

# CURRENTS

## PWSA Takes the Stage to Share Expertise

This year, PWSA was invited to several water and utility industry events to share our insight and knowledge.



Lead Program Manager Dan Duffy speaks at the ACE Conference.

Our peers in the water industry are particularly interested in learning more about the challenges and successes of our Community Lead Response programs. Aging lead service lines and water quality concerns are not unique to Pittsburgh and many water providers are beginning the same journey of lead removal that we started in 2016. Today, PWSA has one of the largest and most comprehensive lead line replacement programs in the country, making us experts in our field. Since surpassing our lead line replacement goals last year, 20 water providers in the United States and Canada have reached out to our team for guidance when establishing their own engineering, construction, and community outreach programs related to lead.

### The Pennsylvania Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Conference – May 2019

PWSA's Senior GIS Analyst Alex Wascko has worked with our lead program since its early stages, heading the data management tasks and helping to create our digital inventory of lead lines. At this conference, Alex explained how her team developed standards and data management systems for our contractors to use when collecting information about service line material type in the field. To date, PWSA and its contractor have identified thousands of service lines, giving us more information to share with customers and helping to determine which locations to remove lead service lines in the future.

Data management is one of the most crucial parts of any large-scale infrastructure

project and the Lead Program is no exception. Our dedicated team of GIS analysts give our program direction and engage our residents with visual tools to help understand our water distribution system better.

### American Water Works Association (AWWA) Annual ACE Conference – June 2019

Lead Program Manager, Dan Duffy, and Senior Manager of Public Affairs, Will Pickering, attended AWWA's annual conference to present to their water infrastructure colleagues about the different aspects of the Community Lead Response program. They spoke to a packed room about how to best plan public outreach, draft educational materials, and write contracts. After the presentation, more than a dozen water providers requested our materials and asked for guidance on how to establish similar programs in their cities.

Coming up in October 2019, PWSA will join our consultant partner AECOM to attend AWWA's Infrastructure Conference to discuss construction inspection and management. Ensuring that the construction team carries out the assigned work as it was

[Continued on Page 2](#)

## IN THIS ISSUE:

- 1** PWSA Shares Expertise
- 2** RAW Talk
- 3** PWSA in the Community
- 5** PWSA in the News
- 6** Team PWSA
- 8** Engineering & Construction
- 10** Water Wise
- 11** PWSA Connect

## COMING UP:

### 2019 Board Meetings

July 26  
(No August meeting)  
September 27  
October 25  
November 22  
December 20  
*Meetings are open to the public starting at 10:00 am at 1200 Penn Avenue.*

### Overbrook Community Council Public Meeting

July 23  
*Fairhaven United Methodist; 7:00 pm*

### Operation Better Block (All Clusters)

July 25  
*Carnegie Library Homewood; 6:00 pm*

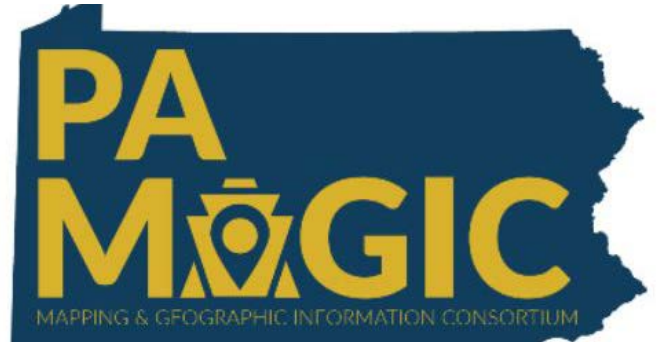
### Lawrenceville United Housing and Resources Event

July 27  
*Goodwill's Workforce Development Center; 10:00 am - 2:00 pm*

Continued from Page 1

written in the project plans is critical to the success of our program.

