



THIS IS WHAT WE DO: UNHP  
RESEARCH & ACTION

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2021 WATER AND SEWER  
RATES AND THEIR  
IMPACT ON AFFORDABLE  
HOUSING SEMINAR

THURSDAY, MAY 27, 9 AM



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**UNIVERSITY NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSING PROGRAM**

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# Seminar on Water & Sewer Rates

University Neighborhood Housing Program

May 24, 2021

## Agenda

1. Introduction  
*VaNessa Lanier, Board Member, UNHP*
2. UNHP and Water & Sewer Advocacy  
*Jim Buckley, Executive Director, UNHP*
3. Presentation  
*Brendan Mitchell, Director of Real Estate, UNHP*  
*Caroline Kirk, Data Analyst, UNHP*
4. Advocacy Next Steps  
Testimony for Water Board hearing - June 1st and 2nd, 2021  
Sustainable Water Rate Study
5. Questions & Comments



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# UNHP Water & Sewer Advocacy

University Neighborhood Housing Program  
25th Anniversary Affordable Housing Forum

Water & Sewer  
Rate Reform Sum

Can New York City achieve  
affordable water rates,  
promote conservation,  
and control capital costs?

Thursday, April 10th, 2008  
8:30–11:00 AM

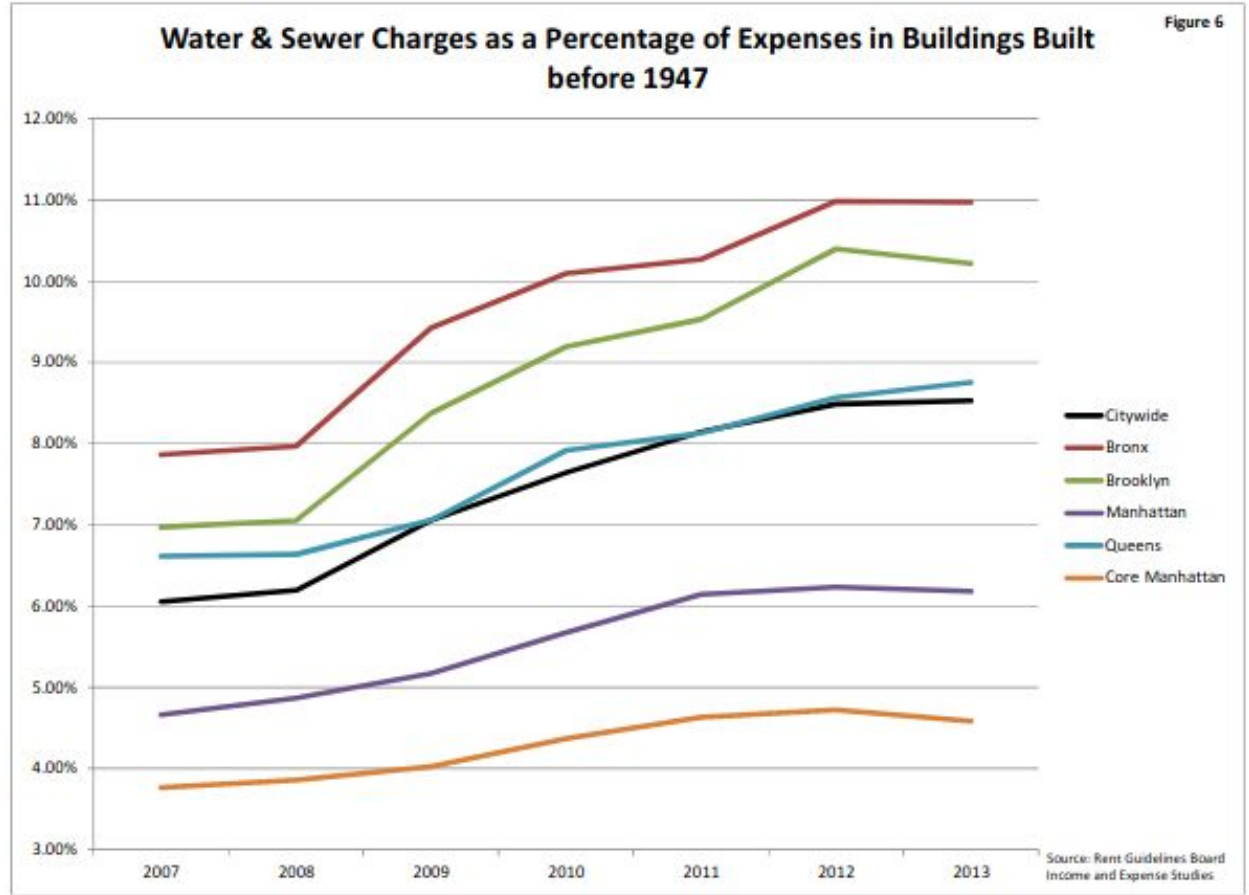
Fordham University's Rose Hill Campus,  
Faculty Lounge McGinley Center

