

Tap Fee Assistance Program

Policies & Procedures Guide

Richland County Utilities reserves the right to grant assistance to households that qualify as low-to-moderate income by reducing or waiving applicable tap fees for those property owners that wish to request water and/or sanitary sewer service from Richland County Utilities.

Purpose of Program

- To ensure that properties in unincorporated areas of Richland County, which are served by Richland County Utilities (RCU) water and sanitary sewer systems, have the ability to request and connect to RCU’s water and sewer system
- To increase the availability of water and sanitary sewer service, provided by RCU, to those households that qualify as Low-to-Moderate Income (LMI) households
- To wave or reduce the applicable water and/or sewer tap fee costs to potential property owners who meet the low to moderate family income limits, as established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) , in the RCU service area, as outlined in the program guidelines

Eligible Participants

- Must be a resident of Richland County and living within the RCU service area
- Must be requesting water and/or sanitary sewer service for a primary residence, which is owner occupied by the applicant. RCU may require additional information to verify and determine home ownership status.
- Must show an acceptable form of income, as requested in section **II. HOUSEHOLD INCOME** of the **TAP FEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM APPLICATION**, for the entire household. If applicant is not employed, he/she must have income documentation supporting one of the following:
 - 1) Disability Benefits
 - 2) Social Security Benefits
 - 3) Other Retirement Benefits
 - 4) Proof of Job Displacement
 - 5) Proof of Registration with Employment Security Commission
 - 6) Proof of self-employment
 - 7) Child Support
 - 8) Alimony
- Must be qualified as a household of low to moderate income (Richland County will use the Section 8 definition of income – based on 80% of the area median income with adjustments for household size. This information will be updated annually —see 2014 information below):
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HUD Income Limits 2014 Columbia MSA (Richland and Lexington Counties)								
# Of Persons in Household	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
80% Low Limits	\$32,700	\$37,350	\$42,000	\$46,650	\$50,400	\$54,150	\$57,850	\$61,600
50% Very Low Limits	\$20,450	\$23,350	\$26,250	\$29,150	\$31,500	\$33,850	\$36,150	\$38,500

**SOURCE: 2014 HUD Section 8 Income Limits. These income limits are updated on a yearly basis in April.*

- All information submitted will be treated confidentially and will not be disclosed to any outside parties, within the limits of the law.

Waiving/Reduction of Tap Fees

RCU shall reduce and/or waive any applicable tap fees for qualified applicants who meet low to moderate income (LMI) as established by Federal guidelines.

RCU shall waive the applicable tap fees in its entirety for applicants that qualify as “*very low income*” as defined by the following:

The total maximum household income of the residents within the dwelling unit shall not exceed **fifty-percent (50%)** of the most recent median annual income of similar sized families in the Richland County statistical area as published by the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

RCU shall reduce the applicable tap fees by 50% for applicants that qualify as “*low income*”, as defined by the following:

The total maximum household income of the residents within the dwelling unit shall not exceed **eighty-percent (80%)** of the most recent median annual income of similar sized families in the Richland County statistical area as published by the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

Applicants that qualify “*very low income*” or “*low income*” will also be required submit a restricted covenant or agreement in a form approved by the County Attorney guaranteeing fulfillment of the criteria prior to the reduction or waiving of the applicable tap fees.

Application Fee

RCU requires a non-refundable \$50.00 application fee in the form of a cashier’s check, money order, or cash. The application fee covers program administration and processing costs. RCU will not accept personal checks for this program.

Water and/or Sanitary Sewer Service Line

RCU is not responsible for assisting with the cost of constructing the water and/or sanitary sewer service line that will connect the residence to RCU’s water and/or sewer system. The applicant is responsible for any and all costs associated with constructing service line(s) that will connect the residence to RCU’s water and/or sanitary sewer system.

Recapture Clause

The Applicant receiving assistance from the Tap Fee assistance program must continue to reside at the residence receiving water and/or sewer service for at least one (1) year from the date of first service. If the Applicant does not maintain principal residency in the property for at least one (1) year from the date of receiving service, which includes maintaining the water and/or sewer service and paying the applicable user fees, RCU will recapture all or a portion of the Tap Fee assistance to the Applicant. If the property is sold

within one year of the applicant receiving assistance, RCU will require repayment of funds to be distributed from the net proceeds of the sale of the property. The recaptured amount will be for the full amount of the assistance and will not be pro-rated.

