

***Policy for Temporary Waiver of Water and Wastewater Fixed Meter Charge
for Low-Income and Senior, and Non-Profit Affordable and Senior Housing Customers***

1. **Introduction & Authority:** Burlington City Ordinances (BCO) permit a fixed meter charge to be temporarily waived in accordance with policies prescribed by the Water Resources Division (WRD) of the Department of Public Works and as approved by City Council as part of the Water Resources Assistance Program. This policy, as enabled by BCO §§ 26-53 (a)(1a) and 31-61 (a)(1a), and as approved by City Council on July 12, 2021, sets forth the rationale, parameters, eligibility, and other details of an assistance program to temporarily waive water and wastewater fixed meter charges for low-income and senior customers.
2. **Definitions:**
 - a. **Account Holder:** An “Account Holder” is defined as either 1) a name listed on the City of Burlington’s property database as the owner of record of the property to which the water/wastewater services or provided, or 2) a name that has been approved for addition to the water account as an authorized tenant or property manager per [Burlington Code of Ordinance § 31-19](#).
 - b. **Eligible Customer:** An “Eligible Customer” is and individual or entity that meets the requirements as set forth in §4 (Eligibility).
 - c. **Fixed Meter Charge(s):** A “Fixed Meter Charge” is defined as the water fixed charges and/or wastewater fixed charges, described in BCO §§ 26-53(a)(1) and 31-61(a)(1), based on the size of the meter or meters and listed in the “Water and Wastewater Fixed Charge by Meter Size Schedule,” as periodically updated and approved by City Council in the annual budget or otherwise.
 - d. **Low-Income Customer:** A “Low-Income Customer” is defined as an account holder already enrolled in an assistance program(s) that defines eligibility by a total gross monthly household income (adjusted for family size) to be at or below 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines as published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, or 50% of the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development Area Median Income.
 - e. **Non-Profit Housing Organization:** A “Non-Profit Housing Organization” is defined as an Account Holder whose meter(s) provides service to affordable or senior housing living units and can verify their domestic non-profit corporation status.
 - f. **Senior Customer:** A “Senior Customer” is defined as an account holder is 65 years or older.
3. **Description of Fixed Meter Charge Waiver:**
 - a. **Applicability:** A customer eligible to receive a waiver under §4 (Eligibility) of this policy may have their monthly water and/or wastewater Fixed Meter Charge waived and not applied to their monthly bill.
 - b. **Temporary nature of fixed meter charge waiver:** Enrollment in this program is temporary and customers having their Fixed Meter Charge waived under this policy for the durations described in §6 (Temporary Nature of Waiver and Reapplication) and can be removed as described in §7 (Termination).
4. **Eligibility:** To be eligible for water and/or wastewater Fixed Meter Charge(s) waiver an individual or entity must meet the following requirements:
 - a. Be the Account Holder;
 - b. Have a water or wastewater meter that provides service to one residential unit (e.g. single family property, condo, or duplex unit with its own meter), and one of the following:
 - i. A Low-Income Customer, as defined in §2 (Definitions);
 - ii. A Senior Customer, as defined in §2 (Definitions), who attests that having to pay the Fixed Meter Charge(s) would create an economic hardship, meaning they would be unable to pay their water resources bill; or
 - iii. A Non-Profit Housing Organization, as defined in §2 (Definitions).
 - c. Be able to demonstrate that they are a Low-Income Customer, a Senior Customer, or a Non-Profit Housing Organization.

5. Application & Approval:

- a. For Eligible Customers to have their water and/or wastewater Fixed Meter Charge(s) waived they must first complete and submit an application to WRD. The application must include any documents to demonstrate that they are an eligible Low-Income Customer, a Senior Customer, or a Non-Profit Housing Organization.
 - i. WRD shall develop an application reflecting the requirements and elements of this policy and shall post this on their website.
- b. WRD shall either approve or deny each application received based on completion of information contained in the application and provision of all required supporting documents.
 - i. Incomplete applications and applications not including the requisite documentation will be denied.
- c. Applicants will be notified by email or regular mail if their application was approved or denied and on what grounds within sixty (60) days of WRD receiving the application.
- d. Accounts approved for the program will begin having their water and/or sewer Fixed Meter Charge(s) waived on the following billing cycle after the application is approved. A notice of approved application will include the date of when the waiver will be applied to a customer's bill.
- e. Applications shall include a statement indicating that participant information will only be released to any third party only with a customer's written consent or as may be required by law (including the Vermont Public Records Act).

6. Temporary Nature of Waiver and Reapplication:

- a. Low-Income Customers and Senior Customers may have their water and/or wastewater Fixed Meter Charge(s) waived for a period of time beginning the following billing cycle after the application is approved and ending on June 30th. A customer must submit another application to WRD in accordance with the process described in §5 (Application & Approval) to be granted a Fixed Meter Charge(s) waiver for any time past June 30th.
 - i. No reapplication will be required for Low-Income Customers and Senior Customers in the first year of having the waiver applied to their account if they are approved between January 1st and June 30th of that calendar year.
- b. Non-Profit Housing Organizations may have their water and/or wastewater Fixed Meter Charge(s) waived for a period of time up to three (3) years, beginning the following billing cycle after the application is approved and ending on June 30th of the third calendar year in which their application was approved.

7. Termination: WRD reserves the right to immediately terminate account holder participation in this program for the following reasons:

- a. Removal of the approved account holder's name (e.g., property sale, tenant changeover);
- b. Death of the approved account holder;
- c. Failure to submit another application by June 30th of each year;
- d. No longer qualifying for the waiver;
 - i. A customer whose water and/or wastewater Fixed Meter Charge(s) is being waived must report to WRD within thirty (30) day all changes in factors that make would make them ineligible under §4 (Eligibility), even if the changes occur before the required recertification date.
- e. Fraudulent applications or unauthorized use of service (providing water for use at a location other than my primary residence) will result in removal from the program and additional consequences (which shall include back billing).

8. Attachments:

- a. Findings in support of the WRD's Policy for Temporary Waiver of Water and Wastewater Fixed Meter Charge for Low-Income and Senior, and Non Profit Affordable and Senior Housing Customers.