

## ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

Jersey Water Works is a collaborative effort of many diverse organizations and individuals who embrace the common purpose of transforming New Jersey's inadequate water infrastructure by investing in sustainable, cost-effective solutions that provide communities with clean water and waterways; healthier, safer neighborhoods; local jobs; flood and climate resilience; and economic growth. New Jersey Future provides administrative and programmatic support to the collaborative. For more information, please visit [www.jerseywaterworks.org](http://www.jerseywaterworks.org).

## JOB DESCRIPTION

New Jersey Future seeks an intern or consultant to assist with the following policy research projects:

### Water Affordability Project

A subcommittee of legal, industry and policy experts from the Jersey Water Works (JWW) Best Practices committee has agreed to recommend ways for New Jersey entities (water and wastewater utilities, municipalities and state government) to authorize and provide low-income customer assistance for water and wastewater services. An intern is needed to conduct policy research, facilitate and participate in stakeholder interviews, draft recommendations for committee consideration, and revise them accordingly. This project has just begun and will continue into the fall. A detailed project description is appended.

### Policy Briefing Papers

Time permitting, the intern could also contribute to the development of other policy papers on topics related to water infrastructure by doing research and writing. Applicants must demonstrate excellent research and written communication skills, the ability to organize small group meetings and interviews, and to work independently and take ownership of a project. The person in this position will have an opportunity to meet, work and participate in various policy discussions with New Jersey Future staff and legal, industry and policy leaders on the JWW

### Best Practice subcommittee.

The intern will report to Larry Levine, Senior Attorney at the Natural Resources Defenses Council (for content) and Managing Director of Policy and Water Chris Sturm (for logistical issues and day to day concerns).

## REQUIREMENTS

This is a part-time temporary position. Applicants should be available 12 - 20 hours per week for at least 8 weeks. The position requires coming to Trenton at least twice per month and attending meetings in different New Jersey locations.

Preference will be given to applicants with or pursuing a master's degree or other relevant graduate or professional degree.

## COMPENSATION

This is a paid position at an hourly rate commensurate with experience.

Founded in 1987, New Jersey Future is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that promotes sensible growth, redevelopment and infrastructure investments to foster vibrant cities and towns, protect natural lands and waterways, enhance transportation choices, provide access to safe, affordable and aging-friendly neighborhoods and fuel a strong economy. The organization does this through original research, innovative policy development, coalition-building, advocacy, and hands-on technical assistance.

Interested candidates should submit a cover letter and résumé to Chris Sturm at [csturm@njfuture.org](mailto:csturm@njfuture.org).

### Policy Research on Ratepayer Assistance Mechanisms to Ensure Affordable Water Services for All

A Project of the Jersey Water Works Best Practice Committee

#### Background

As communities plan for greater investment in municipal water infrastructure, it is essential to ensure that water and sewer service remains affordable for low-income households. This is a challenge around the country, and New Jersey can learn from best practices elsewhere, from both the water and energy sectors, which fall under the broad heading of “low-income customer assistance programs.” Such strategies include the use of “lifeline” rates that cap the water/sewer charge for a level of use that meets basic indoor water needs; means-tested utility bill discounts; targeted assistance for leak repair and other water efficiency retrofits; and various flexible payment terms or temporary assistance when low-income customers fall behind on bills or have short-term hardship.

However, municipalities and utilities may have legal constraints on their ability to adopt and implement some of these strategies. Those constraints may differ for publicly-owned vs. investor-owned utilities, and for municipal utilities vs. utility authorities. Further, there may be opportunities under existing state authorities – or potentially new legislative authority – to direct state funding to local customer assistance programs, or to establish a state-run customer assistance program.

A subcommittee of legal, industry and policy experts from the Jersey Water Works (JWW) Best Practices committee has agreed to address these challenges through the activities listed below, with the assistance of staff at NRDC and NJF. The subcommittee would review all draft reports, assist with identifying interviewees, attend interviews when possible, and guide identification of leading policy options.

Summer 2017

Policy research: Prepare a draft briefing paper based on desktop research that summarizes the findings of national studies on ratepayer assistance programs, summarizes existing ratepayer assistance programs in New Jersey used by water and sewer utilities as well as the state BPU-managed home heating assistance program, and identifies policy models most relevant to the New Jersey context.

(Underway; Target date: July 5)

- Legal research: Conduct original legal research and analysis, to assess whether state law authorizes utilities to implement various types of low income customer assistance programs, and whether existing state law provides opportunities to direct state funding to local customer assistance programs or establish a state-run customer assistance program. Explain what can be done under current legal authorities. (NRDC/Larry Levine + NRDC intern)

- Outreach: Meet with utilities, municipalities, consumer advocates and regulatory agencies with a three-part agenda:

- Gather feedback on the draft briefing paper on existing ratepayer assistance programs

- Present the findings on legal impediments and discuss how they are interpreted in practice.

- Present the policy models for ratepayer assistance programs and gather input.

(Subcommittee members, NJF and NRDC interns. Meeting logistics: NJF. Target date: July/August.)

- Interim report: Describe the leading policy models for ratepayer assistance programs in New Jersey, based on input from stakeholders. Append the briefing papers on existing programs and legal impediments. (Subcommittee members, NJF Intern. Target date: August 21.)

Fall 2017

- Publish a white paper that (1) recommends ways to structure ratepayer assistance in New Jersey; and 2) provides recommendations on statutory or regulatory changes that would be needed to allow municipalities and utilities to implement recognized best practices at the local level, and/or allow the state to fund and/or implement a statewide customer assistance program. (Subcommittee members; NJF Intern. Target Date: October 15)

- Present the findings to utility managers, local and state officials and agencies, ratepayer and affordable housing advocates, and other interested stakeholders.