Since 2016, we have invested millions of dollars in our water system, replacing nearly 4,000 lead service lines – that is over 10 miles of lead pipe. We’ve also inspected over 15,000 curb boxes to identify the location of lead in the system. Back in the office, our dedicated Lead Help Desk staff has responded to thousands of emails and have secured over 5,000 agreements from customers to replace service lines this year alone. To learn more about how PWSA is leading the way to remove lead from drinking water, go to [lead.pgh2o.com](http://lead.pgh2o.com).



# RAW TALK

By Executive Director Robert A. Weimar

## Building a Team for Continued Success

It’s undeniable that we’ve made tremendous progress over the last few years. We have improved our customer service by adopting new technologies, renewed major components of our water system, replaced nearly 4,000 public lead service lines, and upgraded our water treatment to protect customers against exposure to lead in water.

I have the honor of leading the organization, but I am not solely responsible for our progress. I stand on the shoulders of an excellent team. The women and men of PWSA never cease to amaze me with their ingenuity, dedication, and professionalism. They are our human capital, and just like our physical assets, they must be given attention and care in order to ensure that we continue our path toward becoming a first-class water, sewer and stormwater utility.

This month we’re solidifying PWSA’s leadership team through several promotions. These individuals have demonstrated an ability to GSD (Get Stuff Done) professionally, under difficult and unpredictable conditions. They’re the embodiment of professional public servants, and exactly who we need to help me lead the organization into the future. Some have been with PWSA for decades, while others are recent hires with experience from other utilities, engineering consultant firms, and municipalities. This combination of institutional knowledge paired with new ideas and diverse experiences creates an ideal leadership team that will deliver longstanding results.



The promotions also set forth a more clearly defined path for professional development within our organization. Those who GSD professionally will be rewarded with growth opportunities like special projects, additional responsibilities, and promotions. We are cultivating a career development pathway that is available for any of our employees who want to take advantage of it.

We have ambitious, but achievable, plans for the future. In order to deliver, we need even more talented people to join our team. It’s not easy work, but I can’t think of anything more rewarding than helping ensure we continue to deliver for the public. Please reach out to me or any of our leadership team if you are interested in joining us.

“The women and men of PWSA never cease to amaze me with their ingenuity, dedication, and professionalism.”



## Getting Stuff Done (GSD): Going above and beyond to help customers

### Did a Storm Drain Swallow Your Wallet? We can Help!

Our sewer crews are quite busy with scheduled maintenance and emergency repairs, but they are always happy to help when customers accidentally drop a valuable item in one of our storm drains. Most recently, our crews were able to recover a wallet Downtown on Liberty Avenue. The individual who lost their wallet tweeted us a thank you for the assistance we were able to provide. Kudos to Foreman Mike Gigliotti, Utility Worker Bill Schempp, and Laborer Timmy McCarthy for their diligence in handling this issue.

If you ever find yourself in this unfortunate situation, call our 24/7 Emergency Dispatch line at 412.255.2423.

### Cleaning Storm Drains After Heavy Rains

Storm drains are one of our most important assets when it comes to stormwater management. If they become obstructed in any way, there will be an increased risk of flooding during rain events.

Frequent heavy rains and the sheer number of drains in our service area can make it challenging to monitor each and every one. We were very pleased to receive an email from State Representative Tony DeLuca's office commending the crews for responding in less than 24 hours to clean out a flooded drain, even as they were managing a backlog of other service requests due to recent storm events. Our crew even identified a separate issue with the surrounding pipe and scheduled to have it repaired as quickly as possible.

Thanks to all of our sewer crews for their hard work and attention to detail during the busy rainy season!

## Four Mile Run Stormwater Project

### PWSA provides update on anticipated stormwater improvements

At a joint meeting on June 20th, PWSA and the City's Department of Mobility and Infrastructure updated attendees on the progress and current status of the Four Mile Run Stormwater Project and the Mon-Oakland Mobility Project.

The Four Mile Run Stormwater Improvement Project includes a series of projects that will restore historic streams in Schenley Park, enhance capacity at Panther Hollow Lake, improve drainage along the railroad, and improve the flow of stormwater throughout the sewershed.