University Neighborhood Housing Program

## Affordable Water for Affordable Housing:

A Proposal for  
An Affordable Housing Cap  
for Water and Sewer Rates

April 29, 2015



Source: [https://unhp.org/pdf/Affordable Water for Affordable Housing - WEB VERSION - June 16 2015.pdf](https://unhp.org/pdf/Affordable_Water_for_Affordable_Housing_-_WEB_VERSION_-_June_16_2015.pdf)

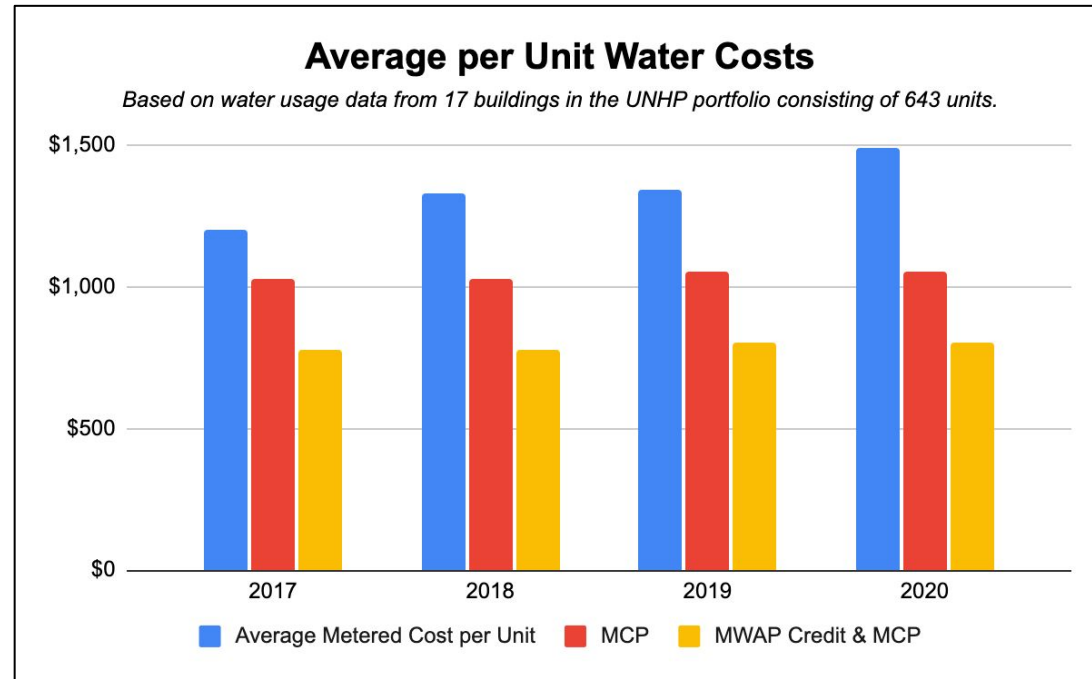


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## UNHP Water Portfolio

- In 2020 the average metered cost per unit in UNHP's portfolio was nearly \$1,500. Increased consumption in 2020 was likely due to stay-at-home orders at the start of the pandemic.
- Multifamily Conservation Program (MCP) billing water costs remained stable at around \$1,050 per unit.
- Multifamily Water Assistance Program (MWAP) can add \$250 per unit of credits on top of MCP.



