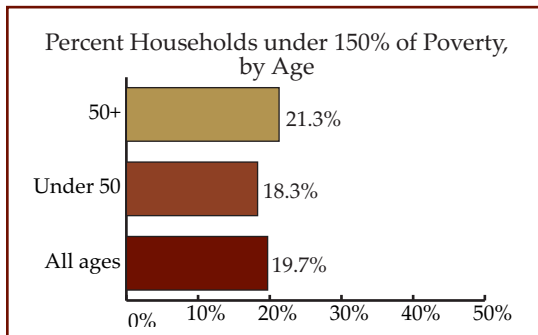


# Energy and Telephone Assistance in the States

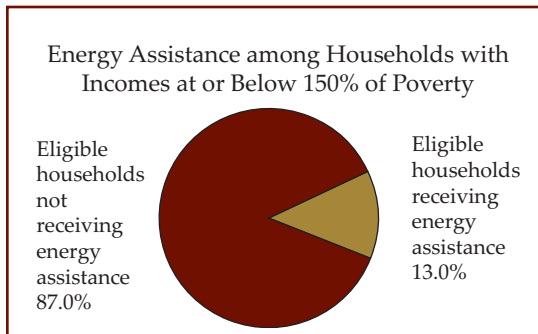
## Rhode Island

### Rhode Island in Brief (2006)

Total state population:	1,067,610
State median income:	\$71,098
Percent households age 50+:	46.3%

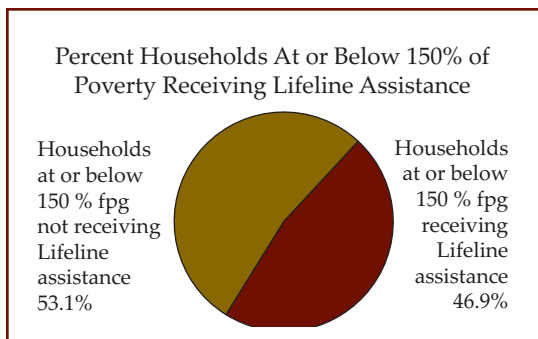


### Energy Assistance



### Telephone Assistance

Telephone penetration rate in state: 94.5%



### Telephone Assistance

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

#### Lifeline

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

#### Benefits (2006)

Maximum monthly credit: \$14.44

Basic federal support: \$8.25

State support: \$4.44

Federal match: \$1.75

#### Funding (2005)

Federal: \$4,571,086

State: \$2,526,790 (est.)

Local telephone companies recover the cost of providing the state portion of this benefit (\$4.44 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:

- Food stamps
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Programs (LIHEAP)
- Rhode Island Pharmaceutical Assistance to the Elderly (RIPAE)
- General Public Assistance (GPA)
- Rhode Island Medical Assistance Program (MAP)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

## Energy and Telephone Assistance in the States

The Department of Human Services and the Department of Administration Division of Planning certify subscriber eligibility for Lifeline.

### Participation (2005)

Households served: 38,836

Participation rate: 30.5% (based on 215% of the federal poverty guideline)

### 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: \$3,486

### Eligibility (2006)

Eligibility requirements are the same as for Lifeline.

### Participation (2005)

Households served: 206

## Energy Assistance

Low-income energy assistance programs in Rhode Island include the following:

- Low-Income Home Energy Assistance program (LIHEAP)
- Weatherization Assistance Program
- Rhode Island Utility Discounts

### Low-Income Home Energy Assistance program (LIHEAP)

The federal Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) provides the

state of Rhode Island with a block grant to help eligible low-income households meet their immediate home energy needs. With this grant, Rhode Island distributes payments under two categories of assistance: heating and cooling. The state also uses a portion of the grant to supplement funding for Rhode Island's Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP).

### Benefits (FY2005)

Heating: \$700 maximum per household

Crisis: \$1000 maximum per household

Clients receive one benefit per 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 May 31, while crisis assistance is available year-round to applicants if they have exhausted their regular LIHEAP grant or if the LIHEAP program had closed..

### Funding (FY2006)

Total: \$25,302,619

Federal: \$23,302,619

Tribal set-aside: \$38,177

Net block grant: \$13,435,331

One time additional net block grant:  
\$2,344,393

Total emergency/cont.: \$7,306,718

Other\*: \$178,000

State: \$2,000,000 (Utility settlement funds)

The Rhode Island State Energy Office distributes grants to Community Action Agencies throughout the state. These agencies accept applications, determine eligibility, notify clients, and make payments to energy providers and clients.

