



## Financial Services Audit Committee Communication

**Date:** April 28, 2023

**To:** Great Lakes Water Authority Audit Committee

**From:** Madison Merzlyakov, Affordability & Assistance Manager

**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. In October 2022, the WRAP improvements approved by the GLWA Board of Directors in June 2022 took effect. These improvements included the following.

- Providing WRAP as a core service, thereby removing the need for communities to opt-in or out
- Determining bill credits that are based on household income and amount of the water and sewer bill, referred to as the WRAP Income Based Plan (IBP)
- Emphasizing case management and direct client assistance

**Analysis:** This month we present an update on the initiatives the Affordability & Assistance team have been focused on, including outreach on available assistance programs, a summary of the WRAP balance rollforward, and efforts related to sustainable water assistance funding.

### Outreach Initiatives

The Affordability & Assistance team continues to coordinate with GLWA's Public Affairs team to develop additional WRAP materials to expand outreach efforts such as a new [flyer](#) focusing on the minor plumbing repairs offered through WRAP that has been created.

GLWA encouraged Member Partner participation in the program via an email communication on Monday, April 17, 2023, following discussions regarding the Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) at the March 23, 2023, One Water Partnership meeting. LIHWAP is a temporary emergency program administered through the State of Michigan with services delivered by local community action agencies, such as Macomb Community Action, Wayne Metropolitan Community Action Agency, and Oakland Livingston Human Services Agency. GLWA will continue efforts to alert Member Partners of funding available to them through this program.

### WRAP Balance Rollforward

The Affordability & Assistance team has been working diligently to capture and summarize all WRAP allocations, board-approved reallocations, and funds used (spent) through June 30, 2022. The summary report following this update details the WRAP Balance Rollforward through FY 2022. Because carryforward balances as of June 30, 2022 are sufficient to support each area agency the Affordability and Assistance team will not be recommending a reallocation for FY 2022. In the coming months we will share an updated summary reflecting FY 2023 activity.

### Sustainable Water Assistance Funding

GLWA continues to engage with various stakeholders throughout the state to support efforts to secure sustainable funding for water assistance. GLWA is an active participant of multiple work groups as well as groups hosted by the Michigan Section of the American Water Works Association (MI-AWWA). The Affordability & Assistance team will update the Audit Committee as this important work progresses.

**Proposed Action:** Receive and file this report.