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## Affordability Programs

- The MWAP will get an additional \$2 million of \$250 water credits.
- For buildings automatically enrolled in the Multifamily Conservation Program, compliance requirements for those who have not yet filed will be delayed for another year.

	FY 2021 Program Budget (per year)	Proposed Expansion	Proposed FY 2022 Program Budget (per year)
<b>Multi-Family Water Assistance Program (4-unit +)</b>	\$10 million	Additional 8,000 affordable apartment unit credits, for 48,000 total credits of \$250 each	\$12 million
<b>Home Water Assistance Program (1-4 unit)</b>	\$6 million	Larger \$145 bill credit to all recipients, and additional 45,000 new recipients (96,000 total)	\$14 million
<b>Leak Forgiveness Program</b>	\$4 million	Program in line with current terms, 50% bill credit for self-reported leaks that are fixed	\$4 million
<b>Total Affordability Programs</b>	<b>\$20 million</b>	<b>+ \$10 million additional customer affordability funds</b>	<b>\$30 million</b>



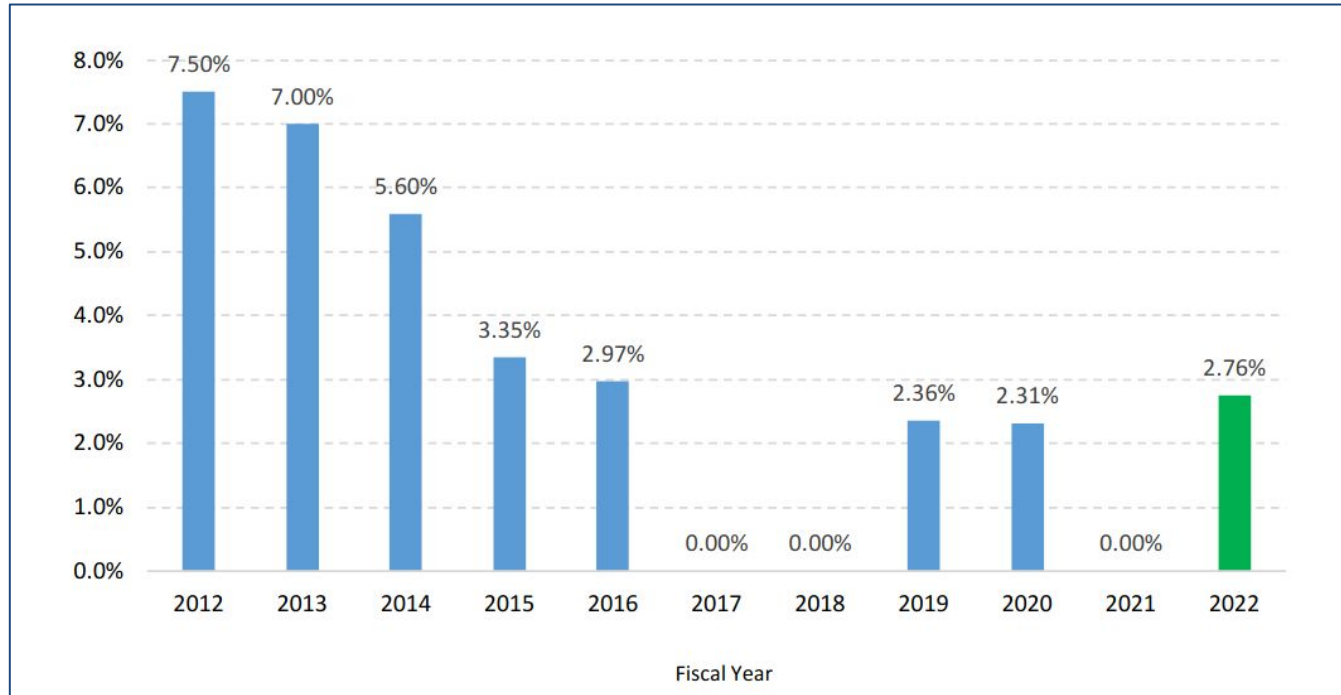
Source: [https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/nycwaterboard/downloads/pdf/minutes\\_and\\_resolutions/wb-meeting-materials-05-10-21.pdf](https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/nycwaterboard/downloads/pdf/minutes_and_resolutions/wb-meeting-materials-05-10-21.pdf)

