



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

**LOW INCOME HOUSEHOLD  
WATER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

**INFORMATION AND FEEDBACK  
SESSION**

**OFFICE OF COMMUNITY SERVICES  
ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN  
& FAMILIES  
TUESDAY, APRIL 20, 2021**



# Agenda

- Opening Remarks
- Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) Legislation
- Overall LIHWAP Updates
- Other Structured Feedback Mechanisms
- You Need to Know
- Initial Questions and Feedback
- Listening Session

# Purpose

The Office of Community Services (OCS) intends to use this informational and feedback session to:

- Share updates related to the establishment of the Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP)
- Identify areas where we are seeking your feedback and mechanisms for sharing your feedback
- Share upcoming requested actions for prospective grantees, and where future updates may be found

# Introductions



**Dr. Lanikque Howard**  
Director,  
Office of Community Services



**Janelle George**  
Deputy Director,  
Office of Community Services

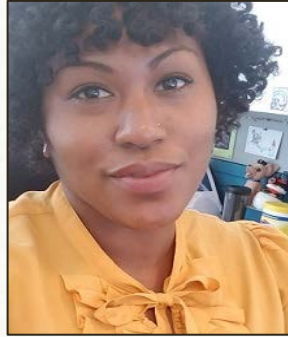


**Lauren Christopher**  
Director,  
Division of Energy Assistance

# Introductions



**Seth Hassett**  
Senior Advisor,  
Office of Community Services



**Christina Clark**  
Program Specialist,  
Office of Community Services



**Yidi Wu**  
Special Assistant,  
Office of Community Services

# Legislation: Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021

- The language of LIHWAP legislation can be found on the OCS Website on the [LIHWAP Laws and Regulations page](#)
- SEC. 533. For an additional amount for "Department of Health and Human Services—Administration for Children and Families—Children and Families Services Programs", \$638,000,000, to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus, for necessary expenses for grants to carry out a Low-Income Household Drinking Water and Wastewater Emergency Assistance Program: Provided, That the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall make grants to States and Indian Tribes to assist low-income households, particularly those with the lowest incomes, that pay a high proportion of household income for drinking water and wastewater services, by providing funds to owners or operators of public water systems or treatment works to reduce arrearages of and rates charged to such households for such services: Provided further, That in carrying out this appropriation, the Secretary, States, and Indian Tribes, as applicable, shall, as appropriate and to the extent practicable, use existing processes, procedures, policies, and systems in place to provide assistance to low-income households, including by using existing programs and program announcements, application and approval processes: Provided further, That the Secretary shall allot amounts appropriated in this section to a State or Indian Tribe based on the following (i) the percentage of households in the State, or under the jurisdiction of the Indian Tribe, with income equal to or less than 150 percent of the Federal poverty line, and (ii) the percentage of such households in the State, or under the jurisdiction of the Indian Tribe, that spend more than 30 percent of monthly income on housing: Provided further, That up to 3 percent of the amount appropriated in this section shall be reserved for Indian Tribes and tribal organizations: Provided further, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.



# Legislation

- 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.
- The legislation provides emergency assistance to low-income households, particularly those with the lowest incomes, that pay a high proportion of household income for drinking water and wastewater services.
- Grantees must provide funds to owners or operators of public water systems or treatment works to reduce arrearages of and rates charged to such households for such services.



# Legislation (continued)

- The legislation specifies that up to three (3) percent of the amount appropriated in this section shall be reserved for Indian Tribes and tribal organizations
- The legislation specifies that the allocation formula be determined by:
  - the percentage of households in the State, or under the jurisdiction of the Indian Tribe, with income equal to or less than 150 percent of the Federal poverty line, and
  - the percentage of such households in the State, or under the jurisdiction of the Indian Tribe, that spend more than 30 percent of monthly income on housing.
- The legislation directed OCS to “use existing processes, procedures, policies, and systems in place to provide assistance to low-income households, including by using existing programs and program announcements, application and approval processes”





# Adaptation of Current Processes and Procedures

- This is an emergency legislation—our overall goal is to expedite the establishment of this program at every level.
- It is not a permanently authorized program.
- Per appropriation legislation, OCS reviewed existing programs to identify processes and procedures that support and align with the Congressional intent of LIHWAP. We identified the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) as most closely aligned with LIHWAP, which will be administered through the Division of Energy Assistance (DEA).
- Current LIHEAP Procedures that have been adapted for LIHWAP:
  - LIHWAP grantees include states, territories, and tribes that received fiscal year (FY) 2021 Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) awards.
  - Terms and Conditions for the LIHWAP funding have been written based mostly on LIHEAP assurances and must be signed by the designated LIHWAP official before funds can be awarded.
  - The LIHWAP Model Plan, which must be submitted and approved before grantees can draw down the full amount of their allocation, is a streamlined plan based on the LIHEAP Model Plan.



