

SOUTH SHORE COMMUNITY ACTION COUNCIL, INC.
71 OBERY STREET
PLYMOUTH, MA 022360
FY2022

Low Income Household Water Assistance Program Information Sheet

This serves as a brief introduction to a federally funded program to be operated locally by our agency, **South Shore Community Action Council, Inc.**, to assist eligible households by providing a payment to their water and/or wastewater bills.

BACKGROUND

The Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) was funded as a one-year emergency assistance program by Congress. Nationally, \$1.138B is available for LIHWAP. Massachusetts was awarded \$19.3M. The federal grantor, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), set the order of priority for the program as follows:

- restore service to households whose water/sewer service has been terminated
- prevent termination for households with terminations notices
- serve households whose water/sewer account is past due (i.e., not current) but whose service is not terminated or in danger of termination.

The state grantor of LIHWAP, the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), has worked with various stakeholders across the state to better understand the various water and sewer configurations and to devise a program to aid households in need. Stakeholders include the Massachusetts Water Works Association, the Department of Environmental Protection, and the Attorney General's Office as well as Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) agencies.

MASSACHUSETTS LIHEAP and LIHWAP APPLICATION

The same agencies that operate LIHEAP, commonly known as Fuel Assistance or Home Energy Assistance, will work with local water and sewer providers to administer LIHWAP. One application acts as an application for the LIHEAP, LIHWAP and the weatherization programs. Questions concerning a household's water and sewer accounts and the status of the accounts were added to the FY22 LIHEAP application. The applicant must also sign the application to indicate their agreement with the declarations and authorizations for use of personal information listed on the back of the application. The declarations include permission to share water and sewer account information for certain reasons. LIHEAP applications will be accepted through May 13, 2022. For more information regarding LIHEAP, see <https://www.mass.gov/home-energy-assistance-programs>.

LIHWAP INCOME GUIDELINES AND BENEFIT

The LIHWAP income eligibility guideline and benefit chart is attached. Though the name of the program indicates it is for low-income households, a four-person household can gross up to \$78,751 annually and be eligible for the program. Those households with income less than 125% of the federal poverty level (FPL) will receive a higher benefit. In addition, households whose arrearage is higher than the threshold listed in the chart will receive a supplemental benefit.

Fiscal Year 2022
Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP)
Income Eligibility and Benefit Levels

Number of People in a Household	Up to 125% of Federal Poverty Level	Maximum of 60% of Estimated State Median Income
1	\$16,100	\$40,951
2	\$21,775	\$53,551
3	\$27,450	\$66,151
4	\$33,125	\$78,751
5	\$38,800	\$91,351
6	\$44,475	\$103,951
7	\$50,150	\$106,314
8	\$55,825	\$108,676
9	\$61,500	\$111,039
10	\$67,175	\$113,401
11	\$72,850	\$115,764
12	\$78,525	\$118,127
13	\$84,200	\$120,489
14	\$89,875	\$122,852
15	\$95,550	\$125,214
16	\$101,225	\$127,577
17	\$106,900	\$129,939
LIHWAP Benefit	\$350	\$300
Water Arrearage Supplemental Help (WASH) Thresholds and Supplements		
	Water - \$654 - \$50	
	Sewer - \$1,106 - \$50	
	Combined Water & Sewer - \$1,715 - \$100	

Note: Contact DHCD to determine eligibility for a household of 18 and above.

Sources (Income Levels):

"Annual Update of the HHS Poverty Guidelines", *Federal Register* 86 No.19 (1 Feb 2021): 7732-7734
"State Median Income Estimates", USHHS, OCS, DEA, *LIHEAP-IM-2021-03*

The **Benefit Amount** awarded to eligible households is based on several household factors reflected in this chart. Those include the number of people in a household, their gross income, and whether a threshold is exceeded.

The **Water Arrearage Supplemental Help (WASH)** is an additional benefit provided only to qualifying, eligible LIHWAP households whose current water and/or wastewater arrearage(s) exceeds a listed WASH threshold.