1.1 PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVE
This Utility Billing Customer Support Policy addresses the requirements of the Washington State Governor’s Office Proclamation 20-23.16, dated 07/02/2021. The objective of this policy is to provide a framework to support customers of the water/sewer/stormwater utility who have been financially impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

This framework will provide guidance for:

- Customer notification;
- Customer support programs;
- Other resources

2.0 CUSTOMER NOTIFICATION
Communication between the City and customers remains vital. The City’s goal is to ensure customers maintain access to essential services during the state’s recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.

2.1 Utility Billing Notices:
Beginning in September 2021, the City will resume sending delinquent notices to inform customers of pending interruption without payment or payment arrangement. Notices will continue to include guidance to utility customer support programs.

2.2 City of Renton Website:
The following will be noticed on the City of Renton website:

The City of Renton is committed to keeping our customers connected to essential services during and after the COVID-19 pandemic emergency. If you are experiencing hardship as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, you may be eligible for support, including long-term payment arrangements or bill assistance referral. This Customer Support Policy does not relieve customers from the obligation to pay for utility services.

3.0 CUSTOMER SUPPORT PROGRAMS
Beginning with the Governor’s initial proclamation in March 2020, all service terminations and imposition of late penalties were suspended through September 30, 2021. The City of Renton will continue to follow all future Governor proclamations. The City of Renton offers both payment arrangements and referral to outside organizations for assistance with outstanding utility balances for customers financially impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.
3.1 Payment Plans:
Payment plans are designed to assist customers in bringing utility accounts to a current status by the end of the plan term. Payment plans will be available to residential and non-residential customers, under the following guidelines:

A. Payment Plans will be granted to all customers with accounts in a past due status experiencing hardship due to the Covid-19 pandemic, during which time no late fees or service interruptions would be imposed if the payment plan is in an active status. Customers may request a payment plan up to 18 months to spread out the cost of outstanding balances and future estimated monthly service charges.

B. The City may choose not to start payment plans if the customer does not timely sign and return a payment plan agreement with terms specified by the City.

C. Payments submitted for past due accounts, whether on a payment plan or not, will be applied to the oldest charges first. Payments are applied to all overdue City utilities, starting with the oldest overdue bill.

D. The City will resume imposing late penalties December 15, 2021 for all accounts that have past due amount owed and have not arranged a payment plan.

E. Non-compliance with a payment plan.
   i. Upon timely notification to the customer of a late or missed arrangement installment, the City may, at its discretion, allow the payment plan to continue
   ii. Once a service interruption is scheduled, the account will be assessed a $60.00 administrative fee and the customer must get their account into good standing to restore service.
   iii. Post shut-off, payment plans may be reactivated at the discretion of the City after payment of the administrative fee and payment of the 10% of the past due account balance.
   iv. The City reserves the right to exercise any and all lien and contractual rights and to collect outstanding utility payments. This may include, but is not limited to, discontinuing payment plans and discontinuing service or not reinitiating service for the customer or future customers until the account is brought into good standing.

4.0 OTHER RESOURCES:
If customers require additional resources beyond a payment arrangement, the City will refer customers to other organizations, including:

- [WA Department of Commerce](https://www.rentonwa.gov) (provides mortgage assistance to homeowners);
- [Department of Commerce Disaster Cash Assistance Program](https://www.wa211.org);
- Community resource guide on the City’s website - [www.rentonwa.gov](http://www.rentonwa.gov)
- Hopelink - [www.hopelink.org](http://www.hopelink.org)
- [Washington 211 - www.wa211.org](http://www.wa211.org)
- Local churches