Orange Water and Sewer Authority
Affordability Outreach Program Update

Year 5: January 2020 – December 2020

Purpose
OWASA’s Affordability Outreach Program is designed to increase community awareness of options to manage and reduce water and sewer bills and to empower low-income customers, and the local agencies that serve them, with information and tools to manage and reduce water and sewer bills. The following plan provides an update on the fourth year (2019) of OWASA’s Affordability Outreach Program and proposes strategies for the coming year (2020).

Background
“Affordability and Cost Management” is one of the five key themes in OWASA’s Strategic Plan. During rate-setting discussions and strategic planning meetings, the OWASA Board of Directors has identified water conservation as a key strategy for customers – especially to those in financial need – to lower monthly water and sewer bills.

And while, because of legal and bond order restrictions, we cannot provide free service or charge different rates based on our customers’ ability to pay, as a member of the community, we recognize the need to ensure that water and wastewater service meets a basic human need. It’s important to OWASA that our services be accessible to the community to protect both public health and the environment.

Furthermore, water conservation practices and investments in efficiency make our community better prepared for droughts; defer the need for multimillion-dollar expansion of OWASA system capacities; and reduce greenhouse gas emissions from use of conventional energy sources to pump lake water, drinking water, wastewater, and treated wastewater. Water conservation has been identified as a key strategy in addressing customer affordability because it reduces costs for customer service, service delivery, and long-term water resource provision. Water conservation has the potential for sustained positive impact for customers, including reduction in water and sewer bills, as well as energy costs associated with heating water. Additionally, our Affordability Outreach Program enhances OWASA’s engagement with the community.

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1 Previous Plans were reviewed, discussed, and approved by the OWASA Board of Directors at the October 22, 2015, December 8, 2016, February 8, 2018, and January 24, 2019 meetings.
The foundation of OWASA’s Affordability Outreach Program remains the partnership with local, social service agencies. We are grateful for their continued collaboration and engagement and look forward to our continued work with them.

Program Objectives

OWASA’s Affordability Outreach Program is designed to increase community awareness of options to manage and reduce water and sewer bills and to empower low-income customers, and the local agencies that serve them, with information and tools to manage and reduce OWASA bills. The following goals and metrics provide an indication of water and sewer service affordability and our efforts to provide relevant outreach to the community.

- **Increase contributions to our Care to Share program:** Through the Care to Share Program, OWASA customers can contribute funds to provide bill payment assistance to other OWASA customers in-need. Currently, 960 customers contribute to Care to Share on their monthly OWASA bill. In 2019, on-bill contributions raised over $11,089 for the Interfaith Council for Social Services to provide utility bill assistance. This was about $3,400 more than was raised in 2018 (a 44% increase) and $5,800 more than was raised in 2017 (a 209% increase).

  In addition, individuals and businesses can donate directly to the Interfaith Council for Social Service and request their funds go to Care to Share. In 2019, $1,450 was donated directly from the public to the program.

- **Decrease average water use of those customers with whom we engage through our affordability outreach program:** The following report summarizes a spectrum of strategies through which we have engaged and propose to engage with customers to decrease their water use. Unfortunately, crediting changes in water use to general outreach is challenging at best. Nonetheless, it remains an objective of the program.

- **Minimize cut-offs due to non-payment:** Although water service cut-offs are an important tool to ensure timely bill payment, they cause great hardship to OWASA customers. OWASA’s reconnection fee (after service cut-off) is $45. If we can help a customer avoid a service cutoff, we help them avoid this fee. Over the past three and a half years, trends in service cut-off due to non-payment have stabilized following a steady decline between July 2014 and June 2016. This decline was due in-part to increased effort to remind customers of upcoming bills, and to move from 21-day to 25-day due dates in 2016. Last year, approximately 613 (3%) of our customers were cut-off from service at least once. One hundred and fifty-two (152) of those customers were cut-off from service more than once, potentially evidence of OWASA’s true affordability challenge.
Figure 1: The number of cutoffs, on average, has been relatively stable over the past three years

Our program strives to engage customers who experience difficulty paying for OWASA services. Primarily, these customers are those who:

- Request and receive bill payment assistance from local social service agencies, including the Inter-Faith Council for Social Services (IFC) and the “Care to Share” program;
- Request extensions of credit to manage bill payments; and
- Have service cut-off due to non-payment of bills.