# Funding Release and Obligation and Expenditure Timelines

- OCS Plans to begin distributing funding by the end of May to grantees once the designated official has signed the Terms and Conditions.
- Grantees will be empowered to draw down 15% of funding for administrative purposes immediately upon receiving their allocation.
- Grantees must submit a LIHWAP Plan and receive ACF approval, upon which they can draw down the remainder of the allocation.
- LIHWAP funding must be obligated by grantees by September 30, 2023.
- LIHWAP funding must be expended by grantees by December 30, 2023.

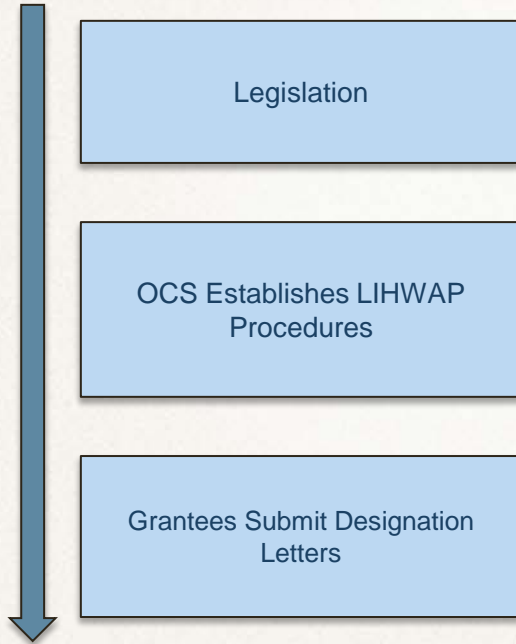


# Differences from LIHEAP

	LIHEAP	LIHWAP
Administrative costs cap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10% (states/territories)</li> <li>• 20% of first \$20K then 10% (tribes)</li> </ul>	15% for all grantees
Public hearings on Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Required of states/territories</li> <li>• Not required of tribes</li> </ul>	Not required of grantees (only public participation required)
Obligation deadline	90% in the first year and 10% in the second year	No carryover cap—all obligations due by 9/30/23
Expenditure deadline	Varies by grantees' rules that apply to their own funding	All expenditures due of 12/30/23
Targeting households	Highest home energy burden households	Highest home water/wastewater burden households
Continuity of services	Encouraged but not required	Strongly prioritized
Regulations	45 CFR Part 96 and some of Part 75	45 CFR 75 (in its entirety)

