



Water Affordability / Assistance

Federal & State Policy Landscape

Larry Levine

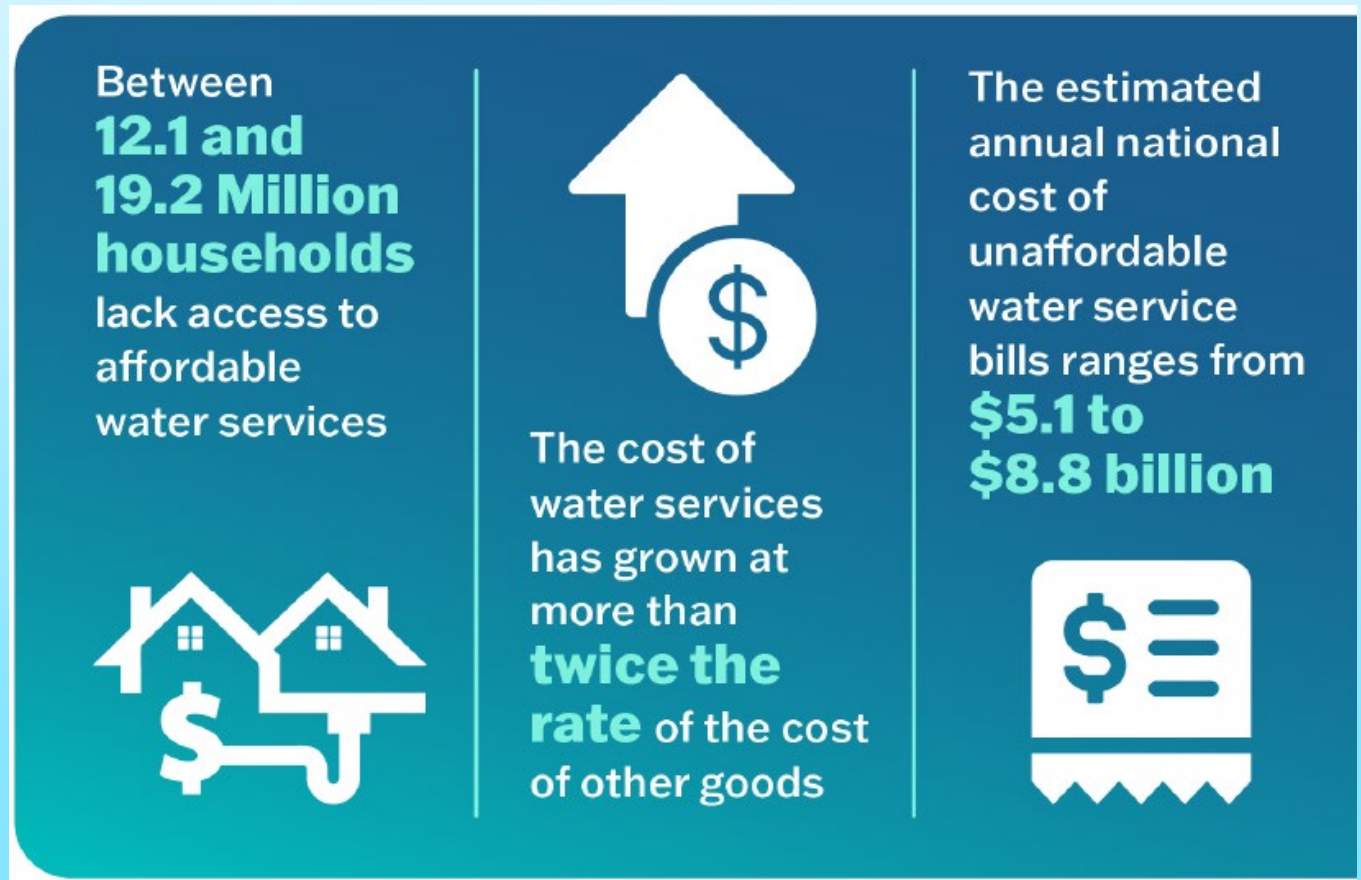
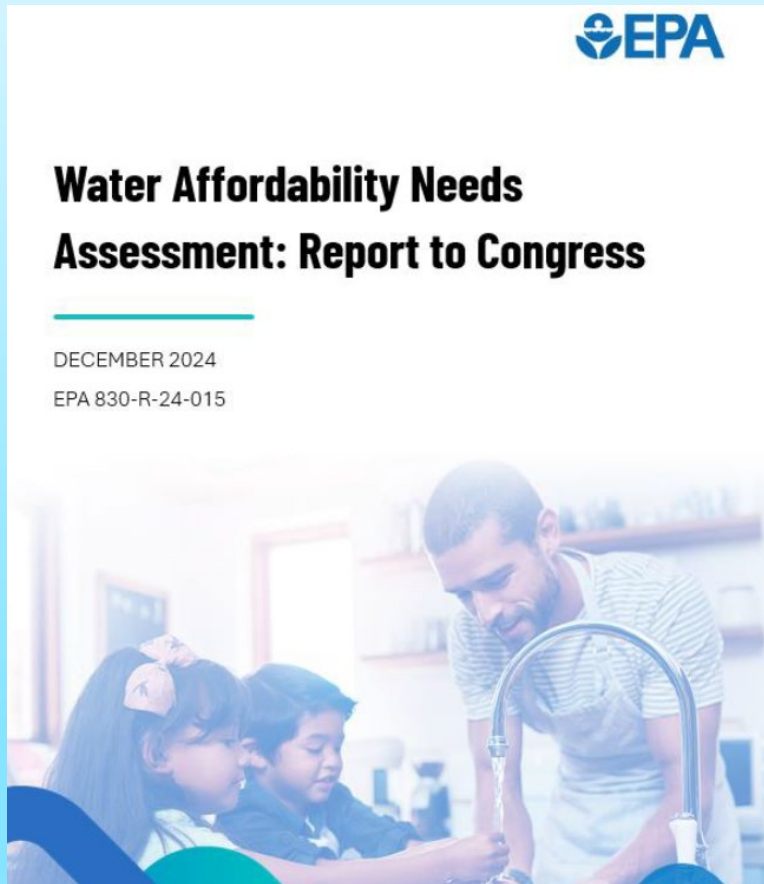
Director, Urban Water Infrastructure & Senior Attorney
Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)