We recognize there are other customers for whom water and sewer service comprises a significant portion of their monthly household expenses that do not fall into any of these categories. By working with our partners in the community, we are able to proactively address affordability concerns before a customer may have to request bill assistance or is cut-off from service. Additionally, it is important to note that while many of the strategies discussed below (including in-home water use assessments) focus on specific households, these services are generally available to our entire customer base upon request, as we cannot differentiate services to our customers based on their financial position or need.

Strategies for Addressing Affordability

The Affordability Outreach Program includes six major strategies for addressing the affordability of OWASA’s services. These strategies are:

- Rates and Billing,
- Information and Outreach,
- Bill Assistance,
- Water Efficiency Retrofits,
- Leak Identification, and
- Partnership.
We have pursued a number of initiatives, for which the remainder of this document will provide an update, as well as propose new and continued tactics for the coming year. The Agua Vista web portal is an exciting new resource made available to all OWASA customers in 2019. Agua Vista a cornerstone of our customer and affordability outreach efforts.

Rates and Billing
Rate structures, rate levels, and billing arrangements have significant ramifications for the affordability of water and sewer service for all OWASA customers.

OWASA’s Board-adopted Financial Management Policy includes a Service Affordability goal that the average annual residential bill shall be no more than 1.5% of median household income (MHI). Currently, the average bill (for 4,000 gallons of water) is $75.67, which annually equals 1.4% of the MHI for Chapel Hill ($67,426) and 1.6% of the MHI for Carrboro ($56,573).

Although, on average, we are meeting our goal, this metric fails to capture true service affordability in our community. The MHI in our service area is relatively high. Using this metric alone to gauge the affordability of water and sewer service underemphasizes the challenge that some members of our community have in paying their utility bill.

About 21% of Chapel Hill residents and 22% of Carrboro residents have annual household income of $25,000 or less. An average bill of $75.67 costs 3.6% of an annual income of $25,000, representing a significantly larger portion of household income than for those at the median. Put another way, at minimum wage, it would require 10.4 hours of work to afford essential water and sewer services for a family of four in OWASA’s service area.

Ensuring that affordable rates, particularly for essential water use, is a very important affordability strategy.

2019 Update and Continued Initiatives for 2020

Choose Your Own Bill Date: Prior to having Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI), OWASA was geographically constrained by meter reading routes as to when customers were billed. Once a bill is issued, customers have 25 days to the due date. This practice provides customers almost a month to pay their water bill. However, for some customers (particularly those on fixed incomes that are paid once per month), their bill date may not align well with income payments, and money may be short by the time the bill comes. AMI allows us the flexibility to offer a change in bill date, if it will help a customer manage their monthly water bill. AMI provides this tool in the toolbox of our customer service team as they work with our customers to manage their bills.

Payment options: In 2019, there were diverse preferences for how customers want to pay their bills. OWASA offers payment by cash, check or credit card in-person; mailed checks; online credit/debit card payments; and automatic draft. In recent years, we have expanded options to allow over-the-phone payment with a credit card and pay-by-text. These options allow a customer to pay just-in-time and can help avoid service cut-off. In 2019, we received over 2,130 pay-by-text payments.
**Cost Management:** Every OWASA employee is a steward of OWASA customer funds. It is imperative that customer funds are expended strategically to achieve the mission and goals of the organization established in partnership with the community we serve. Cost management has and will continue to be an important strategy to addressing the affordability of our services.

**Information and Outreach**
Through accessible and engaging outreach, we aim to give our customers useful information and strategies for reducing their OWASA bill. In 2020, we propose to continue with many of the initiatives implemented over previous years and to continue to explore and utilize the Agua Vista Web Portal to show customers how to save money by saving water.

