LAKEWOOD WATER DISTRICT
COVID-19 CUSTOMER BILL ASSISTANCE PLAN
RESOLUTION NO. B-1463

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF LAKEWOOD WATER DISTRICT, PIERCE COUNTY, WASHINGTON, ADOPTING A COVID-19 CUSTOMER BILL ASSISTANCE PLAN.

WHEREAS, in light of a recent outbreak of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), the Governor of the State of Washington proclaimed a State of Emergency in Washington on February 29, 2020. On March 13, 2020, the President of the United States declared the ongoing Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic of sufficient severity and magnitude to warrant an emergency declaration for all states, tribes, territories, and the District of Columbia pursuant to section 501 (b) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. 5121-5207 (the "Stafford Act"); and

WHEREAS, on March 19, 2020, the Governor of the State of Washington called on public utilities in Washington state to ensure the health and safety of their employees and the public by suspending disconnection tariffs for nonpayment during the COVID-19 pandemic; waiving late fees for customers who are out of work or offering customer payment plans; and expanding bill assistance programs for customers who are economically impacted by this emergency; and

WHEREAS, the citizens of Lakewood Water District are experiencing this disaster, which creates a threat to life and property; and,

WHEREAS, the District’s Board of Commissioners declared the existence of a public health disaster on March 19, 2020 by Resolution No. B-1460.

THEREFORE, it is declared by order of the Board of Commissioners that:

Lakewood Water District and its Board is implementing this COVID-19 Customer Assistance Program (CCAP) that includes two avenues of help: (1) a Deferred Payment Arrangement and (2) a Financial Support Program as outlined in Exhibit A. Any changes to this program, up to and including the discontinuation of this program will be made by the Board of Commissioners via motion before implementation of said changes or discontinuation. The General Manager will provide the Board with monthly reports on the implementation and progress of this program.

Effective this 10th day of April 2020.

LAKEWOOD WATER DISTRICT

[Signatures]

President

Commissioner

Commissioner

Attest:

[Signature]
BACKGROUND

On March 19, 2020, Governor Inslee called on public utilities in Washington state to ensure the health and safety of their employees and the public by suspending disconnection tariffs for nonpayment during the COVID-19 pandemic; waiving late fees for customers who are out of work or offering customer payment plans; and expanding bill assistance programs for customers who are economically impacted by this emergency. As such, Lakewood Water District and its Board is implementing this COVID-19 Customer Assistance Program (CCAP) that includes two avenues of help: (1) a Deferred Payment Arrangement and (2) a Financial Support Program.

OVERVIEW

The CCAP is a two-phase assistance program the District will offer to its customers. First, customers will be applying for the Deferred Payment Arrangement and, with the application form they would need to complete, can opt into evaluation for the Financial Support Program.

DEFERRED PAYMENT ARRANGEMENT

A deferred payment arrangement will be extended to customers for the payment of delinquent accounts where the customer attests to the temporary inability to make full payment.

This Deferred Payment Arrangement grants customers four months of payment deferral (two billing cycles) without any late or dispatch fees imposed on outstanding balances as well as suspending disconnection of utilities. After which, customers would then be allowed to request an 8-month pay arrangement to spread the costs of outstanding bills and/or apply to the Financial Support Program (see below).

Customers will be required to complete the Deferred Payment Arrangement Request Application (Appendix A) attached to this policy. Customers need to attest that, due to COVID-19-related issues, the customer is unable to timely pay his/her/their utility bill.
Additionally, customers have the ability to opt into the Financial Support Program (FSP) where they will be evaluated for qualification (see below) and would be required to submit additional documents.

On a case-by-case basis and on the request by a customer, after reviewing the documented circumstances, deferred payment arrangements may be extended in conjunction with a good history of making payments with approval by the General Manager.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT PROGRAM

The Financial Support Program (FSP) will be extended to customers who struggle to follow through on the Deferred Payment Arrangement or for customers who have requested to opt into this program offered under this COVID-19 Customer Assistance Program (CCAP). This program will **grant a one-time 50 percent forgiveness on the outstanding balances** owed to the District upon approval first by the General Manager and then the Board of Commissioners at its next regularly scheduled meeting.

On a case-by-case review and on the recommendation of the Office Supervisor for a customer’s circumstances that are documented, further forgiveness of payment may be allowed by the General Manager.

Customers will be required to complete the **Financial Support Program Request Application** (Appendix B) attached to this policy. In addition to the application, customers will be required to provide additional documents to verify hardships resulting from COVID-19. These documents may include letters from employers or the State Employment Security Department or other evidence of hardship. Customers also need to have been in the Deferred Payment Arrangement phase of this program prior to converting over to the Financial Support Program.

AUTHORIZATION

This Program as approved by the General Manager and the Board of Commissioners is effective this 10th day of April 2020. The discontinuation of this Program will be based on the Board of Commissioners’ direction/approval.
DEFERRED PAYMENT ARRANGEMENT REQUEST APPLICATION  
(Appendix A)

POLICY:

This Deferred Payment Arrangement grants customers **four months of payment deferral** (two billing cycles) without any late or dispatch fees imposed on outstanding balances as well as suspending disconnection of utilities. After which, customers would then be allowed to request 8-month pay arrangement to spread the costs of outstanding bills and/or apply to the Financial Support Program.

To be approved for this Deferred Payment Arrangement, the Customer needs to attest that, due to COVID-19 related issues, the customer is unable to timely pay his/her/their utility bills.

INFORMATION:

FIRST AND LAST NAME OF ACCOUNT HOLDER
____________________________________

SERVICE ADDRESS
______________________________________________________

DEFERRAL REQUEST DATE
_______________________________________________________

COVID-19 FINANCIAL SUPPORT PROGRAM (FSP):

☐ Yes, I would like to be considered for the COVID-19 Financial Support Program (FSP). I am aware that this will require me to provide financial information to see if I qualify for this program. I am also aware that Lakewood Water District will contact me at the phone number and/or email address on file to obtain this information

☐ No, I would not want to be considered for the COVID-19 Financial Support Program (FSP). I am aware that I can apply for the Financial Support Program (FSP) later if I need to.
ATTESTATION OF APPLICANT:

Under penalties of perjury, We/I declare that we/I have/has examined this application and policy, and to the best of our/my knowledge and belief, it is true and correct and accurate.

_________________________________  ________________________
APPLICANT SIGNATURE     DATE

_________________________________  ________________________
APPLICANT SIGNATURE     DATE
POLICY:

This program will **grant 50 percent forgiveness on the outstanding balances** owed to the District upon approval by the Board of Commissioners.

To be approved for the Financial Support Program, the Customer needs to attest that due to COVID-19 related issues, the customer is experiencing financial hardships. Customers also need to have been in the Deferred Payment Arrangement phase of the program prior to converting over to the Financial Support Program.

Additionally, the Customer needs to provide documents verifying the hardships the customer is experiencing due to the COVID-19 pandemic. These documents may include letters from employers, the State Employment Security Department (ESD), etc.

INFORMATION:

FIRST AND LAST NAME OF ACCOUNT HOLDER

________________________________________

SERVICE ADDRESS

_____________________________________________________________________

DEFERRAL REQUEST DATE

_____________________________________________________________________

TOTAL AMOUNT ___________________________________________
ATTESTATION OF APPLICANT:

Under penalties of perjury, We/I declare that we have examined this application and policy and the best of our/my knowledge and belief, it is true and correct and accurate.

_________________________________  ________________________
APPLICANT SIGNATURE      DATE

_________________________________  ________________________
APPLICANT SIGNATURE      DATE