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## 2022 Water Rate Proposal

- DEP is proposing a 2.76% rate increase, effective July 1, 2021.
- DEP has increased water rates for 8 of the last 11 years.
- Increase in delinquency penalty from 5% to 18% for all property with taxable assessed values more than \$250k.



Source: [https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/nycwaterboard/downloads/pdf/minutes\\_and\\_resolutions/wb-meeting-materials-05-10-21.pdf](https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/nycwaterboard/downloads/pdf/minutes_and_resolutions/wb-meeting-materials-05-10-21.pdf)

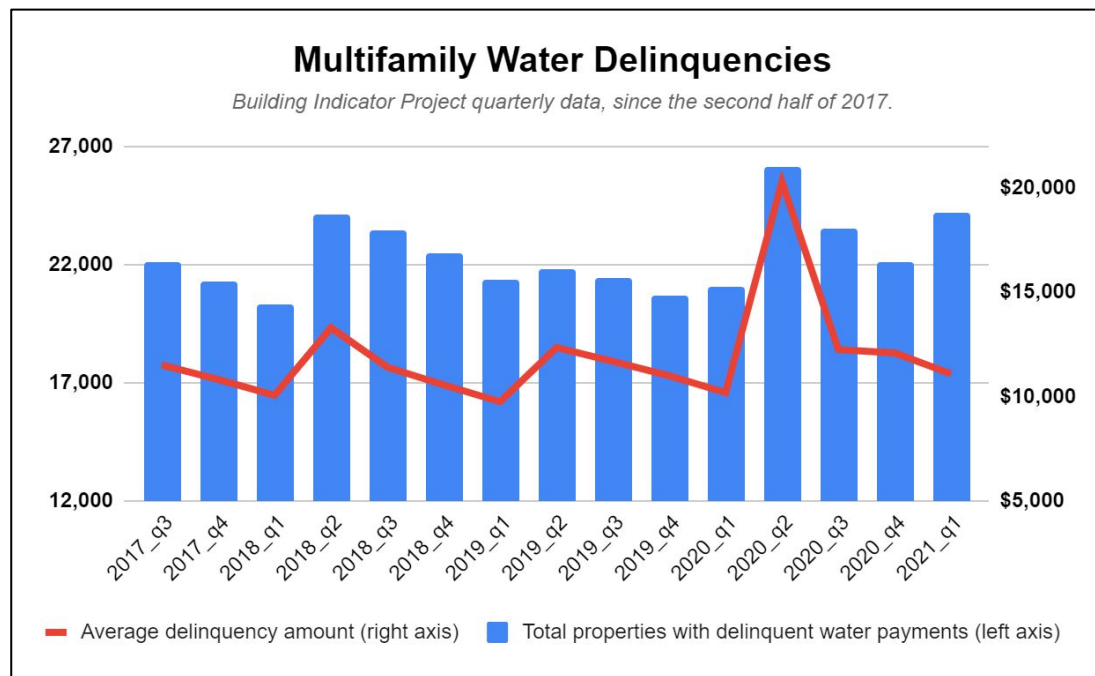


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## Building Indicator Project Water Data

- UNHP receives data on overdue water charges by property from DEP on a quarterly basis.
- Overdue water charges are an early sign of building distress (the first expense an owner may defer).
- Data are seasonal, but show a recent uptick in the number of delinquent properties.



