



California Low Income Household Water Assistance Program

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Eligibility/Calculation of Benefits/Application

Q. How does LIHWAP separate the funds to various receivers if customers are applying for assistance for multiple items?

A. LIHWAP benefits can only be applied to water, wastewater and stormwater charges. The Local Service Provider will determine eligibility and the benefit by using the most recent water bill when they are determining eligibility. If the bill includes other charges, our Local Service Providers have a way to calculate the estimated benefit for those customers.

Q. How are the benefits calculated? Is it a standard dollar amount or is the balance taken into consideration?

A. The Local Service Provider will use the most recent bill to determine the arrearage, current charges, taxes, and fees to determine the benefit amount (up to a \$2,000 maximum).

Q. When should customers apply for LIHWAP benefits?

A. Customers can apply for LIHWAP benefits when they have a past due bill from their water system. The information provided by the customer during the application will allow the Local Service Provider to determine a LIHWAP benefit. If the customer makes a payment after applying for LIHWAP but before the LIHWAP benefit is applied to their account, the overage can be used as a credit.

Q. How does a customer apply for a LIHWAP benefit and who determines eligibility?

A. A customer must contact the Local Service Provider in their area to obtain an application. Application processes vary by Local Service Provider. Local Service Providers may have options to obtain an application in the office, online, or by mail. The customer will apply directly with the Local Service Provider, and the Local Service Provider will determine eligibility and calculate the amount of the LIHWAP benefit.

Q. What are the eligibility requirements for customers?

A. Eligibility for LIHWAP services can vary depending on income, household size, place of residence, and other factors. General eligibility requirements can be found on our customer facing webpage: <https://www.csd.ca.gov/waterbill>

Q. Is documentation of eligibility to be submitted to HORNE/CSD? If not, how long does the local agency have to retain the documentation for audits?

A. Eligibility documentation is retained by the Local Service Provider and must be retained for a minimum of three years following the submission of a final expenditure report. Upon written notification from federal government or the Department of Community Services and Development Records must be retained longer than three years if the 3-year minimum requirement is consistent with 2 CFR § 200.334 (45 CFR § 75.361), which requires financial records, supporting documents, and other non-federal entity records pertinent to a federal award be retained for three years following the submission of a final expenditure report (or quarterly/annual financial report). Note that the Code of Federal Regulations (CFRs) impose certain requirements for: records pertaining to litigation, upon written notice from the federal government or CSD (e.g., a local agency is asked to maintain records for audit purposes), and real property (retain for 3 years after final disposition).



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Q. What are the income limits to apply for this benefit?

A. LIHWAP income limits are based on 60% of the State Median Income. For a breakdown of income limits by household size, see the LIHWAP customer eligibility webpage: <https://csd.ca.gov/waterbill>

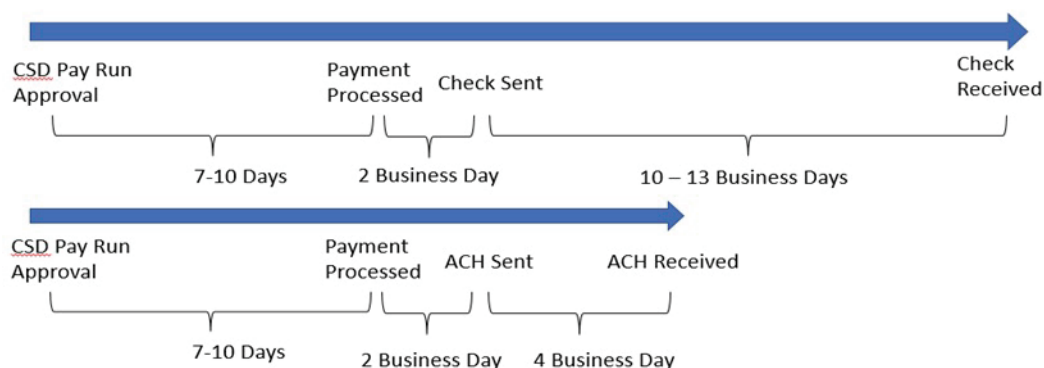
Q. What documentation is required for the customers to apply?