We are continuing to work on the design of the project and plan to start construction in 2020. We also plan to begin constructing two early-action projects later this year that will help to retain stormwater before it enters the combined sewer system. These retention areas would be constructed at Overlook Drive and the other along the Bridle Trail in Schenley Park. For more information, please visit [4mr.org](http://4mr.org).



*Attendees participate in a discussion about the stormwater improvements planned for the Four Mile Run sewershed area.*

## Continuing Our Focus on Customers in Need

PWSA is committed to ensuring access to safe, reliable, and affordable water for every household



Collections Coordinator Nicole Tarver (left) and Lead Help Desk Customer Assistance Representative Dominique Nunley (right) assisting customers at an event in April.

Renewing our aging water and sewer infrastructure comes at a cost. As a water utility owned by the public, almost every dollar used to improve our system must come from the bills paid by our customers. While rate increases are necessary, we recognize that not every customer can afford their bill. That's why we have a comprehensive Customer Assistance Program (CAP).

The CAP program offers support to customers in a variety of ways, including:

- Bill Discount Program of 75 percent reduction for fixed monthly water and wastewater conveyance charges (approximately \$26.66 per month)
- Cash Assistance Program for hardship grants up to \$300 per year
- Winter Shut-off Moratorium
- Free Private Lead Line Replacements

We know that creating a program is not enough. We must inform the public and encourage those who are eligible to take advantage of the CAP. Community engagement is a critical component of getting the word out. From 2018-present, we attended 56 meetings across our service area to encourage enrollment in the various programs. Collaborating closely with community group leaders, City Councilmembers, State Representatives, and the Mayor's Office of Community Affairs helps amplify our message.

Promoting the programs through our own social media accounts and local news outlets is another part of our extensive outreach. WESA recently aired an interview with PWSA representatives, which can be accessed on their website at [wesa.fm/post/thousands-pwsa-customers-qualify-financial-assistance-so-why-arent-they-signing](http://wesa.fm/post/thousands-pwsa-customers-qualify-financial-assistance-so-why-arent-they-signing).

Efforts have started to pay off. To-date, we have 198 approved applications for Free Lead Line Replacements, 2,350 enrolled in the bill discount program, 218 customers have utilized the cash assistance, and 2,795 enrolled in the Winter Moratorium this past winter. We're pleased with the momentum, but we still have work ahead of us to enroll as many eligible customers as possible. This remains a focal point for our outreach and we encourage you to contact us if you would like us to participate in a discussion at your local community meetings. Please email Rachel Rampa, Senior Public Affairs Coordinator at [rrampa@pgh2o.com](mailto:rrampa@pgh2o.com) to schedule a meeting.

We also formed a Low-Income Assistance Advisory Committee (LIAAC), comprised of representatives from the PUC Office of Consumer Advocate, Neighborhood Legal Services Association, Pittsburgh United, Dollar Energy Fund, and local community and social service groups, such as Homewood Concerned Citizens Council. These committed leaders and experts meet quarterly to review our assistance program metrics, and to provide feedback on how we can improve.

We partnered with the Dollar Energy Fund to administer these assistance programs and encourage anyone interested in applying to contact Dollar Energy directly at [866.762.2348](tel:866.762.2348).



## PWSA IN THE COMMUNITY

**Over the past month, we engaged with the community at the following meetings:**

**Operation Better Block (Clusters 1 & 3)**  
June 4  
*The Wheel Mill*

**Red Oak and Hayson Stormwater Project**  
June 4  
*Private Residence*

**Operation Better Block (Cluster 6)**  
June 5  
*Operation Better Block*

**Four Mile Run Stormwater Improvement Project and Mon-Oakland Mobility Project Joint Meeting**  
June 20  
*Local 95 Union Hall*

**Interested in learning more? Please contact [communications@pgh2o.com](mailto:communications@pgh2o.com) to schedule a presentation in your community.**

## PWSA Receives Technology Innovation Award

*Government Technology* recognizes Customer Usage Portal and Work Order and Asset Management System



Julie Quigley accepting the Technology Innovation award at the Special Districts Summit in Philadelphia, PA on June 25th

On June 25th, PWSA accepted *Government Technology's* award for Technology Innovation in the operations category for its Customer Usage Portal and Work Order and Asset Management System (WAMS). These web-based applications are two of several projects aimed at improving customer service and digitizing internal processes.