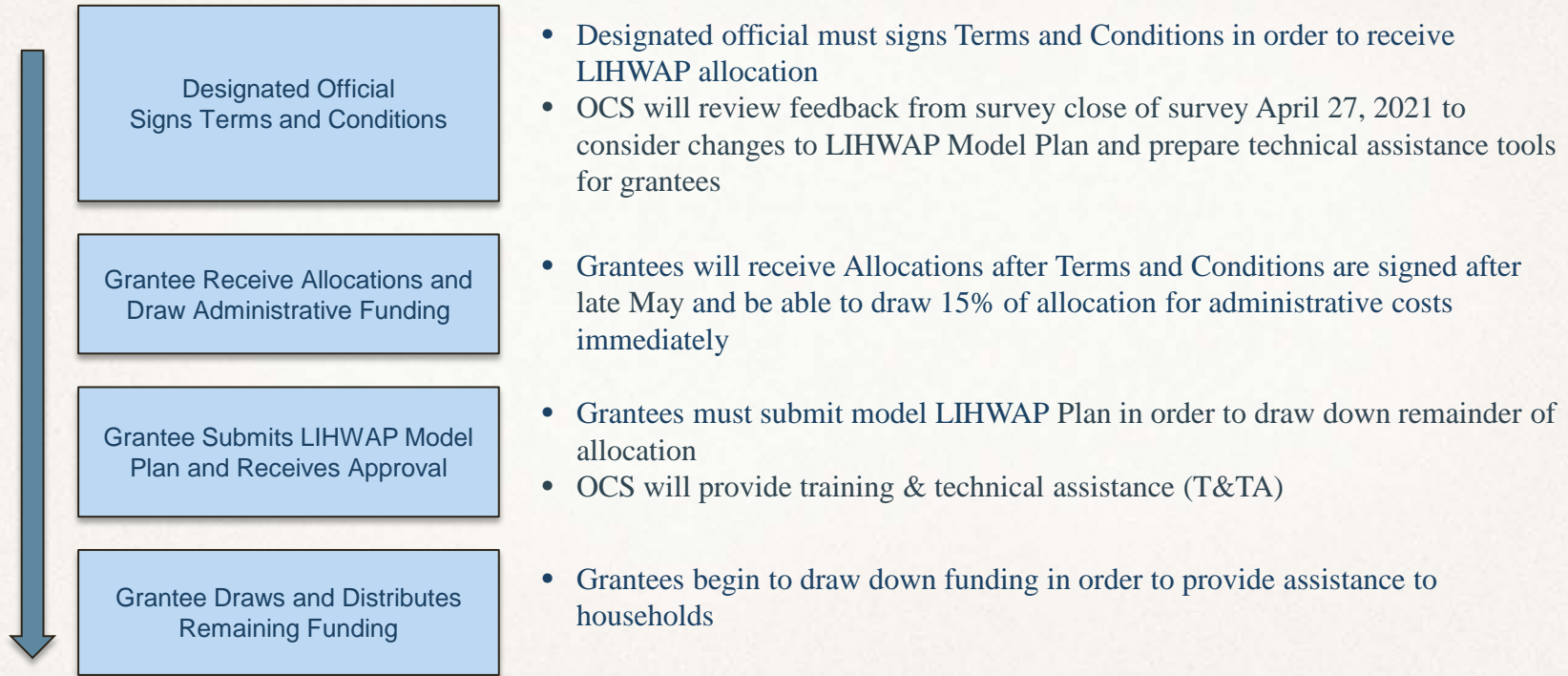


# LIHWAP Flowchart (Completed Actions)



- The language of LIHWAP legislation can be found on the OCS Website on the [LIHWAP Laws and Regulations](#) page
- OCS has reached out to States, Territories, and Tribes for Designated Contacts, set Terms and Conditions for initial receipt of funds by grantees, and published LIHWAP plan for public comment and is providing opportunity for feedback and comment on other areas
- Grantees must submit designation letters to identify an official who is empowered to sign Terms and Conditions and submit the LIHWAP Model Plan

# LIHWAP Flowchart (Upcoming Actions)



# Other Structured Feedback Mechanisms

- We are gathering information through a survey, so that we can make sure to gather your comprehensive feedback in a structured way.
- The survey can be found at [https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LIHWAP\\_InputSurvey](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LIHWAP_InputSurvey) and has been sent to you on Monday, April 19, 2021.
- The survey must be completed **by Tuesday, April 27, 2021**. If you complete the survey after this date, we cannot guarantee that your response will be read.
- The survey begins with a section asking identifying questions regarding your role and the organization you represent. These are intended to help us better understand the responses from this survey.
- There will also be a section for General Comments, for any areas that not explicitly addressed in the survey.



# Areas for Input (Overview)

The following that will be included on the survey:

- Understanding of Drinking Water and Wastewater Needs
- Existing Water Assistance Programs and Supports
- Adaptation of Existing Policies and Procedures
  - Household Eligibility – Adaptation of LIHEAP Criteria
  - Targeting Benefits to Low-Income Households with Highest Water Burden
  - Selection of Sub-providers
  - State or Tribal Regulations/Rulemaking
  - Vendor Agreements or Payment Arrangements
  - Consumer Protections
  - Data Collection and Reporting
- Tribal Government Needs
- Anticipated Technical Assistance Needs
- Anticipated Timeframe for Assistance to Households



