

The Low-Income Housing Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)



Overview for Resettlement Agency Case Managers and Housing Specialists

This overview is provided for informational purposes only.

Resettlement agency staff are advised to consult with local LIHEAP offices and to seek **one-on-one Technical Assistance with a Refugee Housing Solutions specialist during special LIHEAP-dedicated office hours from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM (ET) every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, starting October 14, 2024. During these hours, our team will answer all callers' LIHEAP questions and give advice on enrollment.**

Background | As resettlement agency staff continue helping refugees and other newcomers settle into their new communities across the U.S., it is important to remember the diverse and vital roles that each of us plays in this process. Whether you're a resettlement agency staff member, a private sponsor, or a volunteer, your contribution is invaluable to reaching our collective goal of unwavering support to newcomers.

As newcomers navigate daily life in the U.S., many will face unfamiliar weather and climates and, as such, may not know how seasonal changes affect their health and, in a completely different way, their finances. As the winter season draws near, it is paramount to prioritize the safety of the families and individuals we serve by introducing them to resources that can help them to save on winter home heating costs.

Summary | The **Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)** is a federal government program designed to provide financial support to low-income households. In the winter as well as in the summer, LIHEAP helps households pay energy bills so everyone can stay warm in winter and cool in summer, thus reducing the risk of health and safety issues related to extreme temperatures, which are occurring more frequently in recent years than in the past. In some states, the LIHEAP open enrollment period for senior citizens and individuals with disabilities is in October and for the general population in November. Details can be found here: [Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program \(LIHEAP\) | The Administration for Children and Families \(hhs.gov\)](https://www.hhs.gov/low-income-home-energy-assistance-program)

Why is the LIHEAP Program Important to Newcomers?

- LIHEAP is as vital for newly arrived newcomer individuals and families as it supports paying their utility expenses.
- By lessening utility costs, LIHEAP enables newcomers to allocate their limited financial resources towards other critical needs, thus bolstering overall financial stability.
- Importantly, LIHEAP reduces the risk of extreme temperature harm from unsafe practices like using the oven as a heat source during the winter or the overuse of fans or other cooling appliances during the summer, which strains the electrical system and can cause circuit breakers to be tripped.

The Low-Income Housing Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

- One of LIHEAP's objectives is to prioritize households with the highest energy requirements. Often, newcomer households are large, resulting in higher energy needs and increased utility costs. This program is beneficial not only to low-income families but also to households with large energy consumption.

What Assistance Does LIHEAP Provide? | LIHEAP eligibility varies by state, so states have flexibility to decide the type(s) of assistance they provide. Here are examples of assistance provided:

- One-time payment of utility bills. Check with your state for the various seasonal enrollment months.
- Energy Crisis Intervention Program (ECIP) assists with paying energy bills for households receiving a termination or disconnect notice
- Weatherization Assistance Program helps with energy related home repairs

Additional Information | Produced by Administration for Children and Families, which is a division of the Department of Health and Human Service that includes the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), these videos give an overview of LIHEAP programs for cooling and heating assistance.

[LIHEAP Cooling Assistance \(youtube.com\)](#)

[LIHEAP Heating Assistance \(youtube.com\)](#)

LIHEAP Requirements | As noted, eligibility does vary by state, but some general eligibility requirements for LIHEAP assistance are shared below. For specific requirements for your state, contact your local LIHEAP office ([LIHEAP Office Search Tool Search by State or Territory](#)) or call the toll-free LIHEAP phone number at 1-866-674-6327. *Also, you can book a TA session with one of our RHS team members.*

Newcomer Eligibility | A newcomer [referred to as "alien" in Federal law for LIHEAP purposes] may be eligible for LIHEAP assistance if they:

- Are responsible to pay utilities bills for their home: a house, duplex, apartment, etc.
- Reside in the state from which they are seeking assistance
- Have proof of residence, i.e., lease. Or if they own the home, a deed or property tax bill
- Have an annual household income below the maximum income level allowed for their household size and state
- Provide proof of income for all household member 18 years and older
- Have been legally admitted for permanent residence and meet all other LIHEAP program requirements.

The Low-Income Housing Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

- Other qualified non-citizens include these categories:
 - People admitted to the U.S. as a refugee under Section 207 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA)
 - Individuals and families granted asylum under Section 208 of the INA
 - Those having deportation withheld under section 243(h) or 241(b)(3) of the INA
 - Having Cuban-Haitian Entrant status
 - Admitted as Amerasian immigrants
 - Those being paroled into the United States for at least one year under section 212(d)(5) of the INA
 - Individuals granted conditional entry under section 203(a)(7) of the INA
 - An alien [AKA, refugee/newcomer] who has been battered or subjected to extreme cruelty...by a spouse or a parent, or by a member of the spouse or parent's family residing in the same household as the [refugee/newcomer] and the spouse or parent consented to, or acquiesced in, such battery or cruelty, but only if (in the opinion of the agency providing such benefits) there is a substantial connection between such battery or cruelty and the need for the benefits to be provided
 - Those having a petition pending that sets forth a prima facie case for status as a spouse or child of a U.S. citizen

General Documentation Required for a LIHEAP Application

- Photo ID for the applicant. Check with a local LIHEAP office for accepted ID types
- Identification documents for all household members, e.g., birth certificates, school records (as relevant), Social Security cards, I-94s, or other newcomer identity verification documents.
- Proof of address, e.g., a copy of lease
- Proof of income for all household members 18 and older, e.g., recent proof of income (paystub, job offer letter with salary/wage stated) or a letter from a resettlement agency outlining relevant/related benefits.
- A recent copy of utility bill(s)
- Final notice on termination (utility) services, i.e., shut-off notice
- vacancies are filled promptly, thus maximizing rental income.

References

[Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program \(LIHEAP\) | The Administration for Children and Families \(hhs.gov\)](https://www.hhs.gov/low-income-home-energy-assistance-program-liheap/)