



**Office of Community Services
Low-Income Household
Water Assistance Program
(LIHWAP)**

LOW INCOME HOUSEHOLD WATER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



Welcome & Introductions



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Working Together to Address Water Affordability & Accessibility in Tribal Communities

- OCS is committed to working closely with Tribes to help LIHWAP best serve Tribal communities and ensure that low-income households have access to affordable water and wastewater services.
- The OCS team and Tribal TTA program are building working relationships with Tribal grant recipients to successfully implement the LIHWAP program, meet program guidelines, and tell the story of LIHWAP's impact on the community.



Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP)

- Provides funds to assist low-income households with water and wastewater bills.
- Benefit payments are made directly to public water service providers, on behalf of low-income households, to reduce arrearages and rates charged for drinking water and wastewater services.
- Congress appropriated \$638M in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021, and an additional \$500M in the American Rescue Plan Act (ARP) of 2021 for a new emergency water and wastewater assistance program.
- There is not currently a permanent authorization for LIHWAP.



Key Program Elements

Priorities:

1. Restore services for disconnected accounts,
2. Prevent disconnections for past due accounts,
3. Reduce rates for current accounts

Vendor Agreements: Define policies and procedures that govern processes and communications between the grant recipient and water utility provider



LIHWAP Administration

Grant Recipient

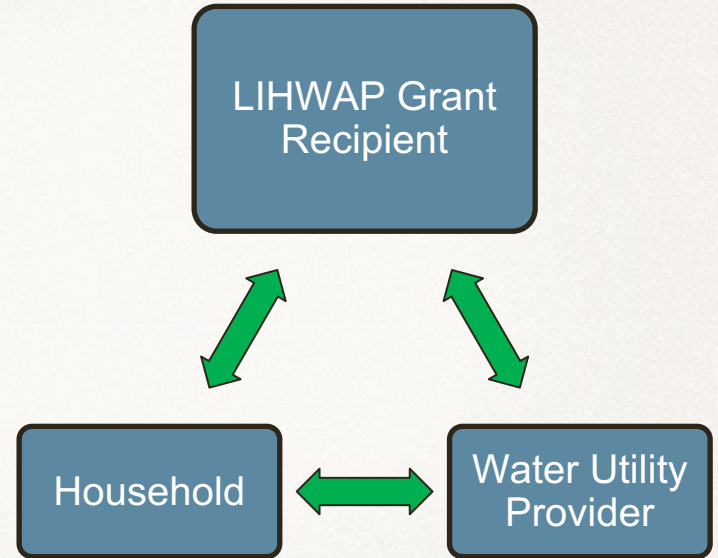
- Develop policies, processes, procedures
- Establish agreements with water and wastewater systems
- Application Intake, eligibility and benefit determination
- Process Benefit Payments

Vendor (Water and Wastewater Systems)

- Ensures household connections are restored or maintained
- Confirms connections and benefit payments credited to eligible accounts

Household

- Applies through state or local agencies
- Customer relationship with water system



Current LIHWAP Status

- **ARPA Anniversary:** March 11 marked the one-year anniversary of the American Rescue Plan (ARPA).
- **Over \$1 billion:** Allocated for LIHWAP implementation
- **Recipient work:** A tremendous amount of work has been done to stand up this brand-new program.
- **Second Quarter Ramp Up:** Many states have ramped up their programs during the second quarter.
- **Continued Outreach:** Is needed to engage water utility vendors and build awareness among eligible households



Leveraging LIHWAP and CSBG

- Braid and blend funding to fill service gaps and provide wrap around services
 - Small scale plumbing repairs, bundled bills
- Joint outreach and coordination
- Cross train staff to build awareness and referrals

Other Innovative Approaches to Support Program Administration

- **Focus on Equity:** \$10,000 minimum award for tribes, requirements to serve renter households, rural and tribal considerations.
- **Leveraging existing programs and networks:** Same provider networks, categorical eligibility, OCS network (CSBG, LIHEAP, RCD)
- **Training and Technical Assistance:** Multiple approaches, videos, webinars, office hours, one on one calls, session for Tribes, World Water Week, quarterly grantee check-ins
- **Flexibilities for Rural and Tribal communities:** Waste removal for septic tanks, bottled water services, tribal service areas



Opportunities to Enhance Program Outcomes

- **Lift Up Best Practices:** Identify and share methods that support effective LIHWAP administration and outcomes
- **Amplify Outreach:** To engage households and water service providers
- **Build Networks:** That support administration of water utility benefits programs
- **Tell LIHWAP's Story:** By collecting data and testimonials to document services provided and unmet needs



Grant Recipient Spotlight – Modoc Nation



- Began accepting applications on December 1, 2021
- Implemented through the Modoc Nation Housing Authority
- Outreach through postcards, posts to their social media platforms and to the Tribal website
- Utilizing categorical eligibility with LIHEAP, means-tested Veterans programs, SNAP, SSI, and TANF
- Serving all three priority groups

Grant Recipient Spotlight – Yurok Tribe



- Began accepting applications on January 10, 2022
- Conducting extensive outreach through the Tribe's Facebook page, flyers, post cards, and tribal council meetings
- Reserved first weeks of applications for households that were disconnected or at risk of disconnection
- Utilizing categorical eligibility with LIHEAP, SNAP, and TANF
- Created vendor agreement letter and conducted outreach to ~15 vendors

LIHWAP Data Collection

- Quarterly Reports
- Annual Reports
- Water Utility Vendor Landscape
- [LIHWAP Data Dashboard](#)



OCS LIHWAP Program Specialist Team



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Resources/Links

- [LIHWAP Website](#)
- [Information Memorandum](#): Vendor Agreements, Renter Households, Benefits Policy, Use of Funds FAQ,
- [Dear Colleague Letters](#): Funding Release, Alternative Utilities Funding, CSBG Coordination
- [World Water Week](#): Partnering to Increase Availability, Affordability, and Access to Quality Water and Wastewater Services
- [Training Resources](#): Use of Funds, Information for Water Vendors, Recipient Training Modules
- [LIHWAP Grant Recipient Summary Profiles](#)
- [Contact Information](#): Recipient contact information

