



Legislation Details (With Text)

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Title: To amend Sections 1147.19 and 1105.21 of the Columbus City Codes to revise the Low Income Discount program related to master metered communities; and to repeal the existing sections being amended.

Sponsors: Rob Dorans

Indexes:

Code sections:

Attachments:

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
12/14/2022	1	CITY CLERK	Attest	
12/13/2022	1	MAYOR	Signed	
12/12/2022	1	COUNCIL PRESIDENT	Signed	
12/12/2022	1	Columbus City Council	Approved	Pass
12/5/2022	1	Columbus City Council	Read for the First Time	

This ordinance amends Sections 1147.19 and 1105.21 of the Columbus City Codes to revise the Low Income Discount program related to master metered communities. The City of Columbus, Department of Public Utilities has a Multi-Unit Master Metered Property Water/Sewer Low Income Discount Program. This program offers qualifying customers a 20% discount on the commodity portion of their water/sewer bill. The program includes eligibility criteria and eligibility must be established annually.

The eligibility requirements include: 1) the property receives subsidized housing benefits, or 2) 80% of units meet the income levels of 150% (or less) of the current Federal Poverty Level with their household income or are currently enrolled in a qualifying low income program. Examples of qualifying programs include food stamp benefits, Ohio Medicaid, Low Income Energy Assistance, Home Energy Assistance, Public Housing Benefits, or Ohio Works First. Documentation showing evidence of 80% of the units meet the criteria must be provided for each unit.

The application to the discount for Multi-Unit Master Metered Properties has been revised to open up the discount to property owners who do not bill their tenants for water. Currently the discount only applies to property owners that bill their tenants for water.

FISCAL IMPACT: Additional master metered properties may become eligible for the Low Income Discount Program due to increased participation since the discount is now opened up to property owners who do not bill their tenants for water.

To amend Sections 1147.19 and 1105.21 of the Columbus City Codes to revise the Low Income Discount program related to master metered communities; and to repeal the existing sections being amended.

WHEREAS, it is necessary to revise the Low Income Discount program related to master metered communities;

WHEREAS, this program offers qualifying customers a 20% discount on the commodity portion of their water/sewer bill;

WHEREAS, it is necessary to revise the program and expand the discount to multi-unit master metered properties that do not bill their tenants;

WHEREAS, documentation must be provided showing evidence that 80% of the units meet the criteria; **NOW, THEREFORE,**

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS:

SECTION 1. That effective January 31, 2023, Section 1147.19 is hereby amended to read as follows:

1147.19 - Low income discount for commodity charges.

(A) For purposes of this section, "low income residential customer" is defined as a direct residential customer of the city (whether inside the city or outside the city) having a total income of less than one hundred fifty (150) percent of the poverty level as published by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census or who is eligible for food stamp benefits, Ohio Medicaid, Low Income Home Energy Assistance (LIHEAP), Home Energy Assistance (HEAP), Ohio Works First, Social Security Disability, public housing benefits, or any other state or federal low income assistance program acceptable to the director.

(B) All low income residential customers may receive a twenty (20) percent discount on the commodity portion of their sewer bill. This discount will be available to the low residential customer upon application to and approval of the department of public utilities.

(C) The Director may adopt regulations necessary to administer and enforce the provisions of this section. Regulations promulgated, pursuant to this chapter by the Director shall be published in the City Bulletin, with copies of the regulations being available for public review at the Director's office and other locations which may be designated by the Director.

(D) Master metered properties are eligible to receive a twenty (20) percent discount on the commodity portion of their sewer bill if the property owner proves to the satisfaction of the Director that the property meets one or both of the following criteria:

- (1) eighty (80) percent or more of the rental units are occupied by participants in qualifying programs outlined in ~~1105.2~~1147.19(A); or
- (2) if the property receives subsidized housing benefits from any state or federal low income assistance program acceptable to the director.

If the ~~eighty (80) percent threshold is~~ criteria are met, the entire building or complex will be eligible to receive the twenty (20) percent commodity rate discount. The discount shall be applied to the master meter bill. Property owners must transmit the full benefit of the discount to residents ~~through the resident's utility billing from the property owner or agent.~~

(E) Political subdivisions receiving water service pursuant to a wholesale master meter contract with the city ~~Master metered suburban community customers~~ are eligible to receive the low income discount if the political subdivision ~~master metered suburban customer~~ adopts the low income discount program as described in Sections ~~1105 and~~ 1147.19 of the Columbus City Codes. Participating master metered suburban community customers must provide to the Department a detailed listing in an approved format of all qualifying customers and their commodity usage prior to application of the discount to the mastered metered account billing. The discount shall apply only to the measured commodity usage of qualifying customers within the master metered suburban community's customer accounts.

SECTION 2. That effective January 31, 2023, Section 1105.21 of the Columbus City Codes be and is hereby amended to read as follows:

1105.21 - Low income discount for commodity charges.

(A) For purposes of this section, "low income residential customer" is defined as a direct residential customer of the city (whether inside the city or outside the city) having a total income of less than one hundred fifty (150) percent of the poverty level as published by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census or who is eligible for food stamp benefits, Ohio Medicaid, Low Income Home Energy Assistance (LIHEAP), Home Energy Assistance (HEAP), Ohio Works First, Social Security Disability, public housing benefits, or any other state or federal low income assistance program acceptable to the director.

(B) All low income residential customers may receive a twenty (20) percent discount on the commodity portion of their sewer bill. This discount will be available to the low residential customer upon application to and approval of the department of public utilities.

(C) The Director may adopt regulations necessary to administer and enforce the provisions of this section. Regulations promulgated, pursuant to this chapter by the Director shall be published in the City Bulletin, with copies of the regulations being available for public review at the Director's office and other locations which may be designated by the Director.

(D) Master metered properties are eligible to receive a twenty (20) percent discount on the commodity portion of their sewer bill if the property owner proves to the satisfaction of the Director that the property meets one or both of the following criteria:

- (1) eighty (80) percent or more of the rental units are occupied by participants in qualifying programs outlined in ~~1105.21~~ 1147.19(A); or
- (2) if the property receives subsidized housing benefits from any state or federal low income assistance program acceptable to the director.

If the criteria are ~~eighty (80) percent threshold~~ is met, the entire building or complex will be eligible to receive the twenty (20) percent commodity rate discount. The discount shall be applied to the master meter bill. Property owners must transmit the full benefit of the discount to residents ~~through the resident's utility billing from the property owner or agent.~~

(E) Political subdivisions receiving water service pursuant to a wholesale master meter contract with the city ~~Master metered suburban community customers~~ are eligible to receive the low income discount if the political subdivision ~~master metered suburban customer~~ adopts the low income discount program as described in Sections ~~1105.21~~ and 1147.19 of the Columbus City Codes. Participating master metered suburban community customers must provide to the Department a detailed listing in an approved format of all qualifying customers and their commodity usage prior to application of the discount to the master metered account billing. The discount shall apply only to the measured commodity usage of qualifying customers within the master metered suburban community's customer accounts.

SECTION 3. That effective January 31, 2023, existing Sections 1147.19 and 1105.21 of the Columbus City Code are hereby repealed.

SECTION 4. That this ordinance shall take effect and be in force from and after the earliest period allowed by law.