

Ten-Point Water Affordability Plan

This plan was developed by members of communities currently struggling with water that is not affordable to all in their communities. To be effective, the authors believe that all ten points are necessary in a water affordability plan. As such, we ask that any reproduction of this plan be done only in its entirety, and that anywhere it is used authorship should be credited to communities struggling with unaffordable water.

1. Any water affordability plan must acknowledge that water is a public trust, the provision of water is a public good and water is not a commodity subject to privatization.
2. Any water affordability plan must be situated within a broader commitment to ensuring access to clean, safe, affordable water for all.
3. Any water affordability plan must be modeled along the lines of a sliding-scale, income-based rate system, such as that devised in Roger Colton's 2005 Water Affordability plan prepared for the City of Detroit.
4. Any water affordability plan must be centered within a framework of preserving and maintaining public health.
5. Any water affordability plan must maintain a commitment to principles of conservation and providing assistance to low income residents to ensure they can be proper stewards of their water resources.
6. Any water affordability plan must enshrine quality customer service as a central value along with a commitment to acknowledge the human dignity of all the people it serves.
7. Any water affordability plan must find appropriate ways to deal with past consumer debt, such as the policies being implemented in Philadelphia.
8. Any water affordability plan must eschew water shutoffs as a policy for being inconsistent with the values of public health and the commitment to acknowledge the human dignity of all the people it serves.
9. Water assistance plans are not the same as water affordability plans and must be rejected as such.
10. Tiered water pricing plans, where water is priced by volume, are not the same as water affordability plans and must be rejected as such.

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