

Low Income Household Water Assistance Program

OKLAHOMA LIHWAP PROFILE SUMMARY



The Oklahoma Department of Human Services' (DHS) Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) is funded at nearly \$15 million in FY21. The state utilizes LIHWAP grant funds to restore or prevent disconnections of water services to eligible households, ensuring continuity of services.

Program Operation

Oklahoma's LIHWAP, which began in December 2021, is managed and operated at state level through the DHS Adult and Family Services (AFS) division in coordination with other programs available to low-income households. Oklahoma's LIHWAP provides relief assistance to **three priority groups**:

- Households with disconnected water services and/or wastewater services
- Households with pending disconnections of water services and/or wastewater services
- Households needing assistance paying their current water and/or wastewater bills

Oklahoma DHS Adults and Family Services - centralized OKDHS Live agents accept LIHWAP applications and determine benefit eligibility while Centralized Service Care Agents issue payments to vendors.

FY21 LIHWAP FUNDING ALLOCATION



AMOUNT

TOTAL: \$14,997,336

- ARP: \$6,589,339
- CAA: \$8,407,997



OPERATIONAL PRIORITIES

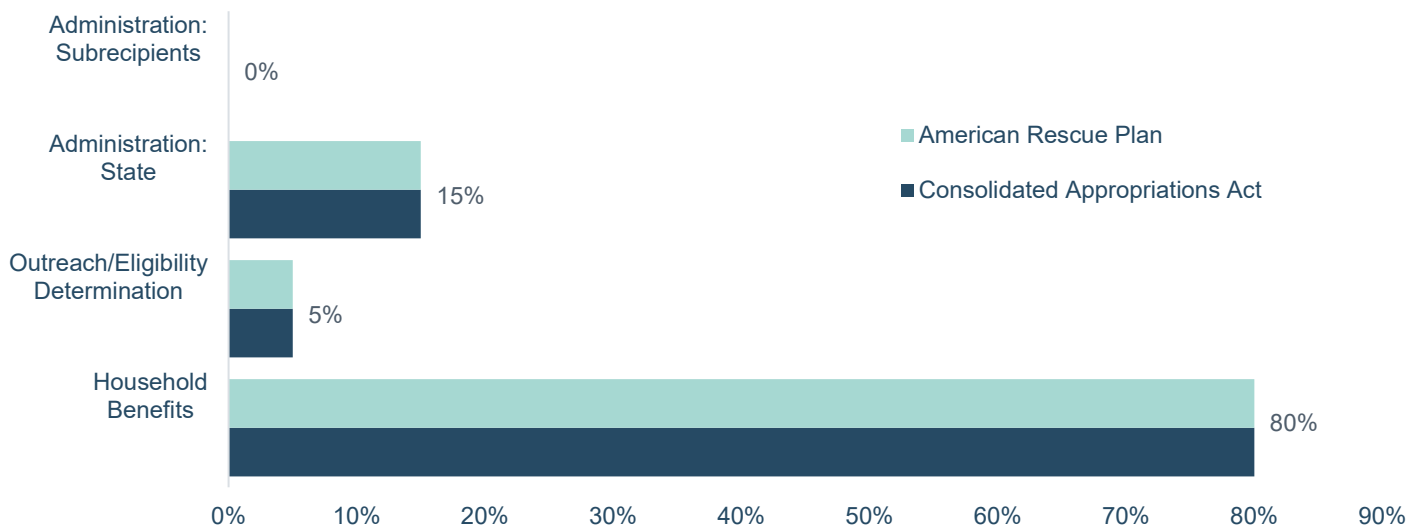
- Restoration of services
- Payment of arrearages
- Rate reductions



PROGRAM COORDINATION

- AFS also offers LIHEAP, TANF, SNAP, State Supplemental Payments to Aged, Blinded, and Disabled, Child Care subsidy, and medical assistance for certain programs.
- Referrals from federal, state, and local agencies, hospitals, doctor's offices, profit and non-profit agencies, neighbor-to-neighbor partnership programs.
- Coordination with tribal organizations to ensure no duplicated LIHWAP payments for households.

Use of Funding by Funding Source



Benefits on Behalf of Households

Under the AFS's administration of the program, eligible households may receive aid under a water crisis and water assistance program. The water crisis program provides a one-time payment up to a maximum of \$750 to restore or prevent disconnections of water services and the minimum amount required to restore service for at least 90 days after the benefit payment. The state does not pay partial arrearages if it will not prevent disconnection or restoration of services. Households eligible for the water assistance program receive assistance with rate reduction – a one-time payment of \$200 for a 4-person household - during the winter heating and summer cooling open enrollment period.

Priority Populations

Households that meet program eligibility criteria **and** fall into one of the following categories receive priority eligibility under the water crisis and water assistance program.

- ✓ People with disabilities
- ✓ Families with young children
- ✓ Older Adult/Seniors (60+)
- ✓ Households with high water burdens

Program Outreach Activities

- Place posters/flyers in local and county social service offices, offices of aging, Social Security offices, Veterans Affairs, etc.
- Publication of articles or public service announcements in local newspapers or broadcast media announcements.
- Work directly with water utilities to identify potential recipients.
- Mass mailing(s) to prior-year LIHEAP recipients or recipients of other government benefits
- Automated phone campaigns and/or social media outreach.
- Inform low-income applicants of the availability of all types of LIHWAP assistance at application intake for other low-income programs.
- Send press release to statewide for local television and radio networks to broadcast for upcoming LIHEAP/LIHWAP open enrollment periods.
- Send post cards via USPS and mass text message alert about upcoming open enrollment periods to Oklahoma households.
- Program listing in the JOIN (Joint Oklahoma Information Network) on-line directory and the Oklahoma Heartline 2-1-1 network directory.

Eligibility and Benefit Determination Criteria

Title	Item
Income Threshold	
✓	130% Federal Poverty Guideline
	60% State Median Income
	Hybrid Federal and State (based on household size)
Categorical Eligibility	
✓	LIHEAP
✓	Means-tested Veterans Programs
✓	Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP)
✓	Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
✓	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
Eligible Households	
✓	Homeowners
✓	Renters
Benefit Level Determination*	
✓	Income
✓	Household size
✓	Household drinking water burden
✓	Household wastewater burden
Benefit Amount	
\$80	Minimum
\$750	Maximum
Benefit Period	
✓	One Time
	Multiple

*Grant recipients are required to determine a benefit level for households seeking assistance with their current water and wastewater bills. Benefit level determination is based on household income, size, and drinking water and wastewater burden.

For more information about the Oklahoma LIHWAP, contact:

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