

A **Championship**
Season for

SEATTLE WATER



**STICKERS
INSIDE!**



2025
Drinking Water
Quality Report



**Seattle
Public
Utilities**



Powering Performance Across Our City

This report is about Seattle’s water—where it comes from, how it gets to your tap, and the team who works hard to keep it safe and tasting great.

What’s Inside:

If you’re new to town, be sure to check out where our water comes from on **pages 6-7**.



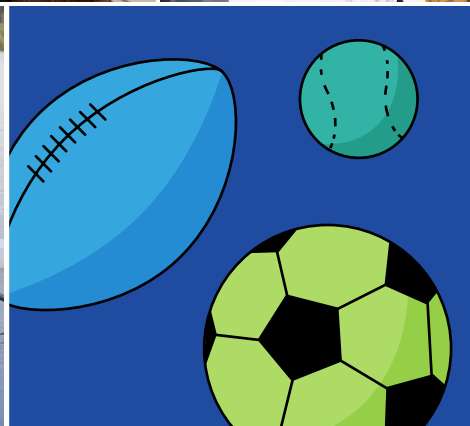
People from all over greater Seattle will appreciate our guide to the water system on **pages 8-9**.



Kids and nature lovers can have fun learning about how conservation efforts support wildlife like salmon on **pages 10-11**.

On **pages 12-13**, you’ll find the results of our water quality testing from 2025.

Long-time locals might spot some familiar faces on **pages 14-15**, where we feature some of the people who keep our water system running safely.



It’s been a championship season for our city.

Seattle athletes gave us plenty of moments we’ll never forget — from game-winning drives down the football field to new home run records. These feats have made Seattle shine on a global stage.

Here at SPU, I’m also very proud that our city continues to have some of the best drinking water in the country.

SPU’s employees work hard every day to keep Seattle Water safe, and they achieved a lot in 2025. We made some water system infrastructure improvements, including upgrading critical and aging pipes. We started directly managing the Tolt Water Treatment Facility operations, welcoming new staff to the SPU team. And once again, we exceeded all water quality standards across the board.

We’ve also continued our commitment to protecting the environment. Seattle Water is pure from the start because it’s sourced from natural, protected watersheds in the mountain forests. Last year, we celebrated the 25th anniversary of the Cedar River Watershed Habitat Conservation Plan, which guides our ongoing work to protect habitat and safeguards salmon and other wildlife in the Cedar.

None of this would have been possible without our customers. Your support keeps our water system running, and your Pacific Northwest spirit of environmental stewardship helps ensure there’s always enough water to go around.

I’m excited to present our water quality report again this year. I hope you enjoy reading more about our water system — and all that we’ve accomplished together.



