

## Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP)

**What:** The LIHWAP helps eligible households pay water and sewer bills to restore or maintain access to drinking water and wastewater services and is funded through two federal appropriations.

It is administered in the Commonwealth by the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). Local service delivery is provided by 20 local administrating agencies (LAAs) that also administer the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).

It is intended to restore service and pay toward arrearages of water and wastewater services in the federal fiscal year 2022 (October 1, 2021, through September 30, 2022).

**Who:** This program will serve income eligible customers who are directly billed for their service(s) *and* whose service has been either terminated for non-payment, or who have an arrearage. Though the program name includes *low income*, the income guidelines are broad, serving households who would not generally be considered low income. For example, a household of four can have an annualized gross income of up to \$78,751. The annualization of a household's income is almost always based on four weeks of a household's income. Refer to the attached [income-eligibility-and-benefit-levels chart](#)<sup>1</sup> for an overview of potential benefits and income limits by household size.

**How:** One application serves as the application for both LIHEAP and LIHWAP programs. Households can [apply online](#)<sup>2</sup> or via appointment.

**Where:** Applications are taken by [20 local administrating agencies](#)<sup>3</sup> (LAAs) that cover the entirety of Massachusetts.

**Vendor Notification and Billing:** Initially, each vendor will be required to sign a vendor agreement and complete a vendor information sheet, returning both to the LAA in order for their customers to be paid.

Eligible customer information will regularly upload to a vendor-specific online portal when a direct-billed water and/or wastewater service customer is determined to be LIHWAP eligible and has provided their vendor information. The vendor will be notified of the initial upload. The vendor will then need to enter whether the account is active; if inactive, is it the result of non-payment; whether the account is in arrears; and, if yes, what is the amount in arrears; and and what are the services provided. Initially, only those accounts that are marked as in arrears will be paid. Any account holder/account number/service address mismatch will need to be corrected in order for a payment to be made.

Once the data is entered by the vendor, the LAA will send payment to the vendor within 30 days.

1. <https://www.mass.gov/doc/fy-2022-lihwap-income-eligibility-and-benefit-level-chart-march-2022/download>
2. <https://toapply.org/MassLIHEAP>
3. <https://hedfuel.azurewebsites.net>