A. An applicant must provide a copy of their water, wastewater, or stormwater bill, income verification documentation, and other documents required to verify eligibility. A customer may contact their Local Service Provider to learn of documentation needed for their application.

Q. How long after will the water/wastewater utility be informed of a customer's eligibility of the LIHWAP benefits?

A. Water systems will be informed when they receive the pay run data, which should be within approximately 25-30 days after the customer has been determined eligible for services. Once the Local Service Provider determines the customer to be eligible, they will send the customer an approval letter with the benefit amount. Once the credit is applied to the account, the water or wastewater system shall also provide a notification to the customer that the account has been credited with a LIHWAP benefit. The notification can be a note on the bill, a bill insert, letter, etc.

Once LSP's determine eligibility, they submit the customer records to CSD on a weekly payrun for processing of payments. The following two diagrams show the typical timeline, for check and ACH transactions, from when CSD receives the customer record on the payrun.



Q. Does the customer, who is applying for the program, have to be the actual account holder?

A. No. The applicant must be a member of the household that will receive a benefit; however, the applicant does not need to be the actual account holder.



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Q. Which residential households are eligible - single family and all multi-family?

A. Households that reside in single family and multi-family who are responsible for paying water/ wastewater costs are eligible to apply for a LIHWAP benefit. Customers who have water costs included in rent, are also eligible to apply for benefits, as long as the applicant is on the lease, and the landlord is willing to reduce the applicant's rent by the amount of the benefit. For more information on utilities included in rent policy, contact your local service provider.

Q. Are there benefits for commercial, irrigation, construction accounts?

A. Customers with commercial, irrigation or construction accounts are not eligible for LIHWAP.

Q. Are homeowners eligible if they are delinquent on potable water service?

A. A homeowner may be eligible if they receive service from a community water system or a wastewater treatment provider or billing entity.

Q. Are you checking to be sure a customer only applies once?

A. Yes, CSD has controls in place to ensure that the customer is only able to apply for benefits one time per program year.

Late Fees/Moved/Closed Account

Q. If a customer moves and closes their water account but still has a balance owed to the water utility, can the customer apply for assistance to pay their closed account?

A. Yes

Q. If the account is closed, but not written off or in collections, can the water utility company apply the payment from LIHWAP to the customer's account?

A. Yes, if the water system can still apply a benefit to the account, an eligible customer can still apply for and receive a benefit under LIHWAP.

Q. Are reconnection fees eligible under LIHWAP?

A. Yes

Q. Does this also cover late fees applied to the water and sewer services?

A. Yes

Q. In some cases, a water utility company takes major past due balances and converts them into a "contract" balance payable over 12 months. In these situations, can the customer apply for LIHWAP benefits?

A. Customers will need to be able to show their arrearages/documentation to qualify for benefits under LIHWAP.



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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. Can a customer with multiple outstanding bills (2+ years) and have received assistance during the COVID period, but still have outstanding bills apply?

A. Yes, LIHWAP can be applied to any remaining past due amount. There are no accrual timeframe requirements and receipt of other assistance does not impact LIHWAP eligibility.

Q. Are customers who received funds from the California Water and Wastewater Arrearage Payment Program funds (water debt accrued between 03/04/20 - 06/15/21) eligible for LIHWAP?

A. Yes. Customers that received a benefit from the State Water Resource Control's California Water and Wastewater Arrearage Payment Program, and still have an arrearage, are eligible for LIHWAP for any remaining debt up to \$2,000.

