

A CHANCE TO START AFRESH

JOBURG JOURNAL NEWSLETTER



GCFO: TEBOGO MORAKA

More than R1.2 billion in qualifying debt relief reaches processing

For thousands of Johannesburg customers, historical municipal debt has made it difficult to bring their accounts back into good standing. The City's Debt Relief Programme is helping qualifying customers address that burden, with more than R1.2 billion in qualifying relief from the first batch of applications now submitted for processing.

By the end of July 2026, the City had received 18,043 applications, linked to approximately R2.052 billion in outstanding municipal debt. Following assessment and verification against the approved programme criteria, R1.247 billion in qualifying debt relief has been submitted for processing. The City expects the approved relief from this first batch to reflect on qualifying customers' accounts by the end of September.

This marks meaningful progress in the implementation of Phase 4 of the Debt Relief Programme.

Where the relief is making a difference

The largest portions of the qualifying relief submitted for processing relate to Expanded Social Package (ESP) beneficiaries, individual residential customers and pensioners.

Of the R1.247 billion submitted for processing:

- R674.4 million relates to ESP beneficiaries
- R315.6 million relates to individual residential customers
- R205.1 million relates to pensioners

Together, these categories account for approximately R1.195 billion of the qualifying relief.

The figures provide an indication of the scale of the financial burden carried by some households and customers, while also showing the reach of the programme among categories of customers who qualify for assistance.

Importantly, the R2.052 billion linked to applications is not the amount being written off. Relief is determined after each application has been assessed against the applicable criteria and conditions.

There is still time to apply

Phase 4 of the Debt Relief Programme closes on 31 October 2026.

Customers who have not yet applied but believe they may qualify should use the remaining period to submit their applications and all required supporting documentation.

Applications received after the first batch will continue to be assessed in subsequent processing batches up to the programme's closing date.

Customers can apply through designated Revenue Customer Service Centres and other official City of Johannesburg Debt Relief channels. The City's official customer service platforms can also be used to confirm qualifying criteria, required documentation and the application process.

Customers should be particularly cautious of anyone claiming they can guarantee Debt Relief approval in exchange for payment. Applications are assessed through the City's official processes.

What happens after the relief?

Debt Relief addresses qualifying historical debt. It does not remove the responsibility for current municipal charges.

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For customers who receive relief, maintaining the account going forward is an important part of the programme's intended outcome.

This is where debt relief connects with the City's broader revenue environment. When customers can bring historical debt under control and maintain their current accounts, it supports a healthier payment relationship between customers and the City.

For Johannesburg, sustainable revenue collection helps the City meet its financial obligations and continue funding the services and infrastructure on which communities depend.

For customers, it means having greater control over their municipal accounts and avoiding the accumulation of new debt.

A message from the Group Chief Financial Officer

The progress made through Phase 4 demonstrates what can be achieved when a structured intervention is matched by customers who are willing to engage with the City and regularise their accounts.

For qualifying customers who have not yet applied, I encourage you to make use of the opportunity while the programme remains open. The closing date is 31 October 2026.

At the same time, I encourage customers who receive relief to view it as a point from which to move forward. Keeping current municipal charges up to date is important to maintaining a sustainable relationship with the City.

Our responsibility as the City is to provide the systems, support and processes that enable customers to manage their municipal accounts. Our customers' responsibility is to engage with those processes and meet their ongoing obligations.

Together, these efforts contribute to a stronger financial foundation for Johannesburg.

Tebogo Moraka
Group Chief Financial Officer
City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality

