



# **FREE BASIC SERVICES AND INDIGENT SUPPORT POLICY 2023-2024**

## 1. POLICY VISION AND STATEMENT

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### Vision

- To ensure access to basic services for all indigent persons in terms of the South African Constitution.
- To reflect the true extent of indigency.
- To determine a level of affordability by Council for the supply of free basic services.
- To prevent the escalation of debt on the accounts of consumers not in the position to pay.
- To determine the total value for free basic services in a way that it can be recovered from the available portion of the Equitable Share.
- To regulate the access of consumers to free basic services and to maintain a ledger of such indigents.

### Statement

Whereas the true reflection of the extent of indigency is of vital importance, the private household sector of debtors is by far the highest contributor to monthly debt escalation and the consumption of metered services by indigent households must be lowered to improve the affordability of service charges, therefor it is imperative that the policy below is made applicable.

## 2. REGISTER OF INDIGENT HOUSEHOLDS

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### Monitoring

Where as the Council does not have a Social Welfare Division to keep register of and to evaluate all applications for indigent support, a control system linked with the demand for electricity current (circuit breaker size) must be operated and maintained, meaning that all residential consumers for whom it is possible to receive electricity current limited to and controlled by a 20 ampere circuit breaker, qualify for the free services as mentioned in this policy

### **Applications**

- On application an applicant has to prove ownership and that he/she is the full-time occupant of the related premises
- An approved enlisted applicant remains enlisted until he/she applies to be delisted or be requested to apply to be delisted from the indigent register
- Should an applicant in his/her application present any fraudulent statement he/she will be denied enlistment or, if he/she had already been enlisted, he/she immediately be delisted. He/she will also be held responsible for the refund of the benefits received at the ordinary rates for the period when the fraudulent presentation is detected and when it arose

### **Re-evaluation**

The decision whether an indigent household remain satisfied with the restriction to the supply of free basic services lies solely with the member of the household responsible for the payment of services.

Regular physical inspections will be carried out at the premises of each of the registered indigents to ensure that the supply installations including the supply limitation applications are intact.

### **Communication**

The policy must be communicated with ward councillors, ward committees and through ward meetings with the inhabitants of the areas as mentioned for indigent support.

## **3. SERVICE LEVELS AND TARIFFS FOR REGISTERED INDIGENTS**

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### **Electricity**

- Free basic electricity of 50 kWh (units) per month is available to registered indigents
- the current limited supply will be set at 20 amperes and the prepaid dispensers at each home will be set accordingly
- the necessary activating number to the value of 50 kWh will be obtained from a municipal pay point on a monthly basis
- the free issue will be limited to 50 kWh (units) per month and unclaimed issued cannot be carried forward to a following month
- any requests for prepaid electricity in excess of 50 kWh must be purchased at

the applicable lifeline electricity tariff

- for conventional consumers a credit of 50 kWh electricity will be entered to their monthly consumer services account
- upon the discovery and confirmation of any tampering to electricity supply equipment or electricity theft, the registration as indigent will be cancelled

### **Water**

- consumption is charged at the normal household tariff for 6 kl of free water per month
- a restriction of 6 kl per month shall be applicable to registered indigents. Where a restriction of 6 kl per month is exceeded repeatedly for a period exceeding three consecutive months in a calendar year a restricted metered service be installed to limit water consumption to more affordable levels
- consumers will be informed of the adopted service levels and how to use a limitation system when installed

### **Assessment Rates**

- the first R15,000 of the property value of residential households is exempted from tax
- all pensioned, aged or disabled owners of residential households are entitled to apply for a rebate in excess of the first R15,000 of the property value not subject to tax
- registered indigents will get 100% rebate on assessment rates on properties valued at R100,000 or less

### **Refuse Removal**

- the refuse removal rate in respect of indigents will be fully discounted
- the discount will be shown in the Council's income statement as "*income foregone*" and recovered from the Equitable Share

### **Sewerage**

- the sewerage rate in respect of indigents will be fully discounted
- the discount will be shown in the Council's income statement as "*income foregone*" and recovered from the Equitable Share

#### 4. **LIMITATIONS**

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- The above free issues or discounts are based on the expected Equitable Share to be paid to the Council by National Treasury annually. The annual adjustment to these benefits is subjected to the increase in the Equitable Share
- The benefits are reserved for consumers who are prepared to limit their electricity current demand to 20 amperes
- Consumers partaking in this indigent scheme are restricted to total water consumption of 6 kl and the supply to regular or constant transgressors will then be restricted by the installation of a device to limit the water flow.

#### 13 **POLICY ADOPTION**

This policy has been considered and approved by the **COUNCIL OF ABAQULUSI MUNICIPALITY** as follows:

Resolution No:

Approval Date:

#### 14 **EFFECTIVE DATE**

This policy shall be effective as from the following date: 01 July 2023