

Monthly Report

**TO THE RATE BOARD AS REQUIRED BY THE
FY2022-2023 RATE DETERMINATION**

Philadelphia Water Department

June 21, 2022



City of

Philadelphia



June 21, 2022

Philadelphia Water, Sewer and Storm Water Rate Board
1515 Arch Street, 17th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102-1595

Chairman Popowsky and Members of the Rate Board:

Attached please find the tenth monthly report provided pursuant to the Philadelphia Water, Sewer and Storm Water Rate Board's Rate Determination, dated June 16, 2021, to document the Tiered Assistance Program ("TAP") enrollments, denials, turnovers, arrearage forgiveness (principal and penalty amounts), implementation of ratable forgiveness, as well as updates concerning tenant issues, language access, customer service and financial matters.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Very truly yours,

Susan Crosby, Esq.
Deputy Revenue Commissioner
Water Revenue Bureau

Melissa LaBuda
Deputy Water Commissioner, CFO
Philadelphia Water Department

Enclosure

CC: Service List (2021 General Rate Case)

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides a monthly update for May 2022 regarding TAP enrollments, denials, turnovers, arrearage forgiveness, implementation of ratable forgiveness, as well as customer service and financial updates.

In May 2022,

- 1,078 applicants were enrolled in TAP, 272 of them for the first time.¹
- 53 customers received a total of \$28,121.53 in Penalty Forgiveness.²
- 11 customers received a total of \$9,444.99 in Principal Forgiveness.³
- 587 applications were denied.⁴
 - 23% of those denials were from already-existing TAP participants, whose change applications had missing or incomplete residency or income documentation. Those participants stayed in the program.
 - 1% of those denials were from already-existing TAP participants who were removed from the program because they were no longer eligible.
 - 75% of all denied applications were for applicants who have not participated in TAP before. Most (91% of new applicant denials) were denied for missing or incomplete documentation.
 - Some customers made more than one application.

On February 8, 2022, PWD and WRB jointly filed an Amendment to Section 206.7 and the corresponding definitions in Section 206.1 to implement ratable forgiveness by July 1, 2022. On May 31, 2022, the City filed the final version of the Amendments after receiving written comments and conducting a public hearing, and a copy of those amendments can be seen in Appendix A. The Departments have completed the required technical changes needed for alteration of the TAP Program.

¹ See Section 5.2 and Tables 3-4.

² See Table 1.

³ See Table 2.

⁴ See Table 5.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Required Reporting

This Monthly Report is provided pursuant to the June 16, 2021 Rate Determination of the Philadelphia Water, Sewer and Storm Water Rate Board (“Rate Board”) and the Hearing Officer’s Report, dated May 18, 2021 both rendered in the 2021 general rate proceeding (collectively referred to as the “Rate Determination”). Based on the Rate Determination, the Philadelphia Water Department (“Department” or “PWD”) is required to report monthly on:

- Specific progress in PWD’s arrearage forgiveness and Tiered Assistance Program (TAP), namely the “amount and type of arrearage forgiveness” PWD provides to TAP customers.
- PWD efforts to increase accessibility to the TAP program by implementing “ratable forgiveness” (allowing customers to earn partial arrearage forgiveness each month) and removing administrative constraints to implementation.
- PWD efforts to reduce the number of denied applications (“TAP denials”) and program turnover, specifically the number leaving the program before receiving arrearage forgiveness.⁵

Sections 6 through 8 of this report also provide any updates regarding TAP outreach, community meetings, language access, customer assistance and financial updates (as available quarterly or more frequently).

⁵ The Rate Determination outlines the following reporting requirements at pages 53-54:

Based on the record produced in this proceeding and in accordance with the discussions, findings and resolutions discussed above, we therefore... (8) require the Philadelphia Water Department to report monthly on the amount and type of arrearage forgiveness that PWD is providing to TAP customers, the result of its efforts to determine what legal and/or operational barriers must be overcome to implement ratable forgiveness for each month the TAP participant pays the TAP bill; and the efforts PWD is taking to reduce TAP denials and TAP churn.” In this report, “TAP churn” is called “Program Turnover.”

Reference: <https://www.phila.gov/media/20210618105014/2021-General-Rate-Determination-as-filed-with-Records-Dept-20210616.pdf>

3. ARREARAGE FORGIVENESS

3.1 Definitions

In this section, the definitions for important terms that have not been previously defined are as follows:

Penalty Arrearage Forgiveness: The process by which TAP participants are able to have penalty charges forgiven after 24 full payments of their TAP bills. The penalty forgiveness program began in July of 2017.

Principal Arrearage Forgiveness: The process by which TAP participants are able to have their unpaid water bills forgiven after 24 full payments of their TAP bills. The principal forgiveness program began in September of 2020. Note that customers who exit TAP because they are over-income are provided partial forgiveness of debt proportional to their principal forgiveness as of the time they exit TAP.

Enrollments (total): All customers who joined the TAP program and began participating this month. Includes customers who have never participated in TAP before (see below), as well as customers who had previously left TAP and now returned or recertified their enrollment in TAP.

First-Time Enrollees: Customers who have never participated in TAP before, and enrolled in TAP for the first time this month. These new TAP participants are a subset of total enrollments.