The Customer Usage Portal, highlighted in our December 2018 newsletter, allows customers to track water consumption through information shared digitally from water meters on an hourly basis. Instead of waiting for a monthly bill, customers can take swift action to address leaks, thereby reducing their costs.

WAMS is a new software program developed to manage mobile field operations and track maintenance of water and sewer infrastructure. When using WAMS, fields crews will be able to report operation schedules to a dispatch representative in real-time. Additionally, WAMS will integrate with mapping software, providing PWSA staff visual tools to make long-term infrastructure maintenance and investment decisions.

WAMS is building upon the same technology designed for PWSA's new backflow device test submission application. Backflow prevention devices are required on all private water lines by the federal Clean Water Act. These devices protect the potable water supply from possible contamination from a private building's internal plumbing. All devices must be tested every year and those results submitted to PWSA. Previously, all results were submitted to PWSA on a paper form. Now, certified backflow testers can submit test results online through the Backflow Test Submission Portal at [pgh2o.com/backflow](http://pgh2o.com/backflow).

*Government Technology* is a magazine focusing on technology in state and local governments. The Special Districts Summit is a nationwide platform created by *Government Technology* and AT&T for regional government entities to meet at the intersection of innovation and public service. The Northeast region, of which PWSA is a part, held its Special District Summit on June 25th at the Marriott in Philadelphia, PA.

**“We’re proud to be recognized for our use of innovative technologies to improve our customer experience and increase the productivity of our field crews.”**

Director of Administration/IT Julie Quigley



## Media and Press Releases

### MEDIA COVERAGE

**PWSA lead line progress: 1,300 lead lines replaced since mid-March, WTAE**

**PWSA approves reimbursement program for private lead line replacements, Post-Gazette**

**PWSA to stay public under proposed, open-ended pact, Post-Gazette**

**Smallman Street reopens after water main break closed it for 3 weeks, TribLive**

**PWSA finishes year-long Lanpher Reservoir improvement project, TribLive**

**Thousands Of PWSA Customers Qualify For Financial Assistance, So Why Aren't They Signing Up?, WESA**

### PRESS RELEASES

**PWSA Receives Technology Innovation Award, June 26**

**PWSA Completes Lanpher Reservoir Restoration, June 21**

**Joint Public Meeting: Four Mile Run Stormwater Improvement Project and Mon-Oakland Mobility Project, June 18**

**Coming Soon! Extreme Makeover for PWSA's Website, May 29**

## Employee Spotlight

Wendy Dean, Engineering Technician II



For customers who frequent the PWSA permit counter, Wendy Dean is a familiar and friendly face. Ensuring proper issuance of our development related permits, Wendy has greeted customers as an Engineering Technician I in the Customer Service Department since October of 2015. While a seemingly simple task, preparing permits involves complex coordination with billing, field operations, engineering, GIS, and Public Affairs. Once a permit is issued, Wendy notifies billing to create a new account and alerts the field operations team to prepare for a tap installation,

meter installation or a waterline shut. She also processes payments and answers questions.

At the beginning of 2019, Wendy was promoted to an Engineering Technician II and now collaborates with two additional engineering technicians to administer all development services, residential, and operations permits in addition to dye testing, maps, and record requests.

The face-to-face interaction with customers and insight into the development projects throughout the city give Wendy the motivation to do her job to the best of her ability. Prior to her current position at PWSA, Wendy was sharpening her people skills as a case manager providing social services to Hill District residents at the Hill House Association for fifteen years.

