

## **NC LIHWAP FAQs**

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**1. What services can be paid using LIHWAP funds? Often utilities bill for more than just water/wastewater on the bill (e.g. stormwater, solid waste, recycling).**

If the charges can be separated out, then water and sewer would be paid and reconnected, even if other charges are outstanding. But if there is no way to isolate the water and sewer bills, then other charges (including stormwater, solid waste, etc.) can be covered in order to reconnect services or avoid disconnection.

**2. What fees that can be paid for using LIHWAP funds?**

Late fees, reconnect fees (which can be added after the utility gets the call from the local DSS pledging payment), lock fees, and any other fees included in the bill to establish reconnection of service.

**3. Will customers who received HOPE program funds be able to receive LIHWAP funds if they are eligible?**

Yes. A household can receive LIHWAP funds even if they have received funds from another program (including HOPE program funds, CARES Act funds, or other sources of bill assistance). A household can be helped more than once under LIHWAP as well, if there are enough funds.

**4. How will a customer know they are eligible for LIHWAP bill payment assistance?**

If a customer applies (or is categorically eligible), they will get a notification from DSS saying they are eligible.

**5. How will a utility know if a customer is eligible for LIHWAP bill payment assistance?**

The county DSS office may contact the utility to verify the utility bill and amount needed to restore service before making the payment. If a customer has applied but the utility has not received a notification, then a utility should contact the local DSS office to learn if that customer is eligible.

**6. Is a utility expected to reconnect a customer after they receive notice from the local DSS office that the customer is eligible for LIHWAP bill payment assistance?**

Once a utility receives the pledge from a DSS employee, then DHHS hopes that utilities will reconnect or not disconnect services in recognition that the bill will be paid.

**7. How will a utility let customers know LIHWAP?**

NC DHHS is creating a flyer which outlines the application process and eligibility requirements. Utilities can distribute those flyers and refer customers to their local county DSS office or to the online application to apply.

**8. If a customer moves out of town but still has an outstanding bill, can the utility apply for LIHWAP bill payment assistance on behalf of that customer?**

If the customer has moved and needs to have the outstanding bill paid to have services reconnected, then they are eligible for LIHWAP bill payment assistance. However, the utility

cannot apply on behalf of a customer, and cannot receive payment for outstanding bills if it doesn't impact that customer's ability to receive service.

**9. What is the amount of LIHWAP funds for North Carolina, and how will that be distributed to each county?**

The total amount of LIHWAP funds for North Carolina is \$38 million. To determine how much will be distributed to each county, NC DHHS is asking for information from utilities about how much money is needed to help meet the needs. Local county DSS offices will reach out to utilities and the distribution will be based on what DHHS knows is owed in each county.

**10. Are there any provisions for citizens on well and septic?**

LIHWAP payments must be made to a utility, and citizens on well and septic are not included in this program.

**11. Will NC DHHS provide a template for submitting customer information for matching current customers that are eligible for LIHEAP or other programs with utility customers?**

Yes, a template will be created and distributed to utilities, so utility staff can prepare to submit customer information to DHHS for categorical eligibility matching. Utilities will be asked to sign a data sharing agreement if they are providing data to DHHS.

**12. When will utilities be asked to provide customer data?**

Data Match should be available around or before November 1<sup>st</sup>.

**13. How will LIHWAP funds reach apartments and public housing where water is included in rent?**

Apartments and public housing will have to provide the account number and vendor for the applicant applying for funds to be paid.

**14. Can a bill be paid in the name of a deceased person or minor child?**

No, bills cannot be paid in a deceased person or minor child's name or on closed accounts.

**15. Can 3<sup>rd</sup> party resellers be paid with LIHWAP funds?**

No, funds can only be paid directly to the water or wastewater vendor.



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