



Financial Services Audit Committee Communication

Date: February 9, 2024

To: Great Lakes Water Authority Audit Committee

From: Haran Stanley, Affordability & Assistance Management Professional

Re: Affordability & Assistance Update

Background: In 2021, an Affordability & Assistance Team was created within GLWA's Financial Services Area. The team serves as the internal and external resource for strategic policies and programs related to water affordability and assistance.

Analysis: This month, we present an update on the initiatives the Affordability & Assistance Team has been focused on, including WRAP outreach materials, Service Delivery Partner engagement, and efforts related to sustainable water assistance funding.

WRAP Outreach

The Affordability & Assistance team continues to work with our WRAP Service Delivery Partners to roll out the new BS&A WRAP tool. This new feature is designed for our Member Partners who utilize the BS&A billing systems. The tool automates the process of applying WRAP payments to the corresponding residential utility account. GLWA launched this project as part of our commitment to streamlining administrative processes to reduce the burden on Member Partners and increase Member Partner engagement. Service delivery partners have nearly completed converting all municipalities' monthly work papers to the new BS&A tool format. They also continue to review the program tool with the engaged communities to ensure successful implementation. We will continue to recommend those communities who use BS&A billing systems to utilize this tool for improved efficiency.

Water Affordability State Legislation

The Affordability & Assistance team continues to play a supportive resource role in the work surrounding statewide water affordability and shutoff protection bill package developed by Senator Chang. I have also joined a subgroup focusing on inquiries and concerns presented by members of the Michigan section of the American Water Works Association.

Other Updates:

GLWA has proven to be a leader in the efforts to make water more affordable for underserved populations in the region. We are continuing to explore ways to improve data collection. We are seeking to understand the impact of WRAP better, identify areas of

improvement, and assist with comprehensive change by telling the program's story. The Affordability and Assistance Team is working with our Service Delivery Partners, Plante Moran, and Public Sector Consultants to advance our collection of data and further develop our outreach efforts.

Proposed Action: Receive and file this report.