NEADA Winter Meeting
March 11, 2026



Utility Affordability Means Water Too



Source: <https://www.epa.gov/waterfinancecenter/water-affordability-landscape>

LIHWAP (2021-2024)

OCS | LIHWAP

Low Income Household Water Assistance Program

Implementation and Impact Final Report

January 2025

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES

Program Highlights



OVER 1.5M
Households served



101,687
Water services restored



953,583
Disconnections prevented



1,120,417
Water bill reductions

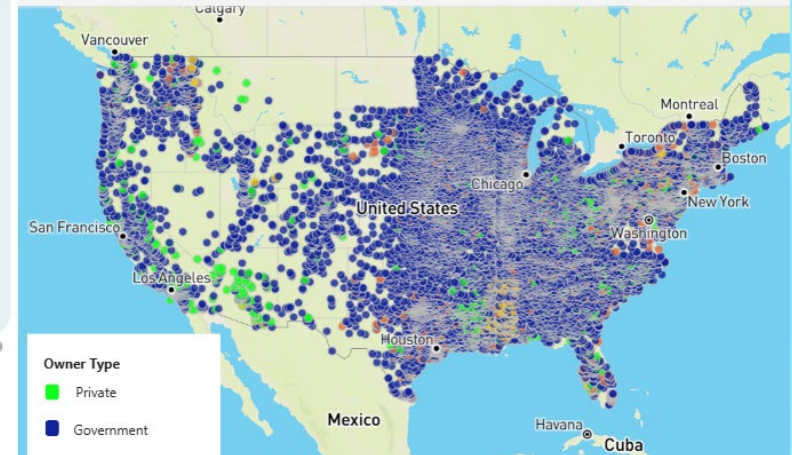
Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program

Access Comprehensive LIHWAP Data: Explore Water System Information for States, Territories, and Tribes.