3.2 Forgiveness by Amount and Type

The information provided in the tables below is for the month of May 2022 (the “reporting period”). Table 1 documents the total penalty arrearages forgiven during the reporting period and for FY 2022 to date, broken down by amount of the participant’s penalty debt forgiven. Table 2 documents the total principal arrearages forgiven during the reporting period and for FY 2022 to date, broken down by amount of the participant’s principal debt forgiven.

In Fiscal Year 2022 to date (July 2021-May 2022), a total of \$657,044.18 of Penalty Arrearage and \$254,370.70 of Principal Arrearage have been forgiven.

Table 1. Total Penalty Arrearage Forgiven during August 2021-May 2022

Debt Range	Participants Receiving Penalty Forgiveness this Month	Amount Forgiven in May	Amount Forgiven, Previously Reported	Total Amount Forgiven, Reported to Date (August 2021-May 2022)
< \$0	-	\$-	\$-	\$-
\$0-\$200	38	\$1,857.95	\$49,033.49	\$50,891.44
\$200-\$500	7	\$2,280.65	\$55,152.76	\$57,433.41
\$500-\$1,000	3	\$2,396.54	\$69,296.72	\$71,693.26
\$1,000-\$2,000	1	\$1,396.01	\$118,939.06	\$120,335.07
\$2,000-\$5,000	2	\$5,244.15	\$145,140.49	\$150,384.64
\$5,000-\$10,000	2	\$14,946.23	\$63,774.77	\$78,721.00
\$10,000-\$20,000	-	\$-	\$35,423.41	\$35,423.41
\$20,000-\$50,000	-	\$-	\$-	\$-
\$50,000+	-	\$-	\$-	\$-
Total	53	\$28,121.53	\$536,760.70	\$564,882.23

Table 2. Total Principal Arrearage Forgiven during August 2021-May 2022

Debt Range	Participants Receiving Principal Forgiveness this Month	Amount Forgiven in May	Amount Forgiven, Previously Reported	Total Amount Forgiven Reported to Date (August 2021-May 2022)
< \$0	-	\$-	\$-	\$-
\$0-\$200	3	\$336.51	\$4,571.74	\$4,908.25
\$200-\$500	2	\$857.74	\$10,171.80	\$11,029.54
\$500-\$1,000	2	\$1,305.00	\$15,007.00	\$16,312.00
\$1,000-\$2,000	2	\$2,209.00	\$35,008.00	\$37,217.00
\$2,000-\$5,000	2	\$4,736.74	\$106,510.17	\$111,246.91
\$5,000-\$10,000	-	\$-	\$36,193.00	\$36,193.00
\$10,000-\$20,000	-	\$-	\$11,462.00	\$11,462.00
\$20,000-\$50,000	-	\$-	\$-	\$-
\$50,000+	-	\$-	\$-	\$-
Total	11	\$9,444.99	\$218,923.71	\$228,368.70

For first-time enrollees, pre-TAP debt that was newly protected from enforcement and made eligible for forgiveness is shown in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 3. Pre-TAP Debt for May 2022 First-Time Enrollees

Type	Total First-Time Enrollees with Debt by Type	Total Pre-TAP Debt
Principal	254	\$418,832.47
Penalty	194	\$36,271.40
Total	272⁶	\$455,103.87

Table 4. May 2022 First-Time Enrollees by Income Guidelines and Associated Pre-TAP Debt⁷

Income Level as Compared to Federal Poverty Guideline	Total Enrollees	Total Pre-TAP Debt
Up to 50%	71	\$128,393.81
Above 50% and up to 100%	115	\$141,701.78
Above 100% and up to 150%	78	\$153,105.58
Above 150% and up to 250%	6	\$26,285.95
Above 250%	2	\$5,616.75
Total	272	\$455,103.87

⁶ Note that the total of first-time enrollees is 272. The count of enrollees in the penalty and principal lines above does not sum to 272 because some customers appear in one category, neither category, or both categories, depending on whether they had only principal, only penalty, both penalty and principal, or no pre-TAP debt. The monthly data in Table 3 was reported on June 1, 2022.

⁷ A similar report for all enrollees during the full calendar year is provided in the Annual Report to the Mayor on the Tiered Assistance Program (TAP), “Table 2. New Applicants Enrolled in TAP.” The monthly data in Table 4 was reported on June 1, 2022.

Reference: <https://www.phila.gov/media/20210412104452/Tiered-Assistance-Program-TAP-2020-annual-report.pdf>

4. IMPLEMENTATION OF RATABLE FORGIVENESS

4.1 Definitions

In this section, the definitions for important terms that have not been previously defined are as follows:

Ratable forgiveness: The monthly proration of arrearage forgiveness. Each month a TAP participant makes a complete payment of their TAP Bill, 1/24th of their pre-program principal arrearage is vested immediately. This vested amount is retained even if a participant leaves TAP and later returns to the program.

Legal considerations: Legal and administrative restrictions or conflicts preventing or slowing down the introduction of ratable forgiveness as described above.

Operational challenges: Technical, technological, staffing, or other factors preventing or slowing down the introduction of ratable forgiveness as described above.

TAP Pause: A change to the forgiveness process whereby a customer's 24-month progress towards arrearage forgiveness is "paused," rather than lost, if they leave TAP for any reason, and the customer can resume their progress upon returning to TAP, rather than starting over.

