



LIHWAP: Emergency water assistance

FACT SHEET

August 2021

A new temporary federal program offers one-time payments to qualifying customers who are struggling to pay their water and wastewater bills during the pandemic.

What is LIHWAP?

The Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP), created by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, is a two-year program for water customers in need of assistance. The program is funded from the federal Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 and the American Rescue Plan.

While LIHWAP is a temporary assistance program, Illinois plans to make additional relief available by introducing the State Water Assistance Program (SWAP) sometime in 2022. This program is still in the planning stages, but when it's ready to be launched, CUB will provide details.

When can I apply for LIHWAP?

Grants will be given out beginning in September, but people can start applying now.

How do I apply for LIHWAP?

To apply for LIHWAP, interested residents should visit their local administering agency (LAA)—a local office that provides financial assistance to cover several key needs, including temporary shelter, rent and utility bills. (It's the same office you would visit to participate in the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, or LIHEAP.)

If you are physically unable to visit your LAA in-person, someone may drop off your application on your behalf, but you must provide them with a handwritten letter giving them permission to submit the application on your behalf.

How do I know if I'm eligible?

As in the Low Income HomeEnergy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), a household must have a monthly income that is at or below 200% of the federal poverty limit.

Family Size	30 Day Income	Annual Income
1	\$2,147	\$25,760
2	\$2,903	\$34,840
3	\$3,660	\$43,920
4	\$4,417	\$53,000
5	\$5,173	\$62,080
6	\$5,930	\$71,160
7	\$6,590	\$79,081
8	\$6,737	\$80,838

How much assistance can I get?

To assist as many households as possible, there is a maximum of \$1,500 in benefits that households can receive. These benefits can be put toward:

- Imminent disconnection/disconnection;
- Disconnection fees/late fees;
- Part of current bill if in disconnection status;
- Arrears/past due balance. ***\$250 or more**

If your service has not been disconnected and you are not on the disconnect list, there is a minimum benefit of \$250. This minimum also applies to City of Chicago residents as it is currently the only municipality under a disconnection moratorium. There is no minimum for those who have had their service disconnected or are on the disconnect list.

How many times can I receive benefits?

Benefits are available once for water and once for wastewater/sewer per household between Sept. 1, 2021 and Sept. 30, 2023, or until funds have been exhausted.

Can I receive benefits if I am undocumented?

This program requires that at least one person in the household has a social security number. If that individual is eligible for assistance, the household will receive benefits, regardless of the citizenship status of other members in the household.

Are certain customers given priority?

Households will be given assistance based on need, on a first come, first served basis. Those who have had their service disconnected, are on the disconnect list or owe more than \$250 will be prioritized.

Are there other sources of assistance out there?

If you need more financial assistance or don't qualify for LIHWAP, inquire with your utility about any financial assistance programs they may offer directly. Also, call 2-1-1 (3-1-1 for Chicago residents) for local resources, and visit your local Salvation Army for assistance.

Who do I contact if I have questions?

For any questions regarding LIHWAP or LIHEAP, please contact your LAA. To find your LAA, go to Illinois.gov and search for "Local Administering Agencies."

Customers should call: 618-443-5231