**PWD&WRB Affordability Advisory Committee**

**October 5, 2016**

**Agenda**

1. Advisory Committee description:

Committee members will provide advice/recommendations and participate in public/constituent workshops focused on the upcoming Affordability Program. The Water Department and Water Revenue Bureau are launching a new low income affordability program by July 2017. One of our goals is to ensure that we provide information about the program – and encourage enrollment to the best of our ability – over the coming year. To this end, advisory committee members will assist us with (through your advice and expertise):

* Messaging
* Information campaign
* Public workshops
* Ease of application

1. Program Goals
2. All WRAP customers apply for Affordability Program
3. All eligible customers apply for Affordability Program

Enrollment in current WRAP program ends June 30, 2017. $500 city grant ends June 30, 2017. Customers may re-enroll in WRAP if this is a better option after June 30, 2017 but the city grant will no longer be available. $500 City grant = $200 to back debt and $300 to current bill.

Program Differences

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **WRAP** | **Affordability** |
| Up to 250% FPL | Up to 150% FPL |
| UESF/City Grant | UESF – 150 to 250% FPL/No city grant |
| Need to be delinquent | Proactive – delinquency not a requirement |
| Assistance based on outstanding bill and income | Bill is percentage based:  0-50% FPL (2% of income)  51-100% FPL (2.5% of income)  101 – 150% FPL (3% of income)  Special hardship (4% of income) |
| Minimum bill $25/month | Minimum bill $12/month |
| Shut Off suspension with consistent WRAP payments | Shut off and debt suspension |
|  | 24 months of consistent payment achieves forgiveness of penalties |
| Approximately 11,000 current customers | Approximately 60,000 eligible customers |
| Application process:  Call for application which is mailed  Walk in to MSB or satellite centers | Application process:  Call for application which is mailed  Walk into MSB or satellite centers  Apply online (sections of application can be filled in automatically with use of the customer access code) |

1. Customer Outreach Process

PWD & WRB develops messaging, program identity and recommended outreach process for all customer “touch points” and works with Advisory Council to maximize effectiveness.

Tools to include:

* Publications (billstuffers, fact sheets, partner newsletters)
* Website
* Advertising if possible, e.g., SEPTA buses
* Community meetings
* City Council constituent services
* Workshops with partners and advisory committee members
* Mailings
* Other

1. Focus Groups for Applications Review

A final draft application has been developed and one of our first goals is to ensure that the application itself makes sense to our customers and is easy to navigate. To keep the momentum of this program moving forward, we are looking to host a focus group(s) with the assistance of your organizations. We are hoping that each of you may be able to bring a few clients to this session.

Tentatively planning the focus group session (s) for the week of October 10 and will be looking for your advice as to whether daytime or early evening is better.

1. Focus Groups Format

Each stakeholder group recruit members to participate in a focus group.  The incentive to participate includes a preview of the new programs and get to help make the program better, which would help members of their community. We’ll also provide refreshments.

* Provide a short description of the program (5 minutes), and provide a copy of the draft application.
* Participants review for 10 minutes and are given stickers. They will be instructed to place the stickers next to anything that was problematic (confusing, not fair....)
* After the 10 minutes, collect the  applications and quick review them to see if there were sections where lots of people had placed stickers.
* Discuss what is confusing, what they thought it meant, what we were trying to say.
* PWD/WRB uses this feedback to review opportunities to incorporate suggestions in application and supporting materials.
* Each session takes about 45 minutes

1. Scheduling focus groups