

Other States – Low Income Utility Rate Plans

Virginia

Program Details: 2020 Virginia Clean Economy Act (HB2330) administered by Department of Housing and Community Development. PIPP program, statewide. Early-stage implementation, starts 2024.

Links:

- <https://www.scc.virginia.gov/docketsearch/DOCS/7v8%2401!.PDF>
- <https://www.aceee.org/blog-post/2023/12/more-states-are-cutting-energy-bills-low-income-households>
- <https://www.benefits.gov/benefit/1538>
- <https://www.dss.virginia.gov/benefit/ea/>

New York

Program Details: Administered by Public Service Commission. Energy Affordability Program (EAP), utility-based. Active since 2016. EAP targets household income at the Federal Poverty Level.

Links:

- <https://www.weact.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Steps-for-Self-Enrollment-into-EAP.pdf>
- <https://dps.ny.gov/energy-affordability-program>
- <https://www.aceee.org/blog-post/2023/12/more-states-are-cutting-energy-bills-low-income-households>
- <https://www.weact.org/campaigns/sign-up-for-new-york-states-energy-affordability-program/>
- <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-hochul-announces-electric-and-gas-utility-bill-credit-program-low-income-families>

Colorado

Program Details: Administered by Public Utilities Commission. PUC rules 3412 (electric) and 4412 (gas). Percentage of Income Payment Plan (PIPP), utility-based. Active since 2012. Bills capped at 6% of income, targeting households with income at 185% of Federal Poverty Level or 60% of State Median Income

Links:

- <https://puc.colorado.gov/utilitybillhelp>

- https://www.aceee.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/equity_and_electrification-driven_rate_policy_options_-_encrypt.pdf
- <https://liheapch.acf.hhs.gov/dereg/states/cosnapshot.htm>
- <https://www.benefits.gov/benefit/1541>
- <https://liheapch.acf.hhs.gov/dereg/states/cosnapshot.htm>

Ohio

Program Details: Managed by the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio. Percentage of Income Payment Plan (PIPP), active since 2010, statewide. PIPP targets households with income at or below 175% of the Federal Poverty Level, subsidizing the balance of utility bills.

Links:

- <https://development.ohio.gov/individual/energy-assistance/2-percentage-of-income-payment-plan-plus>
- <https://development.ohio.gov/static/individual/energyassistance/2023-2024-Heap-Application-ES-BW.pdf>
- <https://liheapch.acf.hhs.gov/docs/PIPPupdate.pdf>
- <https://www.firstenergycorp.com/content/dam/customer/get-help/files/asst-programs/PIPP-Plus-brochure.pdf>

New Jersey

Program Details: Administered by the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs. Universal Service Fund (USF), active since 2004, targets households with income at or below 175% of the Federal Poverty Level. USF provides credits on utility bills to keep costs within a specified percentage of the household's income.

Links:

- <https://liheapch.acf.hhs.gov/docs/PIPPupdate.pdf>
- <https://www.nj.gov/bpu/residential/assistance/usf.html>
- <https://liheapch.acf.hhs.gov/dereg/states/njersey.htm>

California

CPUC Decision 21-10-12: Caps the bill at 4% of income for electric and gas combined.

Program Details: Managed by the Public Advocates Office for the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) under AB 205 (2022). The Income Graduated Fixed Charge (IGFC) is in the proposal stage, with CPUC planning to adopt it by July 1, 2024. IGFC offers varying levels of discounts on fixed charges based on income brackets, with the highest discount for customers with income up to 100% of the Federal Poverty Level. Enrollment in CARE and FERA programs is required for the lower brackets.

Links:

- <https://www.publicadvocates.cpuc.ca.gov/-/media/cal-advocates-website/files/press-room/reports-and-analyses/231214-public-advocates-office-fixed-charge-qa.pdf>
- <https://www.pv-magazine.com/2023/04/28/california-proposes-income-based-fixed-electricity-charges/>
- <https://www.kpbs.org/news/local/2023/09/13/californias-future-with-income-based-flat-fee-utility-bills-is-getting-closer>
- <https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/-/media/cpuc-website/divisions/energy-division/documents/demand-response/demand-response-workshops/advanced-der---demand-flexibility-management/joint-ious-opening-testimony-exhibit-1.pdf>
- <https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/industries-and-topics/electrical-energy/electric-costs/demand-response-dr/demand-flexibility-rulemaking>

Illinois

Program Details: Administered by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. The Percentage of Income Payment Plan (PIPP), established under Illinois Public Act 096-0033 (2009), began in 2011. It targets households with incomes up to 150% of the Federal Poverty Level and is available to customers of specific utilities. Currently, it is inactive for new applicants from October 2, 2023, to August 15, 2024.

Links:

- <https://liheapch.acf.hhs.gov/news/july09/pipp.htm>
- <https://dceo.illinois.gov/communityservices/utilitybillassistance.html>
- <https://dceo.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/dceo/communityservices/utilitybillassistance/documents/pipp-brochure-2019.pdf>
- <https://www.peoplesgasdelivery.com/payment-bill/percentage-income-payment-plan>
- <https://www.nicorgas.com/residential/billingandpaymentoptions/energy-assistance-programs/pipp.html>

Pennsylvania

Program Details: Administered by the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission. The Customer Assistance Program (CAP) is active and available to all qualifying low-income households. It offers support through various programs including LIHEAP, customer assistance and referral evaluation program (CAREP), LIURP, and hardship funds. The program, including Arrearage Management Plans (AMPs), is administered by individual utility companies to assist with overdue payments.

