

ORDAINING new Section 401-84, “Affordability Customer Assistance Program” of Chapter 401, “Water Works” of Division H, “Water Rates” of Title IV, “Public Utilities,” of the Cincinnati Municipal Code for the purpose of implementing a modified water rate structure for qualifying low-income senior citizens and disabled veteran customers reflecting a 25 percent reduction from the generally applicable water rates.

WHEREAS, approximately 7.5 percent of Greater Cincinnati Water Works’ (“GCWW”) customers who are low-income, senior citizen, and disabled veteran homeowners are currently past due on their combined water and sewer bill and may be at risk for disconnection of water service; and

WHEREAS, because many senior citizens and disabled veterans are on a fixed income, some have more difficulty paying their combined utility bill, which may include Metropolitan Sewer District (“MSD”) sanitary sewer charges in addition to GCWW water charges; and

WHEREAS, to increase the affordability of the combined utility bill to avoid delinquency related disconnections for this vulnerable population, the Administration desires to implement a customer assistance program (“CAP”) that offers a 25 percent discount of GCWW water charges to low-income homeowners who live in the property and are either disabled veterans or aged 65 years or older; and

WHEREAS, the proposed GCWW CAP along with MSD’s similar customer assistance program will help qualifying customers by reducing the financial burden of their utility bill and avoiding delinquent disconnections, thereby improving access to clean and safe drinking water that is essential to public health; and

WHEREAS, approximately 30,000 GCWW customers will benefit from this affordability rate; and now therefore,

BE IT ORDAINED by the Council of the City of Cincinnati, State of Ohio:

Section 1. That Section 401-84 of the Cincinnati Municipal Code is hereby ordained as follows:

Sec. 401-84. Customer Assistance Program

- (a) A property owner who meets all of the following qualifications may apply for the Customer Assistance Program which provides a discount described in 401-84(b) for their primary residence only:
 - 1. Aged 65 years and older or disabled veteran receiving compensation for service-connected injuries;

2. Own and occupy the residence for which they are applying for the discounted rate. Property owned by a corporation, limited liability company, partnership or other legal entity does not qualify; and
 3. Has a total income, including the income of their spouse, not exceeding the threshold for the Ohio Homestead Exemption set in R.C. 353.152A)(1)(b)(iii) as annually adjusted by the Ohio tax commissioner.
- (b) The Customer Assistance Program discount shall be 25 percent off the qualified owner's service and commodity charges as set forth in Sections 401-76 and 401-77 of this chapter.
 - (c) The Director shall promulgate rules and processes for application and documentation required for the Customer Assistance Program.
 - (d) A denial of an application for the Customer Assistance Program is subject to appeal to the city's office of administrative hearings by filing a written notice of appeal within thirty days of the date of the notice of the denial.

Section 2. That the proper City officials are authorized to do all things necessary and proper to comply with the provisions of Section 1 including the promulgation and adoption of rules and regulations to implement the Customer Assistance Program.

Section 3. That this ordinance shall take effect and be in force from and after the earliest period allowed by law.

Passed: _____, 2025

Aftab Pureval, Mayor

Attest: _____
Clerk