

**DRAFT SUMMARY OF FFY
2027 LIHEAP STATE PLAN**

Summary of Rhode Island LIHEAP FFY 2027 State Plan

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Section 1 - Program Components

The components of Rhode Island's Low Income Heating Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) include grants to low-income households for:

- Heating Assistance 10/1/2026 – 4/15/2027
- Crisis Heating Assistance 10/1/2026 – 4/15/2027
- Weatherization 10/1/2025-9/30/2027

The funding period is Federal Fiscal Year 2027 (October 1, 2026, to September 30, 2027).

Categorical Eligibility

Households applying for LIHEAP are not categorically eligible.

SNAP Nominal Payments

There is an annual nominal payment for SNAP households (\$20.01). All households that receive the nominal payment have not received LIHEAP at their current residence for the past twelve months and do not have a separate heating bill.

Countable Income

Gross income is used to determine a household's eligibility for LIHEAP. Types of income that are counted include:

- Wages
- Self - Employment Income
- Contract Income
- Payments from mortgage or Sales Contracts
- Unemployment insurance
- Strike Pay
- Social Security Administration (SSA) benefits (Including Medicare deduction)*
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Retirement/pension benefits Supplemental Security Income (SSI) including State Supplemental Payment (SSP)
- Retirement and pension benefits
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Cash gifts
- Jury duty compensation
- Rental income
- Income from employment through Workforce Investment Act (WIA)
- Income from work study program
- Alimony
- Child support
- Interest, dividends, or royalties
- Commissions
- Legal settlements
- Veterans Administration benefits

*meaning the Medicare amount deducted is not counted

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Online Application

Online application at https://pro.hancocksoftware.com/RI_ClientSelfIntake/?Agency=DHS

Section 2 – Heating Assistance

One time heating assistance grants begin to be certified on October 1. The last day to apply for heating assistance is April 15. Renewal applications are mailed in September or October. Households with an elderly member, disabled member, or child or young child are given priority when crisis grants are processed to restore service, prevent a shut-off, or expediate a delivery.

Income Eligibility

Rhode Island households are income-eligible for LIHEAP when the household's gross income is equal to or less than 60 percent of the State Median Income (SMI) for their household size. This is for mandatory use as of October 1, 2026. Grants may be restricted based on available funding.

Family Size (Household Members)	60% SMI	60% SMI
	Annual	1 Month
1	\$43,410	\$3,617
2	\$56,767	\$4,730
3	\$70,124	\$5,843
4	\$83,481	\$6,956
5	\$96,837	\$8,069
6	\$110,194	\$9,182
7	\$112,699	\$9,391
8	\$115,203	\$9,600
9	\$117,708	\$9,809
10	\$120,212	\$10,017
11	\$122,717	\$10,226
12	\$125,221	\$10,435
13	\$127,725	\$10,643
14	\$130,230	\$10,852

Section 3 – Cooling Assistance

Rhode Island is not planning to issue cooling assistance grants in FFY 2027.

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Section 4 – Crisis Assistance

Rhode Island offers winter crisis assistance to households who are unable to maintain heat in their home.

A crisis is considered to occur when a household is unable to maintain heat in their home.

This may be the result of:

- Heat is shut off due to failure to pay a regulated utility bill.
- Inability to pay for deliverable fuel.
- The breakdown of a heating system.

A life-threatening crisis is considered to occur when the household is unable to maintain heat in their home AND the outside temperature is currently at or is forecasted to be below 20 degrees Fahrenheit within the next 24 hours as reported by a weather service such as the Weather Channel.

This may be the result of:

- Heat is shut off due to failure to pay a regulated utility bill.
- The inability to pay for deliverable fuel.
- Breakdown of heating system.

An intervention to resolve the energy crisis for eligible households is provided within 48 hours

An intervention to resolve the energy crisis for eligible households in a life-threatening situation is provided within 18 hours.

Heating systems crisis assistance may be issued if heating system is inoperable.

In cases of limited funding, priority will be given to households with elderly, disabled, or young child member if necessary. Crisis assistance may be issued if a client has the utility shut off or the client has a ¼ tank or less of heating fuel. Clients must have \$300 or less left of their primary heating benefit before receiving a crisis.

Section 5 – Weatherization Assistance

The weatherization program offers measures including weatherization needs assessments, furnace/heating system modifications and repairs, furnace replacement, energy-related roof repairs, and other measures. Weatherization is available to renters and homeowners. Priority is given to households with an elderly or disabled member, as well as households with young children. Households applying for weatherization must first apply for heating assistance.

Section 6 – Outreach

Outreach activities are designed to ensure that eligible households are made aware of all LIHEAP assistance available:

- Posters/flyers in local social service offices, essential businesses, and other appropriate sites
- Sharing announcements with local newspapers and other media
- Inserts in energy vendor mailings

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- Mailing to prior year LIHEAP recipients
- Public events
- Inform low-income applicants of the availability of all types of LIHEAP assistance at application intake for other low-income programs.
- Posting on social media and websites
- Public events
- QR codes that take applicants to the online application
- Training for community partners and government offices so that they can better direct their constituents to apply
- Working with Housing Authorities to inform residents of heating assistance and offering enrollment and outreach events
- Working with schools to inform parents of heating assistance and offering enrollment and outreach events

Section 7 – Coordination

Rhode Island coordinates LIHEAP with other programs available to low-income households by making referrals to/from other programs at intake and by making information available at one-stop intake centers.

