

Help to Others Water Assistance Fund

Program Overview

In the spring of 2010, Halifax Water filed a rate application with the NSUARB. The rate application sought increases in the water, wastewater and stormwater rates.

The three main drivers for the increased need for funding are:

1. The requirement to upgrade aging wastewater infrastructure;
2. A new federal wastewater strategy – the Canadian Council of the Ministers of the Environment (CCME) Municipal Wastewater Effluent Strategy – is bringing new and stricter environmental regulations into effect, which will have significant financial and operational implications for owners of all municipal wastewater systems across Canada;
3. Increased operating costs including incremental costs to operate the three new Harbour Solutions Project wastewater treatment facilities (WWTFs) which are now fully operational.

Prior to the application being filed, Halifax Water recognized that this cost increase, while necessary, would be difficult for some low income customers to manage. With this in mind, Halifax Water began working with the Salvation Army to establish a fund, the **H₂O-Help To Others Water Assistance Fund**, targeted at those customers who are truly in need. The program start date was April 1, 2011.

The program is funded by Halifax Water and its employees, and administered by The Salvation Army. Halifax Water funds the program in the amount of \$25,000 annually. Halifax Water employees are also putting together an employee sponsored fund. Funds donated by Halifax Water employees will be matched by Halifax Water to a maximum of \$25,000 annually. Therefore the potential annual assistance fund could be \$75,000.

The **H₂O Fund** is not a rebate program. It is intended to assist households in an emergency, especially those with no other resources available. The **H₂O Fund** assists with the cost of residential water and waste water. Anyone seeking assistance must complete and submit the **H₂O Fund** application with the required supporting documents. The forms can be found online at www.halifaxwater.ca and www.salvationarmy.ca/maritime. Forms are also available at Halifax Water's 450 Cowie Hill Rd. office, Salvation Army's Gottingen St. location, and all HRM Customer Services Centres.

Applicants are not eligible to receive assistance if:

- Residential water & wastewater costs are included in applicant's rent.
- Residential water & wastewater account is not in the applicant's name (e.g.: account in landlord's name).

To apply for assistance from the **H₂O Fund**, applicants must complete the application form and provide supporting documents. Approved applicants will receive assistance once in a 24 month period to a maximum of \$250.00.

The Salvation Army receives and reviews all completed applications and determines which applicants will receive support. All applicants will be contacted by Salvation Army staff to let them know if they will or will not receive assistance. Applicants who receive assistance will have the funds applied directly to their Halifax Water account.