

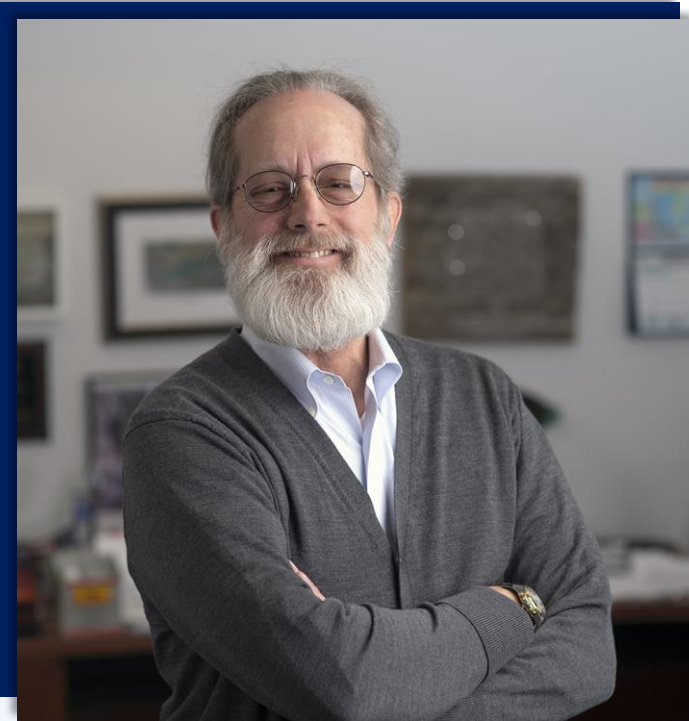
# Water Affordability Coalition

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Affordability and Planning Grant