# Understanding of Drinking Water and Wastewater Needs

Discuss critical needs in your community or service area such as the following:

- Cost
- Quality
- Safety
- Disconnection policies
- Late fees
- Home liens
- Delivery Systems



# Existing Water Assistance Programs and Supports

- Identify existing water assistance programs and utility supports in your area.
- Identify funding source(s): e.g. federal, state, local, foundation/philanthropic organization
- Describe service areas (e.g. entire state, selected communities)
- Describe eligibility requirements



# Adaptation of Existing Policies and Procedures

- Household Eligibility – Adaptation of LIHEAP Criteria
- Targeting Benefits to Low-Income Households with Highest Water Burden
- Selection of Sub-providers
- State or Tribal Regulations/Rulemaking
- Vendor Agreements or Payment Arrangements
- Consumer Protections
- Data Collection and Reporting



# Tribal Government Needs

- Availability of data on household water burden
- Tribal ownership of water utilities
- Water delivery infrastructure (e.g. wells vs. plumbing systems)
- Land ownership and water bills
- Recommended areas for federal guidance or technical assistance



# Anticipated Technical Assistance Needs

What types of assistance would be most helpful?

- Templates for vendor agreements
- Model LIHWAP Plans
- Benefit Matrix templates or examples
- Consultation services
- Webinars
- Other Tools – Specific Focus Areas

# Anticipated Timeframe for Assistance to Households

- Less than 1 month, 1-2 months, 3-4 months, longer than 4 months
- Describe factors that impact your estimate

*Note: Consider options to expedite the processing due to emergency needs*

# You need to know

## Designation Letters:

- OCS emailed Action Transmittals (ATs) to State Governing Officials and Chief Executives of tribes that **received FY2021 LIHEAP grants**. The ATs requested designation letters that identified a responsible governmental official that would be empowered to submit a state or tribal plan and to sign any required certifications or assurances by March 8, 2021. The ATs can be found on our website [here](#).
- If you have not submitted the designation letter, we request that you send this to the appropriate email address (on the Contact Information slide) as soon as possible.

## LIHWAP Survey

- This can be found at [https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LIHWAP\\_InputSurvey](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LIHWAP_InputSurvey) and was sent on Monday, April 19, 2021
- This must be submitted by Tuesday, April 27, 2021 in order for us to review your comments and questions.



# You need to know, continued

## **LIHWAP Model Grantee Plan**

- This can be found at [LIHWAP Grantee Plan](#), and is a draft version.
- The final version of this, which will be disseminated after we review comments from the survey, must be submitted and approved before LIHWAP allocations (beyond the 15% for administrative costs) can be drawn down

## **Terms and Conditions and SF-424M:**

- Were sent via email on Monday, April 19, 2021. These can be found at:
  - [State and Territory LIHWAP Terms and Conditions](#)
  - [Tribes LIHWAP Terms and Conditions](#)
- This is a final document, and must be signed by the person identified in the designation letter before LIHWAP allocations can be released.

## **For Future Updates:**

- Visit the new [LIHWAP webpage](#) to find previously released ATs, other communications, and future updates as they become available. Also read our [spotlight blog post](#) regarding the LIHWAP program.

# Contact Information

- Due to the high volume of questions regarding the establishment of this new emergency program, we request that you email the official LIHWAP emails so that we can track and respond to all requests in a timely manner.
- If you have feedback and questions, we encourage you to first use the survey we have provided in this session, at [https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LIHWAP\\_InputSurvey](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LIHWAP_InputSurvey)
- **If you are a prospective state or territory LIHWAP grantee**, please use the LIHWAP States and Territories email at [LIHWAPStates@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:LIHWAPStates@acf.hhs.gov).
- **If you are a prospective tribal LIHWAP grantee**, please use the LIHWAP Tribes email at [LIHWAP Tribes@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:LIHWAP Tribes@acf.hhs.gov).
- **For general questions**, please reach out to [LIHWAP@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:LIHWAP@acf.hhs.gov). The [LIHWAPStates@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:LIHWAPStates@acf.hhs.gov) and [LIHWAP Tribes@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:LIHWAP Tribes@acf.hhs.gov) emails are for grantees only.





# Initial Questions and Feedback



# Listening Session