**2019 Update and Continued Initiatives for 2020**

**Participate in and provide outreach material for community events:** Last year, we worked with our partners, as well as directly with customers, to share water conservation information, low-flow devices (showerheads, aerators, and leak detection tablets), and shower timers. We continue to use the infographic and motion graphic developed in Year 1 of the Program to engage customers in water wise behavior. The infographic was developed in English and Spanish (Figure 2); the motion graphic was narrated in English, Spanish, Burmese, and Karen and can be found on OWASA’s YouTube Channel.

In addition to promoting water conservation, getting customers registered for Agua Vista was a key message in our community outreach this past year. Currently, 36% of eligible customers are registered for Agua Vista, which means they have access to customized water conservation tips and detailed water use information. Moreover, the system knows how best to notify a customer (email, phone, text, mail) if and when they have a water leak that could lead to a high-water bill.

![Figure 2: Snapshot of Agua Vista Flyer (in Spanish)](image)
Below is a summary of outreach initiatives where we distributed water conservation brochures and low-flow devices, shared water conservation tips, and promoted Agua Vista. The Water Wagon continues to be a helpful platform to use in community outreach.

- **Water Wagon Events**  
  - Science Expo (April 6)  
  - Carrboro Day (May 5)  
  - Town of Chapel Hill 4th of July (July 4)  
  - RENA Center Summer Camp (July 11)  
  - National Night Out (August 6)  
  - Latin American Festival (August 25)  
  - Carrboro Citizen and Chapel Hill People’s Academy (October 19)  
  - Chapel Hill Festifall (October 1)
- **Tables at Chapel Hill Public Housing National Night Out Events in Craig-Gomains and Eastwood Neighborhoods**
- **Presentation to Orange County’s Aging Transitions Team on water efficiency, conservation, and Agua Vista**
- **Delivery of water conservation kits to Community Home Trust and Empowerment for distribution to residents**
- **Agua Vista Tutorial at Orange County Seymour Senior Center**
- **WCHL Wonderful Water session on Agua Vista and Care to Share**
- **Publication of Agua Vista Flyer in Affordability Partner’s newsletters, including:**  
  - Orange County Family Success Alliance (July 2019) – English and Spanish  
  - Chapel Hill Public Housing Newsletter (August through December 2019)
- **Display of Agua Vista banner in OWASA lobby**
- **Agua Vista demonstration to IFC Staff; provided 25 shower timers to distribute**
- **Distribution of “Save Water Kits” in response to surveys taken regarding the Water Quality Report Card**
In 2020, we will continue to offer presentations and informational resources to community members, particularly through our affordability partners. This year, we anticipate continued interest in the Agua Vista web portal and will focus our presentations and outreach on getting more customers interested in and registered for the portal.

**Direct mail to recipients of bill assistance:** In June 2016, we began sending letters to recipients of assistance for OWASA bill payment. In 2019, we mailed 70 water efficiency letters to recipients of bill assistance. In July, we refreshed the format of the letter to include information and recommendations from Agua Vista, as well encouragement and instructions to register for the portal. Figure 4 shows a snapshot of the revised letter. We plan to continue to send these letters on a monthly basis over the next year.
In a water use assessment, we search for leaks and assess the efficiency of a household’s water-using infrastructure: toilets, faucets, appliances, etc. In addition, we discuss a household’s water-using behavior and provide tailored suggestions for reducing water use and reducing water and sewer bills. We also provide low-flow faucet aerators, low-flow showerheads, and shower timers.

In 2019, we conducted two, somewhat atypical, water use assessments that demonstrate the value of our community partnerships and the data provided by Agua Vista. The information and analysis provided by the Agua Vista web portal will continue to allow for much easier (and accessible) desktop assessments.

a) The data provided by Agua Vista made apparent that a customer with bill payment difficulties had an ongoing leak in her home. OWASA staff coordinated with Orange County Handy Helpers to visit her home and identify the source of the leak (which ended up being a toilet upstairs that...
was inaccessible to the customer). With the Orange County Handy Helper volunteer there to assist, we were able to immediately stop the cause of the leak.

b) OWASA staff have been working with the Community Home Trust (CHT) to identify the source of a leak in a 16-unit multi-family, master metered complex. Each tenant was provided with leak detection tablets and a letter on how to identify leaks. Both OWASA and CHT are continuing the monitor the water use in the complex and will take additional measures if the leak persists.

