

Item Title: Accept and Appropriate Funds for the Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program

Specific Action Requested:

That the Board of Commissioners accepts and appropriates an additional one-time allocation of \$379,482.65 of Federal Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) funds from the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NC DHHS) in revenues and expenditures into the Grants and Donations Fund to help eligible households pay their water bills.

Item Summary:

Purpose: In accordance with the North Carolina Local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act, the Board of Commissioners must approve all amendments that increase the budget for a fund.

Background: The Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) is a federally funded program that provides emergency assistance to low-income households to prevent disconnection or aid with reconnection of drinking and wastewater services. The temporary program started December 1, 2021, and the application period ended May 31, 2023. The State has reallocated all remaining funds across NC to issue one-time supplemental payments to counties for all residents who have received assistance under LIHWAP.

NC DHHS allocated \$2.7 million to Wake County through four prior distributions since January 2022 - October 2022 for water assistance services. This is the fifth allocation, and the funding will be used to make one-time payments to prior recipients.

Board Goal: This action supports the Community Health and Vitality Board Goal CHV 3: Support a higher quality of life for vulnerable residents and communities. This action also supports Growth and Sustainability Goal 3: Preserve and protect a clean and abundant water supply.

Fiscal Impact: This agreement provides an additional \$379,482.65 in the Health and Human Services Grants and Donations Fund to administer the program. Funds must be distributed by December 2023. There is no matching funds requirement.

Additional Information:

During fiscal year 2022-2023, the LIHWAP expended all funds and processed 11,933 applications for prior year program participants, including 6,463 approved, 4,965 denied, and 505 withdrawn applications.

Households that meet the following criteria may be eligible for Supplemental LIHWAP payments:

- Have at least one U.S. citizen or qualified non-citizen,
- Have income below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL),
- Be responsible for its water/wastewater/sewer costs,
- Reside in the County where the LIHWAP applications is submitted,
- Categorically eligible residents:
 - Active recipient of Food & Nutrition Services or Work First, or
 - Received Low Income Energy Assistance Plan funds last fiscal year,
- Disconnected or in danger of disconnection/past due.

This is the fifth funding allocation for this program to help eligible households pay their water bills. All funds must be distributed by December 2023. No additional allocations are anticipated this fiscal year.

The State received and allocated the Federal funding to 100 Counties based on a set formula. NC DHHS intends to provide the additional allocation as illustrated below:

Budget Category	Current Budget	Adjustments	Revised Budget
Utility Assistance Allocations	\$2,587,169	\$379,482.65	\$2,966,651.65

Attachments:

1. NC DHHS Funding Allocation
2. Budget Memo – FY 2024 Grants and Donations Fund