



Date: May 5, 2021
To: Thomas B. Modica, City Manager
From: Christopher J. Garner, General Manager 
For: Mayor and Members of the City Council
Subject: Water Bill Assistance Program for Customers Impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic

Long Beach Community Action Partnership (LBCAP), partnering with the Long Beach Water Department, is providing direct financial assistance to help qualified families offset the cost of their water bills accumulated during the COVID-19 pandemic. Beginning May 5, 2021, LBCAP's Water Bill Assistance program will be accepting applications from low-income households who have been impacted by the pandemic, giving them the opportunity to apply for a credit to their water bill.

Financial assistance is offered to those households that meet low-income thresholds per the Federal Poverty Guidelines, similar to the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) also administered by LBCAP. If qualified, 500 households will have a flat benefit amount of \$200 applied against their current or past due water bill charges. The relief is provided on a first come, first serve basis and applications will be made available through LBCAP beginning on May 5, 2021. To learn more about the program visit lbwater.org/waterbillprogram/ or read LBCAP's May 5, 2021 Press Release.

The funding for this program is provided through LBCAP's Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) for Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. As per Proposition 218 California State law, no water rate payer dollars are contributing to this financial assistance program.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (562) 570-2318 or by email at Chris.Garner@lbwater.org.

Attachment

cc: Board of Water Commissioners
Charles Parkin, City Attorney
Douglas P. Haubert, City Prosecutor
Laura L. Doud, City Auditor
Linda F. Tatum, Assistant City Manager
Kevin Jackson, Deputy City Manager
Teresa Chandler, Deputy City Manager
Rebecca Garner, Administrative Deputy City Manager
Department Heads

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Long Beach Community Action Partnership (LBCAP) and the Long Beach Water Department launch Water Bill Program to reduce the burden of water debt for qualified residents.

Long Beach Community Action Partnership and Long Beach Water Department are partnering to provide direct relief on some residential water bills during the COVID-19 pandemic. Starting May 5, 2021, qualified customers who have been impacted by the pandemic can apply for a credit to their water bill.

Relief is offered to those households who qualify as low-income under the Federal Poverty Guidelines. The relief, funded by the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) CARES Act, is provided on a first come, first serve basis, and applications will be made available on May 5, 2021. If qualified, 500 households could receive a flat benefit amount of \$200 on their current or past due water bill charges. To learn more about the program visit lbwater.org/waterbillprogram.

The Long Beach Community Action Partnership launched their Community Economic Recovery and Reinvestment Alliance (CERRA) program in May 2020 in response to the ongoing COVID-19 public health crisis, allocating over \$1 Million through community partnerships and direct aid. As low-income households struggled to provide basic needs before the pandemic, economic fallout from COVID-19 affects those households even harder.

Marisa Semense, who just completed her first year as Executive Director at the Long Beach Community Action Partnership, stated *"We initially focused on food security, but as the health crisis raged on, we knew that utility debts would be of great concern when the moratorium lifts. We currently operate the LIHEAP program and felt water bill assistance is just as important and needed. We appreciate the Long Beach Water Department's immediate response and coordination to develop this program quickly."* With the panic that comes from loss of job hours or income altogether, LBCAP wanted to address urgent needs, but continue to support Long Beach residents in a manner that is sustainable.

While various moratoriums were created to prevent the displacement of thousands that were financially impacted by COVID-19, the Long Beach Water Department partnered with LBCAP, as they saw an increasing need for water customers to receive assistance during these difficult times. *"The Long Beach Water Department is looking forward to this collaborative partnership with the Long Beach Community Action Partnership (LBCAP) to serve our community by providing much needed relief to those customers hit hardest by the COVID-19 pandemic,"* said Frank Martinez, President of the Long Beach Board of Water Commissioners. *"It's our responsibility as the Water Department to do all that we can to maintain the health and quality of life of our customers and community, and we thank LBCAP for providing the funding and administration for this program."*

To learn more about what the Long Beach Community Action Partnership is doing to address the needs of the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond, go to their webpage www.lbcap.org and follow on social medias Facebook, Twitter and Instagram @LongBeachCAP.

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