Community Action Agencies (CAAs) notify applicants of other programs about LIHEAP. Intake staff refers LIHEAP applicants to other programs in their agency. Outreach works with various community partners, such as schools, health centers, and housing, to have them notify the people they serve how to apply for LIHEAP. The Rhode Island Department of Human Services field offices have information about LIHEAP posted in field offices and staff members refer people to LIHEAP when appropriate. Recipients of other assistance programs are informed of LIHEAP.

Section 8 - Agency Designation

There are seven CAAs in Rhode Island that administer LIHEAP in specific catchment areas covering each part of the state. Agencies determine client eligibility, process benefit payments to vendors (gas, electric, and deliverable fuels), and install weatherization measures. Rhode Island currently uses Delegated Authority for LIHEAP contracts. The process follows federal guidelines for selecting CAAs.

Current list of CAAs, main office address, phone number, Congressional District, and UEI number and county served. This information will be utilized by OCS to ensure customers seeking assistance are provided the appropriate contact information when using the “Do I Qualify?” tool on the LIHEAP Clearinghouse.

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<p>Blackstone Valley Community Action 32 Goff Ave., Pawtucket, RI 02806 401-723-0227 County: Providence District 1 UEI: G3PAVFJHP491</p>	<p>East Bay Community Action 100 Bullocks Point Ave., Riverside, RI 02915 401-437-5102 Counties: Bristol, Newport, Providence District 1 UEI: MJ9TZJLS4EL6</p>
<p>Community Care Alliance 245 Main St., Woonsocket, RI 02895 401-235-6000 County: Providence District 1 UEI: PNFUG8XD69Q3</p>	<p>Tri-County Community Action North 11 Emanuel St., North Providence, RI 02911 401-519-1917 County: Providence Districts 1 and 2 UEI: LNX6KGWBH911</p>
<p>Community Action Partnership of Providence County 518 Hartford Ave., Providence, RI 02909 401-273-2000 County: Providence Districts 1 and 2 UEI: LJXNQM5HNCQ7</p>	<p>Tri-County Community Action South 415 Tower Hill Rd, North Kingstown, RI 02852 401- 515-2459 Counties: Washington, Kent Districts 2 UEI: LNX6KGWBH911</p>
<p>Comprehensive Community Action 311 Doric Ave., Cranston, RI 02910 401-467-7013 County: Providence Districts 1 and 2 UEI: LS73E9BEHVZ4</p>	<p>Westbay Community Action 487 Jefferson Blvd, Warwick, RI 02886 401-732-4660 County: Kent District 2 UEI: CKDUK89KEHR3</p>

Section 9 – Energy Suppliers

The CAAs make payments to vendors on behalf of the LIHEAP certified households. Once federal funding is available, the CAAs send Vendor Voucher Reports to *deliverable* fuel vendors authorizing grant amounts of certified households and providing client information. Deliverable fuel vendors provide proof of delivery to the appropriate CAA. Once federal funding is available, the CAAs send Payment Reports to *utility* vendors authorizing grant amounts of certified households and providing client information. After vendors are notified, client confirmation letters are sent to the certified households.

Vendors agree in the annual vendor agreement that they understand that if the State of Rhode Island has reason to believe that the Vendor may have misrepresented, violated, or attempted to violate any part of this Agreement, the Vendor is subject to having their participation as a supplier in the energy assistance program immediately suspended. Suspected violations of Rhode Island law shall be investigated, and if appropriate, prosecuted. Vendors found in violation shall be barred from participation in the energy assistance program for five years.

Fuel vendors are monitored and required to treat households receiving assistance the same as households not receiving assistance.

Section 10 - Program, Fiscal Monitoring, and Audit

A portion of Rhode Island's administrative budget is for a full-time fiscal officer to track all LIHEAP payments. One administrative priority is to do accurate and timely fiscal reporting. The LIHEAP software is owned and monitored by the State daily.

A file is maintained to track obligations (earmarking) based on award restrictions and limits set by the submitted RI State Plan with expenditures broken down by categories, and drawdowns. This spreadsheet is reconciled to the state's financial system monthly.

CAAs have an annual fiscal and biennial program monitoring visit.

Section 11 - Timely and Meaningful Public Participation

Input is obtained from the public in the development of the Rhode Island LIHEAP plan through the following methods:

- Public Hearing
- Draft Plan posted to website
- Draft Plan is shared with LIHEAP managers at monthly meetings in spring and summer of upcoming season.
- Draft Plan is shared with CAA leadership and other stakeholders for feedback
- Hard copy of plan is available for public view and comment

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- A notice about the public hearing is sent to interested parties in Rhode Island with a link to the proposed model plan summary for FFY 2027. The notice includes instructions on how to obtain a copy, how to submit written testimony, and how to sign up to testify at the hearing.