**Mayors Save Water Challenge:** The Towns of Chapel Hill and Carrboro partnered with OWASA to promote water conservation for all residents through the Mayor Save Water Challenge. (Watch the video at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iA_AlQtfSTdA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iA_AlQtfSTdA).) We welcomed the opportunity to advance water conservation tips for the entire community, as well as the Agua Vista web portal, through such a high-profile campaign.

**New Initiatives for 2020**

**Multi-Family Master Metered Customers:** The implementation of OWASA’s Communication Plan has helped to raise awareness of OWASA across the community. Tenants of multi-family master metered accounts that do not have a direct (billing) relationship with OWASA, however, remain difficult to communicate with. We will continue to evaluate and pursue effective methods of reaching these tenants with important emergency communication, water quality, and water conservation information.

**Agua Vista Home Water Reports:** Agua Vista allows for custom print letters and emails and/or letters with information about water use distributed to a specific sub-set of customers. In the third and fourth quarter of 2020 (FY21), we will use Agua Vista to send customer letters each quarter to approximately 1,500 OWASA customers in the lowest-income Census blocks. The report will provide customized water conservation and efficiency recommendations, as well as encourage registration in Agua Vista.

**Bill Assistance**
Temporary bill assistance programs offer help to customers during their greatest time of need and help them avoid service cut-off and reconnection fees. As described earlier in the document, the Care to Share program provides OWASA customers the opportunity to voluntarily contribute to a bill assistance program administered by the Inter-Faith Council for Social Services (IFC). In 2018, Orange County designated the IFC as the entity that will distribute their utility bill assistance funds in Chapel Hill and Carrboro, making the IFC the principal provider of utility bill assistance.
2019 Update and Continued Initiatives for 2020

**Care to Share Day:** In November 2019, we celebrated the first annual Care to Share Day to raise awareness of and contributions to Care to Share. Throughout the month, we engaged in a series of outreach and marketing efforts, including:

- **A campaign toolkit** (poster, tweets, email invite to donate, testimonials, photos, micro website) was emailed to OWASA Board Members and elected officials.

![Care to Share Day Poster](image)

**Figure 5: Care to Share Day Poster**
• **Local government proclamations:** The Town of Chapel Hill, the Town of Carrboro, and Orange County all proclaimed November 21, 2019 to be Care to Share Day.

• **OWASA Staff and Board pie bake off** raised $550 for Care to Share.

![Figure 6: Photo of OWASA Staff at Care to Share Pie Event](image)

• **Public event at University Mall** with the OWASA Water Wagon

• **WCHL Public Service Announcements (PSA):** WCHL donated 23 PSAs over the course of a week and a half. The PSA was narrated by participants of the OWASA Youth Water Academy.

• **WCHL Wonderful Water Interview:** WCHL’s Aaron Keck interviewed OWASA Customer Service Manager Denise Battle and IFC’s Community Services Director Kristin Lavergne about Care to Share.

• **Twitter campaign:** We engaged in an active Twitter campaign that was amplified by our community partners.

• **Contractor and Vendor letter:** Ed Kerwin invited 97 contractors and vendors with whom OWASA does business to donate anonymously and directly to the IFC. Shortly after sending the letter, three businesses donated a total of $1,450 directly to the IFC for the Care to Share Program.

Care to Share Day was a proactive and positive way to engage with our community. We plan to promote another Care to Share Day in November 2020 at a nominal cost.
Care to Share Thank you Letter: Currently, OWASA customers can choose to round up their bill to the nearest dollar and donate the difference to Care to Share or donate a fixed dollar amount in addition to their billed amount. Although the vast majority of participants in the program are “round up” contributors, more total donations come from “fixed amount” contributors. In 2018, and again in 2019, we mailed a letter to all current on-bill donors to Care to Share. The letter thanked them for their contributions and encouraged them to consider contributing a fixed amount, rather than rounding up.

