

Draft Residential Utility Billing Assistance Pilot Program

Effective Upon Adoption Through December 31, 2026

Purpose: The City recognizes that temporary financial issues may occasionally affect a resident's ability to timely pay utility bills. The purpose of this pilot program is to provide City Staff with reasonable flexibility to extend payment options to residential utility customers which will continue to maintain the financial integrity of the City's utility operations while also allowing the City to gain valuable experience over the duration of the pilot program, which is for a limited duration.

This pilot program expires on December 31, 2026, unless extended, modified, or adopted as a permanent program by the City Council.

Part I – One-Time Late Fee Waiver

Eligibility: Any residential utility account holder in good standing may request a one-time waiver of a utility late fee during the term of this pilot program. This waiver request can be made before the utility bill due date.

Conditions:

1. The waiver shall apply only to late the fee and it will not reduce, waive, or otherwise affect the underlying utility charges.
2. Each residential utility account shall be eligible for only one (1) late fee waiver during the pilot program period. If a residential utility customer has already used a waiver through previous programs, no additional late fee waiver is available.
3. The customer must verbally request the waiver, with a written request preferred

Approval Authority:

A one-time late fee waiver may be approved by any of the following:

- Utility Billing Supervisor, Finance Director, Assistant City Administrator or City Administrator

Documentation:

The Finance Department staff shall maintain a record of all approved and denied waiver requests for review at the conclusion of the pilot program.

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Part II – Residential Utility Payment Plans

Purpose: Residential utility account holders experiencing temporary financial issues may request a payment plan after a utility bill due date has passed.

Eligibility:

1. The requester must be the account holder of a residential utility account.
2. The payment plan request must be made after the bill's initial due date.
3. The customer must remain current on all future utility billings while participating in the payment plan.
4. The customer must agree in writing to the terms established by the City.

General Requirements:

1. Payment plans shall be for a term of less than twelve (12) months.
2. City Staff will seek to establish payment plans of the shortest duration that are reasonably practical based upon the account holder's circumstances and repayment ability.
3. The City may require automatic payments or other payment assurances when deemed appropriate.
4. Failure to comply with the payment plan terms may result in termination of the agreement and reinstatement of normal collection procedures, including but not limited to being shut off.
5. Approval of a payment plan is discretionary and shall be based upon the customer's circumstances and ability to repay the outstanding balance.

Approval Authority:

The following officials are authorized to approve payment plans based upon the total outstanding balance to be repaid:

Outstanding Balance	Approval Authority:
\$100 - \$1,000	Utility Billing Supervisor
\$1,001 - \$2,500	Finance Director
\$2,501 - \$5,000	Assistant City Administrator or City Administrator

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Greater than \$5,000	City Council
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Payment Plan Terms

1. Payment plans shall include a written agreement specifying at least the following:
 - Outstanding balance; payment amount; payment schedule; final payoff date; and consequences of default.
 2. The approving official may require:
 - An initial down payment; more frequent payments; and/or additional conditions deemed necessary to protect the City's interests.
 3. Unless authorized by the City Council, no payment plan approved under this policy may extend beyond twelve (12) months.
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Reporting

At the conclusion of the pilot program, staff shall prepare a report to the City Council summarizing:

- Number of late fee waiver requests;
 - Number of late fee waivers approved;
 - Number of payment plans approved;
 - Dollar amounts included in payment plans;
 - Default rates; and
 - Recommendations regarding continuation, modification, etc.
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Sunset Provision: This Residential Water Billing Assistance Pilot Program shall automatically expire on December 31, 2026, unless further action is taken by the City Council to extend or modify the pilot program.