

# Notice of Funding Availability

**Program Name:** State of Maryland Community/Public Water/Wastewater System Assistance Program

**Program Description:** The COVID-19 pandemic has made it difficult for Marylanders to pay their water bills due to the negative impacts of the pandemic. As a result, water systems in Maryland have been financially impacted. The Community/Public Water/Wastewater System Assistance Program (the Program) provides \$20 million of Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) to provide relief to water systems for outstanding water debt from residential customers related to the pandemic. As a condition to receive program funding, water systems must agree to allocate payments as bill credits to customer accounts within a specific number of days after receiving payment and waive late fees and interest, among other requirements.

**Application Period:** January 2, 2023 – January 31, 2023

**Submission Deadline:** January 31, 2023 at 11:59pm ET

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## General Eligibility Requirements

The following are eligible for funding from the Program:

Water systems in the State of Maryland that have outstanding water debt from residential customers that was accrued during the period of performance. Please note, water debt includes both clean water and wastewater.

## Period of Performance

The funding allocated to the Program will cover outstanding water debt from residential customers accrued between January 27, 2020 and September 30, 2022.

## Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be reviewed based on the following criteria:

- Applicants must be established water systems within the State of Maryland.
- Outstanding water debt from residential customers that are submitted by applicants must have been incurred during the program's period of performance.
- Outstanding water debt from residential customers that reside within a Qualified Census Tract (QCT) may be prioritized. More information on QCTs can be found in Appendix 1.
- Amount of contributions (if any) received from local, state, or federal program(s) to reduce outstanding water debt from residential customers during the period of performance.

## Program Requirements

Water systems that participate in the program must sign an agreement with the State of Maryland that requires the following:

1. Allocate payments as bill credits to customer accounts and within a specific number of days of receiving payment. The method of applying payments and the number of days will be determined by the State of Maryland.
2. Waive the entirety of customer late fees and interest for any arrearages accrued.
3. Notify customers of the amount credited and offer to enroll customers with remaining debt into an interest-free payment plan.
4. Document and report on expenditures and customer credits to the State of Maryland in a form and manner to be determined by the State of Maryland.

The State of Maryland reserves that right to add, remove, or modify requirements as a condition of participating in the Program.

## Funding Mechanism

In the event that water systems have sold their accounts receivable or arrears, program funds may be applied as:

- Direct payment to 3rd-party entities to eliminate/reduce customer debt.
- Refund credited amount to customer.
- Create a positive balance for customers to apply toward future bills.

## How to Apply

Water systems must fill out and submit an application, which will be launched shortly.

### ***Application Requirements***

The following information may be collected as a part of the application process. Please have all information readily available upon application submission.

1. Organization Name
2. Organization Address
3. Point of Contact Name (First and Last)
4. Point of Contact Title
5. Point of Contact Email Address
6. Point of Contact Phone Number
7. What types of services do you offer?
  - a. Please select all that apply: Residential - Water, Residential - Wastewater, Residential - Stormwater, Residential - Other.
  - b. If you selected "Residential - Other", please specify:
8. Approximately how many residential customers do you provide water services to?
9. Do you have outstanding water debt from residential customers accrued between January 27, 2020 and September 30, 2022?

- a. If yes, please indicate how much by providing the following:
  - i. A list of account receivables for the period of performance. At the minimum, please include address served and account ID.
- 10. Do you provide water service to residential customers that reside within a Qualified Census Tract?
  - a. If yes, applicants may submit a list of zip codes for review by the State to determine whether they service impacted customers that reside in a QCT.
- 11. During the period of performance, have you received financial assistance to alleviate outstanding water debt for residential customers? (Yes/no)
  - a. If yes, please complete the following:
    - i. Name of program
    - ii. Unit of government providing program (e.g., municipality, county, state, federal) and name of government or administering agency
    - iii. Associated period of performance
    - iv. Funding amount received
    - v. Contact information for the local unit of government
- 12. Signed certification form attesting to the validity of the information provided. The State of Maryland will make available the certification form when the application is launched and applicants will be able to submit this form as part of their application.

## Appendix I

**Qualified Census Tract (QCT):** According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Qualified Census Tracts are those in which 50% or more of the households are income eligible and the population of all census tracts that satisfy this criterion does not exceed 20% of the total population of the respective area.