

Water Utility Affordability Survey

Introduction

Thank you for your interest in our water utility survey. Our agency, the Office of Community Services, administers the Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP), the first-ever low-income federal water assistance program. LIHWAP provides funding to states, tribes, and territories across the United States to help low-income households with their water and wastewater bills. With this survey, we are trying to better understand the scope of water and wastewater debt so that we can help ensure that both households and utilities get the money and support they need. This program directly benefits utilities by providing payments on behalf of customers who are behind on their water or wastewater bills. This survey will take 30 minutes or less to complete and is broken into 6 sections. Your information will be kept private.

PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT OF 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13) STATEMENT OF PUBLIC BURDEN: The purpose of this information collection is to gather data related to water and sewer costs so we can better assist LIHWAP grantees. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 30 minutes per respondent, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and reviewing the collection of information. This is a voluntary collection of information. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The OMB # is 0970-0531 and the expiration date is 09/30/2025. If you have any comments on this collection of information, please contact Gwen Donley at gwendolyn.donley@acf.hhs.gov.

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Utility Information

The following questions will ask you some basic information about your water utility.

1. Approximately how many residential connections do you have (as of December 1, 2022)?

2. What is the size of your administrative staff? (Administrative staff includes staff who are responsible for customer service, billing, support, etc.)

- Less than 3
- 3-5
- More than 5

3. Which of the following services do you provide? (Check all that apply)

- Water
- Wastewater

4. What is your water source? (Check all that apply)

- Groundwater
- Surface water

5. What is the ownership structure of your utility? (Check all that apply)

- Publicly owned (i.e., owned by commissions, municipalities, etc.)
- Privately owned (i.e., owned by a corporation, Homeowners Association, etc.)
- Tribally owned
- Other (please specify)

6. What is the approximate square mileage covering residences you bill for water or wastewater?

- <5
- 5-50
- 51-100
- >100

7. How is your service area defined? (Check all that apply)

- Neighborhood/Community
- Municipality
- Zip Code(s)
- Public Service Area
- HOA
- County

Other (please specify)

8. Please expand on your answer to question 7. What is your service area?

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Disconnection

9. At any point during the 2022 calendar year, was there a moratorium that disallowed residential water or sewer service shut-offs?

Yes

No

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Disconnection

The following questions refer to residential accounts to whom you provide water or wastewater services.

10. Please estimate how many residential accounts *received notice* that their water and/or wastewater services would be shut off or disconnected due to *nonpayment* at any point during the 2022 calendar year:

11. Please estimate how many residential accounts had their water/wastewater services *shut off or disconnected* due to *nonpayment* at any point during the 2022 calendar year:

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Arrearages

The following questions refer to residential accounts to whom you provide water or wastewater services. Please answer to the best of your ability.

12. Please estimate how many residential accounts fell behind (arrearages) on their water and/or wastewater bills at any point during the 2022 calendar year:

13. What was the average amount of money owed (arrearages) per residential account (out of those that owed an arrearage at any point in 2022)?

14. What is the total amount of money owed (arrearages) as of December 1, 2022 that your utility is owed for water and/or wastewater bills?

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EPA Size Category

15. What is the population size served by your utility?

- Very small (<500 people)
- Small (501-3,300 people)
- Medium (3,301-10,000 people)
- Large (10,001-100,000 people)
- Very Large (>100,000 people)

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Rates

The following questions refer to residential accounts to whom you provide water or wastewater services.

16. What is your billing frequency?

- Monthly
- Quarterly
- Twice Annually
- Annually

17. What is your base rate for water services per billing period (\$)?

18. How many gallons or cubic feet are included in your base rate per billing period?

19. Is your flow rate/volume charge measured using gallons or cubic feet?

- Gallons
- Cubic feet

20. What is your flow rate/volume charge for water services per billing period?

___ \$

per ___ gallon/cubic
foot

21. Is your wastewater charged by a flat fee?

- Yes
- No

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Rates, Continued

22. Wastewater flat fee amount (\$):

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Rates, Continued

23. Is your wastewater fee charged based on water usage?

Yes

No

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Rates, Continued

24. If no, please explain:

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Other Fees, Shut-Off Fee

Our federal program, LIHWAP, is able to cover costs related to unpaid or late bills, disconnections, and other fees, so we are interested in learning about the types of fees charged by utilities. In collecting this information, we are not evaluating or critiquing your utility's policies.

25. Does your utility charge a shut-off fee (disconnection or reconnection of water/wastewater)?

- Yes
- No

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Other Fees, Shut-Off Amount

26. Shut-off fee amount (\$):

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Other Fees, Late Fee

27. Does your utility charge late fee(s) on bills owed?

Yes

No

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Other Fees, Late Fee Amount

28. Late fee amount (\$):

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Other Fees, Additional

29. Does your utility charge other fees (ex: interest on unpaid balances, collection fees)?

Yes

No

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Other Fees, Describe

30. Please describe other fees:

31. If there are any other details related to rates, disconnections, arrearages, or fees that you would like to add, please do so here:

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Contact Information

All of your information will be kept private. We will use this to make sure we don't collect duplicate responses and for data quality verification.

32. Your name(s):

33. Name of the utility you work for:

34. Primary address of the utility:

Address

Address 2

City/Town

State/Province

ZIP/Postal Code

35. Your job title(s) or role(s):

36. Phone (including area code):

37. Email address:

38. May we contact you if we have any questions about your survey responses?

Yes

No

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Closing

Thank you for completing this survey. Your responses are helping us understand the water and wastewater needs of communities across the country, and how programs like the Low Income Household Water Assistance Program can help both households and utilities. We appreciate your time. If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to Gwendolyn Donley at gwendolyn.donley@acf.hhs.gov.

39. If you would like to add any comments or additional details, please do so here: