

Customer Affordability and Assistance

A Current State Assessment

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Our Strategic Priority for Enhancing the Customer Experience and Community Engagement

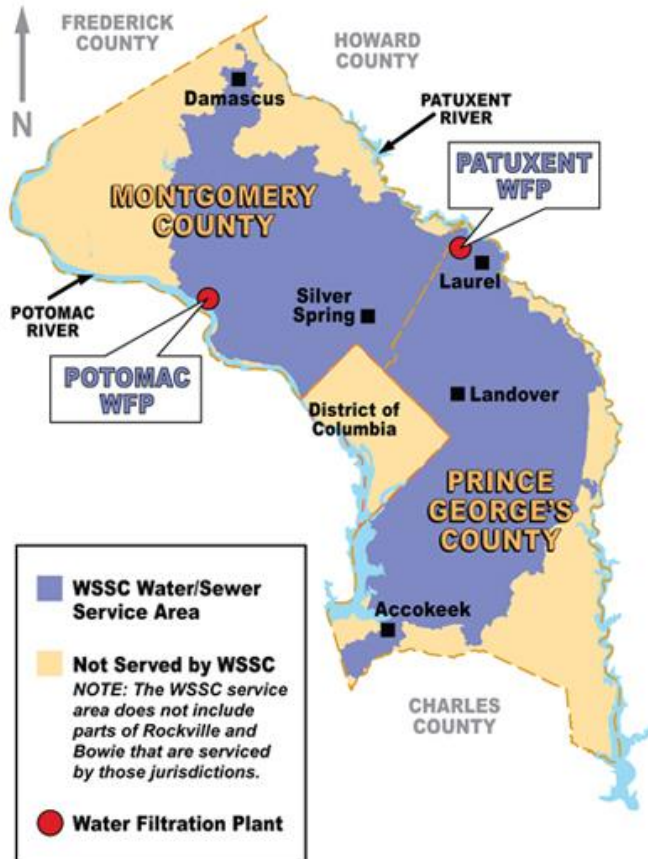
Deliver an excellent customer experience and enhance community engagement through proactive communication, strategic partnerships, and providing exceptional products and services.

Agenda

- ▶ Customer Base Overview
- ▶ Overview of Key Programs (Need-based)
- ▶ Customer Outreach
- ▶ Organization Structure
- ▶ Next Steps
- ▶ Q & A

Customer Base Overview

WSSC Water/Sewer Service Area



- 1.8 million customers
- Over 451,000 active accounts
- Average quarterly residential bill: **\$220.05**
- Number of active residential accounts with delinquent balance: **23,760**
- Average quarterly residential delinquent bill: **\$348.85**

Overview of Key Programs

Program	Description	Administration	# Served	Funding Source
Customer Assistance Program (CAP)	Provides financial relief to customers by providing a credit of the Ready-to-Serve Charge for low-income residential customers.	WSSC in partnership with OHEP	7,662	Rate Payers
Water Fund and RoundUp Programs	The Water Fund helps residential customers who are experiencing hardship pay their delinquent water/sewer bills. The RoundUp Program offers all customers a convenient way to contribute to the Water Fund.	The Salvation Army and WSSC	FY'09-17 3,129 ~~ FY'17 351	Generous donations of customers, community members and WSSC employees

Overview of Key Programs

Program	Description	Administration	# Served	Funding Source
Bay Restoration Fee Exemption	Provides an exemption of the Bay Restoration Fund Fee that WSSC is required to collect pursuant to State law to help improve water quality in the Chesapeake Bay.	WSSC in partnership with the State of Maryland	10,724	N/A
Billing Adjustments for Charitable Institutions	WSSC provides charitable institutions with up to 100 gallons of water a day per resident without cost. To qualify the WSSC charitable credit, the institution must provide residential 24hr care for persons in need.	WSSC	388	Rate Payers

Overview of Key Programs

Customer Assistance Program (CAP)

- ▶ Partnership since July 2015 with MD Office of Home Energy Programs to piggyback on eligibility criteria
- ▶ Offers eligible customers waiver for fixed fees
- ▶ Saves customers on avg \$112 annually per year
- ▶ Rate-payer funded
- ▶ **7,662** current participants



