

**CITY OF SAN ANTONIO  
INTERDEPARTMENTAL MEMORANDUM  
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY INITIATIVES**

**TO:** Mayor and City Council

**FROM:** Dennis J. Campa, Director, Department of Community Initiatives

**THROUGH:** Terry M. Brechtel, City Manager

**COPIES:** Frances A. Gonzalez, Assistant City Manager; City Attorney's Office;  
Finance Department; San Antonio Water System; File

**SUBJECT:** APPROVING THE CALENDAR YEAR (CY) 2004 PROJECT AGUA  
PLAN AND ACCEPTING \$120,341 FROM THE SAN ANTONIO WATER  
SYSTEM (SAWS) TO CONTINUE THE WATER METER DISCOUNT  
AFFORDABILITY PROGRAM (WMDAP) IN CY 2004

**DATE:** December 4, 2003

**SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

- A. This ordinance approves the CY 2004 Project Agua Plan and accepts utility assistance credits in the projected amount of \$65,319 for the period of January 1, 2004 through December 31, 2004.
- B. This ordinance authorizes the acceptance of \$120,341 from SAWS to administer the Water Meter Discount Affordability Program (WMDAP) for CY 2004, establishes a CY 2004 budget, and approves a personnel complement for administration of the program.

Staff recommends approval of these ordinances.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Project Agua

The City of San Antonio (City) and SAWS have developed programs to address the need of SAWS ratepayers for assistance with their utility bills and related expenses.

Project Agua is a utility assistance program developed by the City and SAWS. The project was implemented in January 2003 and will be continued on an annual basis under the terms outlined in the yearly Project Agua Plan. The Project Agua trust account is funded by SAWS and through private and corporate donations. The actual amount available each year for assistance credits is dependent on investment returns from the trust. Funds in the corpus of the trust are not used for assistance.

Eligibility guidelines established in the Project Agua Plan prioritize assistance for SAWS ratepayers with incomes at or below 125% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) who meet at least one of the following criteria: age 60 and older, disabled, require continuous water service for life-sustaining medical equipment in the home, or have children age three years and younger. For example, 125% of the FPL for a family of four is an annual income of \$23,000 or less. The normal maximum assistance credited to the ratepayer's account is \$50; applicants may only receive assistance once per year. Ratepayers who receive assistance are required to make a minimum \$5 co-payment to SAWS.

#### Water Meter Discount Affordability Program

Ordinance No. 92752, passed and approved on October 19, 2000, established the Water Meter Discount Affordability Program (WMDAP) and Ordinance No. 93597, passed on March 15, 2001, approved the Inter-Jurisdictional Agreement implementing the program with the City and SAWS as partners. WMDAP provides a 50% discount (approximately \$2.81) on the monthly water meter charge to low-income SAWS ratepayers whose total household income is at or below 125% of the current FPL. While this program is available to all low-income SAWS ratepayers, emphasis is placed on enrolling senior citizen households. Current census data estimate that there are potentially 55,000 eligible SAWS ratepayers. Once certified as eligible for the program, ratepayers continue to receive the monthly discount for the remainder of the calendar year in which they applied. Re-certification of SAWS ratepayers for the program is performed annually by City staff.

### **POLICY ANALYSIS**

The performance measures for the CY 2004 Project and WMDAP are reflected below.

#### CY 2004 Project AGUA and Water Meter Discount Affordability Program Measures

<b>Project</b>	<b>Assistance Credits</b>	<b>Projected Households Served</b>
AGUA	\$ 65,319	1,306
WMDAP	\$674,400	20,000
Total	\$739,719	21,306

These ordinances continue existing City policy of providing a community safety net to its most vulnerable residents. These ordinances also continue City policy of leveraging the funds of other entities as sources of utility assistance.

In CY 2004, SAWS is providing \$120,341 in direct funds in support of the City's administrative operations of WMDAP. This funding will be used to provide operating expenses and a portion of four City staff positions in order to implement and manage the program. Staff in these positions, which represents no change from the current staffing level, will conduct outreach to serve eligible SAWS ratepayers and will also provide program oversight and data collection and management.

**COORDINATION**

Coordination has occurred with the City Attorney's Office, Finance Department, and SAWS.

**SUPPLEMENTARY COMMENTS**

Provisions of the City Ethics Ordinance do not apply.

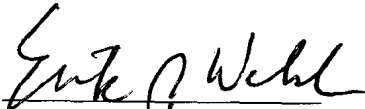


Dennis J. Campa, Director  
Department of Community Initiatives



Frances A. Gonzalez  
Assistant City Manager

Approved:



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Terry M. Brechtel  
City Manager