



District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority

Fiscal Year 2023 CRIAC Report

October 30, 2023

District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority

FY 2023 CRIAC Report

Requirement

This report is required by the District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority Omnibus Amendment Act of 2020. The Transparency Act requires DC Water to publish a report of the average Clean Rivers Impervious Area Charge (CRIAC) for residential customers in the District and the average residential charge in each Ward as well as efforts to publicize customer assistance programs.

The Clean Rivers Impervious Area Charge

The Clean Rivers Project is DC Water's ongoing program to reduce combined sewer overflows (CSO's) into the District's waterways - the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers and Rock Creek. The Project is a massive infrastructure and support program designed to capture and clean wastewater during rainfalls before it ever reaches our rivers. The \$2.99 billion project that will be completed in 2030 has been primarily funded from the Clean Rivers Impervious Area Charge (CRIAC).

The Clean Rivers Impervious Area Charge (CRIAC) is a fair way to distribute the cost of maintaining storm sewers and protecting area waterways because it is based on a property's contribution of rainwater to the District's sewer system. Because charges are based on the amount of impervious area on a property, owners of large office buildings, shopping centers and parking lots are charged more than owners of modest residential dwellings.

All residential, multi-family and non-residential customers are billed a CRIAC. The charge is based on an Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU). An ERU is a statistical median of the amount of impervious surface area in a single-family residential property, measured in square feet. The approved monthly ERU values for FY 2022 and FY 2023 were \$18.40 and \$18.14 respectively. The approved monthly ERU values for FY 2024 is \$21.86

Residential CRIAC Charges for Fiscal Year 2023

The average residential CRIAC charge in FY 2023 was \$19.48 per month or \$233.76 per year. The average charge per Ward is provided in the table below.

| WARD | Average ERUs | Average Monthly Charge | Average Annual Charge |
|---------------|--------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 | 0.95 | 17.18 | 206.16 |
| 2 | 1.05 | 19.10 | 229.20 |
| 3 | 1.61 | 29.17 | 350.04 |
| 4 | 1.16 | 21.12 | 253.44 |
| 5 | 0.98 | 17.80 | 213.60 |
| 6 | 0.90 | 16.32 | 195.84 |
| 7 | 0.92 | 16.68 | 200.16 |
| 8 | 0.87 | 15.84 | 190.08 |
| District-Wide | 1.07 | 19.48 | 233.76 |

Customer Discounts

DC Water has a tradition of lending a helping hand to customers in financial need who struggle to pay their water bills. In FY 2023, we continued to offer a full suite of assistance programs under the DC Water Cares umbrella, including monthly discounts and emergency relief to help customers pay off past due balances. In addition, we built our own system to offer emergency assistance to people who rent in multi-family buildings—a unique program in the region.

DC Water offers the following assistance programs. For more information, please see <https://www.dewater.com/customer-assistance>.

- **Customer Assistance Program (CAP)** provides a discount on the first 400 cubic feet (3,000 gallons) of water and sewer services used each month. Eligible households will receive a 75 percent reduction in the monthly CRIAC fee and a Water Service Replacement Fee waiver. The monthly discount is approximately \$85 a month.
- **Customer Assistance Program II (CAP2)** provides a discount on the first 300 cubic feet (2,250 gallons) of water and sewer services used each month (with the exception of PILOT and ROW fees) and a 50 percent reduction in the monthly CRIAC fee. The monthly discount is approximately \$56 a month.
- **Customer Assistance Program III (CAP3)** provides a discount of 75 percent off of the monthly CRIAC. The monthly discount is approximately \$14 a month.

- **Residential Assistance Program (Emergency Residential Relief)** - Up to \$2,000 to help income-eligible customers eliminate their past due balance.
- **Multifamily Assistance Program (for Renters and Multifamily Occupants)** - Up to \$2,000 for those whose water bill is paid through rent or to an HOA/condo association.
- **CRIAC Relief for Nonprofit Organizations** - Credits of up to 90% of the CRIAC portion of a nonprofit's water bill.
- **Extended Payment Plans** - Repay past due balances over time. More flexible options now available. No late fees accrue while meeting payment plan obligations.
- **SPLASH (One-time Emergency Assistance)** - DC Water employees, customers and others donate to this one-time assistance fund for those facing disconnection.

Publication of Assistance Programs

DC Water utilizes a number of different communications channels to ensure customers are aware financial assistance is available to help them pay their bills. Information is shared directly with customers, and also through the Executive Office of the Mayor, DOEE and other partner agencies and organizations.

Specifically:

- In FY 2023, DC Water hosted and/or attended more than 60 outreach events where information about the assistance programs was provided.
- We continued our partnership with local food banks to insert DC Water Cares fliers into food bags and boxes for clients. Each week of insertions total 8,000 to 10,000 fliers to an extremely targeted audience.
- Continued partnerships with District utilities, the Public Service Commission (PSC) and the Office of People's Counsel (OPC), sharing calendars of virtual and in-person events.
- This same group developed three face-to-face events (one in FY 2022 and two in FY 2023) that brought together utilities, the PSC and OPC to help customers understand and manage their utility bills. The group widely publicized these events.
- Participated in one of OPC's virtual panel discussions, more commonly referred to as their Quarterly Utility Social Services Discussions. There, we talked about our Customer Assistance programs.

- Partnered with the Department of Aging and Community Living (DACL) at their ‘Something in the Water’ event at the Congress Heights Senior Wellness Center, where we highlighted our CAP programs.
- Worked with MOCRS and Council staff to provide information about available resources for constituents struggling to pay their bills.
- Included information about DC Water Cares in all customer newsletters, bill inserts and bill messages.
- Updated our website with information and promoted DC Water Cares across our social media platforms.
- Employed a multi-pronged approach to publicize a special one-time “Catch Up” offer for customers with past-due balances. The campaign included individual letters sent to eligible customers inviting them to participate.