



# ARREARAGE RELIEF TO WATER SYSTEMS FOR CUSTOMER WATER BILL DEBT

The COVID-19 pandemic has made it difficult for many Californians to pay their bills due to job loss and other hardships. The State Water Board is administering the **California Water and Wastewater Arrearage Payment Program** to provide community water systems with financial relief for unpaid water bill debt from their residential and commercial customers.

## Who can apply:

- Community water systems may apply for funding to cover residential and commercial accounts that are 60 days or more behind on payments for debt accrued between March 4, 2020 and June 15, 2021.
- The program will fund debt related to drinking water first. Beginning in February 2022, the program will fund wastewater debt.
- This program is only for water systems; customers cannot apply. Participating water systems will credit customers' accounts and notify them that their water bill debt has been forgiven or reduced.
- The Department of Community Services & Development is creating a Low-Income Household Water System Program that will provide emergency assistance to income-eligible Californians who need additional relief for COVID-19 related water debt.

## What else you should know:

- The program will allocate \$985 million in federal funding authorized by Governor Newsom and the California State Legislature.
- Based on responses to the Drinking Water Arrearage Survey that the State Water Board has received, there are adequate funds available to meet 100% of reported drinking water arrearages and up to 3% (not to exceed \$1 million) in administrative costs for community water systems.
- Community water systems CANNOT disconnect customer service for nonpayment:
  - Prior to Dec. 31, 2021, to comply with the State Legislature's extension of the COVID-19 moratorium on water shutoffs (Senate Bill 155).

- Without offering customers a payment plan and allowing them 30 days to enroll, or before the date a customer is no longer current on an established payment plan, whichever is later.<sup>1</sup>
- The program will begin disbursing funds by Nov. 1, 2021, and it will end on Jan. 31, 2022. Timing of payments to small community water systems (i.e., those with fewer than 3,300) will be prioritized.

**How community water systems can apply:**

- Water systems that completed the survey can open and submit the application beginning Oct. 5, 2021. The application will remain open until Dec. 6, 2021. It can be completed at <https://ear.waterboards.ca.gov>.
  - To request information on the required forms and documentation for the Application, please send an email to [DFA-CommunityWaterSystemsCovidRelief@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:DFA-CommunityWaterSystemsCovidRelief@waterboards.ca.gov).
  - The State Water Board will provide instructions to participating systems on the documentation required to show proper use of the funds.

**Water systems that missed the survey deadline can still participate:**

- Water systems that missed the survey deadline or previously declined participation may still participate in the program.
  - The State Water Board will open an abbreviated survey on Oct 5, 2021 at <https://ear.waterboards.ca.gov>.
  - After water systems complete the abbreviated survey, the Water Board will review the information, and then open up the application to the water system.
  - The abbreviated survey and application must be submitted by Dec. 6, 2021.

For technical assistance with completing the survey and/or application, please submit a [Technical Assistance Form \[PDF\]](#) and email it to [DFA-TARrequest@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:DFA-TARrequest@waterboards.ca.gov).

**For more information:**

**Visit:** <https://bit.ly/CWWAPP>

**Email:** [communitywatersystemscovidrelief@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:communitywatersystemscovidrelief@waterboards.ca.gov)

**Call:** (916) 322-6227 (voicemail line)

**Sign up for email updates:** <https://bit.ly/CWWAPP> (Complete the short form at the bottom of the page.)

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<sup>1</sup> Health and Safety Code section 116773.4, subdivision (e)