As PWSA moves forward with technology improvements such as the Customer Usage Portal, Work Order and Assets Management System, and Backflow Test Submission Portal, permitting will also see digital advancements. Once implemented, increased efficiency will give Wendy and her colleagues the opportunity to provide superior customer service. She achieved a broad understanding

of internal processes across all departments which makes her an ideal candidate to facilitate these improvements for our permitting customers.

When Wendy isn't working, she loves spending time with her large family, cooking meals, and experimenting with seafood and pastas. She also enjoys praise and worship with her East End church community. When she finally takes a well-deserved vacation, you can find her relaxing on a beach in the Caribbean.

Wendy strives to be a good example of customer service for the whole organization by going the extra mile and creating a positive experience when interacting with PWSA. Her cool and calm nature leaves a lasting impression even in the most complex of situations.

**“I really enjoy seeing my regulars at the permitting counter and making their day just a little bit easier.”**

Engineering Technician II Wendy Dean

## The Great Water Bottle Pledge

PWSA employees commit to using reusable water bottles



On May 30th, Executive Director Robert Weimar joined employees at PWSA's 1200 Penn Avenue to take a pledge to only use reusable water bottles while at work. Employees received a BPA-free, reusable PGH2O water bottle that can be refilled at any water bottle filling station in the building. Since integrating the bottle saver stations, the equivalent of over 15,500 plastic bottles have already been saved.

If every employee at the PWSA downtown office honors their pledge to

use refillable bottles instead of single-use plastic bottles, we will prevent over 473,000 plastic bottles from entering our landfills and waterways!

### Take the Pledge and Get a Bottle!

If you are a PWSA employee and are interested in joining this effort, please contact Hali Hetz at [HHetz@pgh2o.com](mailto:HHetz@pgh2o.com) to take the pledge and receive your own PGH2O reusable water bottle!

## New Hires

**Veronica Mitchell**

*Engineering Technician I*

**Raquel Ludinich**

*IT Project Manager*

**Nicholas Balaban**

*Help Desk Technician II*

**Ruqayya Ghaffar**

*Customer Service Representative*

**Tyrik Collins**

*Customer Service Representative*

**Rebecca Copney**

*Customer Service Representative*

**Traylon Johnson**

*Customer Service Representative*

**Ondrea Taylor**

*Customer Service Representative*

**Tasha Crafton**

*Customer Service Representative (Part-time)*

**Christian Reese**

*Laborer*

**Michael Kossler**

*Laborer*

**Dean Harman**

*Laborer*

**Jaime Felsing**

*Laborer*

**WELCOME ABOARD!**

## Job Postings

Interested in working with us? PWSA is looking for dedicated people to join our team.

**Engineering Technician I**, Administration/Customer Service

**Project Manager**, Engineering & Construction

**Stormwater Inspector**, Engineering & Construction

**Engineering GPS Field Tech I**, Engineering & Construction

**SCADA Technician**, Water Quality & Production

**Operations Superintendent**, Water Quality & Production

**Scientist II**, Environmental Compliance

**Plumber**, Field Services

**Account Clerk**, Administration/Customer Service

**Customer Service Representative** (Full-time and Part-time),  
Customer Service

Visit [www.pgh2o.com/employment](http://www.pgh2o.com/employment) to learn more.

# Lanpher Reservoir Restoration Completed

## East Cell completion restores 56 million gallons of drinking water storage

In spring of 2018, PWSA started an aggressive project to restore and upgrade the Lanpher Reservoir, located in Shaler Township, by installing a new liner and cover as well as improving the condition of the concrete wall surrounding the water storage facility.

The reservoir has a liner and cover that holds the water inside, like a winterized, water-tight swimming pool. The renewal project included replacing the liner and cover to create an entirely new protective barrier for treated drinking water. Short-term repairs were made to the aging cover in 2017 with a long-term solution designed in early 2018. Dividing the work between the two halves, or “cells”, allowed crews to complete work while providing continuous water service. In total, the Lanpher Reservoir can hold up to 146 million gallons of treated drinking water.

