



LIHEAP Disbursements to Vendors and At-Risk Populations in Arizona

Summary

During FY 2019, over \$18 million in LIHEAP funds were distributed among several hundred electric and heat vendors; however, 12 vendors accounted for over 90% of disbursements. Approximately four-fifths of LIHEAP benefits were standard, while one-fifth was supplemental/crisis benefits. The average total benefit (standard and supplemental/crisis) received by households was \$560.74, and the average supplemental/crisis benefit received by qualifying households was \$446.88. Households with a disabled member accounted for nearly 50% of all supplemental/crisis benefits distributed. Average supplemental/crisis benefit for this and other high-risk groups did not vary substantially from the overall average benefit.

Background and Purpose

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is a federally-funded program that provides financial assistance to eligible low-income households to offset costs related to heating and cooling bills, energy crises, and weatherization and energy-related home repairs (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 2021). Funds are distributed to state governments, who then manage disbursement. In Arizona, the LIHEAP program is managed by the Department of Economic Security, and applicants for LIHEAP funding apply through local Community Action Programs ([Arizona Department of Economic Security 2021](#)). Eligible households may apply for LIHEAP funds, and

they may also qualify for supplemental/crisis funds if (a) they meet conditions defined as a crisis (b) the household maximum for LIHEAP benefits has been reached (Arizona Department of Economic Security 2020). LIHEAP funds are distributed to vendors, not applicants (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 2021).

Using data provided by the Arizona Department of Economic Security for Fiscal Year 2019 (October 2018 through September 2019), we answered four questions:

1. What is the total amount of LIHEAP funds distributed to each vendor?
2. What are the total and average LIHEAP benefits granted to households?
3. What are the total and average supplemental/crisis LIHEAP benefits granted to households?
4. What are the total and average supplemental/crisis LIHEAP crisis benefit granted to: households with one or more children under six; households with one or more seniors; households with one or more disabled members; households with one or more seniors and one or more disabled members; and households with one or more children under six, one or more seniors, and one or more disabled members.

Findings and Recommendations

1. What is the total amount of LIHEAP funds distributed to each vendor?

During FY 2019, LIHEAP funds were distributed to 119 unique electric vendors and 182 unique heat vendors. Table 1 displays the maximum, minimum, median, and average benefit paid to electric and heat vendors.

Table 1. Maximum, Minimum, Median, and Average Benefit Paid to Electric and Heat Vendors, FY 2019

	Electric Vendors	Heat Vendors
Minimum	\$40.00	\$50.42
Maximum	\$6,557,401.47	\$5,162,116.48
Median	\$1,020.00	\$1,600.00
Average	\$152,858.10	\$97,157.58

The median benefit paid to electric and heat vendors is notably smaller than the average benefit paid, indicating that a small number of vendors receive a substantial proportion of total LIHEAP benefits.

Vendors receiving over \$100,000 in LIHEAP benefits during FY 2019 are listed in Table 2. These vendors account for 96% of all electric LIHEAP disbursements and 92% of all heat LIHEAP disbursements.

Table 2. Electric and Heat Vendors receiving over \$100,000 in LIHEAP Benefits, FY 2019

Electric Vendors	Heat Vendors
APS	APS
SRP	SRP
TEP	SWG
UNISOURCE ELECTRIC	TEP
SSVEC (SIERRA VISTA)	UNISOURCE NATURAL GAS
Navopache ELECTRICITY	COM
COM	UNISOURCE ELECTRIC
Trico Electric	SSVEC (SIERRA VISTA)
Mohave Electric Co.	Default Vendor
	Trico Electric

¹These figures do not include vendors categorized as collect own wood, landlord, N/A, none, not provided, null, other, propane, propane vendor, self fill, rent with utilities included, wood, or unknown. Companies with multiple locations and/or accounts are represented as one company.

²These totals include both standard LIHEAP benefits and supplemental/crisis benefits.

Findings and Recommendations

3. What are the total and average supplemental/crisis LIHEAP benefits granted to households?

\$3,844,035.80



Households in Arizona received a total of \$3,844,035.80 in supplemental/crisis LIHEAP benefits during FY 2019, spread across electric and heat vendors.

\$446.88



The average household received supplemental/crisis benefits totaling \$446.88.

4. What are the total and average supplemental/crisis LIHEAP crisis benefit granted to: households with one or more children under six; households with one or more seniors; households with one or more disabled members; households with one or more seniors and one or more disabled members; and households with one or more children under six, one or more seniors, and one or more disabled members.

Table 4 summarizes the distribution of supplemental/crisis benefits among particular, high-risk subgroups of the Arizona population.

Table 4. Total and Average Household LIHEAP Benefits for High-Risk Subpopulations, FY 2019

Household Composition	Total	Average
1 or more child under 6	\$298,376.62	\$452.09
1 or more senior	\$896,081.44	\$453.71
1 or more disabled member	\$1,860,832.37	\$444.01
1 or more senior & disabled member	\$693,435.61	\$454.12
1 or more senior & disabled member & child under 6	\$8235.80	\$433.46

³ Individual households may be represented in more than one category if membership criteria are met.

References

Arizona Department of Economic Security. 2020. "Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program." Retrieved February 26, 2021 (https://des.az.gov/sites/default/files/LIHEAP_Policy_Manual_2021.pdf).

Arizona Department of Economic Security. 2021. "Utility Assistance." Retrieved February 26, 2021 (<https://des.az.gov/services/basic-needs/shelter-housing/utility-assistance>).

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. 2021. "Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)." Retrieved February 26, 2021 (<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ocs/low-income-home-energy-assistance-program-liheap>).

Citation

Phillips, Lora A., Brajesh Karna, Shelley Morgan, Patricia Solis, and Elizabeth A. Wentz. (2021). "LIHEAP Disbursements to Vendors and At-Risk Populations in Arizona." [White Paper.] Resilience Briefings Series: Shelter and Housing, Knowledge Exchange for Resilience. Available from Arizona State University Library, <https://hdl.handle.net/2286/R.2.N.160734>.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the team at the **Arizona Department of Economic Security** for making these data available.



Authored by: Lora A. Phillips, PhD, Postdoctoral Research Scholar, Knowledge Exchange for Resilience, Department of Geographical Sciences and Urban Planning, Arizona State University

Data support: Brajesh Karna, Data Manager, Knowledge Exchange for Resilience, Arizona State University

Design support : Crystal Alvarez, Communications Manger, Knowledge Exchange for Resilience, Arizona State University

Prepared for: Shelley Morgan, LIHEAP Coordinator, Arizona Department of Economic Security

Disclosure

The ASU Knowledge Exchange for Resilience is supported by Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust. Piper Trust supports organizations that enrich health, well-being, and opportunity for the people of Maricopa County, Arizona. The conclusions, views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust.

