

## Customer Impact of Utility Rates

Resources for Understanding and Assessing Affordability and Equity Issues

### Affordability

- [Water Affordability Self-Assessment Tool \(WASA\)](#), developed by the [Southwest EFC](#), is a web-based tool to assess whether their rates are affordable according to several different measures, including median household income, cost of service for those in the lowest 20% of income, and the number of hours at minimum wage needed to pay the bill.
- [UNC Affordability Assessment Tool](#) contains a series of dashboards which allow users to enter relevant Census data on their service community to help assess the affordability of the water and/or wastewater rates.
- [Michigan State University Institute of Public Utilities](#) The Institute of Public Utilities (IPU) supports informed, effective, and efficient regulation of the infrastructure-intensive network industries providing essential services, such as electricity and water. They have many resources dedicated to [water affordability](#).
- [AWWA Affordability Assessment Tool for Federal Water Mandates](#) examines the strains that increased utility rates have on communities as well as the utility's need to continue to operate within regulations. This document assesses EPA's affordability criteria which could provide a mechanism for utilities to ease the strain on community members.
- [Public Policy Institute of California Water Policy Center](#) spurs innovative water management solutions that support a healthy economy, environment, and society—now and for future generations.
- [Manny Teodoro](#) is an associate professor for the University of Wisconsin whose research examines public policy and management with a focus on utility management. His work examines [water affordability](#), [distrust in government](#), [environmental justice in the Safe Drinking Water Act](#), and more intersectional issues.
- [EPA Water Infrastructure and Resiliency Finance Center](#) provides financing information to help communities make informed decisions for drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater investments.
- [Duke University Nicholas Institute for Environmental Policy Solutions – Water Affordability Dashboard](#) provides users with the opportunity to explore water services to learn about the effect on households.
- [Economic Policy Family Budget Calculator](#) measure the income a family need to attain a modest and adequate standard of living.

### Equity

- [SPENT](#) is a simulation program that was launched in February 2011 as a collaboration between McKinney and Urban Ministries of Durham. The program provides insight into strains that low-income families may experience.

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- [US Water Alliance Water Equity](#) has resources to help communities understand the importance of equitable investment in water, wastewater, and stormwater systems. The US Water Alliance also hosts the [Water Equity Network](#) which seeks to join together stakeholders to advance equitable water management.
- [EJScreen](#) is an environmental justice screening and mapping tool that can assist users with identifying environmental and demographic indicators.
- [Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool](#) helps users identify disadvantaged communities that are marginalized, underserved, or overburdened by environmental issues.

### Other

- [Water Rates Dashboard](#) shows water rates data from 30 major US cities to show average monthly residential utility prices. Other data, including information about rate formulas and other funding sources are available.
- [Low Income Home Water Assistance Program](#) provides funding to assist low-income households with water and wastewater bills.
- [Community Sustainability Tool](#) is a tool for communities to assess if their current utility rates could support financing water and/or wastewater infrastructure investments.
- [Water Rate Checkup Tool](#) is an online tool that assists Kansas public drinking water systems with calculating rates for utility service.