Links:

- <https://www.puc.pa.gov/about-the-puc/consumer-education/utility-assistance-programs/>

- <https://www.firstenergycorp.com/content/dam/customer/get-help/files/asst-programs/PCAP-Brochure.pdf>

Wisconsin

Program Details: Managed by the Public Service Commission. Currently in the proposal stage, Wisconsin is considering Percentage of Income Payment Plan (PIPP) or alternative assistance programs for utility bill assistance. Xcel Energy, in coordination with the PSC, proposes to cap utility bills at 4% of income for households eligible for the Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). This initiative is part of broader efforts to develop assistance programs for lower-income residents.

Links:

- <https://www.jsonline.com/story/money/business/energy/2023/11/21/we-energies-customers-will-pay-3-50-more-a-month-following-psc-action/71590580007/>
- <https://urbanmilwaukee.com/2023/06/15/public-service-commission-could-create-new-aid-for-low-income-we-energies-customers/>
- <https://www.ejicwisconsin.org/post/alternative-low-income-assistance-programs-wisconsin-psc-docket-5-ur-110-70>
- https://www.ejicwisconsin.org/files/ugd/9b581e_d13621b15a5d4f10afae8a119529384.pdf?index=true
- <https://www.jsonline.com/story/money/business/energy/2023/06/01/should-utility-bills-be-based-on-income-its-under-consideration-in-wisconsin/70063965007/>

Michigan

Program Details: Managed by the Public Service Commission under Case No. U-21021. The Percentage of Income Payment Plan (PIPP) Pilot, launched in 2022, is designed for low-income customers of Consumers Energy. Qualifying participants are placed on a fixed payment plan of 6% of gross income, with the remainder covered by a PIPP credit. The pilot aims to enroll up to 1,500 customers receiving natural gas, electric, or both, and includes arrears forgiveness over the pilot's term. The program also focuses on providing energy bill assistance and resources for energy waste reduction.

Links:

- <https://www.michigan.gov/mpsc/commission/news-releases/2022/02/10/mpsc-marks-progress-on-collaborative-efforts-to-better-address-energy-affordability-and-assistance>

Washington

Program Details: Regulated by the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission under the Clean Energy Transformation Act (CETA 2019), various utilities

offer discount programs since 2021 for low-income households. These include benefits up to \$1,550 and are based on income eligibility, ranging from 150% to 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines.

Links:

- <https://liheapch.acf.hhs.gov/dereg/states/wasnapshot.htm>
- <https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=19.405.120>
- <https://www.commerce.wa.gov/growing-the-economy/energy/ceta/ceta-energy-assistance/>
- <https://www.utc.wa.gov/consumers/energy/energy-assistance-programs>
- <https://deptofcommerce.app.box.com/s/qazu3yweu5w6udvvnw97qk5dwzop56p5>
- <https://www.pse.com/en/account-and-billing/assistance-programs/HELP>

Washington, DC

Program Details: Administered by the DC Department of Energy & Environment (DOEE) and regulated by the Public Service Commission of the District of Columbia (DCPSC), the Utility Discount Programs (UDP) have been active since 2013. They offer various discounts on utilities including up to \$475 per year for electric bills, \$276 for winter gas bills, and over \$962 annually for water and sewer bills.

Links:

- <https://doee.dc.gov/udp>
- https://doee.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/ddoe/service_content/attachments/D_OEE%20Utility%20Assistance%20Application%20Final_0.pdf
- <https://here2helpdc.dc.gov/>

Connecticut

Program Details: Connecticut's Low-income discount rate (LIDR) program, established by the Connecticut Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA), offers two tiers: Tier 1 reduces electric bills by 10%, and Tier 2 provides a 50% reduction for eligible households. Recertification is required annually, and payment arrangements are available to all customers. PURA directed Eversource and UI to implement LIDR to improve electric rate affordability by Jan 1, 2024. Applications can be submitted via email, fax, or mail.

Links:

- https://portal.ct.gov/heatinghelp/utility-assistance-information?language=en_US
- <https://www.nbcconnecticut.com/news/local/low-income-electric-customers-in-connecticut-will-soon-see-savings/3108653/>
- <https://www.uinet.com/documents/1678076/77607951/FINAL+UPPC006+UI+Low+Income+Discount+Rate+LIDR+Fact+Sheet+Design+10.11.23.pdf/7e6bd2a5-970e-2eff-fba4-lad4bf666b1a?t=1697033083247>

Oregon

Program Details: Oregon's Energy Assistance Program (OEAP) is available statewide, active since 2022, offering discounts on utility bills from various providers based on income. Eligible households, with incomes below 60% of Oregon's median income, can apply through different utility-specific methods.

Links:

- <https://www.oregon.gov/ohcs/energy-weatherization/pages/utility-bill-payment-assistance.aspx>
- <https://www.oregon.gov/ohcs/energy-weatherization/Documents/factsheets/Oregon%20Energy%20Assistance%20Program%20Fact%20Sheet%20PY2023.pdf>
- <https://oregoncub.org/news/blog/energy-bill-discounts-available-for-low-income-oregon-households/2668/>

Nevada

Program Details: Energy Assistance Program reduces energy burdens to the statewide median household energy burden, which was 2.29% in FY 2023 for a median-income household

(\$85,150): [https://dwss.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/dwssnvgov/content/Energy/The%20Nevada%20Fund%20for%20Energy%20Assistance%20and%20Conservation%20State%20Plan%202023%20Final Signed.pdf](https://dwss.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/dwssnvgov/content/Energy/The%20Nevada%20Fund%20for%20Energy%20Assistance%20and%20Conservation%20State%20Plan%202023%20Final%20Signed.pdf).