4.2 Discussion

Implementing ratable forgiveness is dependent on the following considerations.⁸

Legal considerations: There are currently no legal barriers to the implementation of ratable forgiveness. On February 8, 2022, the Revenue and Water Departments jointly filed an Amendments to Section 206.1 and Section 206.7 of the Philadelphia Water Department Regulations, with the final version filed on May 31, 2022, with an effective date of July 1, 2022. Rate Board approval must be obtained to recover the cost of arrearage forgiveness in rates.

Operational challenges: There are currently no operational barriers to the implementation of ratable forgiveness, although there are resource constraints. Changes to the basis2 billing system are necessary to begin implementing the program, which require resources for development and significant testing, which are now being prioritized among other important initiatives. These changes are course for implementation in late June.

4.3 This Month's Updates

As reported in earlier reports, the Law Department has determined that there are no legal barriers to implementing ratable forgiveness, and the City has updated the Water Regulations in order to authorize this change to the TAP program. The Amendments to Sections 206.1 and 206.7 were

⁸ The Water Rate Board's Rate Determination requires a discussion of "barriers" to implementation. There are no barriers, so this section of the report addresses considerations for implementation instead.

jointly filed by the Revenue and Water Departments with the Records Department on February 8, 2022. As required, the proposed Amendments were publicly displayed on the City's Regulations website and the filing was advertised in local newspapers. Per request, a public hearing was held on March 28, 2022 at 1:00 pm. The Departments considered feedback from Community Legal Services and updated subsection (e) from the original filing to clarify that even if more than one TAP Bill payment is missed, the customer will still receive incremental forgiveness upon their next full TAP Bill payment. The customer does not have to "catch up" on all missed payments in order for forgiveness to resume. Current TAP customers will receive retroactive lump sum forgiveness of Pre-TAP arrears in relation to the number of full TAP Bill payments made since September 1, 2020, and continuing forgiveness in the amount of 1/24th of their pre-TAP arrears with every full TAP Bill payment made after July 1, 2022. The final version of the Amendments to Sections 206.1 and 206.7 were jointly filed by the Revenue and Water Departments on May 31, 2022 with an effective date of July 1, 2022.

The next steps for the Departments are to focus on communication with current and potential TAP participants about the upcoming change and how it will be reflected on bills. Work is finishing on:

- Clarifying nuanced business requirements of ratable forgiveness; and
- Developing and testing software updates to comply with approved regulations.

5. PWD EFFORTS TO REDUCE TAP DENIALS AND PROGRAM TURNOVER

5.1 Definitions

In this section, the definitions for important terms that have not been previously defined are as follows:

TAP Denials: TAP application outcomes where applicants are not enrolled in the program.

Applicants can be denied for TAP for one of six reasons:

- Failure to meet income and residency guidelines;
- Failure to meet income guidelines (without a Special Hardship);
- Failure to meet residency guidelines;
- Installation type is not eligible for TAP;
- Missing or invalid income or residency documentation; or
- Missing information on the application form.

Applications for accounts that are discontinued are also denied.

Program Turnover: Reduction in TAP participation due to failure to meet income or residency guidelines, missing or invalid documentation, failure to recertify or other reasons including a determination that the customer will have a more affordable bill under another assistance program or other billing arrangement.

More Affordable Alternatives: Some customers qualify for assistance programs outside of TAP, and based on their individual circumstances, these programs may be a more affordable option.

5.2 Discussion

In May, 1,078 applicants were approved for enrollment in TAP, and 731 applicants were not. Of those applications that were technically not approved, 144 applicants were already enrolled in TAP at the time of the application submittal, and 8 of those resulted in removal from TAP for failure to meet income or residency.

These data are set forth in Table 5 below. The numbers below reflect the number of applications, rather than the number of customers, as customers can make multiple applications.

Table 5. Denials: Applicants Not Enrolled in TAP⁹ during May 2022

Outcome	Total Count	Applicants Already Participating in TAP
<u>Denied</u>		
Failed to meet Income and Residency Guidelines	0	0
Failed to meet Income Guidelines (no Special Hardship)	15	5
Failed to meet Residency Guidelines	16	3
Installation Type Not Eligible for TAP	0	0
Missing or Invalid Income or Residency Documentation	531	136
Missing information on application form	8	0
Not the Customer applying	17	0
Total Denials	587	144
<i>Denied for Incomplete, remained in TAP¹⁰</i>		136
<i>Denied for Cause, removed from TAP</i>		8
<i>New Applicant Denials</i>	443	
<u>Enrolled in More Affordable Alternative</u>		
Senior Citizen Discounted Bill ¹¹	35	2
Senior Citizen Discounted Bill + Extended Payment Agreement	11	0
Regular Bill ¹¹	25	6
Regular Bill + Extended Payment Agreement	66	1
WRBCC Agreement	4	0
Total More Affordable Alternative Placements	141	9
<u>Other Outcomes</u>		
Customer Withdrew Application	0	0
Data Transfer ¹²	3	3
Total Other Outcomes	3	3

As stated in the previous section, the introduction of “TAP Pause” will address some concerns about Program Turnover, as customers leaving and returning to the program will pick up where they left off on earning principal and penalty forgiveness, rather than starting anew.

