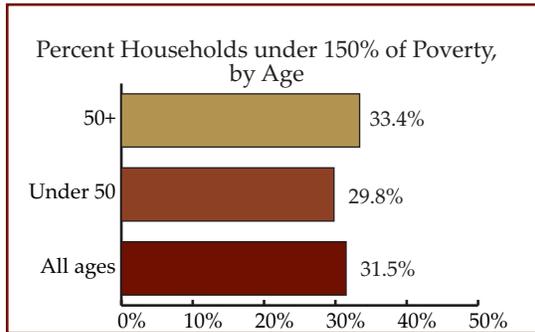


Energy and Telephone Assistance in the States

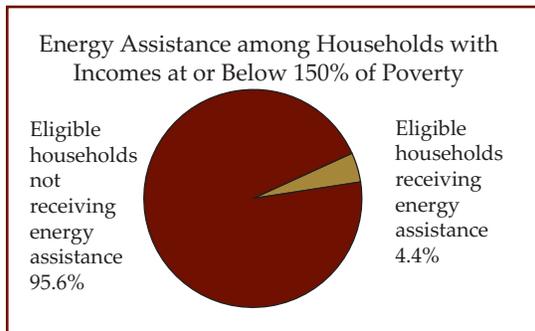
Mississippi

Mississippi in Brief (2006)

Total state population:	2,910,540
State median income:	\$46,570
Percent households age 50+:	48.7%

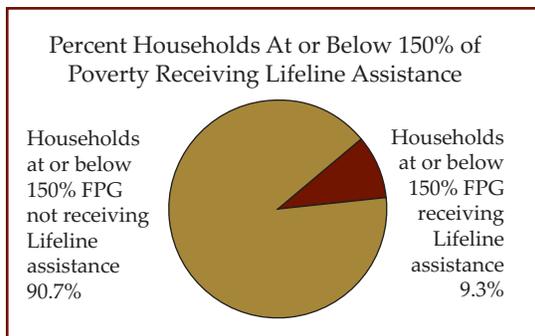


Energy Assistance



Telephone Assistance

Telephone penetration rate in state: 90.8%



Telephone Assistance

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

Lifeline

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

Benefits (2006)

Maximum monthly credit: \$13.50

Basic federal support: \$8.25

State support: \$3.50

Federal match: \$1.75

Funding (2005)

Federal: \$3,309,744

State: \$1,196,580 (est.)

Local telephone companies recover the cost of providing the state portion of this benefit (\$3.50 per subscriber) 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:

- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Food stamps
- Medicaid
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

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

Participation (2005)

Households served: 28,490

Energy and Telephone Assistance in the States

Participation rate: 10.8% (based on 150% 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: \$93,282

Eligibility (2006)

Eligibility requirements are the same as for Lifeline.

Participation (2005)

Households served: 4,136

Energy Assistance

Low-income energy assistance programs in Mississippi include the following:

- Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
- Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP)—
- Low-Income Weatherization Assistance Program (LIWAP)
- Low-Income Utility Rate Assistance

Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

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

distributes payments under three categories of assistance: heating, cooling, and crisis.

Benefits (FY2006)

- Heating: No maximum per household
- Cooling: No maximum per household
- Crisis: No maximum for crisis benefit

Benefit levels vary depending on a case-management analysis and an applicant's household income, bill amount, and compliance with a case-management plan.

Benefits are paid to the energy provider. The Mississippi LIHEAP program operates year-round.

Funding (FY2006)

Total: \$30,266,470
 Federal: \$30,266,470
 Regular net block grant: \$14,349,950
 One-time additional net block grant: 12,442,652
 Total emergency/cont.: \$623,208
 Department of Energy: \$1,850,660
 FY2006 REACH funds: \$1,000,000

The Mississippi Department of Human Services, Division of Community Services, distributes grants to community action agencies throughout the state. These agencies accept applications, determine eligibility, notify clients, and make payments to energy providers.

Mississippi allocates LIHEAP funding in the following manner:

• Heating assistance:	63%
• Cooling:	16%
• Crisis assistance:	5%
• Administration, etc.:	16%

Eligibility (FY2006)

State residents with household incomes at or below 150% of poverty are eligible for assistance.

Participation (FY2005 est.*)

Households served by program component:

Heating: 61,750

*Source: LIHEAP Clearinghouse.

Energy and Telephone Assistance in the States

Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP)—Low-Income Weatherization Assistance Program (LIWAP)

This program helps 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 (FY2004)

Average benefit per household: \$2,464

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
- 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: \$1,850,660

Federal: \$1,850,660

Department of Energy: \$1,850,660

The Mississippi Department of Human Services, Division of Community Services, distributes grants to nine community action agencies and local government offices throughout the state. These agencies accept applications, determine eligibility, and provide weatherization services, such as performing energy audits and implementing suggested measures.

Eligibility (2006)

State residents with household incomes at or below 125% of poverty are eligible for assistance.

Priority is given to low-income elderly and disabled individuals.

Participation (2004)

Households served: 669

Low-Income Utility Rate Assistance

Mississippi Power Company waives the residential customer charge (approximately \$15 per month) for customers who receive SSI benefits.

Seasonal, Health-, and Income-Related Disconnection Policies

Seasonal

From December 1 to March 31, Mississippi prohibits disconnection of residential electric or natural gas service for nonpayment if the customer declares in writing an inability to pay the bill in full and agrees to the following requirements:

- Pay all bills in full before November 1
- Agree to a 12-month level payment plan

Seasonal/Health

During the winter protection period, utilities are prohibited from disconnecting residential utility service if a licensed physician certifies that discontinuance of heating service to the customer would create a medical emergency for the customer or a member of the customer's household.