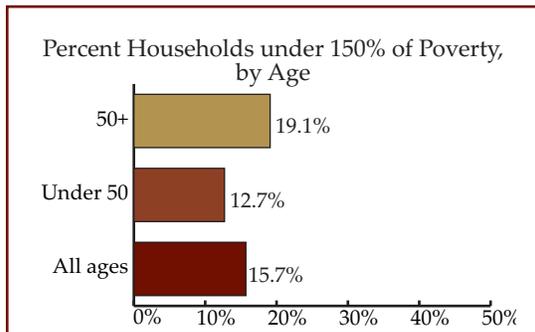


Energy and Telephone Assistance in the States

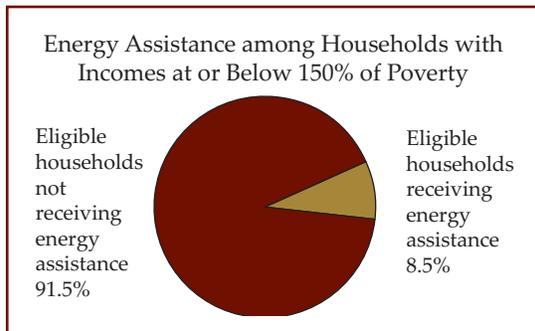
Maryland

Maryland in Brief (2006)

Total state population:	5,615,727
State median income:	\$82,363
Percent households age 50:	46.9%

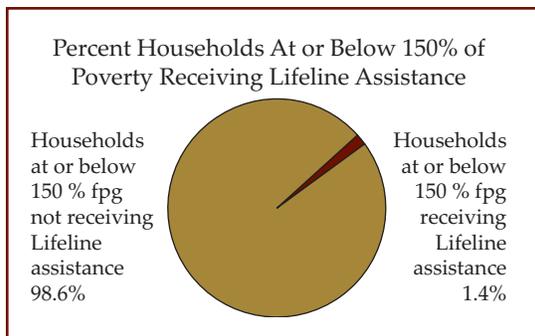


Energy Assistance



Telephone Assistance

Telephone penetration rate in state: 95%%



Telephone Assistance

Lifeline and LinkUp are the primary sources of telephone assistance for low-income households in Maryland.

Lifeline (Tele-Life)

Lifeline provides participating low-income households with a monthly credit toward the price of basic local telephone service. Tele-Life is the name of the Lifeline program offered by Verizon, the largest provider of local telephone service in Maryland.

Benefits (2006)

Maximum monthly credit: \$15.26

Basic federal support: \$8.25

State support: \$5.26

Federal match: \$1.75

Funding (2005)

Federal: \$501,933

State: \$287,890 (est.)

State funding for Lifeline (up to \$5.26 per subscriber) is provided through state tax credits.

Eligibility (2006)

To receive Lifeline assistance, state residents must complete an application and be certified eligible by the Maryland Department of Human Resources. Eligibility is based on enrollment in any of the following programs:

- Maryland Cash Assistance
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Public assistance to adults
- Transitional Emergency Medical and Housing Assistance Program (TEMHAP)
- Supplementary Security Income (SSI) benefits

Beneficiaries must recertify with their local telephone provider periodically to remain eligible for this program.

Energy and Telephone Assistance in the States

Maryland

Participation (2005)

Households served: 4,561

Participation rate: 7.3% (based on participation in SSI)

Link-Up

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

Benefits (2006)

LinkUp subscribers receive the following:

- A credit of \$30 or a 50% reduction in the charges customers pay for connecting to new telephone service, whichever is less
- 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

Funding (2005)

Federal: \$20,424

Eligibility (2006)

Eligibility requirements are the same as for Lifeline.

Participation (2005)

Households served: 851

Energy Programs

Energy assistance programs in Maryland include the following:

- Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)—Maryland Energy Assistance Program
- Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP)
- Electric Universal Service Program (EUSP)
- Utility Service Protection Program (USPP)

Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)—Maryland Energy Assistance Program (MEAP)

The federal Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) provides the state of Maryland with a block grant to help eligible low-income households meet their immediate home energy needs. With this block grant, Maryland distributes payments through its Maryland Energy Assistance Program (MEAP), which includes two categories of assistance: heating and crisis.

Benefits (FY2006)

Heating: \$417 average benefit per household

Crisis: Expedited service of regular benefit per household

The crisis component receives no specific funding, but households in crisis situations may receive expedited payments of regular heating benefits and limited assistance in repairing or replacing refrigerators and furnaces.

Clients receive one benefit 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 to landlord. Heating and crisis assistance from the MEAP program are available year-round.

Funding (FY2006)

Total: \$71,889,447

Federal: \$58,889,447

Regular net block grant: \$31,331,801

Additional one-time net block grant: 27,167,392

Total emergency/cont.: \$3,390,254

State: \$12,600,000 (general fund)

The Maryland Department of Human Resources, through the Office of Home Energy Programs (OHEP), distributes grants through county agencies called local administering agencies (LAAs). These agencies accept applications, determine eligibility, notify clients, and make payments to bulk energy providers. Payments

Energy and Telephone Assistance in the States

to Utilities (electricity and piped gas) are made through the state fiscal system

Maryland allocates LIHEAP funding in the following manner:

- Heating assistance: 90%
- Administration, etc.: 10%

Eligibility (FY2006)

State residents with household incomes at or below 150% of poverty are eligible for assistance. Persons participating in the following programs are also eligible for assistance:

- Public assistance
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Food stamps
- Unemployment
- Veterans benefits
- Disability benefits

Between January 15 and March 31, households at or below 175 of the federal poverty guideline become eligible for assistance from the program.