⁹ An annualized version of this report is included in the Annual Report to the Mayor On The Tiered Assistance Program (TAP), “Table 4. Applicants Not Enrolled.” This monthly data was reported on June 1, 2022.

¹⁰ Apart from recertification, customers in TAP who reapply and have their application denied for being incomplete are not removed from TAP. Only those who are denied for cause or are approved for a more affordable alternative are removed from TAP.

¹¹ Senior Citizen Discounted Bill or Regular Bill may also include a standard payment agreement.

¹² When customers had more than one application in progress at the same time, information was transferred to the newest application for processing, older applications were categorized as “Data Transfer,” and were no longer processed. Similarly, previously denied applications were transferred for re-evaluation when WRB identified available OOPA information or the customer submitted additional required documentation after denial. The subsequent approvals or denials are also captured in these figures.

5.3 Efforts to Reduce TAP Denials and Program Turnover

As shown above, the largest portion of denials are due to missing or invalid income or residency documentation. To address this factor, the Water Revenue Bureau has finalized redesign of the TAP application checklist to clarify and communicate the documentation requirements. Finalization took into account feedback from the RCAS in early October. WRB has also continued the policies introduced over the past several months to reduce the customers' burden to provide proof of residence.

5.4 This Month's Updates

TAP recertifications were restarted in September 2021; however, there have been several changes in 2022 as a response to application review backlogs, stakeholder feedback, and supply chain delays that impacted WRB's ability to respond to customer requests for applications.

1. In January, 2022, WRB extended the timeframe in which customers can submit an application before they are removed from 60 days to 120.
2. As a part of the Department's efforts to retain and attract TAP participants, the recertification frequency for all customers has been updated from once annually to once every three years.

Since December 2021, the total number of TAP participants has decreased for a variety of reasons, which include discontinued accounts, failure to submit their recertification application within the timeframe, and applications submitted that are subsequently denied. Customers who are removed from TAP for any reason are able to reapply at any time.

6. QUARTERLY UPDATES

PWD will provide updates to the Rate Board on at least a quarterly basis with respect to certain customer service and policy issues identified in the Settlement, as set forth in this Section.

6.1 Storm Water Cost of Service and Benefit Allocation Issues

The Water Department staff is reviewing the existing residential stormwater rate structure and evaluating potential alternatives.

Please note that the evaluation of cost of service and benefit allocation issues will involve the Department and multiple external stakeholders. PWD staff are developing a plan to engage these stakeholders and are targeting late summer / early fall to engage stakeholders and gather feedback.

6.2 Customer Service and Policy Issues

1. TAP Recertification:

TAP recertifications were restarted in September. WRB/PWD is considering the merits of establishing a longer period of TAP recertification for all customers and different recertification methods for certain groups such as pensioners, SSI and LIHEAP/LIHWAP recipients. As discussed earlier, WRB/PWD has decided to extend the period of TAP recertifications for all customers.

2. TAP Outreach/Participation:

In this quarter, WRB/PWD engaged in the following activities in support of achieving greater TAP participation, attaining more affordable bills for vulnerable households and evaluating various approaches to inform more customers of TAP and other assistance programs:

- WRB concluded a program in which it reached out to existing TAP customers, inviting them to submit updated income information and receive the most affordable bill. To date, this program has generated over 15,000 applications mailed to TAP participants and resulted in over 6,000 applications returned to WRB. The applications received this month are included in the monthly reporting above.
- WRB began a campaign of moving customers from the WRBCC assistance program into TAP, where reasonable, so they can begin benefitting from arrearage forgiveness.
- PWD is currently planning community meetings, summits and other gatherings, including meetings with Black community leaders and black grassroots community members.
- PWD has organized an additional series of Utility Fairs to provide one-on-one help with utility customer assistance programs. Virtual appointments are available each Wednesday in June. An in-person Utility Fair will occur on Saturday, June 25, at the Community of Compassion CDC in the Cobbs Creek neighborhood.

- Through these assistance events, PWD informs customers with past due water bills they may be eligible for grants under the Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP). PWD can receive up to \$5,000 toward delinquent water bills under this program. See, discussion of LIHWAP in Section 7.2 below.
- PWD continues the outreach, promotion, and advertising campaign to create awareness of Water Customer Assistance programs, encourage customers to apply, and reduce back bills. The campaign uses advertisements in print, on social media, websites, radio, as well as flyers, postcards, bill stuffers, emails, and advertisements on Septa, many in English and Spanish. The campaign includes more than 40 unique “touches” or methods of presenting information about TAP.
- Advertising for March and April included radio with WDAS’ Patty Jackson, a trusted voice in Philadelphia’s Black community. A partnership with WURD in March, April, and May delivered 75 radio spots and participation in the ECO WURD Earth Day event. WURD is the only African American-owned and operated talk radio station in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and an essential channel for engaging with Philadelphia’s Black Community. May and June include an updated SEPTA campaign, Spanish radio ads on La Mega, and a bi-lingual print and digital campaign with Al Dia.
- Advertising in May saw a variety of digital media advertising through WURD, including two newsletter ads, three Facebook posts, and two Instagram posts. Messaging promoted the debt forgiveness features of TAP and encouraged customers to apply for assistance if they’re having difficulty paying water bills.
- May Spanish language ads with La Mega featured radio personality and Hispanic community influencer Maria Del Pilar. Thirty-seven ads ran each week during the month.
- PWD social media in May announced June utility fairs and LIHWAP Grant availability.
- PWD has launched a partnership with Community Resource Corps (CRC), an organization out of the Mayor’s Office of Civic Engagement and Volunteer Service dedicated to projects that help mitigate poverty. The partnership, which began in late March and is expected to last for approximately seven weeks, focuses on outreach to customers who were previously denied for incomplete applications, TAP customers who failed to recertify, and delinquent customers in areas with high/concentrated delinquency.

This effort is nearing its conclusion and the following progress can be reported.

- The CRC began its engagement with 1,386 leads. They attempted to reach all through phone banking and/or door-to-door canvassing.
- Phone banking resulted in 504 successful contacts or a 36 percent conversion rate. The CRC asked contacts if they needed support and gathered information about the customer’s experience with the program and the application process. These conversations resulted in 225 customers expressing a continued need for help with the application.
- Door-to-door canvassing was employed when phone banking was unsuccessful in making initial contact. CRC attempted 125 door knocks resulting in 35 successful connections, of which 9 requested continued help with the application. This conversion rate is on par with

other comparable campaigns in the City. The customers appreciated the effort, and the CRC gathered valuable insight into this outreach method.

- To date, the CRC effort has resulted in 75 CAP applications submitted. Actions to reach the remaining successful contacts will continue.
- PWD reached out to the following Black churches in March to inform their parishioners about water assistance programs including LIHWAP and TAP: Mt. Zion Baptist, St. Matthew AME, Mother Bethel AME, Enon Tabernacle Baptist, Pinn Memorial, and Church of Christian Compassion. This outreach effort is ongoing.
- PWD reached out to Reverend Naomi Washington-Leapheart, the Director of the Commission on Faith-Based and Interfaith Affairs at the Office of Public Engagement and provided CAP fact sheets and social media graphics to be shared on the Office of Public Engagement’s platforms. Going forward, PWD will look to partner with them on any in-person or virtual resource events.
- PWD has continued outreach to partners with CAP social media toolkit, including sharing flyers for CMC for LIHEAP customers, the Citywide social media group, and RCAS.
- A meeting with Residential Customer Assistance and Services (RCAS) committee on May 20, 2022, covered topics including June utility fairs, Community Resource Corps work, updates from partners, and the City’s efforts to review water shut-off policies and introduce new customer protections (see Moratorium on Shut-Offs below). RCAS members were invited to provide feedback on these policies by Friday, May 27.
- WRB revised water shut-off notices in the following ways: Updated language to be more readable; put Customer Assistance information on top; moved tenant/USTRA to front of document (previously on back); updated information about medical certifications.
- PWD created a bill stuffer (in English and Spanish) to be included with shut-off notices to provide instructions on how to avoid a shut-off and apply for assistance.

3. Language Access:

See “Tenant Issues” in 6.3.2, below.

4. Moratorium on Shut-Offs:

In February, PWD extended its shut-off moratorium until June 30, 2022. The extension was designed to provide additional time for customers to apply for assistance.

Cross-departmental meetings also began in February to begin reviewing a range of options for shut-off policy. As a result of these discussions, the recommendations for the upcoming enforcement (shut-off) period include:

- The level of delinquency that triggers a shut-off notice has been raised from \$150 to \$1,000
- PWD customers currently enrolled in TAP are exempt from shut-off
- PWD customers currently enrolled in the Senior Citizen Discount program are exempt from shut-off
- PWD customers who have applied for Customer Assistance are exempt from shut-off
- As an additional safeguard, the City will use internal data to match enrollment data from other low-income assistance programs and provide exemptions to those households.

The data matching process will be done by the newly established Office for Integrated Data for Evidence and Action in the Managing Director's Office. These policy changes are designed to focus enforcement on customers that can pay their bills while protecting vulnerable residents.

6.3 COVID-19 Protections

1. Payment agreements:

In this quarter, WRB/PWD reviewed the payment agreement options offered by outside collection agencies and began developing updated guidelines for those agencies to offer more flexibility in creating agreements with customers.

2. Tenant issues:

To address certain tenant issues, such as establishing tenant accounts, proof of residency, PWD continues to review its business practices, website disclosures and regulations regarding establishing a tenant account and in conjunction with the Law Department reviewed its policies to facilitate tenants opting to request transfer pre-existing arrearages into their account.

PWD and WRB continue to work with the Law Department on process improvements, including staff trainings and open dialogue when questions arise regarding application compliance with the Regulations.

PWD has updated its website with the Simplified Chinese and Spanish request forms in addition to the existing English. The links to these forms are below:

- [Become a tenant water customer | Department of Revenue | City of Philadelphia](#)
- [Become a commercial tenant water customer | Department of Revenue | City of Philadelphia](#)
- [Become an occupant water customer | Department of Revenue | City of Philadelphia](#)

PWD has a designated Language Access coordinator and alternates who work closely with the Office of Immigrant Affairs (OIA) to ensure language access services are accessible and available for staff to assist Limited English Proficient customers.

