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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**DEADLINE EXTENDED TO RE-QUALIFY FOR  
HELP-4-YOU UTILITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

*Customers on the Town's Help-4-You Utility Assistance Program will have extra time to submit necessary documentation to re-qualify for the rate credit.*

Stevensville, MT – Stevensville Mayor Brandon E. Dewey today announced the re-qualification deadline for customers that participate in the Town's Help-4-You Utility Assistance Program. The deadline, originally set for March 31, required customers to submit copies of their tax returns or other income information in order to continue to receive a credit on their water and sewer bill. That deadline now coincides with the new IRS tax filing deadline of July 15, 2020.

Earlier this year, customers already receiving the Help-4-You credit on their bills were sent a re-qualification packet asking them to update their information for the Town. The information is used to re-determine a customer's eligibility for the program. Some customers have not yet completed their tax returns or have limited access to the information they need to submit due to the COVID-19 health emergency. The Town's Finance Department, which oversees the program, has taken steps to extend the deadline and ensure customers continue to receive the credit until the re-qualification is complete.

Under the Town of Stevensville's Help-4-You Assistance Program, customers are eligible for a credit on their water and/or sewer O & M bill if they are a low income, senior, or disabled adult living in a residence receiving a separate Town of Stevensville water or sewer bill. The rate reduction does not apply to water and/or sewer bond charge(s).

To qualify for the program, the customer must be at least 62 years of age or older and have a household income of \$28,000 or less. Customers who are at least 18 years of age with a household income of \$28,000 or less and receive permanent Social Security disability payments also qualify for the program.

Qualified customers receive a reduction on their utility bill by these percentages:

- 0-50 percent of qualifying household income receive a 75 percent rate reduction.
- 51-75 percent of qualifying household income receive a 50 percent reduction.
- 76-100 percent of qualifying household income receive a 25 percent reduction.

For example: A customer who is 69 years old and has an annual household income of \$24,000 would receive a 25 percent reduction. Assuming the customer was only charged the based charge and did not exceed the 3,000-gallon base usage, their water and sewer bill combined would be \$73.45

That same customer, with an annual household income of \$12,000, would receive a 75 percent reduction and their utility bill could be as low as \$50.28

Nearly all sources of income are considered when applying for the program. Sources include wages, retirement income, social security, permanent disability income, VA benefits, gross rental income and gross business income. To certify income customers must provide copies of tax returns with all schedules and supporting documentation. If you are applying for a disability reduction, you must provide a current (less than three months old) statement of eligibility, plus the above requirements. Contact Social Security (800.772.1213) to request benefit verification. The privacy of our customers is important, and all information that is used to certify eligibility is reviewed by the Town's Finance Officer and kept completely confidential.

If you are a renter and the property owner pays the utility bill on your behalf, and you are eligible for this program, the property owner must also certify that you rent has been reduced by the amount of the rate reduction. Please contact Town Hall for further information.

The Town accepts applications for the program year-round and re-qualifies customers annually.

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