Section 12 - Fair Hearings

Rhode Island requires fair hearing procedures for households whose applications are denied. Households determined ineligible are notified in writing by the agency regarding the reason for the denial along with documentation explaining the appeal process. Applicants are given fifteen business days after receiving the denial notice to request a hearing. The applicant is first offered a hearing with an impartial representative of the CAA that processed the application. The applicant has the right to bring a representative and/or present oral or written evidence. The applicant also has the right to review the case file. If a satisfactory resolution cannot be reached the applicant has the right to request a second appeal with the Rhode Island DHS office.

Clients are informed about the appeal/hearing process on the application and during the application intake appointment. Information is also mailed along with the denial notice.

Section 13 - Reduction of home energy needs (Assurance 16)

Rhode Island uses LIHEAP funds to provide services that encourage households to reduce their home energy needs and thereby the need for energy assistance. Recipients are offered home energy assessments, financial literacy, and workforce development assistance. Participants are also helped with outside providers in addressing other needs that can affect their ability to maintain their energy use bills.

Section 15 - Training

Rhode Island provides training to participating CAAs and vendors on policies and procedures as needed throughout the year. CAAs have monthly meetings with DHS and the annual training before the heating season begins.

Vendors are required to attend a training meeting prior to the new season starting as a condition of being a LIHEAP vendor. There are multiple opportunities for the vendors to attend a meeting which are held in person and virtually.

Policies are communicated through vendor agreements, contracts, and the policy manual.

Section 16 - Performance Goals and Measures

Rhode Island collects data and reports to The Office of Community Services at the US Department of Health & Human Services on specific performance measures such as the energy burden before and after of households receiving LIHEAP.

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Section 17- Program Integrity

Reporting Fraud

Mechanisms available to the public for reporting cases of suspected waste, fraud, and abuse include:

- Report Fraud <https://dhs.ri.gov/general-resources-and-support/report-fraud>
- Reporting directly to local agency/district office or Grantee office
- Reporting to State Inspector General <https://omb.ri.gov/internal-audit>
- Reporting to Attorney General <https://riag.ri.gov/forms/consumer-complaint>

Fraud reporting information is included on the DHS website and on the confirmation and denial letters to LIHEAP households.

Requirements for identification documentation

Social Security Card (photocopied and retained copy)

- Applicant – Required
- All Adults in the Household Members – Requested
- All Household Members - Requested

Social Security Number (without card)

- Applicant – Required
- All Adults in the Household Members – Required
- All Household Members – Requested

Government Issued identification card (Driver's License, State ID, Tribal ID, Passport)

- Applicant – Required
- All Adult Household Members – Requested
- All Household Members – Requested

For each Household Member, provide one of the following documents:

- Passport
- Any official document from a government agency
- Certificate of U.S. Citizenship
- Official Birth Certificate
- A driver's license-State identification card
- U.S. Military photo identification
- Certificate of Naturalization
- Other immigration documentation

Methods used to verify household income

- Pay Stubs
- Social Security Award Letters
- Bank Statements
- Tax Statements
- Zero Income Statements
- Unemployment Insurance Letters

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- Letters of support - If a household member is being supported by another person, we require the other person to fill out a form stating their name, address, phone number, as well as the type of support (cash, food, rent), frequency, and the amount.

Protection of Privacy and Confidentiality

Financial and operating controls in place to protect client information against improper use or disclosure.

- Policy in place prohibiting release of information without written consent
- Grant recipient LIHEAP database includes privacy/confidentiality safeguards
- Employee training on confidentiality for: Grant recipient employees and Local agencies/district offices
- Physical files are stored in a secure location
- electronic files are protected in a secure location

Policies are in place for verifying vendor authenticity

- All vendors must supply a valid SSN or TIN/W-9 form
- Vendors are verified through energy bills provided by the household
- Grant recipient monitoring a sampling of vendors annually
- Other - Heating oil vendors are required to supply a copy of their Rhode Island Petroleum Dealer's License with their vendor agreement each year.

Policies in place to protect against fraud when making benefit payments to gas and electric utilities on behalf of clients

- Applicants must submit current utility bill
- Applicants required to submit proof of physical residency
- Intake staff has access to utility database to verify the name, residence, and account number of the applicant.
- Centralized computer system/database tracks payments to all utilities
- Centralized computer system automatically generates benefit level
- Separation of duties between intake and payment approval
- Payments to utilities and invoices from utilities are reviewed for accuracy
- Direct payments to households are made in limited cases only

Procedures in place for averting fraud and improper payments when dealing with bulk fuel suppliers of heating oil, propane, wood, and other bulk fuel vendors

- Centralized computer system/database is used to track payments to all vendors
- Direct payments to households are made in limited cases only
- Conduct monitoring of fuel vendors