PWD currently provides some vital documents in the following languages: Arabic, Italian, Khmer (Cambodian), Portuguese, Russian, Simplified Chinese, Spanish, Traditional Chinese, and Vietnamese.

Vital documents that have been translated include:

- Customer Assistance Program (CAP) Application (9 languages)
- CAP flyers
- Annual Water Quality Reports
- Rate Increase Fact Sheets
- Lead Program Fact Sheets and Materials
- Construction letters and door hangers
- Industrial Waste Warning and Violation Notices
- H.E.L.P. Loan Fact Sheet
- Basement Backup Protection Program Materials
- Plumbing Repairs Program Materials
- Notice of Defect form and fact sheet

Language Access Coordinators continue to have documents translated on an as-needed basis and can schedule in-person interpreters when necessary.

Updated Language Access Plan

PWD's updated 2022 Language Access Plan has been signed by the Commissioner and submitted to the Office of Immigrant Affairs.

7. CUSTOMER ASSISTANCE UPDATES

This section details customer assistance dollars that PWD is working with outside entities to process for its customers. These programs are:

- PHDC: Philadelphia Housing Development Corporation. Provides emergency rental assistance for renters and landlords. PHDC is currently administering federal COVID relief dollars
- UESF: Utilities Emergency Services. Provides financial assistance/grants to utility customers with low-income facing or experiencing shut-offs. Water grants are matched by PWD. UESF has introduced Rapid Assistance Development, which provides added flexibility. UESF funding is included here as part of the assistance provided to customers, however, unlike PHDC funds, UESF dollars do not come from the federal government and should not be considered in the reconciliation/adjustment process.
- LIHWAP: Low Income Household Water Assistance Program. Federal program introduced in 2021 to provide low-income households with financial assistance on water and wastewater bills.

7.1 Rental Assistance and Emergency Services Funding

During May 2022, a total of \$1,837,677.09 in rental assistance from PHDC, emergency grant funding from UESF, and grant funding from LIHWAP was applied to customer accounts. LIHWAP grant reporting began in February 2022.

A summary of the 2022 fiscal year PHDC and UESF grants is shown in Table 6. Table 7 shows PHDC payments from July 2021 to May 2022. Table 8 shows UESF payments from July 2021 to May 2022. Table 9 shows LIHWAP payments starting January 2022. All tables are based on data reported on May 31, 2022. In addition to these funds, PWD matches some UESF grants.

Table 6. Summary of UESF and PHDC Grants, Fiscal Year 2022 (to date)

Source	Count	Amount
UESF	382	\$394,215.69
PHDC	2,472	\$1,508,176.96
LIHWAP	3,164	\$5,217,031.55
TOTAL	6,018	\$7,119,424.20

Table 7. PHDC Grants by Month July 2021- May 2022 (FY 2022)

Month	Total Amount
July 2021	\$361,922.86
August 2021	\$313,080.18
September 2021	\$157,160.34
October 2021	\$124,704.78
November 2021	\$126,844.34
December 2021	\$76,623.44
January 2022	\$0.00
February 2022	\$140,920.51
March 2022	\$0.00
April 2022	\$206,920.51
May 2022	\$0.00
TOTAL	\$1,508,176.96

Table 8. UESF Grants by Month July 2021-May 2022 (FY 2022)

Month	Total Amount
July 2021	\$25,288.82
August 2021	\$54,999.43
September 2021	\$198,558.61
October 2021	\$75,042.32
November 2021	\$8,286.52
December 2021	\$4,383.39
January 2022	\$11,090.93
February 2022	\$4,053.81
March 2022	\$617.75
April 2022	\$10,619.93
May 2022	\$1,274.18
TOTAL	\$394,215.69

Table 9. LIHWAP Grants by Month January - May 2022 (FY 2022) ¹³

Month	Total Amount
January 2022	\$86,753.97
February 2022	\$927,374.00
March 2022	\$1,136,493.29
April 2022	\$1,230,007.38
May 2022	\$1,836,402.91
TOTAL	\$5,217,031.55

¹³The Commonwealth's LIHWAP Program began accepting applications in January 2022 and the City received its first grants in February 2022.

8. DEPARTMENT EFFORTS TO PURSUE FEDERAL ASSISTANCE AND OTHER FINANCIAL UPDATES

The Water Department has pursued and is continuing to pursue federal funding. This section documents, among other things, PWD efforts to secure federal funding to date.

Assistance Program/ Requesting Organization	Date Submitted	Status	Amount Awarded Or Requested	Notes
PennVest	April 2020	Active Construction	\$80.8M loan	Rehabilitation of the Torresdale Filtered Water Pump Station. The award closed in February 2021.
PennVest	January 2021	Awarded	\$106M loan; \$5.1M funding offer	PennVest approved a loan for the construction of the new preliminary treatment building at the Northeast Water Pollution Control Plant. In January 2022 PennVest increased the award due to bids exceeding preliminary estimates. The award is expected to close April 2022.
PennVest	January 2021	Active Construction	\$6M loan	PennVest loan to finance stormwater improvements. The award closed October 2021.
PennVest	August 2021	Loan Closed	\$20.7M loan	PennVest loan to fund Improvements to the City-owned Flat Rock Dam and introduce flow into the Manayunk Canal. The award closed April 14, 2022.
Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) Letter of Interest	July 2021	Awarded / Notified to Apply	\$500M of capital projects with 49% funded via WIFIA	Under WIFIA, federal aid can cover up to 49% of project eligible costs. Closing is expected to occur in the Fall of 2022.
PennVest	August 2021	Awarded	\$40.4M	PennVest loan to fund water main replacements in the City of Philadelphia.
PennVest	November 2021	Awarded	\$8.6M	PennVest application to fund stormwater improvements in the City.
PennVest	November 2021	Awarded	\$6.8m	PennVest application to fund stormwater improvements in the City.

