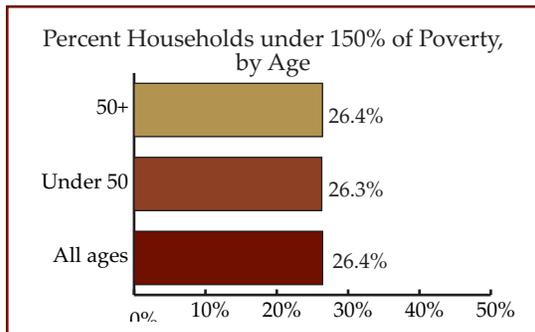


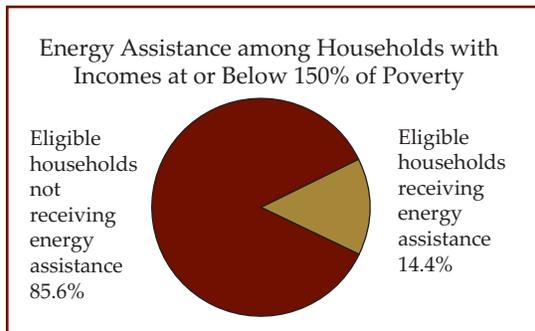
Energy and Telephone Assistance in the States West Virginia

West Virginia in Brief (2006)

Total state population:	1,818,470
State median income:	\$46,169
Percent households age 50+:	53.2%

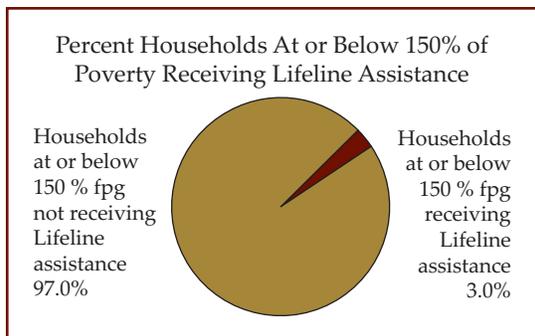


Energy Assistance



Telephone Assistance

Telephone penetration rate in state:	93.4 %
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Telephone Assistance

Lifeline and Link-Up are the primary sources of telephone assistance for low-income households in West Virginia. The state also offers a similar program, called Tel-Assistance Service, which is restricted to households that have at least one member who is disabled or age 60 or older.

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: \$667,412

State: \$242,886 (est.)

Local telephone companies recover the cost of providing the state portion of this benefit (\$2 per subscriber) in the rates they charge non-Lifeline subscribers for basic local service.

Eligibility (2006)

To receive Lifeline assistance, state residents must complete an application with their local telephone provider and prove they have a household income at or below 135% of the federal poverty guideline, or that they are enrolled in any of the following programs:

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

Energy and Telephone Assistance in the States

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

Participation (2005)

Households served: 5,783

Participation rate: 3.5% (based on 135% 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: \$18,166

Eligibility (2006)

Eligibility requirements are the same as for Lifeline.

Participation (2005)

Households served: 985

Tel-Assistance Service

This program offers the same services and benefits as Lifeline, except that it is authorized by state legislation and it restricts benefits to persons who meet the eligibility requirements of Lifeline and are elderly or disabled. Another difference between Lifeline and Tel-Assistance is that local telephone providers recover the cost of providing the state portion of the Tel-Assistance benefit through a state tax credit.

Energy Assistance

Low-income energy assistance programs in West Virginia include the following programs:

- Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)—Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP)
- Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP)
- Special Reduced-Rate Residential Service

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

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

Benefits (FY2006)

Heating: \$295 maximum per household

Crisis: \$500 maximum per household

Clients may receive one heating and one crisis benefit a year (not to exceed \$500 in total). 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 beginning approximately December 1 of each year until funds are exhausted. West Virginia uses an early application period for older and disabled applicants. Crisis assistance is available when heating funds have been exhausted.

Funding (FY2006)

Total: \$24,067,929

Federal: \$24,067,929

Regular net block grant: \$ 17,660,288

Additional one-time net block grant:
\$6,157,991

Total emergency/cont.: \$249,650

Energy and Telephone Assistance in the States

Local offices of the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, Office of Children and Families, accept applications, determine eligibility, notify clients, and make payments to energy providers and clients. West Virginia allocates LIHEAP funding in the following manner:

- Heating assistance: 47%
- Crisis assistance: 28%
- Weatherization: 15%
- Administration, etc.: 10%

Eligibility (FY2006)

State residents with household incomes at or below 130% of poverty are eligible for assistance.

Participation (FY 2005 est.*)

Households served:

Heating: 42,434

*Source: LIHEAP Clearinghouse.

Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP)

Through the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP), the U.S. Department of Energy provides West Virginia 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 energy expenditures, and improve health and safety.

Benefits (FY2006)

Maximum benefit per household: \$4,000

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: \$7,143,377

Federal: \$6,893,727

Department of Energy: \$3,320,985

Additional LIHEAP funds: \$3,572,742

Utility: \$249,650

Dominion Gas partnership*: \$82,400

Mountaineer Gas partnership*: \$167,250

* Note: These funds are only for company low-income high-energy usage customers and are not available in all parts of the state.

West Virginia’s Weatherization Assistance Program for Low-Income Persons is managed statewide by the Governor’s Office of Economic Opportunity. Weatherization services are provided locally by 12 community action agencies that provide weatherization assistance in all 55 counties of the state.

Eligibility (FY2006)

Persons with incomes at or below 150% of poverty are eligible for assistance. Households with elderly or disabled members and families with children are targeted for assistance.

Participation (2006)

Households served: 1,330

Special Reduced-Rate Residential Service

Since 1984, West Virginia requires public utilities to give discounts to low-income and older customers. In return, participating utilities get a directly corresponding tax credit.

Energy and Telephone Assistance in the States

West Virginia

Benefits (2004–2005)

Average discount:

- \$72 per household (electric customers)
- \$128 per household (gas customers)

Eligible households receive a 20% discount on their monthly utility bills from December to April. The discount applies to both gas and electric service.

Funding (FY2006)

Total: \$8,212,251

The amount of the utility discount is credited against each utility's tax liability. The Department of Health and Human Resources mails application kits to recipients of public assistance from qualifying programs (see "Eligibility," below). Clients submit completed applications to their utility, which determines the client's eligibility for the discount and applies the reduced rate to their account.

Eligibility (FY2006)

Gas and electric utility customers in West Virginia who receive any of the following benefits are eligible for assistance:

- Social Security
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Temporary Aid for Needy Families (TANF)
- Food stamp recipients age 60 and older

Participation (December 2004–April 2005)

Households served: 44,055

Seasonal, Health-, and Income-Related Disconnection Policy

Seasonal

Between December 1 and February 28, West Virginia prohibits disconnection of residential natural gas or electric service for nonpayment because such action is interpreted as being dangerous to the health and safety of the customer's household.

Health

West Virginia requires utilities to delay by up to 30 days disconnection of residential service for nonpayment if a licensed physician certifies that such an action would be dangerous to the health of the customer or a household member. Certificates may be renewed every 30 days for the duration of the illness unless the physician can state that the condition is permanent.

Deferred Payments

Utilities are required to offer residential customers in danger of having their service disconnected for nonpayment the opportunity to enter into a deferred-payment agreement. If the customer agrees and adheres to such an agreement, service cannot be disconnected.