



DEPARTMENT OF  
**PUBLIC  
UTILITIES**






March 2024

The City of Richmond Department of Public Utilities is excited to release another update focused on our status, our progress and our future initiatives. Several new technology upgrades and enhancements are scheduled in 2024 and will serve as opportunities to increase our service delivery. In addition to the enhancements shared in the January customer letter, this update highlights more strategies to support the overall framework – which is geared towards normalizing operations and replacing manually intensive processes with automation.

To catch up on progress made to date and previous information shared, we invite you to visit our prior communication which can be found at [www.rva.gov/public-utilities/news](http://www.rva.gov/public-utilities/news) or by scanning this QR code.



This update marks the fifth letter in our quarterly customer engagement series. In January, we discussed the volume of incoming calls received in 2023 and the need to reduce hold times in 2024. Here are a few ways we are addressing long hold times in real time and invite you to learn more about these time-saving initiatives for customer service.

Customer Initiative	Reduce Hold Times	See Explanation Below
<b>Callback Assist</b>   Scan QR code or visit <a href="http://RVA.gov/public-utilities">RVA.gov/public-utilities</a>		DPU resumed modified operating hours in the Call Center on Wednesdays to focus on callbacks and follow-up items. When operating hours were modified in 2023, more than 20,000 customer transactions were resolved.  Those Wednesdays (closing at 12:00 noon) have since been repurposed to make contact with customers who have requested a callback when hold times are longer than desired.
<b>New Payment Channel – “MyHQ”</b>   Scan QR code or visit <a href="http://RVA.gov/public-utilities">RVA.gov/public-utilities</a>		In January, the City of Richmond DPU was advised by Fiserve that the existing MyCheckfree.com payment platform would sunset on March 14. To avoid a disruption of service, DPU has launched a similar payment channel for customers previously enrolled in MyCheckfree.com  “MyHQ” will allow customers to <b>pay without a fee</b> and to view up to 36 months of bills and payment history.  All customers are encouraged to enroll in this paperless billing and electronic payment option.
<b>Business Process Optimization: Staff Augmentation</b>		DPU has partnered with a nationally recognized service provider to support the non-emergency Call Center. The service provider will handle specific call types related to Move In / Move Out requests, targeted adjustments and routine account details, which accounts for approximately 48% of calls handled for these specific service requests. The service provider will provide 29 full time/virtual resources and will begin taking calls by April 1.

Another key initiative for DPU in 2024 involves expanding our utility meter replacement program which further contributes to timely and accurate billing. With supply chain issues diminishing from the Covid-19 pandemic and inventory levels returning to normal, DPU will increase its focus on the next phase of utility meters and transmitting devices that are nearing the end of their useful life. The replacement strategy will be prioritized for residential customers and small businesses. To balance resources between field operations and the billing team, utility meter replacements will be prioritized by age and billing cycle. Stay tuned for more details about this important work, which will begin Summer 2024.

### Friendly Reminders:

#### CivicReady

Sign up today with CivicReady to receive real time alerts about planned and unplanned utility work happening in your neighborhood. This tool will help us share impacts as a result of that work. As a customer, you will have the option of receiving alerts via text message, email, or phone call.



#### PromisePay

Don't forget there is still time to enroll into a flexible and convenient payment plan with PromisePay. If you are in need of financial assistance, don't delay, enroll in PromisePay today. Visit [Richmond.promise-pay.com](http://Richmond.promise-pay.com) or call (804) 626-5420.



#### Social Media

If you currently do not, we invite you to follow us on social media using the platforms and accounts noted at the bottom of this letter. There you will find important updates, conservation tips, fun facts and community event information. We look forward to seeing you at a community event soon as we continue to advance our DPUCares campaign.

In closing, I remain appreciative of your feedback and your patience as we continue to improve our service delivery through the use of technology and process improvements. Reflecting over the last 12 months, DPU has made great strides in part due to the successful training of several new hire classes as a result of high vacancy rates in our customer service division – both field and office. We remain committed to protecting public health and safety by delivering on our mission to provide safe and reliable water and gas services.

Yours In Service,

April Bingham, MPA  
Senior Director