*April 28, 2022*





# Welcome & Introduction Commissioner Nash



# Desired Meeting Outcomes & Agenda

Begin to review final report and plans

Highlight key items and findings




# Introductions

## Kelsey Cooke



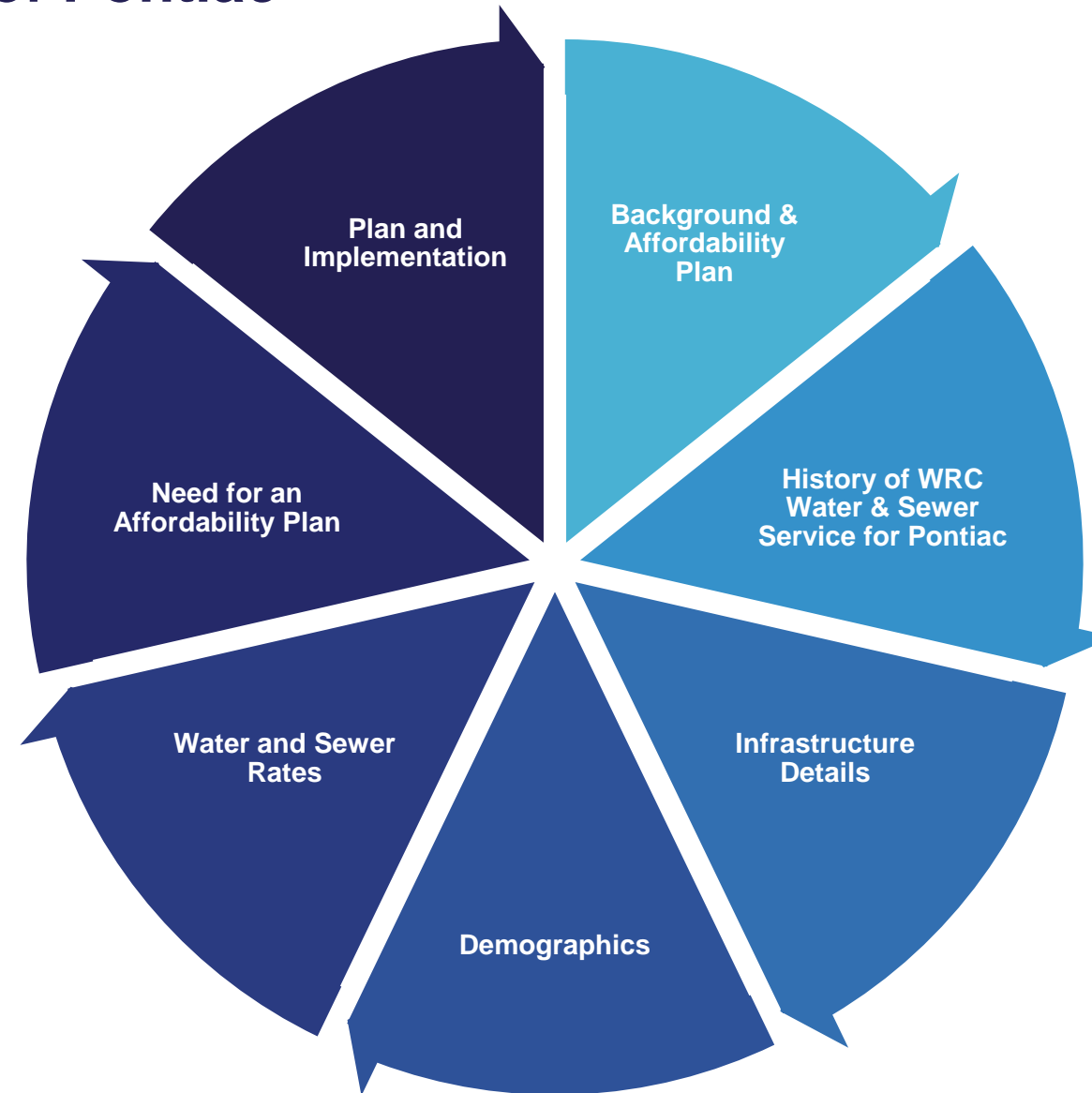


# Main Report Document

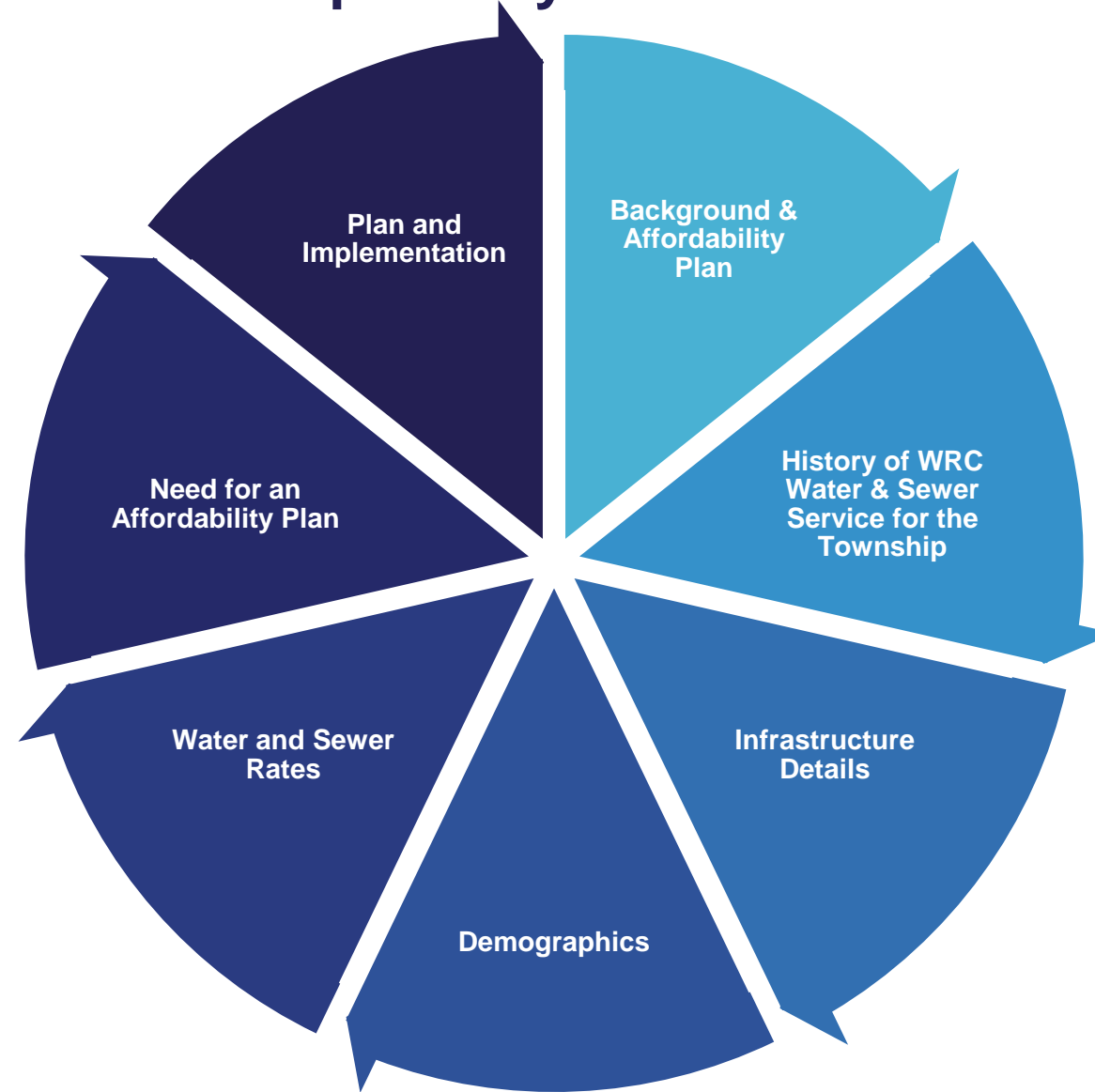
-  Framework for other communities to learn what we did
-  Steps from beginning to end of the process of creating an affordability plan
-  Provides guidance on what information to seek about the desired community and what to do with that information to build a plan