### Lanpher Cover Restoration by the Numbers

The restoration was a major undertaking that required numerous expert crews and a wide array of specialized equipment. PWSA utilized demolition crews, welders, construction workers, and engineers to complete this priority project.

- 28,704 square yards of cover replaced: A football field is only 6,400 square yards.
- 28,800 square yards of liner replaced.
- 3,302 feet of new railing around the reservoir.
- 30,777 hours of labor, with 10-13 workers per day, for over one year.
- Estimated project cost: \$8.7 million.

Read more about PWSA's 12-year plan to upgrade its water and sewer system at [pgh2o2030.com](http://pgh2o2030.com).



Crews work to replace the cover on the East Cell of the Lanpher Reservoir.



The West Cell of Lanpher Reservoir completed with the East Cell still under renovation. The storage facility serves one-third of PWSA's customers.



## New Maintenance Program Provides Workforce Development Opportunities

Landforce, a local organization dedicated to land stewardship and workforce development, was awarded a contract to perform ongoing maintenance activities for our green stormwater projects.



Landforce crews will provide needed maintenance activities on a monthly basis at each of our green

stormwater sites. Ongoing maintenance is required to ensure that our stormwater projects continue to function properly. This includes the rain gardens at Red Oak and Hayson in Banksville, the bioswales at Centre and Herron in the Upper Hill, the detention basins at Hillcrest Street in Garfield, the systems at Melwood and Finland in Polish Hill, and other smaller projects located throughout Pittsburgh. Now that we have a dedicated maintenance crew in place, we can establish a maintenance schedule to ensure the optimal performance of our new stormwater infrastructure.

Landforce’s ongoing activities focus on the removal of sediment and debris, weeding, pruning of plants, shrubs, and trees, replacing mulch, soil, and vegetation, and other activities to facilitate the success of these projects. As part of the maintenance program, our staff will regularly inspect the green stormwater sites and provide direction to Landforce on where work is needed. Following intense storms, additional inspection of the facilities will take place to determine if a higher level of maintenance is needed.

Landforce is an ideal local partner in our stormwater program and we are excited that they were awarded

the contract for this needed service. As a workforce development agency, Landforce trains and provides job opportunities to people that have faced barriers entering the workforce.

Since 2011, they have helped people challenged by incarceration, poverty, and limited education, as well as returning veterans and new refugees enter the workforce. They work collaboratively with their crew members to develop an individualized employment plan while also providing training in the growing field of sustainable land and environmental management.

Each of their crews have the needed skills to help us maintain our green infrastructure projects. While this is a new component of our stormwater program, we are confident about the level of service Landforce crews can provide. Over 80 percent of Landforce participants find jobs or additional training opportunities after working with Landforce. Many speak to an increase in self-confidence, self-worth, and a sense of pride in improving community assets. You can learn more about Landforce at [landforcepgh.org](http://landforcepgh.org).

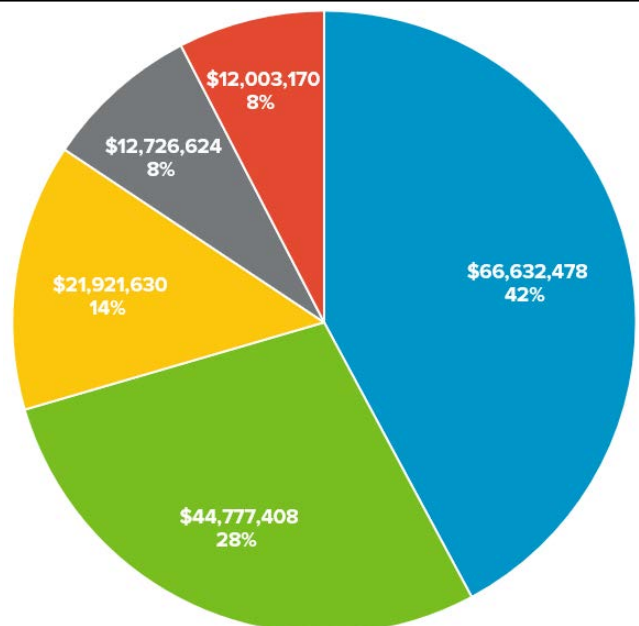
We are proud that this partnership is providing meaningful, sustainable work to residents of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County.