Q. Does CSD need each invoice for the customer if they are a year behind or would a customer statement be enough?

A. If the customer statement shows the arrearages, the water utility company can just bring in the most current bill.

Q. Many of the water utility customers have a deposit on their account. If the customer were to receive the LIHWAP benefit, then close their account, we would apply their deposit, creating a credit. In this case, would the water utility company send the funds back to HORNE because the deposit could have been applied to their balance previously, or to the customer because the credit is on their account?

A. The credit can go to the customer if they close their account.

Renter Related Questions

Q. If a water utility company has a shut-off due to the property owner passing away, can the tenants at the property apply if the water bill is in the owner's name?

A. Yes, the tenants can apply if the utilities are separate and not included in rent. The LIHWAP applicant does not need to be the account holder if the LIHWAP applicant is another member in the home.

For example, if the customer's utilities are included in rent and the water bill is in the owner's name, they would NOT be able to apply for benefits, directly, under LIHWAP. The landlord/owner (whoever is on the bill) would need to apply.

However, if the water bill is in a partner's, or roommate's name, and they pass away, another member of the household CAN still apply for benefits under LIHWAP.

Q. How is a customer eligible if they have utilities included in their rent?

A. If utilities are included in rent, the landlord will receive the credit on their bill. Prior to the Local Service Provider approving the LIHWAP benefit for the tenant, the tenant will need to provide the LSP with an agreement to show that their landlord has committed to deducting the LIHWAP benefit amount from their rental payment.



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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. What if the LIHWAP benefit puts a large credit balance on the landlords account?

A. The Local Service Provider will base the benefit amount on the landlord's water or wastewater bill, and the landlord agreement, to best estimate the individual tenant's "past due" amount. If the payment results in a credit, the landlord may apply the credit towards future payments.

Q. Will the landlord accounts be identified somehow?

A. Once the water system returns their Direct Pay Summary sheet, HORNE will advise CSD of any landlord accounts and CSD will send a confirmation letter to the landlord and the applicant advising that the benefit has been applied to the account, and specifying the applicant's name and the benefit amount. This will ensure that both the landlord and the applicant know the benefit has been applied and can adjust the upcoming rent, for the appropriate amount.

Payment Questions

Q. Will the payment say \$50 to water and \$50 to wastewater for a total benefit payment of \$100?

A. No, it will just be a \$100 benefit for that customer's account and will not show the split on the online portal/pay run document.

Q. If a customer balance is \$250.00 and LIHWAP payment of \$250 is received but in the meantime, customer pays \$100, do we apply the full \$250 or just partial \$150 for the current balance?

A. Since it was the customer who made the payment, you can apply the full \$250 benefit and the customer would have a credit on their account.

Q. If the water utility's bill has five line items such as water meter, water consumption, sewage fee, stormwater and waste water industrial pre-treatment, would the Direct Pay Files indicate what it is paying for?

A. If the customer's bill shows all the water, wastewater and stormwater charges, taxes and fees on one bill, LIHWAP can pay all the arrearages and current charges, fees and taxes up to \$2,000. The LSP will determine the benefit amount and then the amount will be provided to the water system through HORNE's portal. These funds can only be used to cover water, wastewater and stormwater charges. However, if the various water charges are billed separately, then the customer will need to decide which bill they want paid.

Q. Can customers apply for multiple billing cycles if the \$2,000 limit is not reached?

A. No, this is a onetime benefit for past due balances.

Q. Is there a limit on funds a single customer can get?

A. A customer can receive up to \$2,000. Each customer may only receive one benefit throughout the duration of the program.



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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. What are the requirements for paying for water related bills through property taxes?

A. The customer's property tax bill must show their water, wastewater, and stormwater account being delinquent, for LIHWAP benefits to apply. Additionally, the county of the customer must enter into a Direct Pay Agreement with HORNE in order to receive LIHWAP funds to apply to the customer's taxes.

Q. We will be getting payments for lien properties on an upcoming Tax Roll. This is the same as a payment to the account in our opinion so it sounds like that would be treated as if the customer made the payment themselves correct? In that case, would the LIHWAP credit remain on the account?

