



JASON WIMBLEY
ACTING DIRECTOR

State of California-Health and Human Services Agency
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES AND DEVELOPMENT
2389 Gateway Oaks Drive, Suite 100, Sacramento, CA 95833
Telephone: (916) 576-7109 | Fax: (916) 263-1406
www.csd.ca.gov



GAVIN NEWSOM
GOVERNOR

Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) Supplemental Benefit - Frequently Asked Questions

The federal program deadline to apply for water and sewer bill assistance under the Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) has passed and the program is no longer accepting applications. The California Department of Community Services and Development (CSD) is distributing remaining LIHWAP water assistance funds to provide a “supplemental benefit” to eligible, previously-served LIHWAP beneficiaries.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is the Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP)?

A: LIHWAP is a limited-term, federally-funded program that offers assistance to help low-income households pay residential water and sewer bills and manage their residential utility costs. For general information, visit the [Low Income Household Water Assistance Program](#) page.

Q: What is the LIHWAP supplemental benefit?

A: The LIHWAP supplemental benefit is additional, one-time financial assistance for households that previously applied for and received a LIHWAP benefit. The LIHWAP supplemental benefit will be automatically applied to eligible household’s water or sewer utility bill.

Q: Do I need to apply for the supplemental benefit?

A: No. Customers do NOT need to apply for a LIHWAP supplemental benefit. If you are eligible, the benefit will be automatically sent to your water or sewer utility to be applied to your utility bill.

Q: Is my household eligible to receive the supplemental benefit?

A: A household is eligible to receive a LIHWAP supplemental benefit if it received a LIHWAP benefit during the program application period (June 2022 – March 2024).

A household is not eligible for a benefit if:

- The household pays their water and sewer bill(s) as part of their rent. (Under federal program rules, landlords must complete an agreement for renters whose utility bill is included in their rental payment in order for the renter to be eligible for a LIHWAP benefit. The passage of the LIHWAP program and application deadline has made it unfeasible to administer and enforce landlord LIHWAP agreements and the application of supplemental benefits to future tenant rental payments.)
- The household’s water or sewer utility did not renew their LIHWAP direct payment agreement (contract) with the State of California.
- The household switched their water or sewer utility since receiving their first LIHWAP benefit.

Q: How do I know if I will receive a supplemental benefit?

A: If you are eligible for a LIHWAP supplemental benefit, you will receive a notification letter from the California Department of Community Services and Development in May 2024 detailing the benefit. The supplemental benefit will be applied to your utility account in the same manner the first LIHWAP benefit was applied to your account.

Q: What is the amount of the LIHWAP supplemental benefit I will receive?

A: The benefit amount is \$198.23 for all eligible households.

Q: How was the LIHWAP supplemental benefit amount determined?

A: The federal program deadline to apply for a LIHWAP benefit has passed. The LIHWAP program is distributing remaining LIHWAP water assistance funds to provide a fixed, supplemental benefit to eligible, previously served LIHWAP beneficiaries. All eligible households are qualified to receive the same supplemental benefit.

Q: When will I receive the supplemental benefit?

A: Supplemental LIHWAP benefits will be issued in May 2024. The credit may take one to two billing cycles to appear on an eligible household's bill or account. If you believe you are an eligible customer and the second benefit has not been applied to your utility account within 45 days of receiving the benefit notification letter from the California Department of Community Services and Development, please contact your water utility.

Q: What if the supplemental benefit is more than my current water or sewer bill balance?

A: In most cases, if the LIHWAP supplemental benefit amount is more than your current utility bill balance a credit will be applied to your account. However, in instances where a water utility cannot carry forward a credit, your account will only be credited the amount owed when the benefit is received.

Q: What if my utility account is closed?

A: If your account is closed and has a zero balance the LIHWAP supplemental benefit cannot be applied to that account. If your account is closed and has a remaining balance, the remaining balance will be paid (up to the supplemental benefit amount).

Q: How many times can I receive a supplemental benefit?

A: The LIHWAP supplemental benefit is a *one-time* supplemental bill credit. The federal program deadline to apply for a LIHWAP benefit was March 31, 2024. This supplemental benefit is in addition to your original LIHWAP benefit.

Q: Why am I not eligible for the supplemental benefit if I pay my water or sewer bill as part of my rent?

A: The LIHWAP program and application deadline was March 31, 2024. Under federal LIHWAP requirements, landlords must complete an agreement for renters whose utility bill is included in their rental payment in order for the renter to be eligible for a benefit. The program deadline has made it unfeasible to administer and enforce landlord LIHWAP agreements and the application of supplemental benefits to future tenant rental payments. As a result, renters whose water or sewer bill is included in their rent are not eligible for a supplemental benefit.

Q: Who do I contact if I have questions about the LIHWAP supplemental benefit?

A: If you believe you are an eligible customer and the second benefit has not been applied to your utility account within 45 days of receiving the benefit notification letter from the California Department of Community Services and Development, please contact your water utility. For any other questions, please contact the Department of Community Services and Development's Customer Call Center (Toll-Free) at 866-675-6623. *Please **do not** contact your local LIHWAP service provider concerning the supplemental benefit.*