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# Water Payment Delinquencies

## BIP Data

- The count of BIP buildings delinquent for a year increased roughly 7% between 2020 and 2021.
- The average amount that BIP buildings were delinquent on increased just over 13%.

## DEP Data

- Between March 2020 and March 2021 the year over year change in delinquent accounts receivable among 4+ unit properties rose 42.2%.
- The average delinquency amount in 4+ unit properties also rose in that same period, by 32.8%.

### Accounts receivable delinquent more than 180 days

Dollars in millions	2/29/20	2/28/21	1-yr Change	No. of accounts	2/29/20	2/28/21	1-yr Change
Small residential (1-3 units)	\$321.4	\$380.4	18.4%	Small residential (1-3 units)	81,233	93,229	14.8%
Large residential (4+ units)	\$171.2	\$227.3	32.8%	Large residential (4+ units)	9,891	14,069	42.2%
Commercial + industrial	\$101.2	\$142.4	40.6%	Commercial + industrial	6,440	9,082	41.0%
All accounts	\$593.8	\$750.1	26.3%	All accounts	97,564	116,380	19.3%



Source: [https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/nycwaterboard/downloads/pdf/minutes\\_and\\_resolutions/wb-meeting-agenda-03-23-21.pdf](https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/nycwaterboard/downloads/pdf/minutes_and_resolutions/wb-meeting-agenda-03-23-21.pdf)

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# Water Rate Advocacy - Next Steps

## *Immediate Term Advocacy*

- Attend the public hearings about the rate increase, held remotely on Tuesday, June 1, at 12:00pm, and Wednesday June 2nd, at 6:00pm. Details [here](#).
- Submit written testimony to the Water Board through their email: [nycwaterboard@dep.nyc.gov](mailto:nycwaterboard@dep.nyc.gov)
- What UNHP will be saying at the hearings:
  - We oppose the requested 2.76% increase;
  - We support the increase in Customer Affordability Programs;
  - We are concerned about the impact of the 18% penalty rate and urge the Water Board to monitor the impact of this change, especially among long-delinquent properties;
  - We want to inquire about whether any of the federal aid that is coming to New York could be used to reduce the amount of capital work that needs to be financed.

## *Long Term Advocacy*

- Urge that NYC leave the ‘rental payment’ owed by DEP annually in the hands of the Water Board in order to keep rates down;
- Urge that changes to water rate structures include analysis of the impact on affordable housing and homeownership.
  - Including greater participation from CBOs in the Sustainable Rate Structure Analysis Working Group.



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## Links and Resources

- [Notice of Public Hearing](#) for Water Rate Increase
- May 2021 NYC Water Board [meeting notes and presentation](#)
- UNHP blog post, “[A Year Into the Pandemic: Affordable Housing Faces Challenges, Old and New](#)”
- UNHP 2015 Report, [Affordable Water for Affordable Housing](#)
- UNHP 2008 Report, [Water and Sewer Rate Reform Summit](#)
- Additional UNHP blogs on water & sewer:
  - [\\$10m Water Credit Yields Benefits for Bronx Affordable Housing](#) (2018)
  - [Water Board Approves \\$10m Credit for Affordable Housing](#) (2016)
  - [Spring Brings Rising Water Rates and Tighter Budgets](#) (2014)
- NRDC [Stormwater Fee Simulator](#) for New York City
- [Multifamily Water Assistance Program](#) Portal (see FAQ for application process)



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