

# Bellevue Utilities News



Information about your water, drainage, wastewater and solid waste utility services

MAR/APR 2021

## Utility Rate & Tax Relief Programs



Do you need help paying your utility bill? You may qualify for assistance under the Utility Rate and Tax Relief programs.

**Rate Relief Program:** This program offers 70 percent off basic utility costs for low-income seniors (62 and older) and low-income persons with permanent disabilities who meet specific residency and income guidelines.

You may qualify for rate relief if your 2020 household income was \$41,800 or less for one person or \$47,800 or less for two. The form of relief depends on how utility costs are paid:

- **Utility Rate Discount:** For qualified applicants who pay a Bellevue utility bill directly, the discount is applied to bimonthly utility bills. This program is open through Oct. 29.
- **Utility Rate Rebate:** For qualified applicants whose utility costs are paid through rent or another third party, a rebate check is issued for a portion of 2020 utility costs. This program is open April 1 to Oct. 29.

**Emergency Assistance Program:** Customers facing a one-time financial shock, such as a job loss during COVID, may qualify for a 100% discount for up to four months of basic utility service (benefit not to exceed \$301 per bill). Qualified applicants must meet the low-income requirements for the previous 30 days and not receive other Utilities financial assistance.

Other program guidelines apply. You can find more information and applications for all programs at [BellevueWA.gov/utility-relief](https://BellevueWA.gov/utility-relief) or by calling 425-452-5285.

## Tips for Responsible Reorganizing

Planning a spring refresh for your home? Try these tips to help you clear the clutter, keep your sanity, and reduce waste in the process.

- **Prepare labeled boxes or bags for sorting items.** Try categorizing by what to keep, sell, donate, recycle, compost, or as a last resort, place in the garbage. Some items have to go in the garbage, and that's ok!
- **Keep a list of where unwanted items will go.** Many items can be recycled, some in different locations. [BellevueWA.gov/recycle-more](https://BellevueWA.gov/recycle-more) has a guide to where and how to recycle unusual home items.
- **Make multiple donation trips** if you have a lot to clear out, instead of piling everything up. This can help you avoid getting overwhelmed.
- **Take your time**—it's OK to take it piece by piece, or room by room, and adjust your goals to meet your energy level. Be patient and persistent.



**More help:** attend our free "Responsible Reorganizing" virtual class\*, part of the Greener Living class series. You'll get an action guide for decluttering and other tips for downsizing without tossing all your stuff into the trash. Get more info and register at [BellevueWA.gov/greener-living-classes](https://BellevueWA.gov/greener-living-classes). (\*If you miss it this spring, don't worry—it'll be back again soon!)

## Protect Our Streams: Don't Drip & Drive



We've all seen it: the telltale shiny rainbow stretching from a driveway into a storm drain.

Car oil leaks can be an inconvenient expense—but did you know they can also cost our environment?

When it rains, rainwater mixes with the oily road surface residue and sends it straight into our storm system. Our storm drains flow directly to Bellevue waters, where the contaminants can harm fish and other wildlife.

**The solution:** fix leaks as soon as you can, to prolong vehicle life and protect our waterways. If it can't be fixed right away, try putting cardboard, drip pans or newspaper underneath the car when parked.

To absorb spills and avoid runoff, sprinkle sand or kitty litter over the spill, then sweep up into a bag and put it in the trash.

Your efforts to help keep our streams clean and healthy make a difference!





# Smart Water Meters

## Update & FAQs

As we move forward with upgrading meters citywide, we know you will have questions. Our goal is to keep you as informed as possible during this process.

Below are answers to some of your FAQs. You can also find current info and more FAQs on the project website at [BellevueWA.gov/smart-water-meter](http://BellevueWA.gov/smart-water-meter), or contact us anytime at [SmartWater@bellevueWA.gov](mailto:SmartWater@bellevueWA.gov) or 425-452-6973.

### When will my meter be upgraded?

All residential meters and remaining commercial meters will be upgraded over the next 12 to 18 months. While we can't predict specifically when each meter will be replaced, all customers will receive prior mailed notice, and installers will knock on your door first before performing the upgrade.

### What impact will the meter upgrade have on my home?

During the install, your water service will be interrupted for a short time—typically 15 minutes or less. You do not have to be home. Installers will notify you first so you aren't surprised by the water



service interruption, and will work outside at the water meter.

### What if I don't want a smart water meter?

We understand some customers have questions about the technology. It is common technology

used safely across the country. You can learn more about how the technology and components work on the project website.

However, we will have a "non-standard" option available for existing customers who request it. Under this option, meters will be upgraded without the data transmitter. This option will carry additional fees to cover administrative costs for ongoing manual meter reading and bill preparation. If you are interested in learning more about this option, please contact [SmartWater@bellevuewa.gov](mailto:SmartWater@bellevuewa.gov) or 425-452-6973.

### When will I be able to access my water use information?

We anticipate the online customer portal, which will enable you to view, track and manage your property's water use data, will be available after all meters have been installed—about mid- to late-2022. We will share more information on the portal as its release gets closer.

## Are Flushed Wipes Damaging Your Sewer?



**Scary picture: crews found this sewer line full of flushed wipes**

Crews continue to see wipes in certain parts of our sewer system. We have to stress the damage this can cause.

Disinfectant wipes of any kind are not designed to break down in the sewer—don't believe labels that say "flushable"!

Because they don't break down, flushed wipes will eventually clump up, which can cause backups and big problems—both for private sewer lines and the public sewer system we all share the costs to maintain.

To help us protect your health and our sewer system, and avoid costly sewer backups in your home, please trash all wipes. See [BellevueWA.gov/prevent-backups](http://BellevueWA.gov/prevent-backups) for more tips to keep your sewer healthy and clog-free.

## Inspiration in Bloom at the Waterwise Garden



If you can't make the (virtual) Northwest Flower and Garden festival, did you know we have our own demonstration garden right here in Bellevue?

The Waterwise Garden, a special section in the Bellevue Botanical Gardens, was created to

help us share inspiration and tips for sustainable landscape and garden design and care. Garden spaces show how to use native plants, garden with your climate and soil conditions, conserve water, and avoid pesticides and other chemicals in your maintenance.

Check out our natural yard care guides for tips anytime at [BellevueWA.gov/natural-yard-care](http://BellevueWA.gov/natural-yard-care). Or put on a mask, stay 6 feet apart, and get some outdoor therapy while you see some of these practices in action!

### Bellevue Utilities News is available online and in other languages at [www.bellevuewa.gov/utilities](http://www.bellevuewa.gov/utilities).

可在以下网站用中文查看《贝尔维尤市公用事业新闻》(Bellevue Utilities News): [www.bellevuewa.gov/utilities](http://www.bellevuewa.gov/utilities)

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Tin Tức Về Tiện Ích của Bellevue (Bellevue Utilities News) có bằng tiếng Việt trong [www.bellevuewa.gov/utilities](http://www.bellevuewa.gov/utilities).



**General information**—425-452-6932  
[utilities@bellevuewa.gov](mailto:utilities@bellevuewa.gov) | [utilities.bellevuewa.gov](http://utilities.bellevuewa.gov)



**Customer Service/Billing**—425-452-6973



**Drinking Water Quality**—425-452-6192



**24 Hour Emergencies**—425-452-7840 (flooding, water main breaks, no water, sewer overflows, pollutant spills)



**Republic Services** (solid waste service)—425-452-4762