A. If County is signed up with a Direct Pay Agreement with HORNE, and the customer is eligible for a benefit, because of a delinquent tax bill, and they make a payment prior to a LIHWAP benefit being placed on their account, then yes, the benefit would be treated as a customer payment and any benefit could be kept on the account and used as a future credit.

HORNE Related Questions

Q. Is it normal that our utility company has not received anything regarding creating an account?

A. Specialists are currently attempting to contact water and wastewater systems to assist in enrollment. It is possible that we have been working with another individual at your system or that we do not have your correct contact information. To ensure that our records are correct, please complete this [interest form](#).

Q. How can the utility company ensure that no funds will be wired to the bank account since we preferred the payment method checks?

A. If check was chosen as the preferred payment method, then you are guaranteed to be paid via check.

Q. Is there a contact for payment verification, errors, payment processing?

A. HORNE will be tracking your payment and will reach out to you via email or phone if your ACH payment has not been received after 4 business days after being sent or if your check payment has not been received after 13 business days after being sent. Please contact support@ca-lihwap.com, if after these timelines, you have not received payment nor received a call or email from HORNE.

Q. If the utility company receive funds via ACH, and has an invoice to return funds, can it be via check?

A. Yes, you will just send a check back to the P.O. Box below once you receive the invoice from HORNE.

HORNE

P.O. Box 902

Madison, MS 39130

Payable to: HORNE dba CA LIHWAP

Invoice number in the check's memo field

Q. How will the utility company be notified that a payment run has been processed and a check is in the mail?

A. You will receive notification via email from NoReply-OutSystems@hornellp.com.



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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. If the utility company requests a check, does a direct payment summary need to be completed?

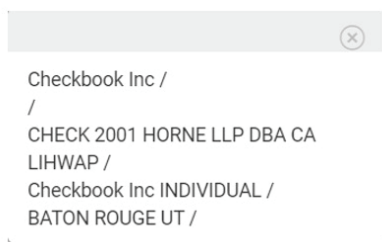
A. Yes, all utilities that are paid must complete a direct payment summary for each pay run. This is required for reporting to CSD, and ultimately CSD's federal reporting.

Q. What if the invoice number cannot be referenced on the check?

A. If you cannot reference an invoice number on a check, then please reference the invoice number on the envelope or manual letter within the envelope.

Q. What is the naming convention to look for on the ACH payment on the bank statement?

A.



Q. Is there any type of reporting capability on the portal?

A. The payment detail reports can be downloaded to reconcile your customer accounts.

Q. Why is the invoice coming in separate from the funds? Is this invoice mailed, emailed or part of the electronic file sent in conjunction with the ACH support identifying allocation of the funds for a given deposit?

A. The invoice will be sent to you by HORNE via email, only if you tell us through your Direct Pay Summary that you need to return funds. It will detail a payment you need to make back to us.

Q. How often will pay runs be generated?

A. Once a week.

Q. Would you explain how a pay batch/run is generated? And does the service provider have any input into the information in it?

A. A pay run is generated based on that week's customer cases approved by all Local Service Providers and receiving CSD's final approval. All the same information is pushed to CSD from the Local Service Providers, so no the local service provider doesn't have any input into the information in the payrun.

Q. Will the utility get information about the number of applications being processed by HORNE?

A. Each utility will get detailed .txt, .dat, and .csv files that breakdown every customer that is being paid on that pay run. Quick note: on the .csv there will be a check number column, this check number column will correspond with the check number or ACH addendum record of the payment.



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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. How can someone else in my office submit the required reporting in my absence?

A. Please contact support@ca-lihwap.com and provide the name and email of the individual from your organization that you would like to be added to have access to the portal.

Q. If a check is the preferred method of payment/return of unused credit, why would our bank information (account number/routing) be necessary on the Direct Payment Agreement?

