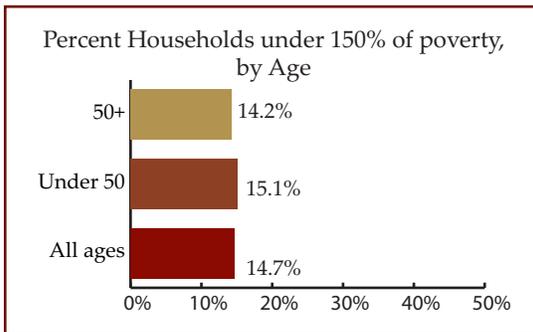


Energy and Telephone Assistance in the States

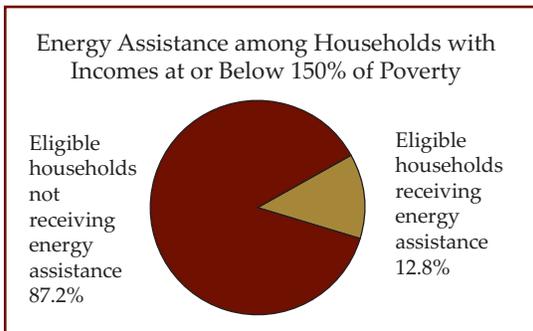
Alaska

Alaska in Brief (2006)

Total state population: 670,053
 State median income: \$72,110
 Percent households age 50+: 42.4%

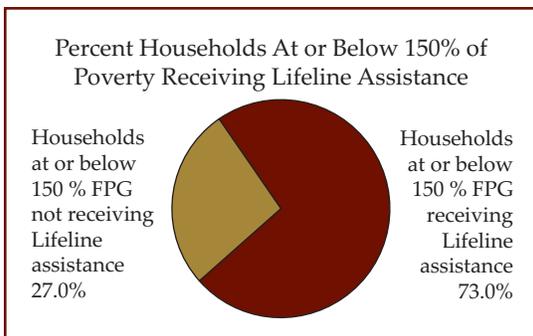


Energy Assistance



Telephone Assistance

Telephone penetration rate in state: 95.5%



Telephone Assistance

Lifeline and Link-Up are the primary sources of telephone assistance for low-income households in Alaska.

Lifeline

Lifeline provides participating low-income households with a monthly credit toward the price of basic local telephone service.

Benefits (2006)

Maximum monthly credit: \$38.50

Basic federal support: \$8.25

State support: \$3.50

Federal match: \$1.75

Enhanced federal support for tribal lands: \$25

The Enhanced Lifeline program increases by \$25 the credit that eligible low-income consumers on tribal lands can receive under the current federal Lifeline program, provided the customer's local telephone bill does not fall below \$1 per month.

Alaska has decided that the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) intended that Enhanced Lifeline benefits associated with tribal lands apply to all of Alaska. As a result, depending on their current rate levels, most customers who qualify for Lifeline will receive basic local telephone service for \$1 a month.

Funding (2005)

Federal: 6,997,935

State: \$1,081,770*

* Source: Alaska Universal Service Administrative Company, *Annual Survey 2005*.

State funding is provided through a 1.2% surcharge on end-user revenues of all telecommunications providers in the state, collected through the Alaska Universal Service

Energy and Telephone Assistance in the States

Fund (AUSF). Telecommunications providers are allowed to pass along AUSF costs to all non-Lifeline customers as a separate line charge on their monthly bills.

Eligibility (2006)

To receive Lifeline assistance, state residents must complete an application with their local telephone provider and certify under penalty of perjury that their household income does not exceed 135% of poverty, or that they are enrolled in any of the following programs:

- Medicaid
- Food stamps
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Public housing assistance
- Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
- Bureau of Indian Affairs general assistance
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Head Start
- National School Lunch
- Alaska Temporary Assistance Program
- Alaska Adult Public Assistance Program

Local telephone providers annually select a random sample of Lifeline customers and verify that these customers remain eligible for the credit.

Participation (2005)

Households served: 25,797

Participation rate: 57.4% (based on 135% of the federal poverty guideline)

Link-Up

Qualified customers receive a discount on the price of installing new telephone service.

Benefits (2006)

Link-Up subscribers receive the following:

- A credit of \$100 toward charges that customers pay for connecting to new telephone service

- The option of deferring payment on the balance of the connection fee (up to \$200) with no interest charges for a period not to exceed one year

Alaska has decided that the FCC intended that Enhanced Link-Up benefits associated with tribal lands apply to all of Alaska. The Enhanced Link-Up program helps eligible low-income consumers on tribal lands afford the cost of initiating new telephone service by increasing by \$70 the amount of assistance available under the current federal Link-Up program, to a total of \$100 per customer.

Funding (2005)

Federal: \$332,359

Eligibility (2006)

Eligibility requirements are the same as for Lifeline.