Search by Water Utility Provider

Multiple Selected	14,935
Water Utility Provider	# Water Utility Provider Listed
Multiple Selected	Multiple Selected
County Served	Service Area Size
YES	LIHWAP Participation
\$62,311	14%
Median Household Income	Poverty Rate
	Area Deprivation Index (ADI)
	59

Directions: This interactive map shows water utilities across the United States and affiliated tribes, tribal organizations, and territories. Use the selectors on the left to filter by LIHWAP participation (these utilities had partnership agreements with LIHWAP grant recipients and participated in the program), ownership type, and utility size. The map will repopulate based on the selection. Indicators next to the map show socioeconomic characteristics of the county in which filtered utilities are located. The data table below these indicators shows data for individual utilities.



Water Utility Providers	LIHWAP	Size	County	ADI	Poverty Rate	Median Household Income
145th Street Water and	✓	Unknown	PULASKI, AR	42	16%	\$55,235

Current & Recent Federal Legislation

2021

- [H.R.3293](#) – Low-Income Water Customer Assistance Programs Act (included in House version of Bipartisan Infrastructure Law)

2024

- [HR 10440 \(sec. 301\)](#) – AQUA Act
- [HR 10150](#) – H2O UP Act
- [S 3830 / HR 8032](#) – LIHWAP Establishment Act

2025

- [HR 4733](#) – LIHWAP Establishment Act

2026


- S ____ – Coming soon....

Bipartisan Co-Sponsors from:	
AL	MI
CA	MO
CO	NJ
DC	NY
DE	OH
GA	OR
HI	PA
IL	WA
IN	WI
KS	Guam
KY	Puerto Rico

State-Level Opportunities

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Statewide Low-Income Assistance Program for Water and Wastewater Customers



An Assessment of Need and Feasibility

Washington State Department of **HEALTH**

DOH 331-779 • June 2025

MICHIGAN WATER PLAN

Bipartisan Solution to Water Affordability in Michigan



Dedicated funding source. Comprehensive & administratively feasible. Supports infrastructure. Protects public health.


Recommendations for Implementation of a Statewide Low-Income Water Rate Assistance Program



CALIFORNIA
Water Boards
STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD
REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARDS

