

Low-Income Home Energy (LIHEAP) and Weatherization Assistance Programs (WAP)

Payments for heating, cooling, and weatherization

The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)...

- provides states with block grants, from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), to help low-income households defray the cost of heating or cooling and weatherizing their homes.
- sends the federal block grant to state social services agencies, welfare departments, or similar agencies which, in turn, often contract with local providers, such as community action agencies, to operate the programs. The names of the programs and services provided vary throughout the country.
- furnishes the highest level of assistance to households with the lowest incomes and highest energy costs or needs, taking into account family size.

LIHEAP programs typically include...

- **Heating or Cooling Assistance Programs.** Payments to help persons defray the costs of heating or cooling their residences.
- **Energy Crisis Intervention Programs.** Emergency payments to cover unpaid energy bills or the costs of weather-related emergencies.
- **Weatherization Assistance.** In some areas, LIHEAP funds are occasionally used for weatherization assistance, such as insulation, weather sealants, and other energy-related home repairs.

Households qualify for LIHEAP in which...

- one or more individuals in the household are receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Supplemental Security Income, food stamps, or certain veterans' benefits or payments; *or*
- household income does not exceed 60 percent of the state median income or 150 percent of the federal poverty level, whichever is greater.

NOTE: There are exceptions to the income cap. A state may not exclude a household from eligibility solely on the basis of their income, if their income is less than 110 percent of that state's poverty level.

However, a state may give priority to households with the highest home energy costs or needs in relation to household income.

ALSO NOTE: The term "household" means "any individual or group of individuals who are living together as one economic unit for whom residential energy is customarily purchased in common or who make undesignated payments for energy in the form of rent."

The U.S. Department of Energy's Low-Income Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP)...

- provides weatherization, such as insulation, weather sealants, and other energy-related home repair, for low-income units.
- is administered by the states, which subcontract with local providers such as community action agencies or other public or nonprofit agencies who then enter into agreements with homeowners and landlords to weatherize their properties.
- is supplemented by some states with contributions from utility companies and other sources.
- follows LIHEAP's immigrant eligibility rules.

NOTE: Agencies using both WAP and LIHEAP funds for weatherization activities may follow either WAP or LIHEAP income eligibility and priority rules (which differ in some respects).

Special considerations for immigrants and their families in LIHEAP and WAP programs

- Advocates argue that all households or family units which include a U.S. citizen or "qualified" immigrant should be eligible for LIHEAP and WAP. Federal agencies have not issued guidance on this issue.

To apply, an applicant should...

- gather documents proving income and showing utility expenses and bills, energy needs, and type and location of housing.
- apply through local programs administering LIHEAP or WAP funds.

continued following table ►

| LIHEAP and DOE Weatherization Assistance Programs | |
|---|--|
| ELIGIBLE IMMIGRANTS | INELIGIBLE IMMIGRANTS |
| LIHEAP Heating, Cooling, and Crisis Assistance Programs | LIHEAP Heating, Cooling, and Crisis Assistance Programs |
| <p>“Qualified” immigrants Victims of trafficking and their derivative beneficiaries</p> | <p>“Not qualified” immigrants</p> |
| LIHEAP Weatherization Assistance and DOE Weatherization Assistance Programs | LIHEAP Weatherization Assistance and DOE Weatherization Assistance Programs |
| <p>Multi-Unit Dwellings Families living in multi-unit dwellings are eligible without regard to the immigration status of the inhabitants.</p> | <p>Multi-Unit Dwellings None</p> |
| <p>Single-Unit Dwellings “Qualified” immigrants Victims of trafficking and their derivative beneficiaries</p> | <p>Single-Unit Dwellings “Not qualified” immigrants</p> |

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The law governing LIHEAP appears at:

Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Act of 1981, 42 U.S.C. §§ 8621, *et seq.*, 45 C.F.R. §§ 96.80, *et seq.*, Interpretation of “Federal Public Benefit,” 63 Fed. Reg. 41,658 (Aug. 4, 1998), Memorandum from Janet M. Fox, Director, Division of Energy Assistance, Office of Community Services to Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) Grantees and Other Interested Parties, Re: Revision-Guidance on the Interpretation of “Federal Public Benefits” Under the Welfare Reform Law (June 15, 1999).

The law governing WAP appears at:

42 U.S.C. §§ 6861, *et seq.*, 10 C.F.R. §§ 440.1 *et seq.*; immigrant eligibility at Weatherization Program Notice 98-1, Gail McKinley, Acting Director, Office of State Community Programs, Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, Re: Program Year 1998 Weatherization Grant Guidance (effective Nov. 19, 1997).