

UTILITY RATES SUPPORT IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS, SERVICE

Increases for water, sewer and stormwater rates, effective January 1, allow the Department of Public Utilities to deliver excellent and dependable drinking water and sewer services to our community. The rates will also support the Capital Improvements Budget that funds water and sewer projects in neighborhoods across Columbus and at our water and wastewater treatment plants.

City Council approved the rate increases November 17, 2008. Under the new rates, the average Columbus residential customer will see a 7.11% change in their total quarterly bill. Specifically, the increases are: 8.5% for water; 6% for sanitary sewer; and 9% for stormwater services. The increase per quarter will average \$13.89, or \$4.63 per month. Average consumption is based on 3,000 cubic feet of water.

The percentage increase is below the double-digit increase projected one year ago, thanks to aggressive fiscal management practices and voter approval of the city's Bond Package last November. Two of the issues were for \$1.1 billion in sanitary sewer and water capital improvement projects. Bond package approval of all six issues allows the city to borrow funds at a lower interest rate, saving taxpayers and water and sewer ratepayers \$28 million. Water and sewer rate revenue pays off the water and sewer bonds.

There is help for struggling families. Council also approved an increase in the Low Income Discount Program from a 15% to a 20% discount for eligible customers who have previously qualified for HEAP, Medicaid, food stamps and other state and federal programs. Please submit the application on the reverse side if you wish to apply. The average customer on the Low Income Discount will actually see a decrease of 1.88%, or \$3.39, on their quarterly bills.

In addition, senior citizens 60 years and older with a household income at 150% of the poverty level or lower are eligible for a Senior Discount. Eligible seniors may qualify for both the Senior and Low Income programs.

The rate increases are driven by the city's 40-year, \$2.5 billion Wet Weather Management Plan to control sanitary and combined sewer overflows, and bring the city into compliance with consent decrees signed with the State of Ohio. The plan also will result in fewer sewer overflows, cleaner waterways and fewer basement backups. But while the EPA requires Columbus to complete this plan, no federal funds are provided, forcing the entire burden to be shouldered by ratepayers. The city is pressing our local congressional delegation to support creation of an ongoing federal funding source to help relieve this burden. Columbus is not alone; Cincinnati, Indianapolis and other cities face similar mandates to improve their sewer systems.

To fund the sewer improvements, a Project Clean Rivers surcharge began in 2006. The rate increases include this fee, which for Columbus customers will be \$2.73 per equivalent residential unit (ERU) per month; the fee for customers outside Columbus will be \$1.62 per ERU. Single-family residential properties are billed at one ERU, which equals 2,000 square feet of impervious (non-penetrable) surface, so the quarterly amount will be approximately \$8.19 for Columbus customers and \$4.86 per quarter for customers outside Columbus. Non-residential properties are charged by the amount of ERUs the properties are assigned, based on the amount of impervious surface.

The new fees also support the city's Upground Reservoir Project, scheduled to begin construction in northwest Delaware County in 2010. The \$140 million project will help provide a reliable water supply to a growing central Ohio population in the 21st century.

Water and sewer bills are based on how much water is used. You can save money by using some easy water conservation tips such as: repairing leaks; turning off faucets when water is not being used, for example when brushing teeth; running washing machines and dishwashers only when full; installing low-flow fixtures and not overwatering your lawn.

APPLICATION FOR LOW INCOME DISCOUNT PROGRAM

NAME: _____
Last First Middle

ADDRESS: _____
Number Street / Road Apartment #

City State Zip Code

TELEPHONE: _____

ACCOUNT NUMBER (from water bill): _____

LOW INCOME PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

Check the appropriate box for the participating Low Income Program:

- Food Stamp Benefits
- Ohio Medicaid
- Low Income Energy Assistance (LIHEAP)
- Home Energy Assistance (HEAP)
- Ohio Works First
- Social Security Disability
- Public Housing Benefits
- Federal Poverty Level Income / NUMBER PEOPLE IN *HOUSEHOLD*:

Application must have **documentation proving current participation** in a qualifying Low Income Program or **current documentation of income** attached. Documentation **must be dated and include applicant's name**. Mail application and *copies* of documents to:

**Department of Public Utilities
Customer Service Center
910 Dublin Road
Columbus OH 43215**

*Documents submitted with this application will **not** be returned.*
Send copies of documents only

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'S SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

Prepared by signature (if different from applicant): _____

If you are a senior (age 60 or older) and qualify for the Low Income Discount Program, you may also qualify for a Senior Citizen Discount. For questions regarding your bill, the Low Income Discount, or the Senior Citizen Discount, please contact Customer Service Monday through Friday 7:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. at 3-1-1 (or call 645-3111), or visit us on the web at: www.utilities.columbus.gov.



Columbus Department of Public Utilities