A. Banking information is required on the Enrollment Form to ensure our information is correct in the event of a lost check. It is not required on the Direct Payment Agreement.

Q. What is the process if the payment/check gets lost in the mail?

A. HORNE will contact you after 13 business days after the check was initiated to ensure that you have not received the check. They will then confirm your mailing address, void the old check, and resend a new check.

Q. Will there be separate checks issued for each eligible delinquent customer?

A. No, there will be one check sent to the utility per pay run. Detailed remittances of what customers that check represents will be provided within the pay run in the LIHWAP portal.

Q. Why are some water/wastewater companies facing email issues from the ca-lihwap.com domain?

A. Please check your spam intake regularly. It may be necessary to completely whitelist our domain. If you continue to experience this issue, please email support@ca-lihwap.com with a detailed account of the issue and HORNE will be in touch.

Q. What is an example of a remittance file prior to receiving an actual payment file?

A.

.txt													
DATE:08/29/2022													
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES AND DEVELOPMENT													
2022 LOW INCOME HOUSEHOLD WATER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM													
CALIFORNIA BILLING SERVICE													
Barton Prange 071379													
PAY RUN DATE: 08/29/2022													
ACCOUNT NUMBER	PAY AMT	BILLING ADDRESS	CUSTOMER OF RECORD				AGENCY CODE	ACC					
123456789-12	\$6.30	0.2 2792 W BALL ROAD APARTMENT NA ANAHEIM CA 92804	Tanya Smith				08047	12312-0804703270					
123456789-12	\$6.30	0.2 2792 W BALL ROAD APARTMENT NA ANAHEIM CA 92804	Sarah Smith				08047	12312-0804703270					
123456789-11	\$6.30	0.2 2792 W BALL ROAD APARTMENT NA ANAHEIM CA 92804	John Smith				08047	12312-0804703270					
123456789-14	\$6.30	0.2 2792 W BALL ROAD APARTMENT NA ANAHEIM CA 92804	Deborah Smith				08047	12312-0804703270					
***** TOTAL \$25.80													
.dat													
*****08/29/2022*****CALIFORNIA BILLING SERVICE*****													
*****08/29/2022-12	*****08/29/2022-12	*****08/29/2022-12	*****08/29/2022-12	*****08/29/2022-12	*****08/29/2022-12	*****08/29/2022-12	*****08/29/2022-12	*****08/29/2022-12	*****08/29/2022-12				
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.csv													
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J				
Pay Run Date	PROPERTY ADDRESS ID	Utility Name	Account Number	Pay Amount	Billing Address	Customer of Record		Check Number					
2/29/2022	56062	Barton Prange Utility	123456789-12	0.2	0.2 2792 W BALL ROAD APARTMENT NA ANAHEIM CA 92804	Tanya Smith		2021					
2/29/2022	56062	Barton Prange Utility	123456789-12	0.1	0.1 2792 W BALL ROAD APARTMENT NA ANAHEIM CA 92804	Sarah Smith		2021					
2/29/2022	56062	Barton Prange Utility	123456789-11	0.2	0.2 2792 W BALL ROAD APARTMENT NA ANAHEIM CA 92804	John Smith		2021					
2/29/2022	56062	Barton Prange Utility	123456789-14	0.2	0.2 2792 W BALL ROAD APARTMENT NA ANAHEIM CA 92804	Deborah Smith		2021					



California Low Income Household Water Assistance Program

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. Will the payment run data file indicate what portion of the benefit is related to water charges and what portion is related to wastewater charges for each account holder?

A. No

Q. Are any penalty fees being paid?

A. No

Q. Can Horne do a test payment/test file of \$1.00? So we can ensure we are getting proper notification and that customer/account information is coming over correctly?

A. HORNE has issued pre-notes to all enrolled systems who have opted for ACH payment method. HORNE will continue to do so on a rolling basis for newly enrolled systems to ensure accuracy of the entries provided.