Sincerely,

Andrew Lee
General Manager/CEO
Seattle Public Utilities

The Game Plan

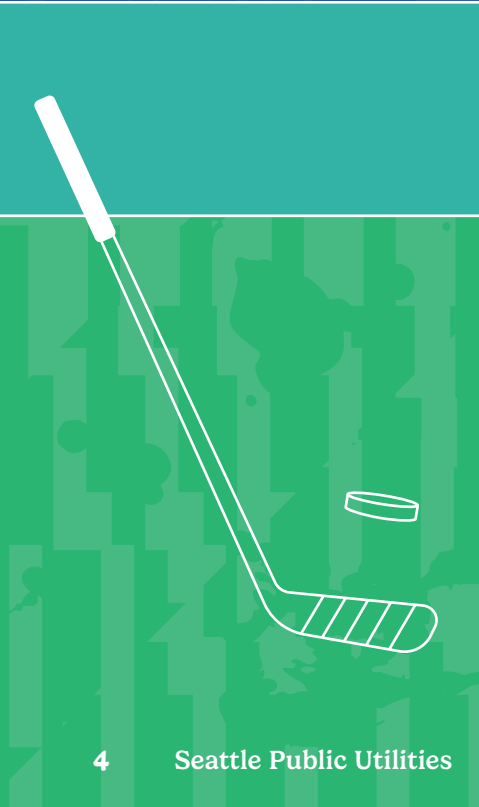
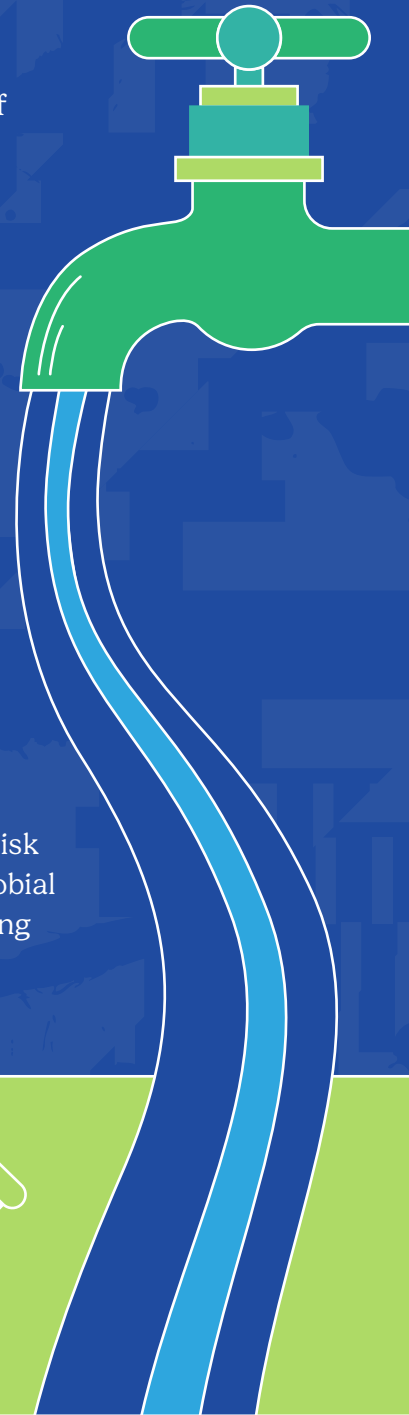
Here's the winning news: We have great drinking water here in Seattle.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) requires that public water providers publish an annual report like this one. No matter who you are, there's something you can learn from this report.

In order to ensure that tap water is safe to drink, the the EPA and the Washington State Board of Health (BOH) prescribe regulations that limit the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) regulations establish limits for contaminants in bottled water that must provide the same protection for public health.

Drinking water, including bottled water, may reasonably be expected to contain at least small amounts of some contaminants. The presence of contaminants does not necessarily indicate that water poses a health risk. More information about contaminants and potential health effects can be obtained by calling the EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline (800-426-4791).

Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than the general population. Immuno-compromised persons such as persons with cancer undergoing chemotherapy, persons who have undergone organ transplants, people with HIV/AIDS or other immune system disorders, some elderly, and infants can be particularly at risk from infections. These people should seek advice about drinking water from their healthcare providers. Guidelines from the EPA and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by *Cryptosporidium* and other microbial contaminants are available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline (800-426-4791).



Rain and Snow: The Source of Our Water

Seattle's famously rainy climate doesn't always make for great sports weather. But rain is where our city's water story begins.

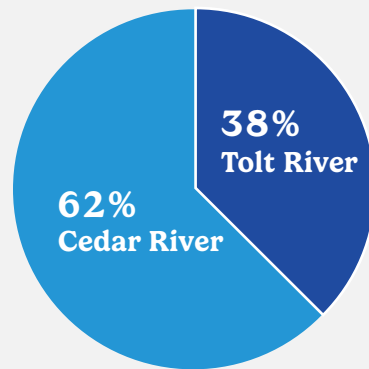
When clouds blow in from the Pacific Ocean, they roll past Seattle and into the Cascade Mountains. In warmer months, those clouds bring rain that washes into rivers and creeks that snake through valleys. In the winter, they bring snow that piles up at the top of the peaks.

Much of that water will become the drinking water for 1.6 million people in the Seattle region.

In two watersheds, the **Cedar River** and the **South Fork Tolt River**, rain and snowmelt are stored in large lakes, surrounded by acres of wild forest. Most of this forest land is owned and managed by the City of Seattle, and it is off-limits to any housing, industry, or agriculture — keeping our water protected from contamination.

This makes Seattle's water pure from the start. **The Cedar River watershed is one of just a few water systems in the entire country that is so clean, it does not require filtration during the treatment process.**

Where Your Water Comes From



In 2025, 62% of Seattle's water came from the Cedar River and 38% came from the South Fork Tolt River.

