



STATE OF MICHIGAN

GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
LANSING

ELIZABETH HERTEL
DIRECTOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Nov. 30, 2021

CONTACT: Lynn Sutfin
517-241-2112
SutfinL1@michigan.gov

Volunteers at Boys & Girls Club supporting City of Benton Harbor community by providing access to water

LANSING, Mich. – For the past five Saturdays, between 15 and 20 volunteers have shown up like clockwork at the Boys & Girls Club of Benton Harbor to hand out cases of water to residents of the City of Benton Harbor.

Some are regular volunteers at the Boys & Girls Club, while others are community members who just want to help out.

“This impacts the community we are all a part of,” said Liji Hanny, Boys & Girls Club of Benton Harbor VP of Internal Affairs and Chief Operations Officer. “The best way to support the community is to be a part of the solution, which is what we do every day. We have wonderful people working here each week who are from Benton Harbor and who love their community.”

In addition to handing out water, volunteers also deliver water door-to-door at the housing community and have made deliveries to community members they know can't make it to the site to pick up the water.

“This is a natural fit for us,” Hanny said. “It's an opportunity to help. We are in the eye of storm right now and we are part of navigating through it.”

Free bottled water continues to be provided by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) and local, paid residents. City of Benton Harbor residents are being encouraged to [use bottled water for cooking, drinking, brushing teeth, rinsing foods and mixing powdered infant formula.](#)

To arrange water delivery to homebound or residents without transportation in the city of Benton Harbor, contact 211, which is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Phones that cannot contact 211 should contact 844-875-9211.

The upcoming schedule for bottled water pickup is:

Wednesday, Dec. 1

- Southwest Community Action Agency, 331 Miller Street, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m., (Self-service)

Thursday, Dec. 2

- Southwest Community Action Agency, 331 Miller Street, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m., (Self-service)

- Ebenezer Baptist Church, 214 E. Britain Avenue, 10 a.m. - noon.
- Brotherhood of All Nations, 1286 Monroe Street, 4 - 6 p.m.

Friday, Dec. 3

- Southwest Community Action Agency, 331 Miller Street, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. (Self-service)

Saturday, Dec. 4

- Boys & Girls Club of Benton Harbor, 600 Nate Wells Sr. Drive, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.,
- Harbor of Hope Seventh-Day Adventist Church, 769 Pipestone Street, 4 - 6 p.m.

Additional dates and locations for bottled water pick up will be added to make sure community needs are met. Information will be posted on Michigan.gov/MiLeadSafe. The ongoing response in Benton Harbor includes the city, Berrien County Health Department, local community organizations, MDHHS and the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy.

To ensure the continued success of bottled water distribution locations in Benton Harbor and to recognize the city residents who have been stepping up to donate their time and talent, the State of Michigan has partnered with local agencies to pay city residents who work at state-supported bottled water distribution sites. Individuals who want to serve as community ambassadors to help distribute water should connect with an established distribution site. Individuals or groups who want to serve as unpaid volunteers can sign up [on the United Way's online platform](#).

MDHHS is engaging in a long-term effort to eliminate lead action level exceedances, educate communities on the effects of lead in drinking water, and remove lead service lines. Gov. Gretchen Whitmer called for the [replacement of lead service lines in Benton Harbor in 18 months](#) and the Whitmer-Gilchrist Administration has provided just under \$20 million to Benton Harbor to speed up their service line replacement timeline.

There is no cost to City of Benton Harbor residents for lead service line replacement. To assist with assuring the work can be completed as soon as possible, residents are encouraged to complete the [Water Service Line Replacement Agreement](#) available online. Contractors cannot begin work on any property without property owner authorization. Completed forms can be returned to Abonmarche, 95 West Main Street, Benton Harbor, MI 49022 or emailed to bvasher@abonmarche.com.

These efforts also include recently approved funds to remove lead from homes in the city. Families living in Benton Harbor can apply for this service by filling out and mailing [in an application that is available online](#). Residents also can call 866-691-5323 to obtain information.

For questions about lead, MDHHS can be reached at 866-691-5323 Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

###