Participation (2005)

Households served by program component:

Heating: 82,688

Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP)

Through the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP), the U.S. Department of Energy provides the state of Maryland with a formula distribution grant to help low-income residents—especially those 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: \$2,826
Weatherization technicians use energy audits to identify and implement energy-saving measures for each home. Examples of these measures include the following:

- Insulating attic, floors, water heater, and exposed pipes
- Tuning up, repairing, or replacing the furnace or heating unit and/or air conditioner
- Stopping air infiltration by weather-stripping and caulking around doors and windows, replacing broken glass panes, and installing storm windows

Funding (FY2006)

Total: \$3,297,804

Federal: \$2,897,804

Department of Energy: \$2,897,804

State: \$400,000

The Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development distribute grants to 15 Local Agencies throughout the state. These agencies accept applications, determine eligibility, and provide weatherization services, including performing energy audits and implementing suggested measures.

Eligibility (FY2006)

State residents with household incomes at or below 150% of poverty are eligible for assistance. Participants in the following programs are also eligible for assistance:

- Public assistance
- SSI
- Food stamps
- Veterans benefits
- Disability benefits

Priority is given to elderly and disabled homeowners and families with children.

Participation (2005)

Households served: 1,291

Electric Universal Service Program (EUSP)

The Electric Universal Service Program (EUSP) provides eligible low-income electric customers with bill payment assistance, and arrearage retirement benefits.

Energy and Telephone Assistance in the States

Benefits (FY2006)

Eligible electric customers may receive assistance in any of three ways:

- Current electric bill payment (an average of \$401 per program year)
- Past due electric bill payment (once in a life time -up to \$2,000)
- Help with energy efficiency measures to reduce future electric bills.

The state requires that most of the funding for this program be spent on bill payment assistance and \$1,500,000 be spent on retirement of arrearages incurred by low-income households.

Participation in the program does not affect other assistance that individuals may be receiving.

Funding (FY2006)

Total: \$33,000,000 by electric customer surcharge

Funding for this program is generated from a universal service charge—\$0.37—applied to all state utility customers. The monies are collected through utility bills and forwarded to the State Department of Human Resources, Office of Home Energy Programs, which administers the EUSP.

Industrial and large commercial utility customers contribute about \$24 million of the total funding; residential customers pay the rest.

The funding is allocated as follows:

- Bill assistance: \$27.835 million
- Outreach: \$200,000
- Arrearage Retirement: \$1,500,000
- Program administration: \$3,465,000

Eligibility (FY2006)

Maryland residents who have the electric bill in their name, have household incomes at or below 150% of federal poverty guidelines, and agree to accept a budget billing plan as determined by their electric utility company are eligible for assistance.

Customers who live in subsidized housing with an electric bill in their name may also be eligible for assistance.

Participation (2005)

Households served: 78,668

Utility Service Protection Program (USPP)

The Utility Service Protection Program (USPP), mandated by the Maryland Public Service Commission and operated in conjunction with the Maryland Energy Assistance Program (MEAP), protects eligible households from utility service termination during the winter months.

Benefits (FY2005)

MEAP households that use gas or electricity as their primary heat source are protected from utility termination if they remain current on a monthly level payment plan. The payment plan is calculated as follows: Customers enrolled in the USPP have their MEAP benefit paid directly to their utility, which then deducts the benefit amount from the estimated cost of the customer's average annual utility use and divides the remaining cost into 12 equal payment amounts.

USPP includes an additional protection provision for MEAP participants with incomes at or below 50% of the federal poverty guideline. From November through March, these households are protected from utility termination if they pay an average of \$40 a month over this five-month period. However, any amount they do not pay on their monthly USPP payments between November and March will be charged against them in seven installments during the seven non-winter months (April-October). Participants must make these seven payments in addition to their regular USPP monthly payment.

Funding

There is no dedicated funding associated with this program. Administrative costs are provided by participating utilities.

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Eligibility

State residents who have applied and are eligible for Maryland's LIHEAP program other household resident. The customer is required to negotiate a deferred payment arrangement to extend service beyond the 30 day delay. MEAP-eligible households with unpaid utility bills may qualify for USPP if their outstanding balance is \$400 or less and they agree to repay their arrearage over a period of no more than 48 months.

Participation (2004-2005)

Households served: 69,471

Seasonal, Health, and Income-Related Disconnection Policies

Seasonal/Low-income customers of Maryland's Utility Service Protection Program are protected from utility disconnections year-round (see program description above). For all other residential customers, utilities cannot disconnect residential service between November 1 and March 31 unless they can prove that such an action will not endanger the health of any member of the customer's household.

Health

Maryland requires natural gas and electric utilities to delay for up to 30 days disconnection of residential service if a physician certifies that such an action would adversely affect the health of the customer or other household resident. The customer is required to negotiate a deferred payment arrangement to extend service beyond the 30-day delay.