

Water Leak Assistance and Support

WaterWorks -Community Action Partnership (CAP) referral

Customer qualifies under Community Action Partnership Income Guidelines and \$300 limit per year for help when there is a leak (Leak must be fixed and verified through meter readings before any help or arrangement is made)

Changes from existing program:

- Account does not need to be in threat of shut off. Customer can start process before termination notice is issued.
- Arrangement for charges due to a leak that exceed \$300 can be made over an extended period (late fee charges can be removed).

Hearing Officer/Board referral

All customers are afforded an opportunity to dispute/appeal charges, explain circumstances and ultimately be heard by the Board.

For Leak process:

- Leak must be fixed and verified through meter readings before any help or arrangement is made.
- Account does not need to be in threat of shut off. Customer can start process before termination notice is issued. Customer can go thru hearing process with the hearing officer to explain the extraordinary circumstances that lead to or caused the leak.
- If customer does not agree with recommendation from the hearing officer, the customer can appeal to the Board.

Sewer charges

Sewer may be a factor if the leak is during sewer setting time. Customer can appeal to their municipality to adjust sewer charges during the sewer setting time. The sewer base can also be reset for bills going forward once the leak has been fixed and lower usage verified if municipality agrees. No Council action needed for this in St Paul.

Additional items under review to assist customers

- Enable a rollup feature for customers to rollup their bill to nearest dollar to offer an additional opportunity to contribute to the WaterWorks program.
- Annual advertising for donations from customers on their bill for the WaterWorks program.
- New line item in 2020 budget of 5% of antenna revenue (estimated \$50,000) WaterWorks and leaks adjustments.
- Working with Office of Financial Empowerment – Kristen Burch
 - Cities of Service - Experience Matters
Cities of Service and its program partner AARP have launched Experience Matters to mobilize volunteers ages 50+ to tackle a driver of poverty related to financial security. Saint Paul VISTA members (2) will organize volunteers to help fellow residents with minor home and property repairs to address property code violations and increase water efficiency.
- Training staff on 75+ list process for contacting customers on possible leaks.
- Continue to add additional agencies that can offer funding support.