

# Water Affordability Coalition

Affordability and Planning Grant Award  
2021



# Grant Overview

## Michigan Department of Energy, Great Lakes, and Environment Affordability and Planning Grant Details:

- Overview
- Work Task Commitments
- Schedule and Structure



MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF  
ENVIRONMENT, GREAT LAKES, AND ENERGY

## What does this grant do?

- Funds WRC efforts to create a sustainable affordability plan
- Funds the use of expert consultants to help study and develop the affordability plan

## What this grant does not do?

- Does not provide money for payment of water/sewer bills
- Does not provide money for investment in infrastructure

# Grant Details



## Amount of Grant

- \$444,600



## Match Requirement

- \$0



## Start Date

- May 19, 2021



## End Date

- September 30, 2022



***Quarterly reporting is due to EGLE***

# Our Work Task Commitments

- Engage the community and local elected and public officials
- Identify demographics and reasons for nonpayment of water bills
- Research and document affordability programs and short-list applicable ones
- Identify legal hurdles
- Identify and leverage other community, state and federal programs
- Work with non-governmental organizations that serve low-income customers
- Create affordability plan framework
- Evaluate long-term financial sustainability



# Schedule

		2021						2022								
	Description	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept
1	Engage Local Officials															
2	Identify Demographics and Reasons for nonpayment															
3	Research and Document Affordability Programs															
4	Identify Legal Hurdles and Mitigation Efforts															
5	Identify and Leverage Other Community, State & Federal Programs															
6	Convene a NGOs Task Force to Assist with Customer Engagement															
7	Create the Framework for the Affordability Plan															
8	Evaluate Long-Term Financial Sustainability															

# Stakeholders

<b>Community Representatives: (Pontiac and Royal Oak Township Coalitions)</b>	Provide Monthly Feedback on Program Development
<b>Broad WRC Stakeholder Group</b>	Engineering, Legal, Billing, Finance, Marketing and Communications
<b>Non-Governmental Organizations</b>	Customer Engagement and Program Implementation
<b>Internal Project Team (WRC/OHM Advisors)</b>	Project Management, Meeting Facilitation, Grant Administration and Technical Support

# Reflection – Are we hearing you?

- **How does the community define affordability?**
- **Examine** structural and institutional issues
- **Develop** policies that are sustainable
- **Differentiate** between a plan and assistance; focus on the plan
- **Create** a vision for everyone to have clean water
- **Include** diversity, equity, and inclusion
- **Embrace** influx of federal funding
- **Develop** workforce
- **Discuss** issues with private water and sewer lines
- **Address** affordability of private repairs
- **Study** the error in the system that even allows a large bill to accumulate
- **Establish** high priority issues - rental properties and housing availability
- **Help** with fear of reporting health issues with water and sewer services in a home
- **Provide** avenue to ask for help
- **Educate** on water conservation
- **Service** plumbing issues and provide aid
- **Identify** communication gaps



# Meeting Structure Going Forward

## Stakeholder Group Composition

- Join forces of Pontiac Water Affordability Coalition with the Royal Oak Township Affordability Coalition
- Identify stakeholders who are missing and add them
- Communicate that key stakeholders are needed as regular participants to make progress

## Stakeholder Group Meeting Schedule

- One 60–90-minute meeting once per month
- Virtual, hybrid, or in-person

## Stakeholder Group Objectives

- Report on progress of the grant work
- Gain feedback on plans and actions taken
- Collaborate to ensure WRC is on the path to achieving critical success



# Next Meeting

- How do you define affordability?
- What does affordability mean to you?
- What would need to happen for you to say this grant work was a success?



# Thank you!

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