



## Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) FAQ

### What is LIHWAP and how can LIHWAP help me?

LIHWAP, which stands for Low Income Household Water Assistance Program, is a federal program that helps low-income households pay for drinking water and wastewater for their homes. This program will help you pay your home water bill if the water bill is in your name, or if you can verify that you are experiencing a water burden.

### What are the legislative instructions behind the Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program?

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (Public Law No.: 116-260) signed on Dec. 27, 2020, included \$638 million in funding with instructions for the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to carry out grants to states, territories and tribes to assist low-income households with water and wastewater bills. Additionally, on March 11, 2021, the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (Public Law No.: 117-2) appropriated an additional \$500 million to the new LIHWAP effort.

The full appropriations language from both the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 and the American Rescue Plan Act are available on the OCS website through the following weblink:

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ocs/law-regulation/lihwap-laws-and-regulations>

### When can I apply for LIHWAP assistance in Georgia?

LIHWAP will open on November 15, 2021 in Georgia and will prioritize households that have an arrearage or past due water bill through the remainder of the year. On January 3, 2022, the program will begin serving households that contain seniors 60 years of age and older and households that contain children five years of age and younger. All other households will be eligible to receive LIHWAP assistance beginning February 1, 2022.

Phase	Dates	Priority Group
Phase 1	<i>Nov.15th through Dec. 31, 2021</i>	Families with past due water bill arrearages
Phase 2	<i>Beginning Jan. 3, 2022</i>	Families with past due water bill arrearages  Household with elderly (60 years of age and older) members, or with children five years of age and younger  *Candidates do not need to have an arrearage
Phase 3	<i>Beginning Feb. 1, 2022</i>	All other eligible residents

**Is there a reason a customer who is income eligible and/or experiencing arrears still may not receive LIHWAP benefits?**

Yes. LIHWAP is not an entitlement program. These funds will only be distributed to eligible customers that receive water services through public pipelines from a vendor that has signed an agreement to participate in LIHWAP.

Customers can contact their water vendor and request that the supplier sign an agreement with DHS in order to be eligible to have these funds applied to their account. Unfortunately, families receiving water services from a vendor without a water supplier agreement, will not receive LIHWAP.

Vendors interested in participating in LIHWAP can contact their local Community Action Agency or may send an email inquiry to DHS at [liheap-csbq-lihwap@dhs.ga.gov](mailto:liheap-csbq-lihwap@dhs.ga.gov) or by calling 404-657-3426.

**What will vendors need to do to ensure that their customers can receive LIHWAP?**

Water suppliers will need to submit a completed agreement to DHS by email at [liheap-csbq-lihwap@dhs.ga.gov](mailto:liheap-csbq-lihwap@dhs.ga.gov). An agreement must be **completed in its entirety** in order to be accepted and to avoid delays in processing.

**Can I receive LIHWAP assistance more than once?**

No, each household is eligible to apply and receive LIHWAP assistance once per program year.

**Will LIHWAP pay for my whole water bill?**

The amount of assistance is determined by household size, income, and composition. If you have an arrearage or past due amount for your water bill, the program will pay the

entire arrearage/past due amount AND provide either a \$200 or \$300 benefit (depending on the household's income), toward your current water bill.

Households without an arrearage/past due amount at present can expect to receive either a \$200 or \$300 benefit (depending on the household income), toward their current water bill. Payments can only be issued directly to the household's water supplier. Payments **cannot** be made to individuals or households.

### **Can I complete a water assistance application online?**

No. You must contact the local Community Action Agency responsible for administering the program in your county to apply for benefits. To find out which Community Action Agency covers your area, email [LIHEAP-CSBG-LIHWAP@dhs.ga.gov](mailto:LIHEAP-CSBG-LIHWAP@dhs.ga.gov) or visit <http://www.georgiacaa.org>

### **What do I need to bring to the appointment?**

You will need to check with your local Community Action Agency for the information needed for the intake process. Examples of information needed will include:

- picture identification,
- social security cards for each member in the household,
- proof of income for the past 30 days,
- current water bill, etc.

### **Can LIHWAP help with my energy bill?**

No. LIHWAP assistance can only be used for drinking water or wastewater services bill payment. For assistance with your energy bill, please inquire with the Community Action Agency about the LIHEAP program.

### **How long will it take to get my benefits if I am eligible?**

Community Action Agencies process LIHWAP benefits in the order received and processing times vary. You must continue to pay your bill until benefits have been issued to your household water supplier to avoid an interruption in services and/or additional fees.

### **What is the application process for LIHWAP assistance?**

You will need to contact your local Community Action Agency to schedule an Intake Appointment to complete the application. If you are determined eligible to receive LIHWAP assistance, you will be informed of the amount of assistance that will be applied to your water bill. The LIHWAP benefit will be issued directly to the household water supplier.

If you are determined ineligible, you will receive notification and documentation

regarding the reason for denial. It is important that you continue to pay your bill to avoid service interruption and/or additional fees while your application is being processed.

### **Can I apply for LIHWAP with any Community Action Agency?**

No. You must complete your application through the Community Action Agency that provides assistance to the county you reside in. Each county is represented by one Community Action Agency.

### **How do I know if I am eligible for the LIHWAP Program?**

Your household water supplier must be a registered vendor for the LIHWAP program with the Department of Human Services (DHS) in order for your household to be eligible for LIHWAP assistance. All LIHWAP assistance payments are applied directly to the water account through the household water supplier, therefore households whose water supplier does not participate in the program will not be eligible for assistance.

The other basic eligibility requirements are :

1. Have a total gross income at or below 60% of the State Median Income Guidelines for Georgia
2. Be responsible for paying the cost of water for the household or be able to verify a water burden
3. Be a US citizen or lawfully admitted immigrant

### **Where do I apply for LIHWAP assistance?**

You must contact your local Community Action Agency to schedule an appointment to complete a LIHWAP application. **To find out which Community Action Agency covers your area, email [LIHEAP-CSBG-LIHWAP@dhs.ga.gov](mailto:LIHEAP-CSBG-LIHWAP@dhs.ga.gov) or visit <http://www.georgiacaa.org>**

### **Is LIHWAP a one-time emergency appropriation or an ongoing annual appropriation?**

LIHWAP does not have a permanent or ongoing statutory authorization or appropriation beyond the current funding.