



DETROIT  
**Water & Sewerage  
Department**

Water Board Building  
735 Randolph Street  
Detroit, MI 48226

Customer Service  
Phone: 313-267-8000  
[www.detroitmi.gov/dwsd](http://www.detroitmi.gov/dwsd)

October 10, 2023

We the People of Detroit  
Monica Lewis-Patrick  
1520 Chateaufort Place  
Detroit, MI 48207

Dear Ms. Lewis-Patrick,

Please find this correspondence as a follow-up to the letter your organization provided on September 20, 2023, to the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department (DWSD) and the Board of Water Commissioners (BOWC) regarding the Lifeline Program.

Your letter references 10 questions to the BOWC seeking a response.

*For customers who are enrolled in the Lifeline Plan and are not in compliance due to no payment, a partial payment, a program arrearage, or a balance forward:*

1. ***What is the total number of customers who are not in compliance?***
  - As of October 2023, 83% or 20,714 of enrolled Lifeline participants are in compliance.
2. ***Are customers receiving bills over the Lifeline Plan payment amount? If so, how many?***
  - On average, 70% or 17,470 of enrolled Lifeline participants are within the water consumption allocation.
3. ***On average, how many months of payments have been missed?***
  - 4,242 have missed two or more payments as of the last billing cycle.
4. ***Has the lack of program compliance been communicated to the customer? If so, how?***
  - Participants receive an invoice by mail each month.
  - DWSD sent 14,700 postcards to Lifeline households as a reminder to pay their monthly bill as well as information on how to contact Wayne Metro if they are facing a hardship paying their water bill.
  - Wayne Metro has contacted out of compliance participants via text, email, and phone. 7,597 participants have been contacted.
    - 110 participants stated they were not behind on their water bill but could use assistance with other areas of their household finances.
    - 70 participants were offered additional services through Wayne Metro.
    - 283 participants were assisted with financial assistance on Lifeline to bring their account current.
    - 90 participants previously ineligible for Lifeline were screened a second time as household conditions changed and entered into Lifeline.

5. ***Has DWSD notified Wayne Metro of customers who are out of compliance?***

- DWSD and Wayne Metro are in contact with each other several times throughout the billing cycle sharing information on the compliance of each participant.

6. ***Has Wayne Metro performed outreach and case management services (per the policy statement above)?***

- Yes. Wayne Metro provides Case Management services including, but not limited to, needs assessments, financial assistance with past due balances, wrap around services including enrollment in other utility service assistance programs.

7. ***What are the common reasons for non-payment given by customers?***

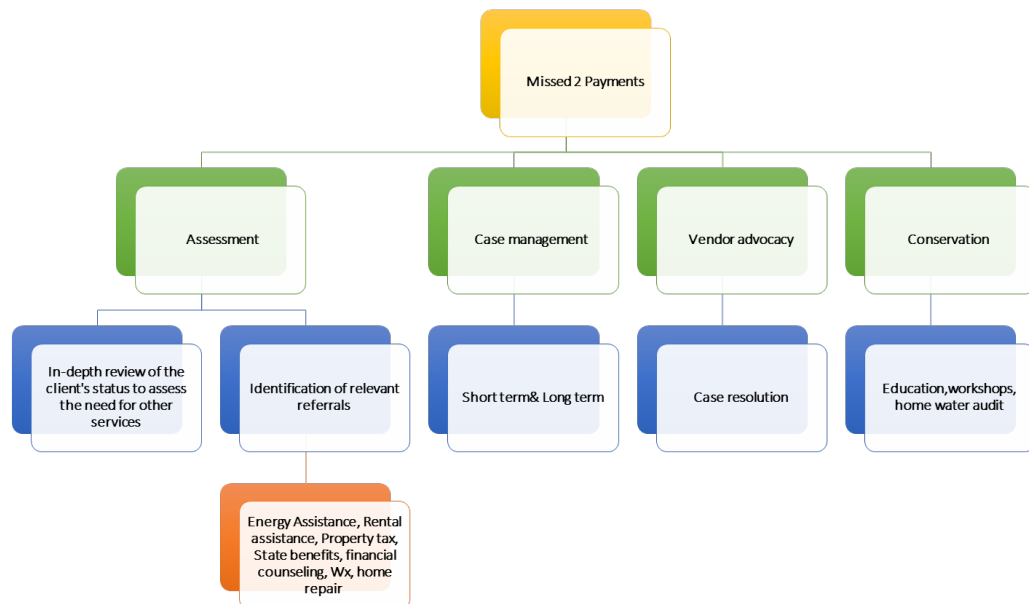
- Changes in household income
- Unexpected or additional household expenses
- Life changing events

8. ***What is the status and follow-up from Wayne Metro's outreach and case management services?***

- Wayne Metro continues to reach out to customers via text, email and phone calls when customers have missed payments and will continue to perform case management services as described above on a case-by-case basis to those requiring additional assistance.
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9. ***What is being done by Wayne Metro to help customers come back into compliance?***

- The following diagram represents how Wayne Metro is aiming to increase retention and compliance on the Lifeline program:



**10. Have any customers been unenrolled from the Lifeline Plan? If so, how many?**

- There have not been removals due to non-compliance from the Lifeline Plan currently. The only removals have been if a customer moves out of the city or into a home where they are not responsible for the water bill.

Should you have any further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to my office directly. A copy of this letter will be submitted to the BOWC on October 18, 2023.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matthew C. Phillips". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Matthew" being the most prominent part.

Chief of Staff and Customer Service Officer  
CC: Board of Water Commissioners