

State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations



DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

September 30, 2022

Luly E. Massaro
Commission Clerk
Rhode Island Public Utilities Commission
89 Jefferson Boulevard
Warwick, RI 02888

Re: LIHEAP Enhancement Plan Rates – PUC Docket 4290

Dear Ms. Massaro,

The Rhode Island Department of Human Services, in accordance with RIGL §39-1-27.12, herewith files an original and ten (10) copies of the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program Plan Rates for 2023.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deborah A. Barclay". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Deborah A. Barclay
General Counsel

Enclosure



RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)¹ Enhancement Charge- 2023

In accordance with RIGL § 39-1-27.12², the Rhode Island Department of Human Services (DHS) files the following rate as the LIHEAP Enhancement Charge Rate for 2023:

The LIHEAP Enhancement Charge shall be \$0.81 per month or equivalent amount per customer, as not to exceed an annual collection of \$7.5 million for the calendar year 2023. The term "customer"³ defined as any person⁴ taking service from an electric or a gas distribution company⁵ at a single point of electricity or gas delivery or electric or gas meters, with a maximum total annual LIHEAP Enhancement Charge to any customer capped at ten dollars (\$10.00).

The Rhode Island Department of Human Services recommends that the funds collected from the rate be deposited into the same single fund/account as last year for consistency. The electric and gas company will provide a credit in an amount specified by the Rhode Island Department of Human Services to customer accounts that are receiving LIHEAP assistance payments.

The Rhode Island Department of Human Services has filed its State LIHEAP Plan with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to define eligibility for a household to participate in LIHEAP at sixty percent (60%) of the State Median Income (SMI) in the State of Rhode Island consistent with RIGL § 39-2-1(a)(1).

The Rhode Island Department of Human Services and the Community Action Agencies will continue to make designation of the qualifying customer accounts receiving LIHEAP payments through the 2023 LIHEAP eligibility criteria. Accounts receiving a 2023 Primary benefit will receive one additional credit from the LIHEAP Enhancement Fund. After consultation with the Division of Public Utilities and Carriers, the electric and gas Distribution Company, Community Action Agencies, and other advocacy organizations presenting the interests of LIHEAP-eligible households, DHS will establish the amount of credits⁶ to be applied to customers' accounts that are receiving LIHEAP payments.

¹ The LIHEAP is the federal Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

² Public Law of 2011, Chapter 383 and 412 which were signed into law on July 13, 2011 and amended June 19 2014, see Public Law of 2014, Chapter 145.

³ The definition of "customer" is conceptually congruent with the definition of "customer" in RIGL § 39-1-2(9) which applies specifically to electric company customers.

⁴ "Person" includes an individual, trust, firm, joint stock company, corporation (including a quasi-government corporation), partnership, association, syndicate, municipality, political subdivision, municipal or state agency, or other government agency, club, nonprofit agency, or any interstate body, and his, her, its, or their lessees, trustees, or receivers appointed by any court.

⁵ The term "electric distribution company" is defined in RIGL § 39-1-2(12) and a "natural gas distribution company" has the same definition except "natural gas", as defined in RIGL § 39-1-2(17), should be substituted for "electric."

⁶ Design of the appropriate credit amounts and their application are dependent in part both on the level of federal appropriations, and on any integration of the LIHEAP Enhancement Plan provisions of RIGL § 39-2-1 regarding the maintenance or restoration of utility service and arrearage payment provisions.