

Low Income Household Water Assistance Program

SOUTH CAROLINA LIHWAP PROFILE SUMMARY



The South Carolina's Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) is funded at \$19 million in FY21. The program addresses the public health and economic impacts low-income households often face due to a lack of resources available to prepare for and recover from a crisis. Data from on a nationally representative sample of households below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level indicates that 12-28% of households reported being unable to pay a utility bill between June and August 2020. The state utilizes LIHWAP grant funds to assist South Carolina families to maintain access to household drinking water and wastewater.

Program Operation

South Carolina's LIHWAP, which began in October 2021, is managed and operated at the level in coordination with other programs available to low-income households and in partnership with 13 Community Action Agencies (CAA) responsible for administering the program at the local level. South Carolina's LIHWAP provides relief assistance to **three priority groups**:

- Households without current water or wastewater services for the immediate restoration of services
- Households with existing arrearages to prevent disconnection of drinking water or wastewater services
- Households seeking assistance with rate reduction

Administering agency staff determine program eligibility and process benefit payments to water service providers.

FY21 LIHWAP FUNDING ALLOCATION



AMOUNT

TOTAL: \$19,068,273

- ARP: \$8,377,976
- CAA: \$10,690,297



OPERATIONAL PRIORITIES

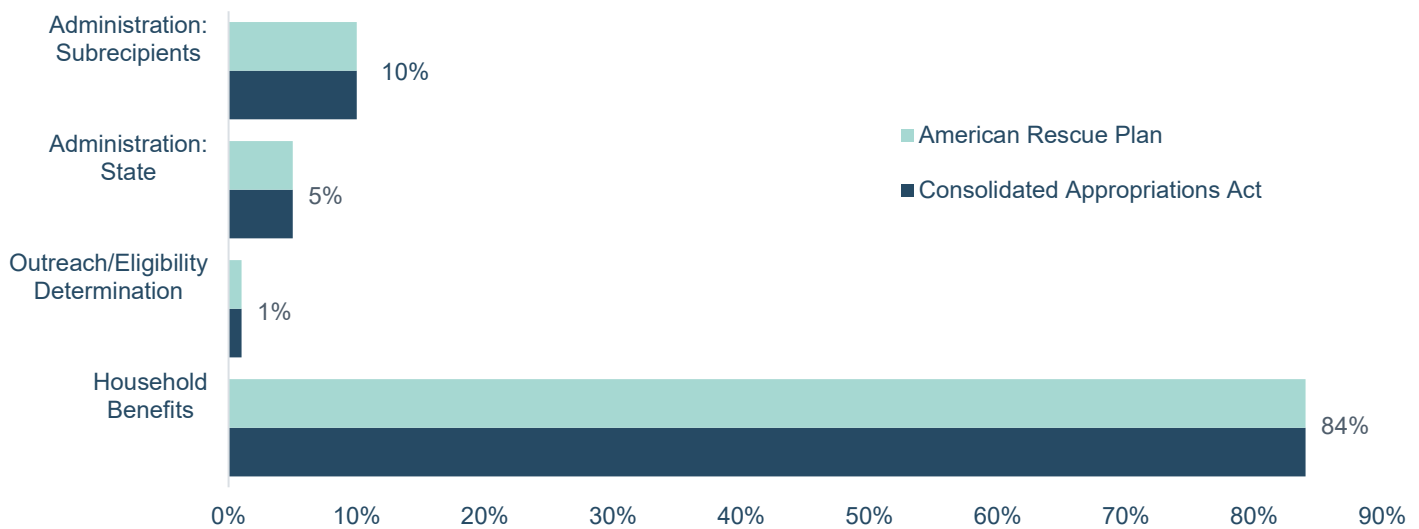
- Restoration of services
- Payment of arrearages
- Rate reduction



PROGRAM COORDINATION

- Joint application and income eligibility requirements with the LIHEAP program.
- CAAs coordinate with other agencies and low-income programs

Use of Funding by Funding Source



Benefits on Behalf of Households

Under South Carolina's LIHWAP, eligible households with a current water/wastewater bill and/or past due amount may apply for assistance as often as needed based on the frequency established by each local administering agency. An eligible household may receive emergency LIHWAP assistance up to \$1,000 per service to eliminate a household's residential water emergency. Local administering agencies only apply LIHWAP benefits toward allowable water/wastewater fees outlined on the customer's detailed bill, not to exceed \$1,000.

Households in all federal priority groups with a current water/wastewater bill and/or past due amount may apply for assistance as often as needed. Local administering agencies have the option to set their own frequency for applicants to apply for assistance.

Priority Populations

Households that meet program eligibility criteria **and** fall in one of the following categories receive priority in eligibility, as indicated in each local administering agencies' implementation plan.

- ✓ People with disabilities
- ✓ Families with young children (<5)
- ✓ Older Adult/Seniors (60+)
- ✓ Households with high water burdens

Program Outreach Activities

- Work directly with water utilities to identify potential recipients.
- Inclusion of inserts in water vendor billings to inform individuals of the availability of LIHWAP assistance.
- Mass mailing(s) to prior-year LIHEAP recipients or recipients of other government benefits.

Eligibility and Benefit Determination Criteria

Title	Item
Income Threshold	
✓	150% Federal Poverty Guideline
	60% State Median Income
	Hybrid Federal and State (based on household size)
Categorical Eligibility	
✓	LIHEAP
	Means-tested Veterans Programs
	Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP)
	Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
Eligible Households	
✓	Homeowners
✓	Renters
Benefit Level Determination*	
✓	Income
✓	Household size
✓	Household drinking water burden
✓	Household wastewater burden
Benefit Amount	
\$0	Minimum
\$1,000	Maximum
Benefit Period	
	One Time
✓	Multiple

*Grant recipients are required to determine a benefit level for households seeking assistance with their current water and wastewater bills. Benefit level determination is based on household income, size, and drinking water and wastewater burden.

For more information about the South Carolina LIHWAP, contact:

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