

40,000 additional NEORSD customers eligible for sewer bill savings

NEORSD enhances assistance eligibility requirements to include renters, increases income threshold

Cleveland - Beginning January 1, 2022, an additional 40,000 customers became eligible for the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District's [Affordability Program](#), which provides a 40% reduction on sewer bills. Previous eligibility requirements included only homeowners whose household income level was at or below 200 percent of poverty level. As part of the 2021 rate study, NEORSD made two significant changes:

- **Raised the eligible household income level to 250 percent of poverty level**, which, for example, increases the household income for a family of four from \$51,500 to \$64,375
- **Added qualifying renters who can show proof of their responsibility to pay the sewer bill**

"We have offered [cost saving programs](#) for several decades, including Homestead, and added a new program, the Crisis Voucher Program in 2012, so that those facing a hardship could get some relief. Additionally, we added stormwater credits in 2013, providing a reduction in stormwater fees," said Kyle Dreyfuss-Wells, Chief Executive Officer of NEORSD. "However, as a national leader on this important topic, we recognized that more needed to be done."

These improvements to the Affordability Program were adopted by the NEORSD Board of Trustees as part of the [annual 4.2 percent rate increase](#) passed last July for the 2022 to 2026 rate cycle. Monies from these rates fund essential operations necessary to maintain the region's clean water. These include NEORSD's three wastewater treatment plants, including increasing utility and chemical costs, as well as stormwater projects, like flood control, erosion control and other work necessary to protect public health and safety.

One of the largest costs are necessary and needed infrastructure investments, including construction related to [Project Clean Lake](#), NEORSD's \$3 billion, 25-year infrastructure program to address combined sewer overflows. Combined sewer overflows result in a mixture of sewage and stormwater discharging into the environment during heavy rain events.

"Like most other clean water utilities, our important sewer and stormwater work is fully funded by our customers. While federal water infrastructure funds were prevalent in the 1970s and 1980s, grants are virtually non-existent today, so expanding savings is critical," said Constance Haqq, Chief Administrative Officer of NEORSD. "In addition to enhancing eligibility for our Affordability Program, we continue to advocate for funding on behalf of our customers. Nationally, we are the US Water Alliance partner on the Water Equity Task Force, and we continue to participate in the affordability discussion locally through the Greater Cleveland Water Equity Partners, developing a roadmap to identify problems and develop solutions to ensure clean, fresh water for all, regardless of income."

The Affordability Program is administered by the CHN Housing Partners.

For additional information about NEORSD's Affordability Program or other bill assistance, customers can log onto www.neorsd.org or call NEORSD's Customer Service Department at 216-881-8247.

ABOUT NEORSD

The Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District provides regional management of sewage and stormwater services that protect the environment and serve our community. As the largest wastewater treatment provider in the State of Ohio, NEORSD spans 380 square miles, serves 62 communities and one million residents, treats 90 billion gallons of wastewater a year, and manages more than 400 miles of streams.

In addition to its award-winning treatment plant and laboratory performance, NEORSD's Project Clean Lake construction program will reduce annual Lake Erie pollution by 4 billion gallons by 2035, while its [Regional Stormwater Management Program](#) addresses widespread inter-community problems like flooding, pollution, and erosion.