Drinking Water Affordability in Kentucky

Authors: Rebecca Shelton, Ricki Draper, and Mary Cromer



APPALACHIAN CITIZENS' Law Center

STATE OF MAINE

An Overview of Statewide Water Affordability


FINAL REPORT / JANUARY 24, 2025

Tools for Analysis

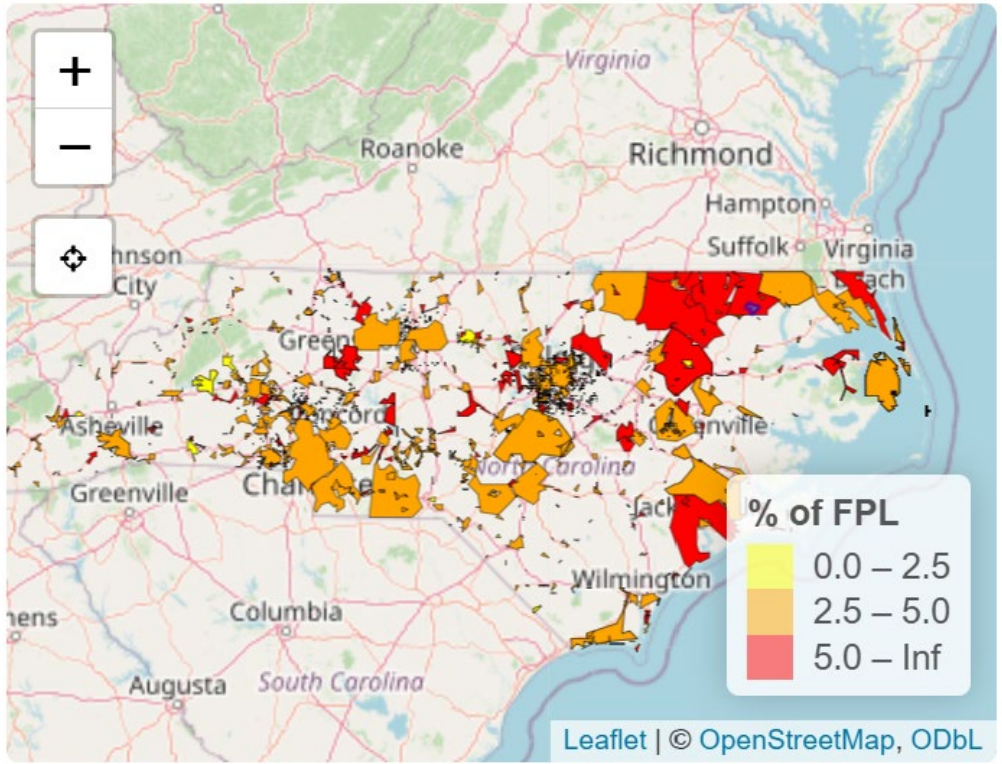
NATIONAL WATER AFFORDABILITY DASHBOARD

The ability to afford water & wastewater services is a cornerstone of household financial security. This dashboard is designed to create an ecosystem of interactive resources related to bill levels, affordability simulation modeling, and customer assistance programs to assist utility decision-makers in assessing the affordability implications of rate-setting. It complements [UNC SOG EFC's state utility rates dashboards](#) which provide information on the cost of water in relation to utility financial benchmarks.

- Cost of Services
- Affordability Simulator
- Customer Assistance Programs
- Learn More
- View EFC's website

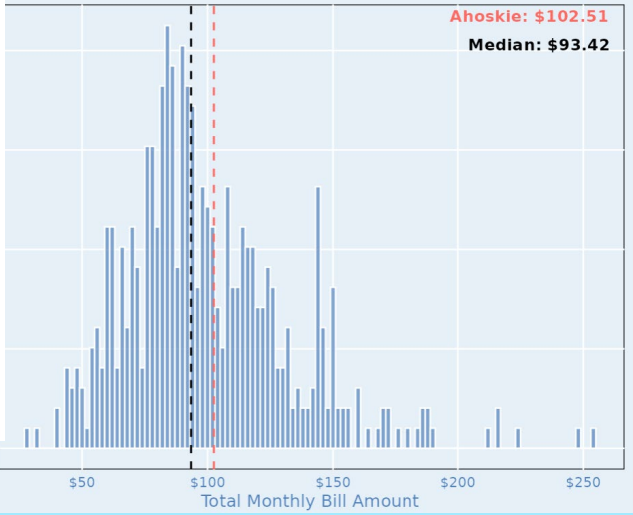
 This dashboard was created with funding from the US EPA's Multimedia grant program.

Annualized cost of 5000 gallons of Combined usage as percentage of 100% federal poverty limit (FPL) for household size of 3



Comparison Benchmarking Plot


Distribution of Bills for 5000 Gallons of Combined Usage



Data Sharing Opportunities

REPORT

TURN ON THE TAP: INCREASING PARTICIPATION IN WATER AFFORDABILITY PROGRAMS THROUGH DATA SHARING



NRDC
National
Consumer Law
Center
Fighting for the
Public Interest

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R. 25-06-B



bit.ly/turn-tap

For additional reading....



Governors, Legislators, and Utility Affordability: Broadening the Frame to Water

January 28, 2026 • Expert Blog • United States • Larry Levine

State leaders can address major water affordability challenges by protecting financially vulnerable customers, ensuring transparency, and providing dedicated state funding for water infrastructure.



Michigan Primed for First Statewide Water Affordability Program in United States

June 24, 2025 • Expert Blog • Michigan • Cyndi Roper, Larry Levine

Collaboration among community advocates, water utilities, and environmental groups is key to progress on landmark legislation, creating a model for other states.



Open Discussion

Thank you!

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