Eligible Property

- The property must be within RCU's water and/or sanitary sewer service area. RCU must be able to provide service to the property.
- Property must be the **primary residence** of the applicant

Conflict of Interest

It has been determined that employees of Richland County Government may be eligible, based on income, to participate in the Tap Fee Assistance Program with the exception of members and employees of:

- County Council
- County Administration Department
- Finance Department
- Utilities Department
- County Attorney's Office,
- And any other employee who exercises functions or responsibilities with respect to the activities assisted with this program.

All participants in the program must meet eligibility and program requirements.

Persons with questions or comments concerning this issue may contact, in writing, RCU at 7525 Broad River Road, Irmo, South Carolina 29063, or by calling (803) 401-0050.

Richland County Government does not discriminate on the basis of age, color, religion, sex, national origin, familial status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability in the admission or access to, or treatment of employees in its assistance programs or activities.

Grievance Procedures

The purpose of these procedures is to set forth guidelines for processing appeals from RCU as to the regulation of grievances filed by participants in the Tap Fee Assistance Program. Any applicant may appeal decisions made by RCU if he/she believes these decisions are egregious or impinge on his/her rights. A written grievance must be submitted to: Director, 7525 Broad River Road, Irmo, South Carolina 29063.

The appeals process for property owners is as follows:

1. RCU Staff
2. Richland County Administration

Level 1: RCU Staff

After receiving a written complaint every effort will be made to resolve disputes at the staff level. The appropriate staff person will meet with the aggrieved parties and with others who may be involved to

resolve disputes fairly and quickly. The staff will respond to written complaints within (30) thirty days. If the grievance is not resolved to the satisfaction of the program participant at this level, the aggrieved party can submit a written request for a hearing before Richland County Administration within (10) ten days from the receipt date of RCU's response in the form of a certified letter. This request should be sent to the Richland County Administrator, 2020 Hampton Street, Columbia, SC 29204.

Level 2: Richland County Administration

The aggrieved party is entitled to a hearing before the Richland County Administration. The County Administrator will respond to written appeals within (15) fifteen business days following the applicants hearing. This hearing represents the final level of appeal.

Application Process

Citizens interested in participating in RCU's Tap Fee Assistance Program can contact **RCU at (803) 401-0050 or at purinid@rcgov.us**.

- The Tap Fee Assistance application, along with \$50.00 fee must be submitted to RCU at 7525 Broad River Road, Irmo, South Carolina 29063 at the time request for water and/or sanitary sewer service is made. **The Tap Fee Assistance Application fee is non-refundable.** Upon receipt of the application, RCU will review the application for income eligibility and will verify employment.
- **Incomplete applications will not be processed and will be returned with explanation. The applicant will receive, in writing, the status of the application within 30 days of receiving the application. If applicant is turned down for any reason, he/she must wait six (6) months before re-submitting an application.**

Note: Income eligibility is valid for six months from the date of notification, after which household income will need to be re-verified.

- All information submitted will be treated confidentially and will not be disclosed to any outside parties within the limits of the law.
- Applicants will receive written notification either approving or denying the tap fee assistance.
- If turned down for any reason, applicant must wait six (6) months before re-applying. That will be from the day of the letter stating the reason for being turned down.

Responsibilities of the Tap Fee Assistance Program

- Provide information concerning the Tap Fee Assistance Program
- Provide assistance and follow up with applicants
- Verify employment and income(s) to determine eligibility of each applicant

RCU staff will review applications for completeness and accuracy

- Provide notification to applicant(s) regarding program eligibility

Responsibilities of Applicant

- Complete and submit the Tap Fee Assistance Program Application
- Provide RCU with the necessary income verification documents
- Keep in contact with RCU throughout the application process
- Ensure that all necessary program requirements are met
- Ensure the home is located in the RCU service area
- All information submitted will be treated confidentially and will not be disclosed to any outside parties within the limits of the law
- Construct and/or contract the construction of the service line that will connect the applicant's residence to RCU's water and/or sanitary sewer system.
- Maintain the service line connecting the residence to RCU's water and/or sanitary sewer system

Program Definitions for Further Understanding

Income

The amount of money or its equivalent received during a period of time in exchange for labor or services, from the sale of goods or property, or as profit from financial investments.

