

Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE July 29, 2022

TO Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

SUBJECT **Update to Dallas Water Utilities Campaign to Establish Payment Plans**

The purpose of this memorandum is to share information on the Dallas Water Utilities (DWU) marketing campaign encouraging customers with outstanding balances of more than 60 days to establish payment plans. DWU, like most water utilities across the country, suspended water disconnections and late fee charges in March of 2020 at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Currently, fifteen percent of DWU customers have past due balances of more than 60 days with a median balance of \$174.22. Customers who have failed to establish payment arrangements will be subjected to disconnects for non-payment on residential accounts starting on Tuesday, September 6, 2022.

DWU created a public outreach campaign to connect with customers who had past due balances and assist them in establishing payment plans to meet their individual needs. All residential customers received an insert in their August and September 2021 utility bills encouraging them to contact customer service and establish a payment plan if their account is past due. In April and July 2022, postcards were mailed to residential customers with past due amounts, encouraging them to contact DWU to establish a payment plan. An additional postcard will be mailed in August of 2022 prior to resuming disconnects and to market funding available for those customers that qualify for utility assistance.

DWU understands that customers with past due balances are facing financial hardships and will continue to assist customers by developing a payment plan that fits their budget. Currently, DWU has established 6,007 payment plans for customers who need additional time to pay their utility bill. DWU is also partnering with Dallas County and the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs – Health and Human Services to assist in streamlining funding distribution for the Low-Income Housing Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) and to assist DWU customers in applying for the Texas Utility Help Program. Customers can apply for these programs at texasutilityhelp.com or by calling 855-566-2057 or Dallas County at 214-819-1848. Customers are still being encouraged to contact DWU to set up their initial payment plan and avoid late fees and water disconnection by calling 214-651-1441, Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Our goal is to assist every customer and help in any way possible during this period of hot temperatures and low precipitation.

Staff is working with the Communications, Outreach and Marketing Department to finalize customer-friendly graphics to effectively communicate through the city's social media channels the utility assistance information. We will provide the graphics to the City Council via email within the next week.

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Should you require additional information at this time or if you have questions, please contact Terry Lowery, Director of Dallas Water Utilities, at terry.lowery@dallas.gov.



Kimberly Bizer Tolbert
Deputy City Manager

c: T.C. Broadnax, City Manager
Chris Caso, City Attorney
Mark Swann, City Auditor
Billieae Johnson, City Secretary
Preston Robinson, Administrative Judge
Jon Fortune, Deputy City Manager

Majed A. Al-Ghafry, Assistant City Manager
M. Elizabeth (Liz) Cedillo-Pereira, Assistant City Manager
Robert Perez, Assistant City Manager
Carl Simpson, Assistant City Manager
Jack Ireland, Chief Financial Officer
Genesis D. Gavino, Chief of Staff to the City Manager
Directors and Assistant Directors