



HRPDC Press Release for Localities Use

“Quench the Need” of Neighbors in Crisis through Region-wide Help to Others (H2O) Water Assistance Program

(Hampton Roads, Va., June X, 2022) – Temperatures will soon be sizzling in [city/county name], motivating residents to water yards, fill swimming pools and douse garden beds. This can add up to a lot of H2O flowing throughout the region, yet some neighbors who have fallen on hard times may find a cool glass of water out of reach. This month, the [Help to Others \(H2O\)](#) water assistance program is asking area residents to help “quench the need” of those who are struggling to pay their utility bills.

“Right now, there are families in our Hampton Roads communities who are unable to pay their water bills due to a crisis or circumstances beyond their control,” said H2O Program Manager Katie Cullipher. “Imagine falling on hard times and not having water to drink, wash dishes, launder clothes or flush the commode. By donating to the H2O water assistance program, you can provide this basic necessity for our neighbors in need.”

How H2O works and who it helps

The H2O program is administered by the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission (HRPDC) and HRSD in partnership with The Salvation Army. Families or individuals in danger of losing residential water service due to a crisis can receive one-time financial assistance of up to \$500 to pay their local water and wastewater bills.

To be eligible, recipients of H2O funds must live in the participating service area, which includes [city/county name]. Applicants must also be able to show that a personal or family crisis, such as a death in the family, catastrophic illness or drastic decrease in family income, is preventing them from paying a water bill.

Financial emergencies and setbacks can leave anyone tapped out, and the past two years have been especially difficult for some, according to Seth Atkinson, Social Services Program Manager with The Salvation Army Hampton Roads Area Command.

“Lately, we have seen recipients who have been impacted by COVID, job loss and other sudden crises. No one should go without water to drink or bathe, and you can’t provide that if

you can't pay your bill," said Atkinson. "When you give to the H2O program, the funds go to a trusted agency, with every penny flowing to those in need."

You can [donate to H2O](#) through a safe, online portal; by check; or by adding a one-time donation to your HRSD/HRUBS online payment. H2O is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, making all program donations tax deductible. In addition, 100% of contributions are applied directly to the water or wastewater bill of someone in need in the local area. Donations are never used to cover administrative costs of the program.

"A simple twist of fate may have put a person or family in a tough financial situation," Cullipher said. "Let's make their glass half full. With community support of the H2O program, we can keep the water flowing."

For more information and to donate, visit www.shareH2O.org.

About Help to Others (H2O) – The HRPDC and HRSD administer the H2O program in partnership with The Salvation Army. Families or individuals in danger of losing residential water service due to a sudden crisis can receive one-time financial assistance of up to \$500 to pay their water or wastewater bills. Participating cities and counties include: Chesapeake, Franklin, Gloucester, Hampton, Isle of Wight, James City, Newport News, Norfolk, Poquoson, Portsmouth, Smithfield, Southampton, Suffolk, Surry, Virginia Beach, Williamsburg, Windsor and York. Visit shareh2o.org.

.