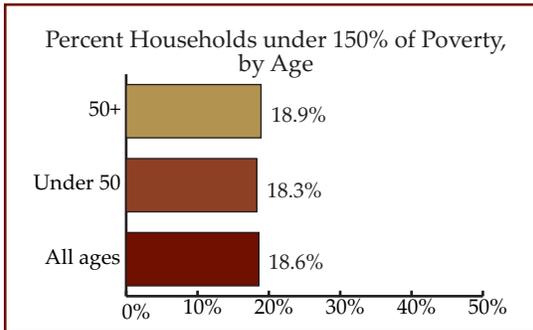


Energy and Telephone Assistance in the States

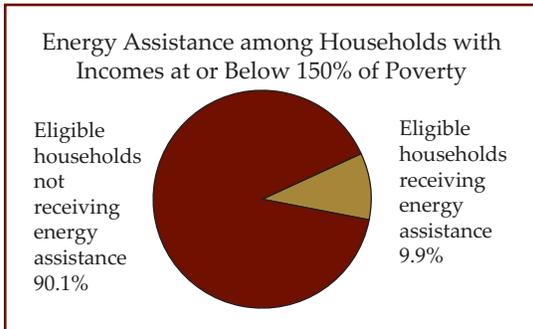
Nebraska

Nebraska in Brief (2006)

Total state population:	1,768,331
State median income:	\$63,625
Percent households age 50+:	46.4%

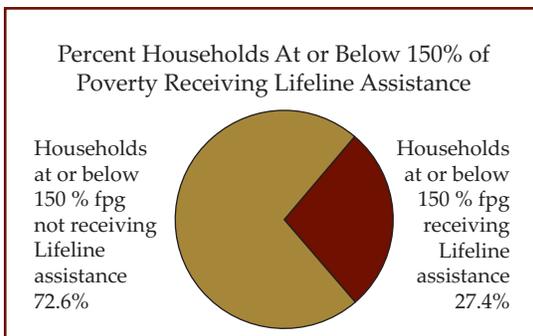


Energy Assistance



Telephone Assistance

Telephone penetration rate in state: 92.9%



Telephone Assistance

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

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: \$2,370,608

State: \$908,485*

* Source: National Regulatory Research Institute (NRRI), 2004–2005 Universal Service Funding Mechanism Survey.

The state portion (\$3.50) of this benefit is funded through a monthly subscriber surcharge imposed on all intrastate retail telecommunications services. All intrastate retail telecommunications service providers collect the surcharge (which is set at 5.75% of billed rates) from their customers and forward the revenues to the Nebraska Universal Service Fund (NUSF). The NUSF supports several programs, including Lifeline, and reimburses eligible local telephone service providers for paying the state portion of the Lifeline benefit.

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
- Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

Energy and Telephone Assistance in the States

- Medicaid
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Federal public housing assistance, Section 8
- Children's health insurance programs

Beneficiaries must prove to the NUSF periodically that they remain eligible for this program.

Participation (2005)

Households served: 21,741

Participation rate: 22.7% (based on 125% 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: \$36,896

Eligibility (2006)

Eligibility requirements are the same as for Lifeline.

Participation (2005)

Households served: 2,387

Energy Assistance

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

- Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)—Low-Income Energy Assistance (LIEA)
- Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP)

Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)—Low-Income Energy Assistance (LIEA)

The federal Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) provides the state of Nebraska with a block grant to help eligible low-income households meet their immediate home energy needs. With this grant, Nebraska distributes payments through its Low-Income Energy Assistance (LIEA) program, which includes three categories of assistance: heating, cooling, and crisis. The state also uses a portion of the grant to supplement funding for Nebraska's Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP).

Benefits (FY2006)

Heating: \$622 maximum per household

Cooling: \$198 average per household

Crisis: \$500 maximum per household

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 directly to the client. Heating assistance is available from October 1 to March 31; and cooling, from June 1 to August 31, if funds are available. Crisis assistance is available year-round.

Funding (FY2006)

Total: \$29,568,302

Federal: \$29,568,302

Regular net block grant: \$17,969,500

One-time additional net block grant: \$3,136,209

Total emergency/cont.: \$7,533,357

FY2005 LIHEAP carryover funds: \$929,236

The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services uses county branches throughout the state to accept applications and determine eligibility. The central office notifies clients and pays energy providers and clients.

Energy and Telephone Assistance in the States

Nebraska allocates LIHEAP funding in the following way:

• Heating:	35%
• Cooling:	9%
• Crisis:	27%
• Weatherization:	11%
• Administration, etc.:	18%

Eligibility (FY2006)

State residents with household incomes at or below 116% of poverty are eligible for heating and crisis assistance. To be found eligible for cooling assistance, the household must have a documented medical need. This requirement is waived if a member of the household is age 70 or older. Nebraska also uses an assets test to determine the financial eligibility of clients for LIHEAP.

Participation (FY2006 est.)*

Households served by program component:
Heating: 32,514

*Source: LIHEAP Clearinghouse.

Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP)

Through the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP), the U.S. Department of Energy provides Nebraska 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 (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 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: \$7,124,459

Federal: \$7,124,459

Department of Energy: \$2,586,397

Additional LIHEAP funds: \$4,538,062

The Nebraska Energy Office distributes grants to eight community action agencies and one nonprofit corporation 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 total incomes at or below 150% of the federal poverty level are eligible for assistance. Households with a member receiving Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) or SSI are automatically eligible for assistance.

Participation (2005)

Households served: 1,292

Seasonal, Health-, and Income-Related Disconnection Policies

Nebraska has no state-mandated weather-related disconnection policies.