Low and Moderate Income (LMI)

Based on 80% of the areas' median income with adjustments for household size.

Primary Residence

The principal place a person lives for the majority of the year or the permanent home he/she plans to return to upon conclusion of a temporary stay elsewhere

RCU

Richland County Utilities Department.

Total Maximum Household Income

The combined income of all residents and dependents residing in the household

Unincorporated Areas

Areas of Richland County that does NOT include the City of Columbia, Eastover, Forest Acres, Irmo, Blythewood, and Arcadia Lakes.

For questions regarding the RCU Tap Fee Assistance Program, please contact:

Dan Purini
Richland County Utilities
7525 Broad river Road
Irmo, South Carolina 29063
(803) 401-0050 (office)
(803) 401-0030 (fax)
purinid@rcgov.us



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TAP FEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM APPLICATION

I. **PERSONAL INFORMATION** – *Primary residence for which you are requesting assistance must be located in the RCU service area*

A. Type of Service Requested: Water Sanitary Sewer Service

B. Property Owners' Name (print): _____
Last Name First Name MI Maiden Name

C. _____
Social Security Number Birth Date (MM/DD/YY) Age

D. _____
Street Address City Zip Code

E. _____
Day Phone # Evening Phone # Mobile Phone #

F. Married () Single () Divorced () Email _____

G. Former Address (*if less than 2 years at present address*)

Street Address City Zip Code

H. **HOUSEHOLD MEMBER INFORMATION: (Must list self and all members of household regardless of age)**

Name:	Age:	Receives Income
1. _____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
2. _____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
3. _____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
4. _____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
5. _____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

(*List any additional household members, age, and whether or not they receive income on a separate sheet of paper*)

I. NAME(S) AND NUMBER OF HANDICAPPED PERSONS IN THE HOUSEHOLD: _____

J. SPOUSE'S NAME AND SS# _____

II. HOUSEHOLD INCOME – PLEASE ATTACH LATEST INCOME TAX FORM

HOUSEHOLD INCOME FROM EMPLOYMENT (GROSS MONTHLY INCOME)

Name of Family Member	#1.	#2.	#3.	#4.
Type	Monthly Amount #1	Monthly Amount #2	Monthly Amount #3	Monthly Amount #4
Base Employment				
Overtime				
Bonuses				
Commissions				
Self Employment				

HOUSEHOLD INCOME FROM OTHER SOURCES

TYPE	MONTHLY AMOUNT	TYPE	MONTHLY AMOUNT
Pension	\$	TANF	\$
SSI	\$	Child Support	\$
Disability other than SS	\$	Business / Insurance	\$
Foster Care	\$	Alimony	\$
Social Security	\$	Rental Property	\$

III. EMPLOYMENT HISTORY –LIST LAST TWO POSITIONS WITHIN FIVE YEAR PERIOD

BEGIN WITH MOST RECENT JOB

1. Name of Family Member: (Primary)		2. Name of Family Member: (Secondary)	
Name & Address of Employer	Yrs/Mo. on Job	Name & Address of Employer	Yrs/Mo. on Job
Position:	Phone:	Position:	Phone:
Name & Address of Employer		Name & Address of Employer	
3. Other:		4. Other:	
Name & Address of Employer	Yrs/Mo on Job	Name & Address of Employer	Yrs/Mo on Job
Position:	Phone:	Position:	Phone:
Name & Address of Employer	Yrs/Mo on Job	Name & Address of Employer	Yrs/Mo on Job
Position:	Phone:	Position:	Phone:



IV. ASSETS

Checking:

Bank, S&L, or Credit Union	Address	Account #	Amount
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Savings:

Bank, S&L, or Credit Union	Address	Account#	Amount
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Life Insurance:

Company Name	Address	Account #	Cash Value
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Stocks & Bonds:

Company Name	Address	Account #	Cash Value
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Retirement Fund:

Company Name	Address	Account#	Vested Interest
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I understand that Richland County will disqualify me from participating in the Tap Fee Assistance Program if false information is reported or if information has been omitted from this application.

