

Summary of Rhode Island LIHEAP FFY 2026 State Plan

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

The funding period is Federal Fiscal Year 2026 (October 1, 2025, to September 30, 2026).

Households applying for LIHEAP are not categorically eligible.

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.

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

- Wages
- Self-employment income (60%)
- Contract income
- Payments from mortgage or sales contract
- Unemployment insurance
- Strike pay
- Social Security Administration (SSA) benefits (including the Medicare deduction)
- 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
- Funds received by household for care of a foster child
- Ameri-Corp Program payments for living allowance, earnings, and in-kind aid.

Section 2 – Heating Assistance

The current State Median Income (SMI) is used for income eligibility for LIHEAP (see following table for most recent SMI). Renewal applications are mailed in September or October. Households with an elderly

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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, family size, fuel type, and home energy costs are used to determine the benefit level.

FFY 2026 LIHEAP 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 as of October 1, 2025. Grants may be restricted based on available funding.

FFY 2026 LIHEAP Income Eligibility		
Family Size (Household Members)	60% SMI	60% SMI
	Annual	1 Month
1	\$42,252	\$3,521
2	\$55,252	\$4,604
3	\$68,253	\$5,687
4	\$81,254	\$6,771
5	\$94,254	\$7,854
6	\$107,255	\$8,937
7	\$109,692	\$9,141
8	\$112,130	\$9,344
9	\$114,568	\$9,547
10	\$117,005	\$9,750
11	\$119,443	\$9,953
12	\$121,881	\$10,156

NOTE: (1) Prepared by the Administration for Children and Families, Office of Community Services, Division of Energy Assistance.

Section 3 – Cooling Assistance

Rhode Island is not planning to offer Cooling Assistance in FFY 2026.

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:

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1. Heat is shut off due to failure to pay a regulated utility bill.
2. Inability to pay for deliverable fuel.
3. 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 assure 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
- Mailing to prior year LIHEAP recipients
- 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 website
- 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

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- 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 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. Rhode Island Department of Human Services field offices have information about LIHEAP posted and staff refer people to LIHEAP when appropriate.

Section 8 - Agency Designation

There are seven Community Action Agencies 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 fuel), and install weatherization measures. Rhode Island currently uses Delegated Authority for LIHEAP contracts. The process follows federal guidelines for selecting community action agencies.

Current list of Community Action Agencies, main office address, phone number, Congressional District, and UEI number and county served. Used for Near hotline and Office of Community Services (OCS) Service Provider Tool and LIHEAP Clearinghouse.

Blackstone Valley Community Action 32 Goff Ave., Pawtucket, RI 02806 401-723-0227 County: Providence District 1 UEI: G3PAVFJHP491	East Bay Community Action 100 Bullocks Point Ave., Riverside, RI 02915 401-437-5102 Counties: Bristol, Newport, Providence District 1 UEI: MJ9TZJLS4EL6
Community Care Alliance 245 Main St., Woonsocket, RI 02895 401-235-6000 County: Providence District 1 UEI: PNFUG8XD69Q3	Tri-County Community Action North 11 Emanuel St., North Providence, RI 02911 401-519-1917 County: Providence Districts 1 and 2 UEI: LNX6KGWBH911

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Community Action Partnership of Providence County 518 Hartford Ave., Providence, RI 02909 401-273-2000 County: Providence Districts 1 and 2 UEI: LJXNQM5HNCQ7	Tri-County Community Action South 415 Tower Hill Rd, North Kingstown, RI 02852 401- 515-2459 Counties: Washington, Kent Districts 2 UEI: LNX6KGWBH911
Comprehensive Community Action 311 Doric Ave., Cranston, RI 02910 401-467-7013 County: Providence Districts 1 and 2 UEI: LS73E9BEHVZ4	Westbay Community Action 487 Jefferson Blvd, Warwick, RI 02886 401-732-4660 County: Kent District 2 UEI: CKDUK89KEHR3

Section 9 – Energy Suppliers

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

Once funding is available, Community Action Agencies send Vendor Voucher Reports to deliverable fuel vendors authorizing grant amounts and providing client information. Deliverable fuel vendors must provide a proof of delivery to the appropriate Community Action Agency. Once funding is available, Community Action Agencies send Payment Reports to utility vendors authorizing grant amounts and providing client information. After vendors are notified, client confirmation letters are sent to the approved applicants after applications have been certified by the Community Action Agency and the funding is available.

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.

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.

Community Action Agencies have an annual fiscal and 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 Community Action Agency 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 2026. 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 the receipt of the denial notice to request a hearing. The applicant is first offered a hearing with an impartial representative of the Community Action Agency 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 for 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 local agencies and vendors on policies and procedures as needed throughout the year. Local agencies have monthly meetings with DHS and an annual training before the heating season begins.

Deliverable fuel 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 and the policy manual.

Section 15 - 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.

Timeframes and plans for meeting the Performance Goals and Measures requirements in the coming federal fiscal year.

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Timeline for data collection and reporting of performance measures:

Benefit Targeting and Burden Reduction Targeting

1. October – December 2025

- a) Utility heating data collection for FFY 2025.
- b) Utility non heating data collection FFY 2025.
- c) Deliverable fuel heating FFY 2025.

January 2026

- a) Compile the data from these spreadsheets returned to determine the energy burden for the households--broken down further into the highest energy burden households.

January 2026

- a) Run reports using LIHEAP software to determine the number of utility crisis grants (restoration of home energy) and deliverable crisis grants (prevention of home energy) during the specified FFY.
- b) Run reports using LIHEAP/Weatherization software showing the number of repaired and replaced inoperable heating equipment (restoration of home energy) and operable heating equipment (prevention of home energy) during the specified FFY.

Section 17- Program Integrity

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>
- Reporting to local agencies/district offices and vendors

Requirements for identification documentation include:

Social Security Card (photocopied and retain copy)

Applicant – Requested

All Household Members – Requested

Social Security Number (without card)

Applicant – Required

All Household Members –Required

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

Applicant – Required

All Household Members – Requested

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Methods used to verify household income

- Pay Stubs
- Social Security Award Letters
- Bank Statements
- Tax Statements
- Zero Income Statements
- Unemployment Insurance Letters
- 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), the period of time and the amount.
- Other methods to verify income as needed

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.

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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