This doesn't mean the water is ready to drink just yet. The sources of drinking water (both tap water and bottled water) include rivers, lakes, streams, ponds, reservoirs, springs, and wells. As water travels over the surface of the land or through the ground, it dissolves naturally occurring minerals and, in some cases, radioactive material, and can pick up substances resulting from the presence of animals or from human activity.

There is always some potential for natural sources of contamination. In Seattle's surface water supplies, the potential sources of contamination include:

- **Microbial contaminants, such as viruses, bacteria, and protozoa from wildlife;**
- **Inorganic contaminants, such as salts and metals, which are naturally occurring;**
- **Organic contaminants, which result from chlorine combining with the naturally occurring organic matter; and**
- **Radioactive contaminants, which can be naturally occurring.**

Washington's Source Water Assessment Program is conducted by the Department of Health (DOH) Office of Drinking Water. According to DOH, all surface waters in Washington are given a susceptibility rating of "high" regardless of whether contaminants have been detected or whether there are any sources of contaminants in the watershed. Information on the source water assessments is available from the DOH website at fortress.wa.gov/doh/swap.

Water will pass from these watersheds through SPU's extensive treatment, storage, and distribution system on its way to your tap.

Visit the Cedar River Watershed Education Center to learn more about our water supply or hike Rattlesnake Ledge Trail to catch an incredible view of the protected watershed.





Treatment

Water first goes to the Cedar River or Tolt water treatment facilities, where it undergoes screening, disinfection, pH adjustment, and other treatments to prepare it for drinking and distribution.

WHAT'S NEW: As of 2026 the Tolt Water Treatment Facility is run by SPU, transitioning from private to public operation.

How Water Gets to Your Tap

When a quarterback throws a last-second touchdown or a hockey player snaps the puck into the net, it can look effortless. But any good athlete knows that a lot of preparation is needed to make those incredible feats possible.

The same is true for our water system. It takes a lot of hard work for clean water to come out of your tap.

Pipe Network

After treatment, water flows into the vast network of pipes that transport water across the region. SPU has around 1,900 miles of water pipes. That's about the distance between Seattle and Houston — or about 25,000 times the length of the average home run!

WHAT'S NEW: We're regularly replacing aging pipes throughout the system. This includes a major pipeline upgrade between Volunteer Park and Maple Leaf Reservoir.



Sampling and Testing

SPU employees are constantly monitoring our entire water system to prevent leaks, keep everything running smoothly, and respond to any issues that arise. We sample and test our water daily from sites across the system to look for potential contamination and quality issues, with nearly **30,000 samples taken every year.**



Your Home

Finally, water branches off into the service lines that connect each home to the water system, providing clean, mountain-fed water that's better than anything you'd buy in a bottle.



Storage

Across the city, drinking water is stored in water towers and covered reservoirs. Many of these reservoirs are covered by public parks.

WHAT'S NEW: We're working to replace the 21-million-gallon reservoir in the Bitter Lake neighborhood so the adjacent park can be expanded, with more amenities and public art.

Learn Why Seattle Water is Better Than Bottled:

Scan the QR code or go to seattle.gov/utilities/betterthanbottled.



In Seattle, Water and Nature Are Teammates



The drinking water is sourced from protected forests so nature can serve as a buffer between our water supply and potential sources of pollution, like industry or agriculture.

Nature helps protect Seattle's drinking water, and we manage our water system to help protect nature.

Water is not an endless resource. We rely on regular rain and snow to feed our water system and replenish the supply every year.

Water is also vitally important to salmon, a key player in our local ecosystem and a culturally-important species. Salmon swim upriver to spawn each fall, when river flows are naturally low. SPU manages the water supply to ensure the rivers have enough water for the salmon to make their journeys.

When you conserve water, you help us make sure there's enough water for salmon.

Conservation also helps protect our future.

As the climate warms, we expect our region to see less snow in the mountains and hotter, drier summers. Using water wisely every day helps ensure that there will always be enough for people and fish.



Celebrating 25 Years of Habitat Conservation

SPU has obligations and agreements to protect nature in the Cedar River and South Fork Tolt River watersheds. In 2000, we launched the Cedar River Watershed Habitat Conservation Plan, a 50-year plan to protect and restore habitat for fish and other wildlife around the Cedar River, including threatened species.

