

Unemployed Residents Eligible For Water Bill Assistance— Effective May 8, 2020

Baltimore, MD—Water billing in Baltimore City has been delayed since March due to the coronavirus pandemic. Today, Department of Public Works Acting Director Matthew Garbark announced that billing will resume Friday, May 8.

“In order to protect our staff from COVID-19 we created a process to generate bills, provide customer service remotely and allow our employees to telework,” Garbark says. “This process took a few weeks to put in place, which delayed billing cycles for March and April—time well spent, given that the new process provides the flexibility to meet the changing needs of our communities.”

Due to the billing delay, customers will receive larger than normal water bills that include part of March and all of April. But because of the pandemic, late fees have not and will not be assessed for overdue water bill payment, and water has not and will not be shut off for lack of payment. And DPW will continue to offer payment plans for those struggling to pay their bills.

In light of the economic disruptions caused by the coronavirus pandemic, Mayor Bernard C. “Jack” Young directed municipal agencies to consider offering assistance programs. Following that directive, Garbark announced an Emergency COVID-19 Discount for any Baltimore City water account holder who shows proof of unemployment eligibility. The discount will provide the same assistance that eligible BH₂O Assists and BH₂O Plus participants currently receive:

- A 43% discount on charges for water and sewer usage
- A waiver of Bay Restoration and Storm Water Remediation fees

Eligibility for the Emergency COVID-19 Discount is effective May 8 and will remain in place until 90 days after the end of the current state of emergency or December 31, 2020, whichever comes first. The discount is good for one year.

Since implementation of the BH₂O program in 2019, thousands of city residents have received needed water assistance. To ease the burden on those currently enrolled in BH₂O, DPW will bypass the annual verification process, allowing them to automatically remain in the program for the coming year.

“Water affordability has been one of my priorities for years, so when I asked agencies to consider opportunities to assist Baltimore families who are struggling during this pandemic, BH2O was an obvious choice,” said Mayor Young.

“Mayor Young challenged us to find new and innovative ways to assist Baltimore residents during this crisis,” Garbark added. “This decision today is an important way to help our customers during this unprecedented time of need.”

To make it easier to apply for the Emergency COVID-19 Discount and the BH2O programs, the city will launch a new online application on May 8. The application will be available at: <https://cityservices.baltimorecity.gov/BH2O> and bmorechildren.com/bh2o. Applications by mail will also continue to be accepted.

DPW encourages customers to continue to make payments online at <https://cityservices.baltimorecity.gov/water/> or by mailing their payment to the Director of Finance, 200 Holliday St., Baltimore, MD 21202.

DPW’s Customer Support and Services Division is available to assist residents while its Customer Support and Services Division Walk-in Center at 200 Holliday St. remains closed to the public at this time. Email DPW.Billing@BaltimoreCity.gov or call 410-396-5398.

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