The following table summarizes the change in monthly contributions of these two types of donations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>“Round up” contributors</th>
<th>Fixed dollar contributors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% of participating customers</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of total contributed amounts</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median amount of monthly contributions</td>
<td>$0.21</td>
<td>$0.33*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We plan to send “Thank you” Letters once again in 2020.

General Care to Share Promotion: We promoted Care to Share in presentations to Town of Chapel Hill’s and Carrboro’s Citizens Academies and at events for which we deployed the Water Wagon. We collected money from countertop collection boxes at the Cane Creek Reservoir and University Lake Offices and established an online Care to Share store within our online billing software.

In 2020, we will continue to use existing forums, including our Water Wagon events, to promote participation in the Care to Share Program. We will collect donations during lake recreation season at the University Lake and Cane Creek Reservoir counters.

LIFT-UP Financial Coaching Program: Through a partnership with the Community Empowerment Fund (CEF), we launched our first official year of the LIFT-UP Program. Through LIFT-UP, OWASA customers with bill payment challenges are referred to a financial advocate at CEF. If they participate in financial coaching with CEF, OWASA works with the customer and CEF to develop a personalized deferred payment plan. (Our typical deferred payment plan is only about two weeks. By engaging with a CEF financial advocate, customers can negotiate a longer deferred payment plan.)
This program is a tool in the toolbox for our customer service staff to help our customers pay their water bill. In 2019, we referred four customers to the CEF to participate in the LIFT-UP Program. For varying reasons, no one customer completed their arrangement. At this point, it requires very little from us to maintain the program and relationship with CEF. We will assess opportunities to improve it in the coming year.

**Water Efficiency Retrofits**
Replacing inefficient water-using equipment (primarily toilets) in a home can help a household consistently reduce their water use and bill. Although OWASA cannot directly spend money on upgrading water-using fixtures and appliances of a sub-set of our customers, we can promote and direct outside funding to water efficiency retrofits of low-income housing in our service area.

**2019 Update and Continuing Initiatives for 2020**

**Engagement with Orange County Home Preservation Coalition:** The Orange County Home Preservation Coalition is a county-wide network of organizations in Orange County that work together to improve accessibility and affordability of home repairs and preservation projects to Orange County Residents. Each of the primary organizations providing home repair in the county are participants in the Coalition. OWASA has joined the Coalition as a Community Liaison Partner. The group meets monthly to communicate and collaborate on home repair needs and resources in the region.

In February 2019, OWASA discussed the resident-value of high efficiency toilets. The investment in a low-flow toilet can be recovered within two years and sometimes as soon as in six months. We encouraged members of the Coalition that provide home repair to consider replacing inefficient toilets with high efficiency toilets, even if that was not the reason for their work in the home.

Additionally, OWASA has worked with the Coalition in their development of a unified application to address the release of water use information for OWASA customers. In doing so, OWASA can release information that can help identify opportunities for leak repair and efficiency upgrades.

We plan to continue to communicate and collaborate with the Orange County Home Preservation Coalition to help promote water efficiency upgrades in low-income housing.

**New Initiatives for 2020**

**Rechartering Care to Share:** As OWASA increases awareness of and donations to Care to Share, we will soon approach a time when we collect more money than the IFC provides in the way of water utility bill assistance. In fact, FY19, about $2,200 more was donated in on-bill contributions than was invoiced by the IFC.
This is a new and good place to be. In building a modest fund balance, we can ensure that the IFC is consistently reimbursed for the assistance they provide. This has not always been the case.

Beyond a modest fund balance, there is an opportunity for the Care to Share Program to also support water efficiency retrofits and leak repair to low-income customers.

In 2020, we plan to work with the IFC and the OWASA Board of Directors to revisit and refresh Care to Share’s charter. The revised charter will define financial benchmarks relative to community need and establish a policy so that funds collected in excess needed to provide sustainable bill assistance can be used for water efficiency retrofits and leak repair for low-income customers. The Orange County Home Preservation Coalition is a natural partner to administer these funds to organizations that have the expertise and community relationships to conduct the work.

