



**FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE UTILITY  
RATE RELIEF PROGRAM  
POLICY**

**Policy Number: FN-0006**

**Adopted October 25, 2018**

This document supersedes any and all previous FAURRP policies.

## **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE UTILITY RATE RELIEF PROGRAM POLICY**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to allow eligible Oak Lodge Water Services' (OLWS) customers to obtain a discounted rate for the service charge portion of their bill.

### **Scope**

This policy applies to residential customers of OLWS seeking rate relief on the basis of low income resulting in economic hardship. Approved Financial Assistance Utility Rate Relief Program (FAURRP) applicants will receive a 50% reduction on the eligible portions of their bill. Eligible portions include water base rate, wastewater charge, and watershed protection fee. Water consumption charges are not eligible for discount.

### **Policy Statement**

This policy defines the process and procedures to be used in processing applications for the FAURRP, determining eligibility, and delineating rules governing administration of the program.

### **Procedure**

#### Financing the Program

Water, wastewater, and watershed protection service charges shall be established at a level sufficient to cover revenue losses resulting from OLWS customers qualifying for a reduced rate as authorized by OLWS Ordinance. OLWS shall budget resources sufficient to fund the revenue losses due to the program at a rate of 0.5 percent of budgeted OLWS rate revenue. This budgeted amount shall serve as a cap to the program's cost which will require Board of Director's approval to exceed.

#### Eligibility

To be eligible for the FAURRP, applicants must meet all of the following minimum qualifications:

- The applicant must be a residential customer of the OLWS; and
- The property served must be occupied and used by the applicant as their principal residence during the period for which rate relief is applied; and
- The applicant must be current on all accounts with OLWS; and
- The applicant's family, of which the applicant is a member shall not exceed the gross annual household income levels as defined by the United States Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Department as "very low income" for the Portland-Vancouver area, most recent version; and
- The applicant must make written application on a form provided by OLWS; and
- The applicant must provide proof of income status in a form determined by OLWS; and
- The applicant may not own property other than that associated with their principal residence

for which the application is submitted; and

- Family means one person, or two or more persons related by blood, marriage, legal adoption, or guardianship; or a group of not more than five persons, all or part of whom are not related by blood, marriage, legal adoption, or guardianship living together as a simple housekeeping and economic unit in the dwelling occupying the property for which the reduced rate is applied; and
- Rate reductions, if granted, are based on complete calendar months and commence on the first day of the month following the date the application is approved by the General Manager; and
- Billings will not be prorated for partial month eligibility; and
- Once approved the rate relief will last for 12 months. It is the applicant's duty to reapply for the program annually. If OLWS has not received the renewal application 30 days prior to the expiration of the 12-month period, the rate will revert to the standard service charge; and
- OLWS will not retroactively adjust charges.

### Contract

The application required under this policy shall be in a form provided by OLWS and shall contain a signed statement of agreement to abide by all terms of this policy and subsequent rules and regulations as may be adopted by the Board. Enrollment in the rate reduction program ends if the applicant can no longer meet one or more of the program requirements or is disqualified for a violation of the policy.

- Proof of Eligibility
  - Applicants must file with OLWS proof of eligibility in the form of a federal or state tax filing from the previous year, or other acceptable official document as OLWS may require.
- Termination of Rate Reduction
  - Reduced rates for customers shall be terminated in the event of the occurrence of any of the following circumstances;
    - Minimum income levels are exceeded.
    - Applicant defaults in the performance of the terms and provisions of his contract with OLWS (including delinquency on sewer or water assessments).
    - Applicant moves from the dwelling.
    - Applicant (if an owner) sells, trades, or otherwise relinquishes ownership of the dwelling.
    - Applicant fails to comply with any rule or regulation adopted; refuses to provide information to or hinders any investigation by OLWS into the continued eligibility of the applicant for reduced rates; willfully makes any false or misleading statement to obtain or retain a rate reduction; or receives benefits under this policy with knowledge that he or she does not qualify for such benefits.

### Confidentiality

To the maximum extent possible under the law, the applications, records, and other information relating to rate reduction requests shall be kept confidential by OLWS.

Violations, Penalties, and Enforcement

A violation of this policy shall be punishable by a penalty equal to twenty percent of the monies owed and shall disqualify the applicant from further participation in the program.

Each violation of a separate provision of this policy shall constitute a separate offence and each day that a violation of this Policy is committed or permitted to continue shall constitute a separate offence.

The disqualification of any person for violation of this policy shall not act to relieve such person from the requirement to pay the full regular water, wastewater, and watershed Protection rates for the entire period he or she was unqualified for reduced rates. The penalties imposed by this section are in addition to and not in lieu of any remedies available to OLWS.

The disqualification of any person for violation of this policy shall disqualify such person from eligibility for a period of not less than two years, nor more than three years.

Multiple disqualifications of any person for violation of this policy shall disqualify such person for eligibility in perpetuity.

**Review and Update**

The Billing Team shall review this policy annually to ensure accuracy of policy and practice.

Last Updated: August 2023