

END WATER SHUT-OFFS



Housing. Opportunity. Mobility. Equity. Stability.

WHY IS THE CITY OF WILMINGTON SHUTTING OFF PEOPLE'S WATER DURING A PANDEMIC?

Between June–October 2021, the City of Wilmington sent shut-off notices to 530 residential customers and shut off the water of 103 families.

The pandemic is not over. In the first week of December 2021, Delaware had twice as many COVID-19 cases and almost twice as many COVID-19 hospitalizations as in the first week of November.

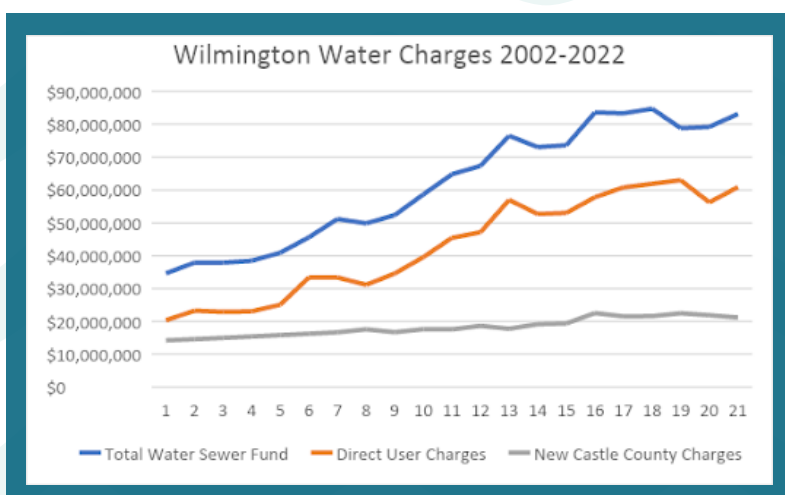
WATER IS A HUMAN RIGHT AND A BASIC NECESSITY, ESPECIALLY DURING A PANDEMIC

Access to safe, affordable water is vital to stop the spread of COVID-19 and other bacterial or viral infections through frequent hand-washing and cleaning.

But many Wilmington residents are struggling to pay high water bills and are at risk for water shut off and foreclosure.

WILMINGTON IS FACING A WATER AFFORDABILITY CRISIS

The average residential customer uses 6,000 gallons of water a month and **the average monthly bill, including all charges and fees, is \$93.92**. This equals an annual bill of \$1116 a year.



The cost of water for Wilmington residents has been going up fast, faster than inflation and the minimum wage.

Revenue from direct user charges – water and sewer bills – tripled from 2002 to 2022, according to figures included in the city's annual budgets from those years.

A GROWING NUMBER OF FAMILIES ARE AT RISK OF LOSING ACCESS TO WATER

According to Wilmington's Finance Department, the city had over 10,000 overdue accounts in March 2021 out of the 36,000 total utility customers.

While the City of Wilmington stopped doing water shut-offs for 16 months at the start of the pandemic, the City started shutting off water again for past-due water bills in June 2021. Out of 530

residential customers that received water shut-off notices from June–Nov. 2021, 103 (1 in 5!) had their water shut off and still had no water by December 7, 2021.

Lack of water places residents and members of their communities, including schools, workplaces, and other shared spaces, at risk of contracting bodily illnesses, including COVID-19.



IT'S TIME FOR ACTION

Wilmington has a once in a generation chance to get on board with a national movement to ensure water as a human right and make the necessary policy changes to sustain its water system. It's time for Wilmington to ensure water access for all.

WE ARE ASKING MAYOR PURZYCKI TO TAKE IMMEDIATE ACTION:

Short term: Keep the water on during the pandemic

- Stop water shut-offs for 6 months
- Fund the Utility Assistance Program for home-owners
- Establish a pilot program with DHAP to cover water debt during the pandemic for households in low-income census tracts
- Stop water bill foreclosures for homeowners for 6 months

Long-term: Build a sustainable water utility with affordable water rates

- End water debt, rebuild water infrastructure and ensure water access for all
- Leverage federal resources for major water infrastructure improvements
- Cap water rates for low-income residents and help them out of water debt
- End water shut-offs for non-payment
- End water foreclosures for home-owners