I authorize Richland County Utilities Department officials to obtain information pertinent to program eligibility concerning statements made in this application in regard to income, employment, assets, deposits, or debts (including credit history). I agree that the application shall remain the property of Richland County Government Homeownership Assistance Program. I further understand that information obtained will be used only for the purpose of determining eligibility and will not be disclosed to any other organization or individual.

Applicants Signature

Date

Return this completed and signed application along with supporting documentation and \$50 application fee to:

**Richland County Government
Richland County Utilities Department
7525 Broad River Road
Irmo, South Carolina 29063
Phone (803) 401-0050 Fax (803) 401-0030
www.rcgov.com**

Richland County does not discriminate on the basis of age, color, race, religion, sex, national origin, familial status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability in the admission, access to, or treatment or employment in its programs or activities.

CHECKLIST FOR SUBMITTING YOUR APPLICATION

- COMPLETED APPLICATION (Include self under **HOUSEHOLD MEMBER INFORMATION**)
- LATEST COMPLETED TAX RETURN (if self-employed bring the last 3 years)
- 6 MONTHS OF LATEST BANK STATEMENTS
- 2 MONTHS MOST RECENT PAY CHECK STUBS
- SIGNED WAIVER OF PERSONAL INFORMATION*
- DRIVERS LICENSE OR FEDERAL/STATE ISSUED ID
- **\$50 APPLICATION FEE (*IN THE FORM OF MONEY ORDER OR A CASHIER'S CHECK*)**
- PROOF OF ADDITIONAL INCOME TO INCLUDE: CHILD SUPPORT, SSI, ALIMONY, ETC.
- ANY DOCUMENTATION OF LEGAL SEPARATION

*

** IF YOU SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION WITH A PERSONAL CHECK, RICHLAND COUNTY WILL NOT ACCEPT IT AND IT WILL BE GIVEN BACK TO YOU WITH A REQUEST FOR A MONEY ORDER OR CASHIER'S CHECK.

PLEASE NOTE THAT RICHLAND COUNTY UTILITIES DEPARTMENT OFFICE WILL NOT ACCEPT AN APPLICATION WITHOUT ALL THE ABOVE LISTED ITEMS.

CALCULATING ANNUAL INCOME

1. Name Click here to enter text.		2. Identification XXX-XX- Click here to enter text.			
ASSETS					
Family Member	Asset Description	Current Cash Value Of Assets		Actual Income From Assets	
Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	\$Enter amount		\$Enter amount	
Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	\$Enter amount		\$Enter amount	
Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	\$Enter amount		\$Enter amount	
Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	\$Enter amount		\$Enter amount	
Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	\$Enter amount		\$Enter amount	
3. Net Cash Value of Assets.....		3. \$ Enter total amount			
4. Total Actual Income from Assets.....				4. \$ Enter total amount	
5. If line 3 is greater than \$5,000, multiply line by <u>2.5%</u> (Passbook Rate) and enter results here; otherwise, leave blank				5. \$ Enter amount	
ANTICIPATED ANNUAL INCOME					
Family Members	Wages/ Salaries	Benefits/ Pensions	Public Assistance	Other Income	Asset Income
Click here to enter text.	\$Enter amount	\$Enter amount	\$Enter amount	\$Enter amount	Enter the greater of lines 4 or 5 from above in e.
Click here to enter text.	\$Enter amount	\$Enter amount	\$Enter amount	\$Enter amount	
Click here to enter text.	\$Enter amount	\$Enter amount	\$Enter amount	\$Enter amount	
Click here to enter text.	\$Enter amount	\$Enter amount	\$Enter amount	\$Enter amount	
Click here to enter text.	\$Enter amount	\$Enter amount	\$Enter amount	\$Enter amount	
6. Totals	a. \$Enter total amount	b. \$Enter total amount	c. \$Enter total amount	d. \$Enter total amount	e. \$Enter amount
Enter total of items from 6a. through 6e. This is Annual Income					7. \$ Enter total amount