The Cedar River Watershed Habitat Conservation Plan guides the city's efforts to monitor wildlife populations, manage river flows, and restore habitat in rivers and forests across the watershed, among other conservation strategies and goals. This plan still helps us provide high-quality drinking water while using cutting-edge science to keep the local ecosystem wild and thriving.

Saving water doesn't have to be complicated.

Sometimes it's as simple as turning off the faucet while you brush your teeth or doing a full load of laundry instead of two smaller loads. When we take small steps like these, the impact adds up.

History shows Seattleites are water conservation champions.

SPU and 18 other utilities in the Seattle region created the Saving Water Partnership to take action on water conservation. Today, our region uses about as much water as it did in the 1950s, despite the population doubling since then.

In 2019, to build on this success, the Saving Water Partnership set a new goal: keep average annual water use below 110 million gallons per day over the next 10 years, even as the population was forecast to continue growing.

Last year, we used 97.9 million gallons per day, well below that goal.

SPU also works hard to prevent water loss within our system. In total, we produced 46.2 billion gallons of drinking water in 2025, with just 4.5% lost to leakage (2.08 billion gallons), which reflects an efficient system.

A Few Ways to Save Water

In the Kitchen

Wash a full load of dishes in the dishwasher.

Fix leaky faucets as soon as possible. All those drops can add up.

In the Garden

Add compost to your garden to help that soil hold more water, so you don't have to water as frequently.

In the Bathroom

Take shorter showers, and replace your showerhead with a more water-efficient one.

Install a new, water-efficient toilet. The Saving Water Partnership offers up to \$100 rebates for eligible toilets.

For more tips, tools, and rebates, visit [savingwater.org](https://www.savingwater.org).

Our Water Quality Scoreboard

Regular water testing helps make sure our water is safe to drink.

Below, you'll find detailed information on water quality testing results for 2025. The compounds in this table are regulated by federal and state agencies.

Seattle's water has exceeded all quality standards.

More information on water quality can be found at seattle.gov/utilities/your-services/water/water-quality, or by calling 206-615-0827. We can also send you a list of the more than 200 compounds we tested for but did not find in our surface water supply, including unregulated contaminants.

How to Read This Table

The table shows testing results for both the Cedar River and South Fork Tolt River watersheds. If you live south of Green Lake, your water probably comes from the Cedar River. Areas north of Green Lake usually receive South Fork Tolt water. Each source can provide water to other areas in Seattle if needed.

All acronyms used in the table are defined below.

Detected Compounds	Units	EPA'S Allowable Limits		Levels in Cedar Water		Levels in Tolt Water		Typical Sources
		MCLG	MCL	Average	Range	Average	Range	
Raw Water				Raw Water		Raw Water		
Total Organic Carbon	ppm	NA	TT	0.7	0.4 to 1.1	1.3	1.1 to 1.5	Naturally present in the environment
Finished Water				Finished Water		Finished Water		
Turbidity	NTU	NA	TT	0.36	0.17 to 3.65	0.04	0.02 to 0.28	Soil runoff
Arsenic	ppb	0	10	0.5	0.3 to 0.6	0.3	0.2 to 0.4	Erosion of natural deposits
Barium	ppb	2000	2000	1.7	1.3 to 2.2	1.3	1.1 to 1.5	Erosion of natural deposits
Fluoride	ppm	4	4	0.7	0.5 to 0.75	0.7	0.6 to 0.75	Water additive
Coliform, Total	%	0	5%	Highest Month = 0.6% Annual Average = 0.05%		Highest Month = 0.6% Annual Average = 0.05%		Naturally present in the environment
Total Trihalomethanes	ppb	NA	80	34	19 - 41	34	16 to 43	By-products of drinking water chlorination
Haloacetic Acids(5)	ppb	NA	60	28	13 - 36	28	15 to 41	By-products of drinking water chlorination
Chlorine	ppm	MRDLG = 4	MRDL = 4	Average = 1.0 Range = 0 to 1.8		Average = 1.0 Range = 0 to 1.8		Water additive used to control microbes

Definitions

MCLG: Maximum Contaminant Level Goal – The level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MCLGs allow for a margin of safety.

MCL: Maximum Contaminant Level – The highest level of a contaminant that is allowed in drinking water. MCLs are set as close to the MCLGs as feasible using the best available treatment technology.

MRDL: Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level – The highest level of a disinfectant allowed in drinking water. There is convincing evidence that addition of a disinfectant is necessary for control of microbial contaminants.

MRDLG: Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level Goal – The level of a drinking water disinfectant below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MRDLGs do not reflect the benefits of the use of disinfectants to control microbial contaminants.

TT: Treatment Technique – A required process intended to reduce the level of a contaminant in drinking water.

NTU: Nephelometric Turbidity Unit – Turbidity is a measure of how clear the water looks. The turbidity MCL that applied to the Cedar supply in 2025 was 5 NTU, and for the Tolt it was 0.3 NTU for at least 95% of the samples in a month. 100% of Tolt samples for 2025 were below 0.3 NTU.

NA: Not Applicable

ND: Not Detected

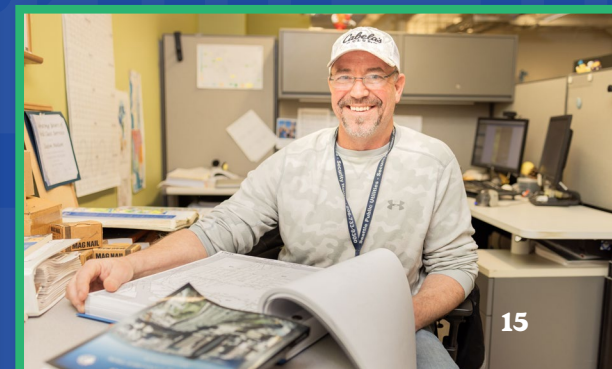
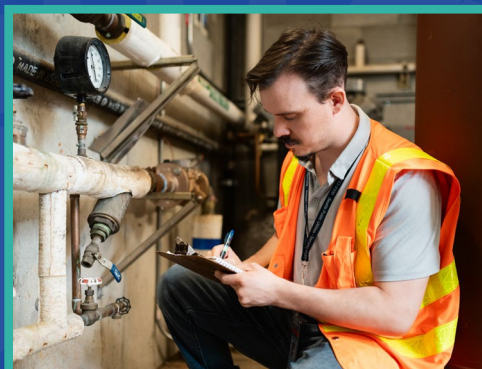
ppm: 1 part per million = 1 mg/L = 1 milligram per liter

ppb: 1 part per billion = 1 ug/L = 1 microgram per liter

1 ppm = 1,000 ppb

The Water Team Roster

Our 1.6 million customers in communities throughout the greater Seattle area are the reason our water team of more than 300 people runs the plays that keep Seattle Water safe.



Common Customer Questions About Drinking Water

Is There Lead in Seattle's Drinking Water?

There is no detectable lead in Seattle's source water.

That said, exposure to lead can result in serious health problems, so you should know how lead might end up in drinking water, and what to do about it.

What to Know About Lead

Lead in drinking water is primarily from materials and components associated with service lines and home plumbing. Your potential exposure level may depend on where you live, when your plumbing was installed, and what type of plumbing you have.

There are no known lead services lines in Seattle's water

distribution system, but a small number of homes and businesses may have lead connections. Individual homes and businesses may also have other plumbing components that could corrode and introduce contaminants into the water. In addition, drinking water is only a minor contributor to overall exposure to lead. Other sources, including paint, soil, and food, also contribute.

Preventing Lead Exposure

SPU is responsible for providing high-quality drinking water, but cannot control the variety of materials used in plumbing components. SPU treats the water to minimize the tendency for lead to enter the water through corrosion, and results show that we have been very successful at this.

The risk of lead contamination in water increases when water sits in pipes for longer than six hours. When your water has been sitting for several hours, you can minimize the potential for lead exposure by flushing your tap for 30 seconds to two minutes before using water for drinking or cooking. You can also reduce your risk by using the cold tap for drinking and cooking water, since lead dissolves more quickly in hot water.



The Bottom Line

If present, elevated levels of lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. If you are concerned about lead in your water, you may wish to have your water tested.

Every three years, SPU does copper and lead testing in a subset of homes known to have copper pipes and lead solder. Those results can be found in the table below.

