

# Low Income Household Water Assistance Program

## WASHINGTON LIHWAP PROFILE SUMMARY



The Washington State Department of Commerce Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) is funded at nearly \$20 million in FY21. The program addresses the needs of many low-income households struggling to pay their water bills. Available data indicates that city-owned water and sewer utilities have seen an increase of 5.4-6% in customers who have accounts in a delinquent status while the total amount of arrearages ranges from \$7.89 million to \$15.7 million since the COVID-19 pandemic began. For city-owned sewer utilities, the number of households with delinquent accounts has increased 5.4% with total of \$7.98 million in arrearages. The state utilizes LIHWAP grant funds to restore and prevent the disconnection of household water/wastewater services.

### Program Operation

Washington's LIHWAP, which began in October 2021, is managed and operated at the state level in coordination with other programs available to low-income households and in partnership with 26 Community Action Agencies and local county governments that administer the program at the local level. Washington's LIHWAP provides relief assistance to **two priority groups**:

- Households without current water services for the immediate restoration of services
- Households with existing arrearages to prevent disconnection of drinking water and/or wastewater services

Administering agency staff conduct outreach activities, determine client eligibility, and process benefit payments for water service providers.

### FY21 LIHWAP FUNDING ALLOCATION

#### AMOUNT

**TOTAL: \$19,976,183**

- ARP: \$8,776,882
- CAA: \$11,199,301



#### OPERATIONAL PRIORITIES

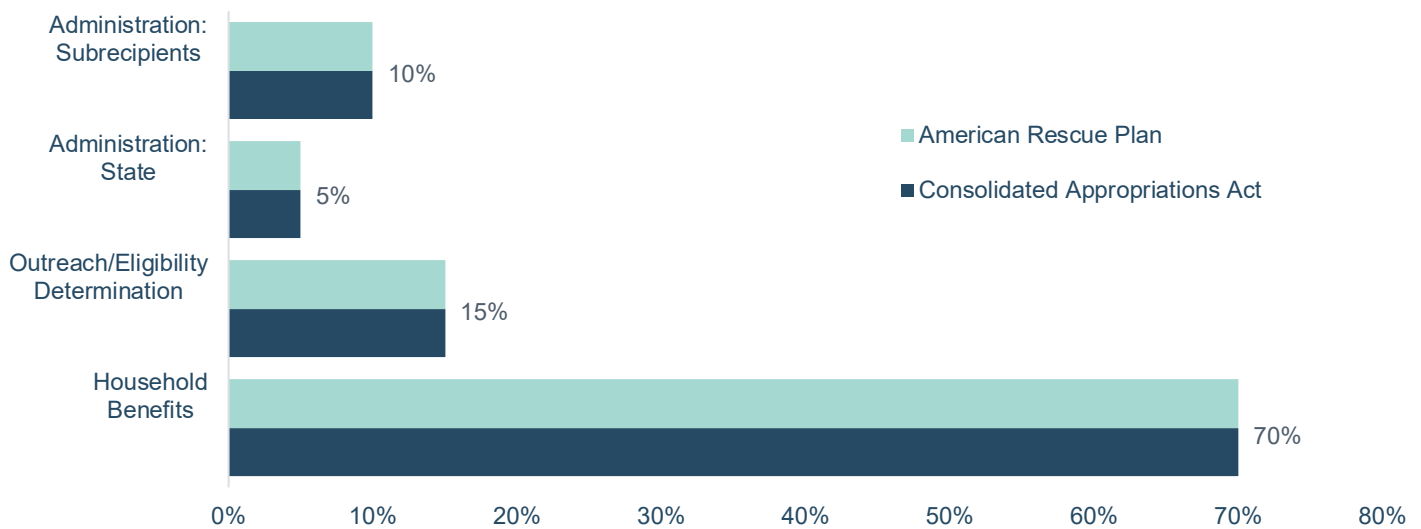
- Restoration of services
- Payment of arrearages



#### PROGRAM COORDINATION

- Joint application with LIHEAP
- Intake and referrals to/from other programs as determined by subgrantees

## Use of Funding by Funding Source



## Benefits on Behalf of Households

Under Washington's LIHWAP, eligible households may receive up to \$2,500 in benefit assistance towards their water/wastewater bill.

## Priority Populations

Households that meet program eligibility criteria and fall into one of the following categories receive priority outreach about the program.

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

## Program Outreach Activities

- Place posters/flyers in local and county social service offices, offices of aging, Social Security offices, Veterans Affairs, etc.
- Publication of articles or public service announcements in local newspapers or broadcast media announcements.
- 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
- Automated phone campaigns and/or social media outreach.
- Multi-lingual announcements in languages spoken by low-income households within utility service area and/or notification in ethnic language news and broadcast media outlets
- Inform low-income applicants of the availability of all types of LIHWAP assistance at application intake for other low-income programs.
- Execute interagency agreements with other low-income program offices and/or public health pathways created for Covid-19 outreach to perform outreach to target groups.
- Outreach to faith-based institutions, including those serving low-income people and people of color.

## Eligibility and Benefit Determination Criteria

Title	Item
<b>Income Threshold</b>	
✓	150% Federal Poverty Guideline
	60% State Median Income
	Hybrid Federal and State (based on household size)
<b>Categorical Eligibility</b>	
✓	LIHEAP
	Means-tested Veterans Programs
	Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP)
	Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
<b>Eligible Households</b>	
✓	Homeowners
✓	Renters
<b>Benefit Level Determination*</b>	
✓	Income
✓	Household size
	Household drinking water burden
	Household wastewater burden
✓	Amount owed for water services
<b>Benefit Amount</b>	
<b>\$0</b>	Minimum
<b>\$2500</b>	Maximum
<b>Benefit Period</b>	
✓	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. Because Washington is not using its LIHWAP funds to assist households with their current water bills, the Washington State Department of Commerce did not establish a benefit level.

### For more information about the Washington LIHWAP, contact:

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