



## Water Affordability: Need to Know for Your Home

### Water Affordability Is a Growing Issue

- Water rates grew by almost 80% over the past decade (2008-2018) in northeastern Illinois.<sup>1</sup>
- In Chicago, households with the lowest incomes are the most burdened and pay on average almost 10% of their income on their water bill.<sup>2</sup>

### What Should I Do if My Water Has Been Shut-off for Non-payment?

- If you or someone you know is living without water, contact Elevate at **855-372-8377** or email us at [info@ElevateNP.org](mailto:info@ElevateNP.org).

### Where Can You Find Assistance?

- **Illinois's low-income household water assistance program (LIHWAP)** is designed to help households that are facing the threat of water disconnection or have past due water balances of \$250 or more. Contact CEDA at 800-571-2332 for more information
- **Chicago's Utility Billing Relief (UBR)** program addresses past water debt by providing a 50% rate reduction on water, sewer, and water-sewer taxes (eligibility is the same as for LIHEAP). Contact CEDA at 800-571-2332 for more information.
- **Utility Bill Payment Plans** can be set up with the City of Chicago for qualified customers. Learn more by contacting the City at 312-744-4426.
- **The Citizen's Utility Board** offers utility and water bill analysis and more information on water saving tips, LIHWAP, and understanding your water bill. Call 800-669-5556 for information.

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1. Water Affordability in Northeastern Illinois, Elevate and Metropolitan Planning Council, 2018.

2. City of Chicago Water Affordability Analysis, Elevate and Metropolitan Planning Council, 2022.

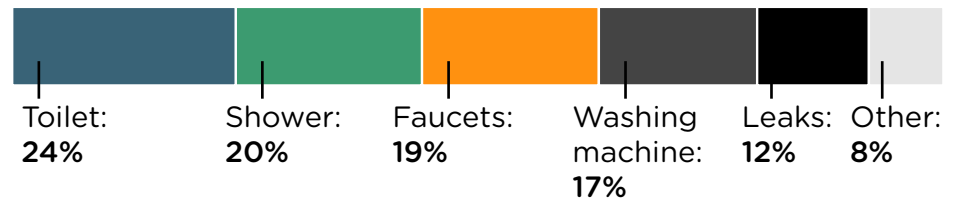


## Save on Water Costs at Home

### Water usage at Home

On average, a family of four will use over 300 gallons of water a day or 10,500 gallons a month. Roughly 70% of this use occurs indoors.<sup>3</sup>

### WHERE DO WE USE OUR WATER?



SOURCE: EPA WaterSense

### How Can I Save on Water Costs at Home?<sup>4</sup>

#### **PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR WATER BILL**

If you notice a spike in usage or costs, contact your utility. Abnormal spikes in usage may indicate a leak. Repairing or replacing leaky faucets and toilets can help you save.

#### **TACKLE THAT TOILET**

Flushing is the biggest water hog in the house. Older toilets can use 5 to 7 gallons per flush, but low-flow models use as little as 1.6 gallons. Considering replacing your toilet or put a plastic bottle filled with water in your toilet tank to reduce the amount of water used per flush. To check for a toilet leak, put dye or food coloring into the tank. If color appears in the bowl without flushing, there's a leak that should be repaired.

#### **STOP THE DRIPS**

If your sink or bathtub faucets leak one drip per second, you'll waste more than 3,000 gallons per year. You could take 180 showers with all that water! Repair or replace faucets to save water.

#### **INVEST IN WATER EFFICIENT DEVICES**

If you need to purchase a new dishwasher,

washing machine, or toilet, look for one with a WaterSense label. Water-efficient fixtures and appliances can use at least 20% less water.

#### **INVEST IN LITTLE HABITS THAT CUT BACK ON WATER USE**

Run full loads of laundry and dishes, take shorter showers, and turn off the water while you brush your teeth to save water and money.

#### **WATCH YOUR WATER USE OUTDOORS**

Consider planting drought resistant plants. If you need to water your grass, avoid doing so during the heat of the day.

#### **WATER SAVINGS = ELECTRICITY SAVINGS**

When you cut back on your hot water use, you'll save money on your electricity bill.<sup>5</sup>

#### **GET AN ENERGY ASSESSMENT**

Utilities often offer free energy assessments that include the installation of water saving devices like low-flow showerheads and aerators. Contact your energy utility to learn more.

## Want To Learn More?

Visit [ElevateNP.org/Water-Affordability](http://ElevateNP.org/Water-Affordability) to learn more about ways to reduce your water costs.

3. How We Use Water, US EPA Water Sense

4. Ibid

5. Water Footprint Calculator, Grace Communications Foundation