

AFFORDABLE WATER FOR ALL MICHIGANDERS

Michigan residents pay more for water than they can afford. Drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater costs have gone up steadily in recent years. The average cost of **water** across Michigan has **increased nearly 200% since 1980, with some communities increasing more than 300%**. Water bills are affordable when customers can consistently pay their bills without taking away money from other key expenses, such as food, housing, and electricity. Yet in Michigan, **low-income households are paying up to 25%** of their income on water bills.

In light of these alarming trends, Moonshot Missions was commissioned to assess solutions for this growing crisis. Moonshot examined possible affordability programs in six Michigan communities of various sizes, locations, and income distributions. The key finding in all of the communities studied was that some form of **affordability plan is possible that benefits households without significantly impacting utilities' revenue requirements or other ratepayers**. According to *Draining: The Economic Impact of America's Hidden Water Crisis*, a report by DigDeep, creating a water affordability program could also create nearly \$200 billion of economic value over the next 50 years.

Water assistance programs help customers to pay their water bills.



VS

Water affordability programs lower cost of water, so bills are lower.



How can Michigan's Decision-Makers Make Water Affordable for All?

- Require water systems to apply a tiered water rate based on gross household income for low-income customers 135%, 150%, and 200% of the federal poverty line so everyone pays a bill they can afford
- Provide a simple way to verify a customer qualifies for a water affordability program and at what tiered rate
- Limit the circumstances in which a utility may shut off a customer's water service
- Provide protections for tenants who may be unable to pay their water bill or whose landlord is struggling to pay the water bill
- Provide protections for certain customers who are unable to afford their water bill from water shutoffs, procedures for notifying customers when water shutoffs will occur, and processes for which low income customers can appeal a decision
- Provide a process for customers to receive forgiveness of their water debt.

TOGETHER WE CAN CREATE A THRIVING, PROSPEROUS MICHIGAN WHERE EVERYONE WANTS TO LIVE, WORK, AND PLAY.

Scan the QR code to read the economic feasibility study:
Water Affordability Analyses for Six Michigan
Communities

For more information contact: Kristy Meyer
kristy@freshwaterfuture.org

