as a result of changes in technology, business process controls, accounting standards, and policies and procedures.
- C. The Director or Program Administrator shall verify projected available Assistance Program funds and certify the maximum discounted fee amount prior to the start of each fiscal year.
- D. The Assistance Program fiscal year will coincide with the DPU fiscal year.

**VI. Audit**

- A. The Assistance Program Agency (Agencies) shall retain records of the disposition of all received Assistance Program applications, including applications received, approved, and denied.
- B. The Director and Program Administrator shall have the right to review Assistance Program Agency (Agencies) locations, practices, and site recordkeeping on a periodic basis, and to recommend or require changes as determined by the review.
- C. The City Internal Auditor shall have the right to audit the Assistance Program as necessary, including the right to access the records of the Assistance Program Agency (Agencies).

City of Richmond, Virginia  
Department of Public Utilities Rules and Regulations  
MetroCare Water Assistance Program

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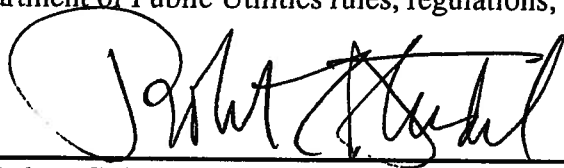
**VII. Special Provisions**

Nothing in this Regulation shall be construed to limit or alter the Director's discretion or authority, as otherwise required or permitted by law.

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These rules and regulations shall become effective 12. March, 2015, and at that time shall supersede, to the extent necessary, any and all other conflicting City of Richmond Department of Public Utilities rules, regulations, policies, and guidelines.

**Approved:**

  
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Robert C. Steidel, Director of Public Utilities, City of Richmond

**Date:**

12. March. 2015

