

*The National League of Cities (NLC) Service Line Warranty Program benefits cities and residents. But don't take our word for it – read what they have to say.*

## **NLC Service Line Warranty Program – Beneficial partnerships for municipalities and the homeowners they serve**

The NLC Service Line Warranty Program was conceived in partnership with the NLC to educate property owners about their service line responsibilities and protect them against a potentially significant out-of-pocket repair expense. The Program also offers numerous benefits to our municipality partners.

### **HISTORIC CITY OF BALTIMORE CONFRONTS AGING WATER INFRASTRUCTURE**

Baltimore City is nearly 300 years old and portions of the water infrastructure date back to the Baltimore Water Company, the country's first water utility, established in 1792. In 2013, Baltimore rolled out the Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) system to improve meter accuracy and reduce water loss. As crews replaced meters, they had difficulty reconnecting service because of deteriorating lines.

“When we installed the meters, it became apparent that dirt was the only thing holding some residents' pipes together,” said Shonte Eldridge, Baltimore City's deputy chief of operations. “We needed to find a solution, because homeowners could be faced with unexpected, and high, repair bills.”

The City selected the Program in 2014 after a comprehensive RFP process. They cited our award-winning contact center, use of local contractors and competitive rates as the reason for the selection. The NLC Service Line Warranty Program utilizes rigorously vetted, local contractors to perform the work, keeping money in the local economy. Tom Shrum, owner of Prime Plumbing, is one such contractor. Shrum has seen an increase of business – adding a new truck and hiring another technician – every 12 to 18 months since the launch of the Baltimore program. “We are doing two water line repairs every day for the Program,” he said.



Baltimore City officials direct the City's program royalties to a fund for low-income homeowners who have plumbing emergencies.

#### BALTIMORE CUSTOMER TESTIMONIALS:

*I am very pleased with the service that I have received. Due to the extreme cold weather my city has been having for the past month, they did an excellent job in helping to get a contractor out to my home to help me.*

- Joann R., Baltimore, MD

*We are very happy with your fast service and great customer service. Technicians are professionals and get their job done in [a] timely manner.*

- Miguel O., Baltimore, MD

*You responded immediately to our issue and the plumber came out the next day and serviced the problem and fixed the issue in about an hour. They also guaranteed their work with contact information just in case something else arose. I'm satisfied.*

- Sharron B., Baltimore, MD

#### ONE HOMEOWNER'S PROBLEM LEADS TO EDUCATION FOR ALL IN VAN METER, IOWA

When a Van Meter Public Works employee knocked on her door, Melanie V. didn't know she was about to have a \$4,000 problem. "He knew me - everyone knows everyone else in Van Meter - and he told me water was coming across the road and it was coming from my [service] line," she said. "So I went right out and got it fixed the next day. I didn't realize I was responsible. I thought the city was responsible."

Jake Anderson, Van Meter city manager, agreed many homeowners aren't aware of their service line responsibilities. "That is a difficult way to learn about [responsibilities]," he said of a line break. "It's not something a lot of people think about until there's a problem. It's fairly common for people to think it's the city's responsibility."

If the city took responsibility for the cost of repairing service lines, the water rates would be raised to account for that expenditure, and the council had been grappling with that very issue for several months before Melanie came to them. Anderson reached out to colleagues in other cities to see how they had addressed the issue and learned about the NLC Service Line Warranty Program, a program also endorsed by the Iowa League of Cities.

"There's just a lack of awareness, so the educational information sent out to homeowners through the program twice a year is very helpful and costs the city nothing," Anderson said.

The city adopted the NLC Service Line Warranty Program in July 2017 to help educate residents while providing access to an affordable repair program.

#### BIG CITY ADDRESSES A GROWING PROBLEM

As one of America's oldest cities, the City of Newark has experienced a steady increase in water infrastructure challenges and problems. City Council members were being contacted often by residents with water line issues and were growing increasingly concerned about citizens who may experience financial hardships from water line repairs. So after a rigorous search process, Newark decided to offer the NLC Service Line Warranty Program to its homeowners. An important factor in Newark's selection of this program was its endorsement by the National League of Cities.

"Newark homeowners have been enthusiastic about the program, and those who have had claims have been extremely satisfied with the service they have received," said Mildred Crump, former city council president. "We have also been given positive feedback from citizens who have not chosen to purchase the warranty but still appreciate the City providing information."

The City of Newark adopted the program in 2015. In the last three years, Newark homeowners have saved over \$800,000 in repairs. The program serves over 180,000 customers throughout New Jersey.

#### NEW JERSEY CUSTOMER TESTIMONIALS

*I used the service once and so far it's a very good service.*

- Joseph R., Newark, NJ

*The technician did a great job! He was very kind, courteous and professional.*

- Jeff C., Toms River, NJ

*I thought your service was excellent. Why? Because you arranged a quick response from an incredibly good plumbing contractor who immediately (and successfully) fixed the problem. Thank you!!*

- David B., Leonia, NJ

#### PARTNERSHIP "FOR GOOD" - JACKSON TOWNSHIP MUNICIPAL UTILITIES AUTHORITY

The Jackson Township Municipal Utilities Authority (MUA) has turned a program that educates residents about their service line responsibilities and provides repair assistance into a resource that benefits the entire community. Jackson Township MUA has offered the NLC Service Line Warranty Program for approximately nine years.

"One of our concerns was that we didn't want to be making money on this program," David Harpell, Jackson Township MUA executive director, said of the royalties the authority was offered. "We were doing this for the residents' benefit."

I really appreciate how fast the service was. They are not expensive, and I would recommend them to anyone.

Sandra E.,  
Baltimore, MD

"I didn't realize I was responsible. I thought the city was responsible."

Melanie V.,  
Van Meter, IA

Authority officials decided that while passing on the royalties wouldn't have a large impact on the authority's bottom line, those same funds could have a rather large one on nonprofits working to make Jackson Township a better place.

So the proceeds of the program are donated to charitable organizations either located in Jackson Township or serving Jackson Township residents. "We give preference to those charities serving immediate human needs, such as feeding the hungry or supporting those suffering from serious illness," said Harpell.

Since the inception of the program, more than \$53,000 has been distributed to organizations serving the Jackson Township community. In addition, in a relatively new program, Jackson Township MUA has set aside \$3,000 for bill assistance for disadvantaged residents.

### JACKSON MUA CUSTOMER TESTIMONIALS

*Great service during holiday season!*

- Lisa D., Jackson, NJ

*Was able to get the issue resolved quickly and efficiently.*

- Kaydella F., Jackson, NJ

## Why Offer the NLC Service Line Warranty Program?

### KEY BENEFITS

- Experience from a leading company that has more than 3.7 million customers with 5.9 million service plans through over 600 partner utilities/municipalities
- Commitment to educating homeowners and reducing call volume to the municipality
- Superior, reliable and guaranteed service 24/7/365
- Award-winning in-house call centers in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and Canonsburg, Pennsylvania, with over 500 seats
- Incomparable local contractor management results consistently achieving 98% post-service satisfaction
- Programs are proven to increase resident satisfaction
- No cost to cities to participate
- Provides cities with an ongoing revenue stream

To learn more about how you can partner with USP to bring peace of mind to your residents, visit [www.utilitysp.net](http://www.utilitysp.net).

Follow us on Twitter: [@UtilitySP](https://twitter.com/UtilitySP)

[www.utilitysp.net](http://www.utilitysp.net)

DM\_19\_0321\_NTC

NLC Service Line  
Warranty Program

Administered by  
  
Utility  
Service  
Partners, Inc.  
a HomeServe Company