Turn on the Tap/Increasing Participation in Water Affordability Programs Through Data Sharing: Natural Resources Defense Council/National Consumer Law Center Report



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The Natural Resources Defense Council and National Consumer Law Center (collectively, "NRDC") have released a June 2025 report titled:

TURN ON THE TAP: INCREASING PARTICIPATION IN WATER AFFORDABILITY PROGRAMS THROUGH DATA SHARING ("Report").

The authors of the Report include:

- Larry Levine, Natural Resources Defense Council.
- Olivia Wein, National Consumer Law Center.

Kenneth Thomas contributed as a Research Assistant.

The Report is intended to assist:

…anyone advocating for or implementing low-income water affordability or assistance programs, including advocates, utilities, cities, states, and utility regulators.

A concern being addressed is stated to be programs that struggle with low enrollment due to barriers in the application process. The Report contends that data sharing with other types of low-income programs is a "uniquely effective method for dramatically increasing enrollment."

The Report's focus includes:

- How low-income water affordability and assistance programs around the country are using this approach to increase participation (making the application process easier and faster/possibly eliminating the need for many households to submit an application).
- How data sharing can reduce staff time needed to review/approve applications and lower the amount of data that has to be maintained on program participants.

A review of case studies and the common features of successful data sharing arrangements are discussed.

Key sections of the Report include:

1. Introduction
2. Data sharing methods are not one-size-fits-all, but rather can be adapted to fit the context
3. Lessons learned from case studies
4. Case studies
    1. Water
    2. Energy

A copy of the Report can be downloaded here.