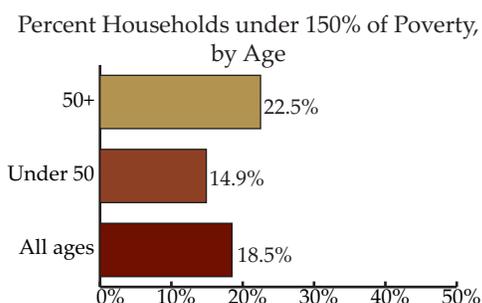


# Energy and Telephone Assistance in the States

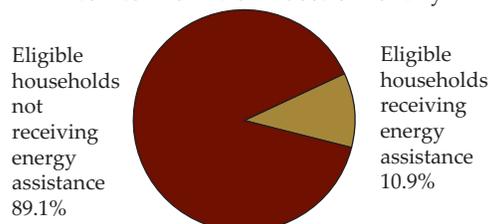
## Massachusetts

### Massachusetts in Brief (2006)

Total state population:	6,437,193
State median income:	\$58,605
Percent households age 50+:	47.7%

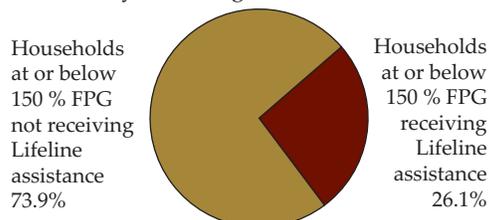


Energy Assistance among Households with Incomes at or Below 150% of Poverty



Telephone penetration rate in state: 93.5%

Percent Households At or Below 150% of Poverty Receiving Lifeline Assistance



### Telephone Assistance

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

#### Lifeline

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

#### Benefits (2006)

Maximum monthly credit: \$18.39

Basic federal support: \$8.25

Maximum state support: \$8.39

Federal match: \$1.75

#### Funding (2005)

Federal: \$14,226,210

State: \$12,071,633 (est.)

Local telephone companies recover the cost of providing the state portion of this benefit in the rates they charge non-Lifeline subscribers for basic local telephone service.

#### Eligibility (2006)

To receive Lifeline assistance, state residents must complete an application with their local telephone provider and prove they are enrolled in any of the following programs:

- Food stamps
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Mass Health
- Emergency Aid to the Elderly, Disabled and Children (EAEDC)
- Fuel assistance
- Public housing

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

## Energy and Telephone Assistance in the States

### Participation (2005)

Households served: 119,901

Participation rate: 18.3% (based on 200% 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 \$30 or a 50% reduction, whichever is less, on the charges 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

### Funding (2005)

Federal: \$8,712

### Eligibility (2006)

Eligibility requirements are the same as for Lifeline.

### Participation (2005)

Households served: 1,289

## Energy Assistance

Low-income energy assistance in Massachusetts includes the following programs:

- Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)—Fuel Assistance Program and Heating Emergency Assistance Retrofit Task Weatherization Assistance Program (HEARTWAP)
- Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP)
- Massachusetts Discount Utility Rate
- Low-Income Conservation Fund

## Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)—Fuel Assistance Program and Heating Emergency Assistance Retrofit Task Weatherization Assistance Program (HEARTWAP)

The federal Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) provides the state of Massachusetts with a block grant to help eligible low-income households meet their immediate home energy needs. With this grant, Massachusetts distributes payments under an integrated heating and crisis component (fuel assistance), and through the Heating Emergency Assistance Retrofit Task Weatherization Assistance Program (HEARTWAP), which repairs and replaces inefficient or unsafe heating equipment of eligible low-income households.

### Benefits (2006)

- Heating: \$335–\$919 maximum per household; \$561–\$790 average per household
- Heating system replacement: \$4,125 maximum per household
- Asbestos abatement: \$1,200 maximum per household
- Emergency repairs: Average between \$100 and \$150 per household

Clients receive one fuel assistance benefit a year. If household energy costs exceed a fixed threshold established by fuel type, the household may be eligible for an additional “high energy” benefit of up to \$75. 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. Fuel assistance clients are also eligible to receive discounts on utility and telephone bills.

HEARTWAP provides heating system repairs and replacements to LIHEAP-eligible households. Throughout the winter months, HEARTWAP serves as an emergency intervention service to eligible households

## Energy and Telephone Assistance in the States

having problems with their primary heating system. Fuel assistance is available from November 1 to April 30, and the program uses an early application period for older and disabled applicants. For FY2006, the LIHEAP application deadline was extended until May 12, 2006. HEARTWAP services are available year-round.