Assistance Program/ Requesting Organization	Date Submitted	Status	Amount Awarded Or Requested	Notes
PEMA/FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC)	December 2021	Submitted	~\$35.7M	The Cohocksink Flood Mitigation Project, the final phase of a six-phase flood mitigation project, proposes to double conveyance capacity of the combined sewer system through the construction of new sewer infrastructure and seven green stormwater infrastructure systems. The project will have a large area of impact that includes portions of the Northern Liberties, South Kensington, and Ludlow neighborhoods.
PEMA/FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC)	December 2021	Submitted	\$204K	Through the City of Philadelphia Climate Change Adaptation – Facility Flood Risk and Resiliency Assessment BRIC Project Scoping, the Philadelphia Water Department will work over 24 months in partnership with procured contractors to conduct a facility-based, asset-level risk and resiliency assessment of the Baxter WTP. This assessment will result in identification of a mitigation strategy to protect the Baxter WTP from coastal flooding and proactively build resiliency to climate change. PWD’s risk and resiliency assessment framework includes a comprehensive, asset-level flood risk assessment; a resiliency assessment to explore flood mitigation strategies; stakeholder engagement and partnership building; and development of a future FEMA BRIC application, including a Benefit-Cost Analysis.
PEMA/FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC)	December 2021	Submitted	\$693K	The Philadelphia Water Department is seeking BRIC project scoping funding to advance comprehensive planning, technical analyses, and stakeholder engagement for storm flood risk reduction and combined sewer overflow (CSO) mitigation within the Wingohocking and the Tookany/Tacony-Frankford (TTF) Watersheds. The Germantown Wingohocking Creek Flood Risk Reduction Project Scoping will advance the planning elements of the Tacony Tunnel alternative identified in the Germantown Flood Risk Reduction Study by evaluating hydraulic optimization, operation and maintenance considerations, climate resiliency, stakeholder engagement and partnership building, residual risk mitigation, and cost estimation and benefit cost analysis.
PEMA/FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)	January 2022	Submitted	\$204k	Throughout the City of Philadelphia Climate Change Adaptation – Facility Flood Risk and Resiliency Assessment HMGP Project Scoping, PWD will work over 24 months in partnership with procured contractors to conduct a facility-based, asset-level risk and resiliency assessment of the Baxter WTP. This assessment will result in identification of a mitigation strategy to protect the Baxter WTP from coastal flooding and proactively build resiliency to climate change. PWD’s risk and resiliency assessment framework includes a comprehensive, asset-level flood risk assessment; a resiliency

				assessment to explore flood mitigation strategies; stakeholder engagement and partnership building; and development of a future FEMA BRIC application, including a Benefit-Cost Analysis.
PEMA/FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)	January 2022	Submitted	\$693k	PWD is seeking HMGP project scoping funding to advance comprehensive planning, technical analyses, and stakeholder engagement for storm flood risk reduction and combined sewer overflow (CSO) mitigation within the Wingohocking and the Tookany/Tacony-Frankford (TTF) Watersheds. The Germantown Wingohocking Creek Flood Risk Reduction Project Scoping will advance the planning elements of the Tacony Tunnel alternative identified in the Germantown Flood Risk Reduction Study by evaluating hydraulic optimization, operation and maintenance considerations, climate resiliency, stakeholder engagement and partnership building, residual risk mitigation, and cost estimation and benefit cost analysis.
PennVest	February 2022	Awarded	\$125M	<p>PWD submitted an application to PennVest totaling \$125M for the replacement of an existing clear well basin (“CWB”), constructed in 1904, which is showing signs of deterioration making the structure susceptible to possible contamination and water quality deterioration.</p> <p>The building of the new CWB’s will allow for additional storage capacity to replace the existing CWB. The original CWB was one tank which could not be taken offline for inspection, cleaning, or maintenance. With the addition of new CWB’s, the clear well basin storage system provides redundancy and resiliency by providing multiple units that can individually be taken off line for maintenance. Furthermore, the new CWB’s will improve quality of life by providing a new watertight storage tank to provide protection of the finished water supplied to PWD customers.</p>

APPENDIX A: AMENDMENTS TO REGULATIONS SECTION 206.1 AND 206.7

206.0 INCOME-BASED WATER RATE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

206.1 Definitions.

The following words and phrases when used in Sections 206.0 through 206.10 of these regulations have the meanings given to them in this Section unless specifically provided otherwise or unless the text clearly indicates otherwise:

(a) Civil Action: An *in personam* lawsuit filed to collect water and sewer rents. A Civil Action shall be deemed commenced when a Complaint is filed with the Court of appropriate jurisdiction.

