



Press Release

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LOW-INCOME WATER CUSTOMERS IN CHINO HILLS MAY APPLY FOR RATE ASSISTANCE

Chino Hills, CA – Residential water customers in Chino Hills will have the opportunity to apply for the City of Chino Hills' new Low-Income Rate Assistance program (LIRA) online starting Jan. 5. The LIRA program offers a \$10 discount on the monthly water meter charge.

"The amount was set after a survey of nine water agencies with monthly low-income discounts revealed a range from \$2.25 to \$16.48," said Nadeem Majaj, Public Works Director. "Residents who live in multi-family/multi-unit structures, that receive water through one master meter, are not eligible for this discount. "

Applications will be available online starting on Saturday, Jan. 5 at www.chinohills.org/LIRA. Printed applications will be available on Monday, Jan. 7 at the water counter on the second floor at City Hall, 14000 City Center Drive; and at the Chino Hills Community Center, 14250 Peyton Drive.

"Depending upon response to the program, we will work to review applications within 10 business days," said Christa Buhagiar, Finance Director. "Once eligibility is confirmed, the discount will appear on the next 12 monthly bills. If an application is denied, the customer will be notified."

According to Ms. Buhagiar, eligible customers must occupy the property where water service is provided, have a water meter size of 1" or below (meter size noted on water bill), have the water bill account in their name, and complete an application. Water customers must provide a copy of a current Southern California Edison or Southern California Gas bill that verifies their enrollment in the utilities' California Alternate Rates for Energy (CARE) rate assistance programs. A new application is required every year.

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According to Mr. Majaj, the LIRA and CARE programs follow the same California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) definition of low income (200% of the Federal poverty level). The qualifying household income levels are: 1 person - \$24,280; 2 persons - \$32,920; 3 persons - \$41,560; and 4 - \$50,200. For larger households, add an additional \$8,640 per person. The CPUC may adjust income levels each year based on inflation. Once approved to receive the LIRA discount, participants are required to notify the City if their income level increases above the limits during the one-year period covered by their application.

“Penalty fees collected by the water utility will fund the program,” said Mr. Majaj. “Historically those fees have offset other costs to the water system. Proposition 218 does not allow assistance programs to be subsidized by other ratepayers.”

The City used U.S. Census data to determine that approximately 1,400 households may qualify. Approximately \$100,000 per year will be needed to pay for the discount. Persons who have questions or need assistance completing the simple application may call Utility Billing Customer Service (909) 364-2660.

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