**Combine Efforts with Energy Efficiency Upgrades:** In 2019, the Orange County Climate Council formed, and OWASA joined as a charter member. Through our participation in the Climate Council, we have recommended that water efficiency be considered as a climate change mitigation strategy and be folded into potential efforts to increase energy efficiency in low-income housing. In the coming year, we will continue to advance this concept through our participation in the Orange County Climate Council.

**Leak Detection**
Proactive leak identification can help our customers avoid high bills, home damage, and water waste. It is good customer service. Advance Metering Infrastructure and the Agua Vista web portal have revolutionized the level of service that OWASA provides to our customers for leak detection.

**2019 Update and Continuing Initiatives for 2020**

**Agua Vista Web Portal:** In March 2019, OWASA rolled out our Agua Vista customer-facing web portal, putting hourly water use data at the fingertips of customers. Moreover, the Agua Vista web portal runs analyses of water use trends and proactively notifies customers (via email, text, voice, or post, if necessary) of water use indicative of a leak. In follow-on to the notification, the system provides OWASA customers with step-by-step guidance to identify and repair the source of the leak.

All OWASA customers are opted into leak notification. If they have not yet registered for the Agua Vista web portal, we utilize the email address provided when they signed up for an account. If a residential customer does not have an email on-file with OWASA and has not registered for Agua Vista, we mail a printed leak notification. Prior to using

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2 We have mailed about 1,084 letters at a cost of $1,600 ($1.50/letter). As registration for Agua Vista increases, we expect the cost of printed leak alerts to decline.
the web portal to make leak notifications, OWASA customer service staff called customers directly when their AMI data suggested a water leak.

Since we started using Agua Vista to initiate leak alerts, Agua Vista has issued over 8,200 leak notifications, about 87% of these notifications were sent electronically. About 650 customers have provided feedback that the notification was, in fact, a leak that they fixed. More than likely, the number of actual leaks was greater and people did not log into the system to provide us feedback. The average affirmed leak was over 1,400 gallons per day. Early notification of a leak of this magnitude results in real savings for a customer, as well as the prevention of property damage.

In order to assist customers that may not have the resources to address a leak once notified, we developed and uploaded a leak repair resource guide (Appendix A) that refers customers to home repair organizations associated with the Orange County Home Preservation Coalition.

**We have had great success in registering customers for Agua Vista. Over 36% of customers are now registered for Agua Vista.** As recognized earlier in the Plan, we actively worked with our Affordability Outreach Partners to promote Agua Vista and will continue to do so in the coming year.

**New Initiatives for 2020**

**Rechartering Care to Share:** With increased detection and notification of leaks provided by Agua Vista, there is increased demand for resources to repair those leaks for low-income customers. Extending the use of Care to Share funds, as described earlier, will be valuable to helping to fund leak repair, as well as water efficiency improvements. Both of these investments will help to increase the affordability of water and sewer service for low-income households.

**Partnership**

Critical to the relevancy and acceptance of OWASA’s affordability outreach is partnership: partnership with our customers and the social service agencies that serve our community.

**Ongoing**

**With customers:**

Proactive Customer Communication: OWASA proactively communicates with customers regarding impending cut-offs. One day after a customer misses a second month of bill payments, OWASA contacts the customer via telephone to let them know that if payment is not made within the next ten days, their service will be cut-off and they will incur a $45 fee for non-payment. If payment has not been received within ten days, the customer is re-notified that if prompt action is not taken, their service will be cut-off. Proactive notification has made a significant impact on reducing the number of service cutoffs.
Social Agency Referral and Collaboration: OWASA’s Customer Service Department maintains a list of social service agencies that provide bill payment assistance to customers in need. If a customer contacts OWASA to express difficulty in paying their bill, Customer Service refers the customer to those agencies. Additionally, we inform our customers that if they are working with an agency to obtain financial assistance, they may authorize us to release their billing information to that agency, so that agency can better assist the customer.

