



Financial Services Audit Committee Communication

Date: February 24, 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.

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

Recap of Recent WRAP Improvements

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

WRAP Outreach

The Affordability & Assistance team continues to coordinate with GLWA's Public Affairs team to develop additional WRAP materials and content to expand outreach efforts. So far, a Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) document has been developed, as well as a tip card and WRAP IBP Infographic. The dedicated WRAP webpage (www.glwater.org/assistance), has also been refreshed.

A press conference is planned in March to formally share the launch of the WRAP Income Based Plan, as well as announce United Way for Southeastern Michigan as the Oakland County WRAP service delivery partner.

Member Partner Engagement

The Affordability & Assistance team, alongside WRAP Service Delivery Partners, continues to work with Member Partners to notify them of improvements, walk through the details of the program, and discuss ways to best engage their residents to expand outreach. Below is a snapshot of the most recent discussions with Member Partners regarding WRAP.

- Novi (1/19/23)
- Northville Township (1/25/23)
- Riverview (1/25/23)
- Rockwood (1/26/23)
- Belleville (2/3/23 & 2/6/23)

Later this month, United Way for Southeastern Michigan, the designated WRAP service delivery partner for Oakland County residents, will be hosting a virtual event for Oakland County member partner representatives. This event will provide a space for Oakland County member partners to learn more about the WRAP process as well as other services and programming that United Way offers.

Sustainable Water Assistance Funding

GLWA continues to engage with its legal partner, Dykema, and consulting expert, Public Sector Consultants, to facilitate and support efforts to secure sustainable funding for water assistance at the state and federal levels. GLWA has participated in various stakeholder meetings across the state. We are excited to learn more about the Governor's proposed budget and the funds set aside for water assistance. The Affordability & Assistance team will update the Audit Committee as this important work progresses.

Proposed Action: Receive and file this report.