Overview of Key Programs

Water Fund including RoundUp

- ▶ Created to help residential customers who are experiencing financial hardship pay delinquent water/sewer bills
- ▶ Funded by generous donations
- ▶ \$300 maximum allowable annual award
- ▶ Administered by Salvation Army
- ▶ Benefited on average **340** customers per year for past five years
- ▶ Current fund balance is \$2,877



Overview of Key Programs

Water Fund including RoundUp

- ▶ Generated **\$738,581.64** over past seven years
- ▶ Funds breakdown:
 - United Way: \$43,144.26
 - United Way Contributions through the WSSC Credit Union: \$2,067.05
 - Contribution through WSSC Payment Processing (RoundUp): \$693,370.33
- ▶ Helped over **3,129** recipients in the past seven years
- ▶ Over the past seven years, average assistance per qualified applicant was **\$235.10**
- ▶ In FY 2017, recipients received an average of **\$201.37**

Overview of Key Programs

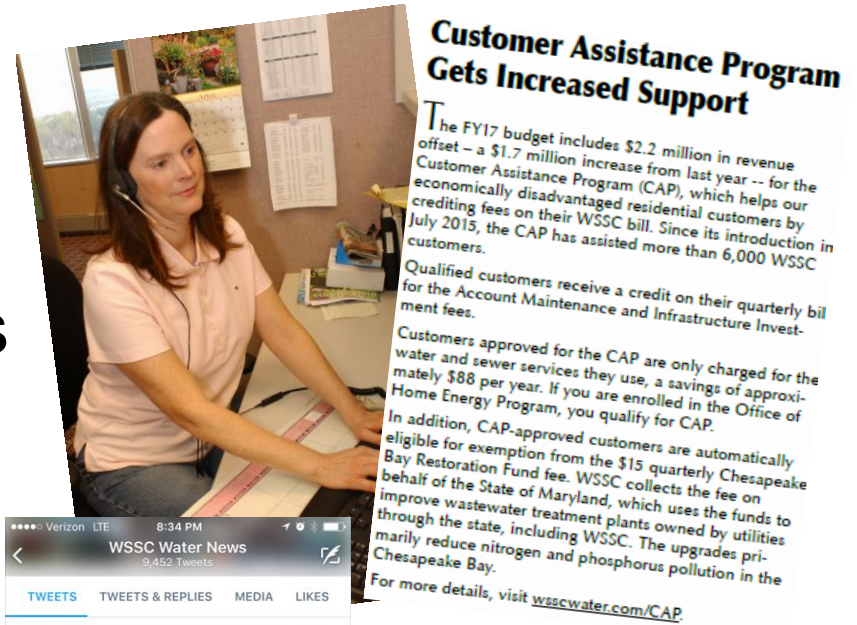
Bay Restoration Fund Fee Exemption

- ▶ WSSC offers the Bay Restoration Fee Financial Hardship Exemption Program
- ▶ Customers must meet 2 of 4 established criteria
- ▶ Offers eligible customers a quarterly \$15 Bay fee exemption
- ▶ CAP customers automatically eligible
- ▶ **10,724** current exemptions
- ▶ Rate-payer funded



Customer Outreach

- ▶ Customer Bill
- ▶ Bill Insert
- ▶ Customer Service Reps
- ▶ Community Meetings
- ▶ Pipeline Newsletter
- ▶ On-Hold Message
- ▶ Social Media
- ▶ Website



Organization Structure

Customer Service Department

▶ Customer Engagement and Advocacy Division – Functional Overview



Next Steps

- ▶ Expand outreach efforts
- ▶ Continue exploring assistance for renters in master-metered apartment buildings – Meeting with State of MD regarding Renters Tax Credit
- ▶ Scheduling meetings with State/County officials
- ▶ Benchmarking other utilities
- ▶ Obtain Commission approval for Customer Assistance Program Policy/Regulation

Next Steps

Possible Target Groups

	Prince George's Total		Montgomery Total	
Seniors	111,690	} 34%	151,360	} 31%
Disabled	55,391		48,018	
Low Income	86,265		78,290	
Veterans	59,015		45,776	
Total Population	908,049		1,043,863	

Note: 2016 Estimates Based on 2010 Census Data

Q & A

- ▶ For more information on WSSC's current Income-Eligibility Programs:
 - ▶ Click the Link - <https://www.wsscwater.com/iep> or
 - ▶ Call our Customer Service Center on **301-206-4001**