Participation (2006)

Households served: 5,382

Energy Assistance

Energy assistance programs in the state include the following:

- Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)—Heating Assistance
- Program (HAP)
- Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP)
- Rural Residential Energy Rehab Program (Enhanced Weatherization)

Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)—Heating Assistance Program (HAP)

The federal Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) provides the state of Alaska with a block grant to help eligible low-income households meet their immediate home energy needs. With this grant, Alaska distributes payments through its Heating

Energy and Telephone Assistance in the States

Assistance Program (HAP), which includes three categories of assistance: heating, cooling, and crisis. The state also uses a portion of the grant to supplement funding for Alaska's Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP).

Benefits (FY2006)

Crisis: \$2,975 maximum per household
Heating: \$ 2,975 maximum per household

Clients receive a benefit once a year. Benefits are paid to the energy provider unless the client's home energy costs are included in rent, in which case the payment is sent directly to the client. HAP assistance is available from November through May, with an early application period from October 1 to November 1 for older and disabled residents.

Funding (FY2006)

Total: \$18,483,373
Federal: \$18,483,373
Tribal set-aside: \$3,264,815
Regular net block grant: \$7,439,500
One-time additional block grant: \$1,298,153
Total FY2006 emergency/cont.: \$5,900,590
FY2005 LIHEAP carryover funds: \$580,315

The Alaska Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), Division of Public Assistance, determines client eligibility, notifies clients, and makes payments to energy providers and clients. The department contracts with community action and nonprofit agencies to accept applications for HAP.

Alaska allocates LIHEAP funding in the following manner:

Heating assistance: 76%
Crisis assistance: 4%
Weatherization: 10%
Administration, etc.: 10%

Eligibility (FY2006)

Households with incomes at or below 150% of poverty are eligible for assistance.

Participation in Alaska's HAP does not reduce the client's eligibility or benefits under other state assistance programs.

Participation (FY2005)

Households served by program component:
Heating: 7,854
Winter/year-round crisis: 1,201
Weatherization: 495

Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP)

Through the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP), the U.S. Department of Energy provides Alaska with a formula distribution grant to help low-income state residents—especially those who are 60 years and older, disabled, or living with young children—increase the energy efficiency of their homes, reduce their energy expenditures, and improve health and safety.

Benefits (FY2006)

Average benefit per household: \$6,000

Once an applicant has been approved, weatherization technicians use energy audits to identify energy-saving measures for each home. Examples of these measures include the following:

- Insulating attics, floors, water heaters, and exposed pipes
- Tuning up, repairing, or replacing the furnace or heating unit and/or air conditioner
- Providing ventilation fans—including electric, attic, ceiling, or whole-house fans—to increase air circulation
- Stopping air infiltration by weather-stripping and caulking around doors and windows, replacing broken glass panes, and installing storm windows

Funding (FY2006)

Total: \$5,334,314
Federal: \$2,334,314
Department of Energy: \$1,734,314
Additional funding through LIHEAP: \$600,000

Energy and Telephone Assistance in the States

State: \$3,000,000

Alaska Housing Finance Corporation:
\$3,000,000

The Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC) distributes grants to community action and local government agencies throughout the state. These agencies accept applications, determine eligibility, and provide weatherization services, such as performing energy audits and implementing suggested measures.

Eligibility (FY2006)

Households with incomes at or below 60% of the state median income are eligible for assistance. Priority is given to elderly and disabled individuals and households with children under six years old.

Participation (2004–2005)

Households served: 697

Rural Residential Energy Rehab Program (Enhanced Weatherization)

The state general fund provides weatherization assistance to low-income residents located between the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta and the Northwest Arctic Borough in Alaska (non-road-accessible communities), where winter temperatures can reach -40°F, and fuel costs may consume as much as half of a family's monthly income.

Benefits (2006)

Maximum assistance per household: \$17,000
The program provides extensive energy-related repairs, heating and electrical improvements, and housing rehabilitation, in addition to energy conservation measures such as caulking and weather-stripping.

Funding (FY2006)

Total: \$5,000,000

The Alaska Housing Financing Corporation,
Alaska Department of Health and Human

Services, and the U.S. Department of Energy all contribute funds to this program. Total from each funding component varies significantly from year to year.

Eligibility (2006)

Households with total income at or below 60% of the state median income are eligible for assistance. The program gives priority to elderly and disabled individuals and to households with children under six years old.

Clients are enrolled through the federal WAP.

Participation (4/05–3/06)

Households served: 90

Seasonal, Health-, and Income-Related Disconnection Policies

Health

Alaska does not have a cold weather disconnect policy but does require utilities to delay for 15 days the disconnection of residential electric or natural gas service for nonpayment if the customer notifies the utility that a member of the household is seriously ill, over age 65, disabled, or dependent on a life-support system.

Deferred Payments

The state requires utilities to offer deferred-payment arrangements to residential customers in danger of having their service disconnected for nonpayment. If the customer agrees and adheres to such an arrangement, the utility is prohibited from disconnecting service.

Deferred-payment agreements must include the following requirements:

- The customer must pay one-third of the outstanding bill at the time of the agreement.
- The customer must pay off outstanding balance over a period not to exceed 12 months.