



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO

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CONTACT:

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

press@cityofchicago.org

**CITY COUNCIL APPROVES ORDINANCE TO IMPROVE SENIOR WATER/SEWER BILL
EXEMPTION**

City Council today approved an ordinance previously introduced by Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Alderman Marty Quinn that will make it easier for seniors to claim the water/sewer bill exemption.

"This exemption provides a substantial savings to seniors, and by making smart corrections to the program, we can ensure that more seniors can realize these savings," said Mayor Emanuel. "I'm pleased to work with Alderman Quinn to make this exemption work better for seniors."

"Seniors in my ward often lose their ability to claim their exemption if they are late on a water bill, don't have a state-issued ID card or move their home into a trust," said Alderman Quinn. "This ordinance will ensure that more seniors are able to get the exemption they deserve."

The ordinance would allow a senior to claim the exemption regardless of a senior's water account standing. Additionally, the ordinance requires the Department of Finance to send written notification to seniors who inadvertently lose their exemption when they move their home into a trust as part of the estate planning process. Seniors can reapply for the exemption through the trust, but under the ordinance as currently written, seniors often don't learn that they've lost their exemption until much later in the process. It also would require that application forms be made available in both English and Spanish and allow the use of Matricula Consular identification cards in place of state-issued IDs. The ordinance would also make other technical changes regarding the documents that can be used to determine residency, ownership and age to qualify for an exemption.

The Senior Citizen Sewer Exemption entitles seniors aged 65 or older with an exemption from payment of the sewer service charge for their residence. The sewer charge is calculated at 96 percent of the water service charge. Seniors who meet the program criteria must complete and submit an application. For more information about this exemption, residents can call 312-744-4426 or email waterbill@cityofchicago.org.

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