



LOW INCOME HOUSEHOLD WATER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

*A joint webinar presented by ACF, NCAP and
CAPLAW*



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LIHWAP Overview

Grant Awards: To states, territories and eligible tribes

Purpose: To protect the health and safety of low-income household by ensuring access to in-home water and wastewater services

Priorities: Restore services for disconnected accounts, prevent disconnections for past due accounts, reduce rates for current accounts

Support for Utility Companies: Recoup lost revenue



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Federal Partnerships-Braiding and Blending Programs

- LIHWAP, CSBG, LIHEAP and ERA can be combined to provide wrap around support.
- Sharing information and promoting visibility across programs.
- Categorical eligibility, joint application intake, referrals.
- Resources
 - [LIHWAP/CSBG Coordination](#)
 - [LIHWAP/LIHEAP/ERA Coordination](#)
 - [LIHEAP/ERA Coordination](#)



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Current LIHWAP Status/ Administrative Priorities

- All funds awarded- 49 States, just over 100 tribes, 5 territories, the District of Columbia
- State profile summaries online, upload for full LIHWAP implementation plans in process
- Training and technical assistance
- Quarterly reports
- Stakeholder engagement



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Call to Action/Resources

All CAAs

Review information about LIHWAP, cross train staff about available programs and benefits, build awareness to support households, build pathways to support referrals.

CAAs that Administer LIHWAP Activities

Review resources related to intake and eligibility and vendor agreements, share feedback on administration with state partners, share LIHWAP application information where applicable.

Resources

- [LIHWAP Website](#): Program information and updates
- [Information Memorandum](#): Vendor Agreements, Renter Households, Benefits Policy, Use of Funds FAQ,
- [Dear Colleague Letters](#): Funding Release, Alternative Utilities Funding, CSBG Coordination, LIHEAP/ERA coordination
- [World Water Week](#): Partnering to Increase Availability, Affordability, and Access to Quality Water and Wastewater Services
- [Training Resources](#): Use of Funds, Information for Water Vendors
- [Contact Information](#): State, territory and tribal recipient contacts as well as federal LIHWAP staff contacts



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LIHWAP Contacts

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LIHWAP: A Primer for the Community Action Network

- Overview**
- Structure + Administration**
- LIHEAP Comparison
- Vendor Agreements
- Client Eligibility
- Renter Benefits + Emergency Assistance**
- Use of Funds
- Administrative Costs
- CSBG Supports for LIHWAP
- Calculation of Benefits + Priority
- Additional Resources

The Low-Income Home Water Assistance Program, or LIHWAP, is a new emergency program administered by the Office of Community Services (OCS) that helps low-income households pay water and sewer bills to maintain access to drinking water and wastewater services. Specifically, the funds are used to pay public water utilities to reduce arrearages¹ of and rates charged to eligible individuals. The program was created by the 2021 Consolidated Appropriations Act, which provided \$638 million in initial funding, and Congress later appropriated an additional \$500 million for the program under the American Rescue Plan of 2021. LIHWAP has not been permanently authorized by Congress, which means that the program will end once all the funds appropriated to it have been spent.

¹ For the purposes of LIHWAP, arrearage refers to an unpaid past due bill for household drinking water and/or wastewater utility services. LIHWAP grant resources can be used to pay for arrearages incurred at any point in time by households that meet LIHWAP eligibility criteria and may include reconnection charges, fees, and penalties.

www.resources.caplaw.org/resources/lihwap-primer-for-caas/

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Program Structure and Functions

- Varies by state, implementation plan
- Grant recipients conduct program functions or delegate them:
 - Intake and eligibility;
 - Outreach and referrals;
 - Negotiating vendor agreements;
 - Benefit calculation; and
 - Making and tracking payments.



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Program Structure and Functions

- LIHWAP benefits
 - Payments to utilities to restore water services and pay penalties/fines
 - Payments to prevent disconnection
 - Rate reductions to lower monthly water rate
- CSBG supports
 - Minor plumbing repairs
- Other funding sources



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Intake and Eligibility

- Categorical eligibility
 - LIHEAP, TANF, SNAP, SSI, veterans programs
- Household income
 - 150% FPL or
 - 60% state median income or
 - Greater of the two



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Outreach and Referrals

- Many agencies coordinating outreach and intake with LIHEAP
- CSBG funds may be used for coordination of utility assistance benefits
- “Blending” and “braiding” funding streams



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Negotiating Vendor Agreements

- Most states providing form agreement
- Must be consistent with LIHWAP terms and conditions
- Key terms to be negotiated:
 - Assistance needed to prevent shutoff or pay past due balance
 - Rate reduction amount
 - Temporary shutoff moratorium for 30-90 days after payment
 - Frequency and content of vendor invoices
 - Data necessary for CAA reporting requirements



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Negotiating Vendor Agreements

- In your state, are CAAs negotiating vendor agreements and paying benefits to vendors?
 - Yes
 - No
 - We are negotiating agreements but not paying benefits



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Benefit Calculation

- Benefit cap
 - None at federal level
 - If none at state level, CAAs should pay full amount to restore service
- Priorities are households:
 - With disconnected water services
 - Pending disconnection
 - Seeking help with current water bills (no past due balance)
 - High water burden
 - Low water burden



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Making and Tracking Payments

- Payments may **not** be made directly to households
 - Cisterns and septic tanks
- Renter households
 - Recipients must establish procedures to treat owners and renters equitably
 - Water bill may be included in monthly rent
 - Obtain water meter and utility info from landlord
 - Average monthly water cost
 - Consider agreements



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