

Low Income Home Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP)

Frequently Asked Questions

A temporary emergency Low-Income Home Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) is available to provide low-income households assistance in paying their water and wastewater (sewer) bills. Funds will be sent directly to Public Water System (PWS) providers to be credited to income eligible household accounts to reduce arrearages, prevent shutoffs and reduce monthly rates. This program is slated to operate from October 1, 2021 through September 30, 2023 or until funds have been expended. DPHHS has developed a combined application with the Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) which will allow individuals to apply for assistance with their heat bills, weatherization of their homes, and for Low Income Home Water Assistance program (LIHWAP) assistance.

The LIHWAP program is authorized under Section 533 Title V of Division H of the Consolidated Appropriations act of 2021, Public Law No: 116-260 and as provided for under The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

Additional information can be found at: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ocs/programs/lihwap>.

Applicant Households

1. How do I know if I get my water from a Public Water System?

If you receive a monthly bill from a company that supplies water to your home, you are probably getting your water from a Public Water System. Contact your water/sewer provider or the local LIEAP/LIHWAP office for more information.

2. What is a Public Water System?

Public water systems are defined in both Montana statute (MCA) and Administrative Rules of MT (ARM). There are three categories of public water systems –

- community (such as towns),
- non-transient non community (such as schools or factories)
- transient non community systems (such as rest stops or parks)

Community water systems are the **only** type that would be eligible for participation in the Low Income Home Water Assistance Program. A public water system may be owned and/or operated by –

- an individual;
- a limited partnership;
- a limited liability company;
- a corporation, whether organized for profit or not;
- a city, town, local government entity, or other political subdivision of the state;
- a federal agency

3. Where do I get an application and information to apply?

Applications are available at your local area Energy Assistance office (LIEAP). or on the State of Montana website (LIEAP.mt.gov) or by contacting DPHHS for Energy and Community Services at 1-833-317-1080.

4. Can the same information provided for LIEAP be used to apply for LIHWAP?

Yes. DPHHS has combined the LIEAP, Weatherization and LIHWAP application. Indicate on the combined application that you would like to apply for the Water Assistance Program. Information provided with the completed application will be used to determine eligibility for all three programs. A copy of your household’s water bill, in your name must also be provided.

5. Is there a separate application for the Water Program?

No. DPHHS has combined the LIEAP, Weatherization and LIHWAP application. Indicate on the combined application you would like to apply for the Water Assistance Program. Information provided with the completed application will be used to determine eligibility for all three programs. You must also include a copy of your water bill.

6. Can I apply for LIEAP and in the future apply for the water program?

Yes. You can contact your local LIEAP office and let them know you would also like to apply for the water program. If you are already approved for LIEAP, you may be approved for the water program also. Your water and/or sewer provider must have entered into a contract with DPHHS and you will need to supply a copy of your household’s water bill in your name.

7. Do we apply once a year for the Water Program?

This is a temporary program that runs from October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2023, or until funds have been expended. If you move, please contact your local LIEAP office and let them know. You may be able to reapply for a pro-rated benefit.

8. Will this program help pay past due bills?

This program is designed to assist with past-due amounts, re-connect fees, and provide a one-time benefit for monthly charges.

9. Do you have to be low income to apply?

There are income guidelines.

POVERTY LEVELS	
Household Members	Upper Income Limits
1	\$27,282
2	\$35,676
3	\$44,071
4	\$52,465

10. Will the Water Program help fix sewer issues, broken pipes and leaks in my house?

No, the LIHWAP funds **cannot** be used to fix sewer issues, broken pipes, or plumbing leaks.