# Appendix A: City of Pontiac



# Appendix B: Charter Township of Royal Oak



# Appendix C: Research and Findings

## Research Objectives

- To learn about efforts municipalities and other utilities across the country have already undergone to address water service and related affordability issues in their respective communities
- Understand the relative successes and failures of existing Customer Assistance Programs, as well as other barriers to household water service affordability
- Determine what Customer Assistance Programs, or components of existing Customer Assistance Programs, could be incorporated into the affordability plans for Pontiac and the Township

**To carry out the above-stated objectives, we implemented a multi-pronged research approach that includes the following components:**

- A comprehensive literature review
- Participation in water industry events, including presentations, webinars, and conferences
- Technical assistance from the Water Center at the University of Pennsylvania
- Exploratory meetings with a variety of actors in the water affordability arena, including, water and other utility experts, municipal leaders, coalition members, customers, consultants, educators, advocates, and service providers



# Appendix C: Research and Findings

## Summaries of all Events, Webinars, Meetings, and Conferences Attended

- Mayors Innovation Project—Water Affordability Academy
- Michigan Environmental Justice Virtual Conference hosted by EGLE
- Intro to Low Income Household Water Assistance Program webinar presented by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, the National Association of Clean Water Agencies and the National Energy and Utility Affordability Coalition
- Utility Management Conference presented by the Water Environment Federation and the American Water Works Association
- Michigan American Water Works Association – Water Affordability webinar series and Affordability Summit (May 2022)

## Sample Exploration Meetings with representatives from the following local, statewide, and national agencies:


- Local: GLWA, OLHSA, DWSD , People's Water Board Coalition
- Statewide: Grand Rapids Water, DTE, Consumers Energy, Michigan Public Services Commission
- National: City of Sacramento, National Wildlife Federation, HomeServe, PromisePay, Access H2O, Roger Colton, National Resource Defense Council

# Appendix C: Research and Findings

## Affordability Approaches, Program Success Factors, Challenges

- The attached slides cover a seven-step framework to develop (and measure the effectiveness of) a Customer Assistance Program
- We learned about this framework from a national consulting firm during the Utility Management Conference
- We are testing the Customer Assistance Program we developed by running it through this framework

**Stantec's Seven Step Process**



➤ Step 1 – Preliminary Needs Assessment

➤ Step 2 – Select Cap Objectives

➤ Step 3 – Select Required CAP Components


➤ Step 4 – Design CAP Requirements

➤ Step 5 – Implementation

➤ Step 6 – Review CAP Objectives

➤ Step 7 – CAP Follow Through

\*This framework can be used for a single CAP, or several CAPs to address multiple affordability issues.

 **Purely Resourceful**



# Appendix D: Legal Analysis and Mitigation Measures

- The Legal Landscape—how public water utilities are owned, operated and funded
- Legal restrictions on fees
- Analysis centers on potential legal challenges to the tiered income-based bill assistance program and opportunities to mitigate the same
- To aid in the legal analysis, a general overview of the legal landscape governing public water utilities is provided before describing some of the legal minefields involved with bill assistance programs
- Outside legal assistance was provided by the National Wildlife Federation, students from the University of Michigan Law School Environmental Law Clinic and the law firm of Dickinson Wright
- Legal mitigation strategy includes a policy proposal for statewide low-income water assistance legislation and funding mechanism

# Appendix F: Project Partners



### **Appendix G:** *People First Policies*

- Identification and outline of our billing policies and procedures
- Review and evaluation of policies with implemented modifications and improvements

### **Appendix H:** *Rate Structures and Bill Assistance*

- Summary of Rate Structures
  - Review of Rate Structures through “Affordability Lenses”
- Rate Structure and Bill Assistance Analysis

### **Appendix I:** *Landlord-Tenant Relationships and Support*

- Michigan Water Lien Act and Rental Properties
- Rental Populations within Our Communities
- Affordability Challenges and Solutions for Landlords and for Tenants

### **Appendix J:** *Public Outreach and Communication Methods*

- Development of a Coalition of Stakeholders
- Customer Interviews
- Branding and Marketing Materials
- Customer Education Materials
- Customer Relationship Management
- Public Outreach Plan

# Next Meeting

*Next Meeting, May 26 at 11 a.m. via Zoom*






# Thank you!

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