

How can the Trust help me?

Depending on your circumstances, the Trust may:

- o approve a payment arrangement, which may include a write-off of part or all of the amount owed to Watercare
- or
- o decline the application.

How do I apply?

You will need to complete an application form. Please call or email us to request a form or download one from our website.

- o Phone: (09) 625 8176
- o Email: info@waterassistance.org.nz
- o Website: www.waterassistance.org.nz

Alternatively, you can pick up a form from a budget advisory service or Citizens Advice Bureau branch.

How long does the process take?

The process usually takes three to six weeks. This depends on the:

- o application being filled out correctly
- o timing of the meeting with the approved budget advisor
- o timing of the meeting of the Trust.

How can I contact the Trust?

You can contact us by phone, email or post. We also have information and the application form on our website.

- o Phone: (09) 625 8176
- o Email: info@waterassistance.org.nz
- o Website: www.waterassistance.org.nz
- o Address: Water Utility Consumer Assistance Trust
PO Box 79 – 233
Royal Heights
Auckland 0656

Unable to pay your water bill?



What is the Water Utility Consumer Assistance Trust?

The Water Utility Consumer Assistance Trust provides financial support to customers of Watercare Services Limited (Watercare) who are struggling to manage their water and/or wastewater costs. It is a charitable trust that receives funding from Watercare, Auckland's water and wastewater service provider.

Please note the Trust can *only* consider applications relating to bills from Watercare.

Am I eligible to be considered for assistance?

To be eligible to be considered for assistance, you need to be a residential customer of Watercare who:

- o is an owner-occupier or tenant (landlords of tenanted properties cannot apply)
- o has not expressly communicated to Watercare your refusal to pay your Watercare bill
- o has generally paid your Watercare bills in the past
- o has not received assistance from the Trust in the past 24 months, unless you can demonstrate extenuating circumstances beyond your control
- o is prepared to work with a budget advisory service approved by the Trust
- o is prepared to share your personal financial details with the Trust, including bank statements
- o has agreed to Watercare notifying your landlord (if applicable) about the application, as your landlord is Watercare's customer.

Once you have been identified as eligible to be considered for assistance, your financial situation will be assessed by a budget advisory service approved by the Trust. To receive financial support, you need to:

- o be experiencing financial hardship. This means that you are likely to have difficulty paying your Watercare bills without affecting your ability to meet your basic living needs
- o show a willingness to deal with debt
- o be able to pay future Watercare bills in all likelihood.

What happens after I submit my application?

Step one

The Trust's administrator will work out whether or not you are eligible to be considered for assistance.

If you are not eligible, you will receive a letter saying your application has been declined.

Step two

If you are eligible, Watercare will temporarily put your account on hold from its credit management processes until a decision is made by the Trust regarding your application. This means you will not have any debt collection procedures applied in the meantime, including water restrictions.

Step three

You will have three weeks to meet with an approved budget advisor who will fully assess your financial situation. You will be sent a list of budget advisory services approved by the Trust as well as a form to take to the meeting. If you have received another bill from Watercare, you will be asked to take it to the meeting. It can be considered as part of your application.

Step four

You and the approved budget advisor will work through the form together, identifying your income and expenses. The approved budget advisor will assess what you can afford to pay and return the form to the Trust on your behalf.

Step five

The Trust will assess your application at its monthly meeting. Depending on your circumstances, it may:

- o approve a payment arrangement, which may include a write-off of part or all of the amount owed to Watercare
- or
- o decline your application.

Step six

The Trust will inform you and Watercare of its decision. Watercare will work with you to implement the approved payment arrangements.