Rhode Island allocates LIHEAP funding in the following manner:

Heating Assistance:	55%
Crisis Assistance:	15%
Weatherization:	15%
Administration, etc.:	15%

## Energy and Telephone Assistance in the States

### Eligibility (FY2006)

State residents with household incomes at or below 60% of the state median income are eligible for LIHEAP assistance.

### Participation (FY2005) (Estimate for Heating only)

Households served by program component:  
Heating: 30,460

### Weatherization Assistance Program

Through the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP), the U.S. Department of Energy provides Rhode Island with a formula distribution grant to help low-income residents—especially those 60 years or 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)

Maximum benefit per household: \$3,200

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: \$4,137,702  
Federal: \$3,153,702  
Department of Energy: \$1,253,702  
Additional LIHEAP funds: \$1,900,000  
Utilities: \$984,000

NE Gas: \$200,000

National grid: \$784,000

The Rhode Island State Energy Office distributes grants to seven community action agencies in 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 income at or below 60% of the state median income are eligible for weatherization assistance. Households with elderly or disabled members, and families with children, are given priority.

### Participation (2005)

Households served: 895

### Rhode Island Utility Discounts

As a condition of deregulation of the electric industry in Rhode Island, the state requires utilities to provide low-income rate discounts to eligible customers, and preserves all existing low-income programs that were offered by the utilities before deregulation.

### Benefits (FY2006)

Several utilities offer rate discounts and payment plans with arrearage forgiveness. The Narragansett Electric Company, which is the state's only major investor-owned utility, offers a 20% discount usage rate amounting to about \$10 per month for low-income customers.

### Funding (FY2004)

Utility assistance: \$3,900,000

The utilities recover costs for providing low income discounts through the distribution rates charged to all other (non-low income) customers.

### Eligibility (FY2006)

State residents enrolled in any of the programs listed below are eligible for assistance:

- Medicaid
- Food stamps

## Energy and Telephone Assistance in the States

- LIHEAP
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
- SSI
- General Public Assistance

The State Department of Human Services notifies beneficiaries of the above programs of their potential eligibility for the rate discount.

### Participation (2004)

35,791 households

### Appliance Management Program (AMP)

The Appliance Management Program (AMP) helps low-income households save electricity and oil costs by installing energy-saving measures in and delivering energy education to eligible households.

#### Benefits

AMP services include the following:

- Appliance efficiency analysis
- Replacement of refrigerators and freezers
- Installation of energy saving light bulbs and fixtures
- Free insulation or other weatherization services

#### Funding (FY 2004)

The utilities recover the costs of these benefits through the distribution rates charged to all other (non-low income) ratepayers. AMP is administered by the Rhode Island State Energy Office.

#### Eligibility

Households eligible for LIHEAP and living in one to four family units are also eligible to participate in the AMP program.

#### Participation

Not available

### Seasonal, Health-, and Income-Related Disconnection Policy

#### Seasonal/Low-Income

From November 1 to March 31, Rhode Island prohibits disconnection of residential natural gas or electric service to households containing seriously ill or disabled persons, residents 65 years of age or older, unemployed persons, or persons eligible for or receiving LIHEAP.

Utilities are also prohibited from disconnecting residential service to non-protected customers if the customer owes the utility \$500 or less for utility service that is the primary heat source or \$200 or more for service that is not the primary source of heat.

#### Health

The state requires utilities to delay for up to 21 days disconnection of residential service for nonpayment if a licensed physician certifies that any resident of the customer's household is seriously ill. If the duration of the illness exceeds 21 days, the customer may request a review to determine if the initial delay will be extended, and, if so, for how long.

#### Deferred Payments

The state requires utilities to offer residential payment plans to customers who are in danger of having their service disconnected for nonpayment. Protected status customers are required (at a minimum) to pay one-twelfth of the unpaid balance and either current usage or 1/12 of the estimated annual usage for each month during enrollment. Customers who do not qualify for protected status are required (at a minimum) to pay 1/12 of their estimated annual usage plus 1/6 of the overdue balance for the first six months of the 12-month plan.