(b) Customer: A natural person who (i) is receiving or (ii) is in the process of requesting or simultaneously requests to receive or restore service from the Water Department at such person's primary residence in Philadelphia. A person shall cease to qualify as a Customer under the second category if his or her application for service is ultimately denied.

(c) Federal Poverty Level or FPL: The Federal Poverty Level, as determined annually by the United States Census Bureau.

(d) Hold: A non-permanent suspension of Litigation.

(e) Income: All regular and periodic income from whatever source derived, including but not limited to salaries, wages, income from self-employment, alimony, support money, cash, public assistance and relief, the net amount of any pensions or annuities including railroad retirement benefits, all benefits received under the Federal Social

Security Act (except Medicare benefits), all benefits received under State employment insurance laws and veterans' disability payments, all interest received from the Federal or any State government, or any instrumentality or political subdivision thereof, net income from rentals, workmen's compensation, interest and dividends, and any regular and periodic monetary contributions from a non-household member. Income shall not include overtime; back pay; severance pay; bonuses; tuition reimbursements; loan disbursements; federal or state income tax refunds; lump sum payments of benefits such as loss of time insurance benefits, death benefits, life insurance benefits and other insurance proceeds; Supplemental Nutrition Access Program ("SNAP") benefits or any other form of surplus food or other relief in kind supplied by a governmental agency; or property tax rebate.

(f) Litigation: A Sheriff's Sale or Civil Action as defined in this Section.

(g) Low-income: Income equal to or less than one hundred fifty percent (150%) of FPL.

(h) Monthly Household Income: The monthly Income received by the Customer and all adults residing in the Customer's household.

(i) Rate Board: The Philadelphia Water, Sewer and Stormwater Rate Board, established pursuant to Section 5-801 of the Home Rule Charter and Section 13-101 of the Philadelphia Code.

(j) Sheriff's Sale: An *in rem* lawsuit filed to collect water and sewer rents, pursuant to the Municipal Claim and Tax Lien Law, 53 P.S.

§§ 7101, et seq. A Sheriff's Sale shall be deemed commenced when a Petition pursuant to 53 P.S. § 7283 is filed with the Court of appropriate jurisdiction.

(k) Special Hardship: A hardship condition that may include, but is not limited to, the following: (i) an increase in the Customer's number of dependents in the household; (ii) a seriously ill household member; or; (iii) circumstances that threaten the household's access to the necessities of life if payment of a delinquent bill is required.

(l) Tiered Assistance Program (TAP): The Income-Based Water Rate Assistance Program described in these regulations and Section 19-1605 of the Philadelphia Code.

(m) Pre-TAP arrears: For owners and occupants, the sum of all unpaid service, usage, and stormwater charges at the property, calculated at the time of first enrollment in TAP; or, for tenants, the sum of all unpaid service, usage, and stormwater charges at the property accruing during the period the tenant has been responsible to pay for water service pursuant to the terms of their lease, calculated at the time of first enrollment in TAP.

(n) TAP Payment Agreement: A payment agreement provided to a Customer enrolled in TAP in accordance with these regulations and Section 19-1605 of the Philadelphia Code.

(o) TAP Bill: A bill issued by the Water Revenue Bureau to a Customer enrolled in TAP for service, usage and stormwater charges and any payments toward pre-TAP arrears.

(p) WRB: The Water Revenue Bureau, within the City of Philadelphia Department of Revenue.

206.7 Earned Forgiveness

If a Customer maintains enrollment in TAP, the Customer will obtain forgiveness of outstanding arrears under the following conditions:

(a) A Customer maintaining enrollment in TAP, who makes twenty-four (24) full monthly payments of the TAP Bill, will earn forgiveness of penalty charges on Pre-TAP arrears.

(b) Any arrears older than fifteen years will be removed in accordance with Philadelphia Code Section 19-1605(1).

(c) As of July 1, 2022, all Customers maintaining enrollment in TAP will receive a one-time lump sum forgiveness of Pre-TAP arrears, in an amount calculated by multiplying the amount of the Customer's Pre- TAP arrears by 1/24 and then by the number of full monthly payments of TAP Bills issued on or after September 1, 2020.

(d) After July 1, 2022, a Customer maintaining enrollment in TAP will earn forgiveness upon making each full monthly payment of the TAP Bill, calculated by dividing the amount of the Customer's Pre- TAP arrears by twenty-four (24). The credit for the forgiven debt will be applied to the Customer's account on or after the date of each full payment of the Customer's TAP Bill during such period of enrollment.

(e) If the Customer fails to make a full TAP Bill payment, the Customer will not receive forgiveness for that month; however, the Customer will remain eligible for forgiveness of Pre-TAP arrears the next time that the Customer makes a full TAP Bill payment. The Customer may recover any missed months of forgiveness by paying full TAP Bill amounts for those missed months.

* * *

(f) In the event that a Customer is unable to maintaining enrollment in TAP due to a change in household income between September 1, 2020 and July 1, 2022, that results in a determination that the Customer is no longer eligible for enrollment in TAP, forgiveness of Pre-TAP arrears will be applied to the Customer's account, in an amount calculated by multiplying the amount of the Customer's Pre-TAP arrears at the time of initial enrollment by 1/24 and then by the number of complete monthly payments of TAP Bills issued on or after September 1, 2020.