### Funding (FY 2006)

- Total: \$147,419,345
- Federal: \$127,419,345
- Tribal set-aside: \$32,741
- Regular net block grant: \$82,764,288
- One-time additional block grant: \$943,806
- Total emergency/cont.: \$43,678,510
- State appropriation: \$20,000,000

The Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development, Division of Community Services, distributes fuel assistance grants to 22 nonprofit agencies throughout the state. These agencies accept applications, determine eligibility, notify clients, and make payments to energy providers and clients. The community agencies also operate HEARTWAP, delivering services through contracted heating professionals.

Massachusetts allocates LIHEAP funding in the following manner:

- Heating assistance: 71%
- Cooling assistance: N/A
- Crisis assistance: 3%
- Weatherization: 11%
- Administrative/program planning: 10%
- Services to reduce home heating cost/ outreach/budgeting, etc.: 5%

### Eligibility (FY 2006)

State residents with household incomes at or below 200% of poverty are eligible for fuel assistance and HEARTWAP.

### Participation (FY 2005)

- Households served by program component:
- Heating: 135,068
- Cooling: N/A

- Winter/year-round crisis: 11,192
- Weatherization: 11,078

### Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP)

Through the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP), the U.S. Department of Energy provides Massachusetts with a formula distribution grant to help low-income residents—especially those 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 (FY 2006)

Maximum benefit per household: \$4,600

Weatherization technicians use energy audits to identify and implement 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 (FY 2006)

- Total: \$6,938,192
- Federal: \$6,938,192
- Department of Energy: \$6,938,192

The Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development distributes grants to 12 nonprofit agencies across the Commonwealth. These agencies accept applications, determine eligibility, and provide weatherization services, such as performing energy audits and implementing suggested measures.

## Energy and Telephone Assistance in the States

# Massachusetts

### Eligibility (FY 2006)

State residents with household incomes at or below 200% of poverty are eligible for assistance. In addition, households with a member receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or SSI benefits are categorically eligible. Priority is given to households with older and disabled members, and to households with children under age seven. Households with exceptionally high energy bills may also receive priority service.

### Participation (FY 2005)

Households served: 2,900

### Massachusetts Discount Utility Rate

In 1997 the Massachusetts legislature passed electric restructuring legislation requiring electric distribution companies to provide discounted rates for eligible low-income customers that are comparable to the low-income discount rates in effect before March 1998. As required by rules issued by the Massachusetts Department of Telecommunications and Energy that govern the unbundling of natural gas services, regulated gas companies in Massachusetts also must provide a low-income discount rate.

### Benefits (FY 2006)

Currently, all of the state's investor-owned electric and gas utilities provide low-income discounts, ranging from 20% to 42%.

### Funding (FY 2006)

Total: \$36,000,000

The gas and electric discount rates are funded through rates charged to all customers.

### Eligibility (2006)

State residents receiving any means-tested public benefit program, with household incomes at or below 200% of the federal poverty guideline, as well as those certified eligible for LIHEAP are eligible for assistance. All nonprofit agencies throughout the state that deliver LIHEAP automatically sign up LIHEAP-

recipient households for the discount, after verifying their income as part of the LIHEAP application process.

### Participation

Households served: 135,068

### Low-Income Conservation Fund

The Massachusetts electric restructuring law mandates a charge to customers of investor-owned utilities to fund energy efficiency activities, including no-cost, utility-funded services for eligible low-income households.

### Benefits (FY 2006)

Households eligible for the electric discount utility rate may also qualify for free weatherization or energy efficiency measures, including energy audits, appliance efficiency (repair or replacement), insulation, and furnace replacement.

### Funding (FY 2006)

Total: \$23,000,000

The state's low-income conservation program is funded through the greater of a 0.25 mills/ kWh charge on all electric customers of the state's investor owned utilities or 20% of each utility's residential conservation program.

### Eligibility (2006)

State residents who have a household income at or below 60% of the state median income qualify for the residential discount rate. Program funding is administered by the nonprofit agencies throughout the state that deliver weatherization, in coordination with all of the gas and electric distribution companies in the state.

### Participation (FY 2005)

Households served: 12,000

### **Seasonal, Health-, and Income-Related Disconnection Policies**

#### **Seasonal**

Between November 15 and March 15, Massachusetts prohibits disconnection of residential natural gas or electric service—if such service either provides heat or operates the heating system—for any household that is unable to pay an overdue bill because of financial hardship.

In 2006 the moratorium on disconnection of residential natural gas or electric service was extended until April 30, 2006.

#### **Health/Age**

Massachusetts prohibits disconnection of natural gas or electric service for nonpayment whenever a customer presents certification that the household contains either a seriously ill member or a child under 12 months old. Utility companies may not shut off services without written approval to households where all residents are 65 years of age or older.

Certifications of serious illness may be renewed monthly, or quarterly in cases of chronic illness. Certifications of infancy remain in effect until the child exceeds 12 months of age.