Information on lead in drinking water, testing methods, and steps you can take to minimize exposure is available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline or at [epa.gov/safewater/lead](https://www.epa.gov/safewater/lead). Customers enrolled in Seattle's Utility Discount Program can access free testing by calling SPU's Water Quality Lab at 206-615-0827. Additional local information on lead and testing options can be found at [seattle.gov/utilities/your-services/water/water-quality/quality-concerns/lead](https://www.seattle.gov/utilities/your-services/water/water-quality/quality-concerns/lead).

Lead and Copper Monitoring Results

Parameter and Units	MCLG	Action Level+	2025 Results*	Homes Exceeding Action Level	Source
Lead, ppb	0	15	1.6	0 of 52	Corrosion of household plumbing systems
Copper, ppm	1.3	1.3	0.12	0 of 52	

* 90th Percentile: i.e. 90% of the samples were less than the values shown.
 + The concentration of a contaminant which, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements which a water system must follow.

Why Is My Water Discolored?

There are a few possible reasons why water may sometimes come out of the tap discolored, like plumbing issues in your home or temporary disturbances in the city's water main. This can happen when there has been a water outage in the area or the Seattle Fire Department is testing or operating fire hydrants in your neighborhood.

To learn more about potential sources of discolored water, visit [seattle.gov/utilities/discolored-water](https://www.seattle.gov/utilities/discolored-water).



Stay Hydrated Around the City with New Water Bottle Refilling Stations

Seattle Water is now even easier to access around the city. Grab your reusable bottle and fill up at one of our new hydration stations, located at:

- 1000 2nd Ave.
- 501 Olive Way
- 1398 3rd Ave.
- 898 3rd Ave.
- 298 James St.
- 100 Pike St.
- 201 Occidental Ave.

Share Your Seattle Water Pride

Seattleites have a lot to be proud of, from our city's world-class arts and culture to the incredible natural landscapes at our doorstep (not to mention our championship-winning football team).

We think Seattle's excellent drinking water should make all of us proud, too.

To help spread the word, peel off the stickers attached in this report and stick them onto a reusable water bottle filled with pure from the start Seattle Water. Don't forget to share your new sticker on Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, and tag **@seattle_public_utilities!**



Learn More and Find Resources

SPU is here for you, to answer your questions and help you get the services you need.

Get help with SPU services or your SPU bill

Call 206-684-3000, Monday-Friday, 7:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Visit myutilities.seattle.gov

Learn more about Seattle's drinking water quality

Visit seattle.gov/utilities/waterquality

Ask questions about Seattle's drinking water quality

Call the Drinking Water Information Line at 206-615-0827

Ask general drinking water quality questions

Call the EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 800-426-4791

Learn more about drinking water systems in my home

Visit doh.wa.gov/you-and-your-family/healthy-home/drinking-water

Explore water-saving tips, programs, and rebates

Visit savingwater.org

Learn more about free toilets for income-qualified households

Visit seattle.gov/utilities/freetoilets
Email mhr@soundgenerations.org

Learn how to find and fix leaks

Visit savingwater.org/indoors/fixing-leaks

Sign up for emergency alerts

Visit alert.seattle.gov

Report urgent concerns, such as water outages, discolored water, or hydrant leaks

Call SPU's 24-hour Operations Response Center at 206-386-1800

Keeping Water Affordable

Every SPU customer should be able to access drinking water and waste services, regardless of their financial situation. We work hard to invest ratepayer dollars wisely and keep rates low — and for those who need help paying their utility bill, assistance is available.

Flexible Payment Plans

We can work with you to set up short- or long-term payment plans to cover past-due balances, without any interruption to your service.

Utility Discount Program

Income-eligible customers can receive a 60% discount on Seattle City Light bills and a 50% discount on SPU water, sewage, and waste bills.

Emergency Assistance

Eligible residential customers can get help paying utility bills.

To learn more about these programs, visit seattle.gov/utility-bill-help or call 206-684-3000.

Donate to Help Someone in Need

You can help provide emergency financial assistance to your neighbors by donating to SPU's Community Donation Fund.

Learn more at seattle.gov/utilities/donations.



**Seattle
Public
Utilities**

Seattle Public Utilities

700 Fifth Avenue, Suite 4900

P.O. Box 34018

Seattle, WA 98124-4018

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통역 서비스를원하시면 (206) 684-3000 번으로 전화해 주십시오

Para sa serbisyo ng tagapagpaliwanag, tumawag sa (206) 684-3000.

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