Customer Payment Deferral Agreements (Extensions of Credit): Customer Service staff have the authority to arrange an individual payment plan that will allow a customer to spread payments in arrears over a timeframe that is more manageable for them (typically a few weeks). We enable agencies providing financial assistance to initiate, on behalf of their clients, requests for extension of credit for customers to pay their bills. This facilitates the process and eliminates the need for the customer to make a separate trip to OWASA to enter into such an agreement. The LIFT-UP Program creates an opportunity for customers in-need to receive an extended deferred payment arrangement, in exchange for engaging with a financial advocate at the Community Empowerment Fund.

With Community: Our community partners are the foundation of the Affordability Outreach Program. They provide insight and input on strategies needed to help improve the affordability of water and sewer services. In collaboration with them, we can more effectively provide relevant information to the community and attract funding. Our partners include:

- Town of Carrboro
- Binkley Baptist Church
- CASA
- Town of Chapel Hill
- Community Empowerment Fund
- Community Home Trust
- Compass Center for Women and Families
- DHIC*(New)
- El Centro Hispano
- EmPOWERment Inc.
- Habitat for Humanity of Orange County
- Hillsong Church
- InterChurch Housing Corporation
- Inter-Faith Council for Social Services
- Marion Cheek Jackson Center
- Central Piedmont Community Action
- Orange County Affordable Housing Collaborative
- Orange County Family Success Alliance
- Orange County Home Preservation Coalition
In 2019, the Affordability Outreach Program shifted its efforts to integrate OWASA into and participate in already-organized meetings of Affordability Outreach Partners. For example, OWASA staff regularly attended Orange County Home Preservation Coalition meetings attended by a critical mass of partners, including Rebuilding Together, Habitat for Humanity, Orange County, Town of Carrboro, Town of Chapel Hill, Central Piedmont Community Action, and Marion Cheek Jackson Center.

We attended meetings of the Orange County Department of Aging and the IFC. We have an established relationship with many partners now, and they call upon us directly when they have questions or issues.

**Resources Required**

Successful implementation of this program will require the assistance of a Sustainability Program Coordinator (part-time, temporary position) at about 5-7 hours per week, as well as time from the Sustainability Manager and other members of staff to manage and guide the Program. The Program requires a modest budget of $10,000 to reproduce outreach material, purchase water-saving devices and demonstration material, mail Care to Share “thank you letters”, and mail home water conservation reports to low-income regions of our service area.
Register for OWASA’s Agua Vista web portal at owasa.org. On Agua Vista, you can track your water use and receive early notification of costly and potentially damaging leaks.

You Have A Leak, Now What?

Do You Rent or Own?

OWN

- Are you able to repair the leak yourself?
  - NO
    - Log into your Agua Vista Web Portal for repair guidance and videos.
    - Investigate possible leak
      - Check Your Faucets, Showers, and Appliances
        - Visually inspect your faucets and showers for cracks, leaks, and drips.
        - Look for a puddle of water around the bottom of your water heater tank.
        - Inspect flexible rubber hoses connecting to pipes for deterioration.
      - Are you able to afford a qualified repair person?
        - YES
          - Call a qualified repair person and inform them about the leak.
        - NO
          - Below are some organizations that may be able to help you.

- YES

RENT

- Contact your landlord and provide data from your Agua Vista Web Portal.
  - Are you able to repair the leak yourself?
    - NO
      - Log into your Agua Vista Web Portal for repair guidance and videos.
  - Are you able to afford a qualified repair person?
    - YES
      - Call a qualified repair person and inform them about the leak.
    - NO
      - Below are some organizations that may be able to help you.

- YES

Below are some organizations that may be able to help you.

- Rebuilding Together
  - 919.341.5980
  - info@rttriangle.org
  - rttriangle.org

- Orange County Department on Aging
  - 919.968.2087
  - rlavally@orangecountync.gov
  - orangecountync.gov

- Habitat for Humanity of Orange County
  - 919.932.7077
  - info@orangehabitat.org
  - orangehabitat.org

- Hope Renovations
  - 919.921.8460
  - info@hoperenovations.org
  - hoperenovations.org

- Orange County North Carolina
  - 919.245.2490
  - housinghumanrightsccd@orangecountync.gov
  - orangecountync.gov