## 2019 Capital Spending

Amounts reflect total expenditures from January 1 - June 21, 2019

- Water
- Lead
- Sewer
- Stormwater
- Other

**TOTAL: \$158,061,310**





# WATER WISE

## Stormwater Flooding Tips

With 57.83 inches of rainfall, 2018 was Pittsburgh's wettest year on record

2019 hasn't been much different. We are currently on pace to reach a similar amount of rain this year. In May alone, Pittsburgh received 5.97 inches of precipitation! As we head into summer, which typically brings heavier storms, our customers should utilize the following tips to prepare for the dangers of flooding:

- **Proof your home:** Maintain your drains and gutters on a regular basis and keep your most valuable items at the higher levels of your home. If your home is prone to flooding, place sandbags and flood barriers along garage and basement doors and your driveway.
- **Stay away:** Floods pose a considerable risk of injury or drowning and quite possibly contain raw sewage and other harmful material such as glass, sharp metal, or chemicals. Six inches of moving water is all it takes to knock a person off their feet!
- **Avoid driving:** Always pay attention to emergency alerts during rainy days, especially when planning to use a vehicle. Do not ignore critical road signage. A surprisingly small amount of moving water is sometimes all it takes for a car to be swept away.
- **Be aware of electricity:** Water conducts electricity, so stay in a safe area away from where water has contacted electrical equipment. Switch off your electricity at the breaker box or call your electric utility to shut off power at the meter if you can't safely access the breaker box.
- **Ensure proper clean-up:** Use a sump pump and wet vac to remove water. Mold and mildew can build up within 48-hours. Remove carpeting, wet furniture, and other water-logged belongings. Clean surfaces with a non-ammonia detergent. If you've experienced significant flood damage, hire a flood restoration service to safely and properly clean the damaged area. Document the damage with photos or videos before removing any water or making repairs. This can support your insurance claim if you intend to file one.



Get to know your PGH2O!

Our Annual Water Quality Report is now available online:

[pgh2o.com/files/2018CCR.pdf](http://pgh2o.com/files/2018CCR.pdf)



Our Number One Priority is to Provide Safe and Reliable Drinking Water.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) requires community water systems to deliver a Consumer Confidence Report, also known as an annual drinking water quality report, to their customers. These reports provide customers information about their local drinking water quality.

*If you prefer to have a hard copy sent by mail, please call Customer Service at 412.255.2423 to request a copy.*



## Customer Assistance Program

Our Customer Assistance Program is designed to provide financial relief for income-qualified residential customers who are having difficulty paying their water and sewer bill.

For more information about our programs, including the Winter Shut-off Moratorium, Bill Discount, Cash Assistance, and Free Private Lead Line Replacements, please visit [pgh2o.com/CAP](http://pgh2o.com/CAP) or call Dollar Energy Fund at 866.762.2348.



## Do We Have Your Number?

Did you know that we call customers during water emergencies and outages? Please verify that we have the best number to reach you. You can even add multiple numbers for your account, so your entire household is informed about our work.

### HOW DO I UPDATE MY CONTACT INFORMATION?

Call PWSA Customer Service: [412.255.2423](tel:412.255.2423)

Or visit our website: [pgh2o.com](http://pgh2o.com) and click on "Update Contact Info"

*PWSA is committed to maintaining and protecting the confidentiality and privacy of our customers and will not share your information with third party vendors.*

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