

Water Assistance Payment Reconciliation

Last fall the Energy Assistance Program (EAP) added a new water benefit as part of the federal government's continued response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) payments began October 2021 and will finish up for this program year in July 2022. This program will also be available next program year, with payments beginning October 2022 and applications available as early as September 1, 2022.

LIHWAP rules require Commerce to reconcile all water assistance payments, verifying payments were applied to the intended accounts in a timely manner. As a municipal water vendor, you may be contacted by Commerce to complete this task. Your signed vendor agreement indicates you will provide this information when requested. Additionally, all applicants provide their release of this information to Commerce when signing the application.

Commerce will provide by email a list of all LIHWAP payments made to all water vendors during the program year to ensure program records agree. The email will explain the purpose, timeline, and what happens if the information is not provided. The goal is to start sending these as early as July 2, 2022.

Once received, Commerce asks that you return the completed reconciliation document within two weeks. Submission of the completed reconciliation document verifies the vendor has confirmed the following for each payment:

- The amount applied to the account
- The date it was applied to the account
- Date water service was restored if service was disconnected prior to LIHWAP payment

Commerce will send a reminder if they have not received a response within two weeks. This communication will include a reminder of what is needed and the actions Commerce will take if the vendor does not comply by an extended deadline of one additional week.

If the completed reconciliation document is not returned to Commerce by the extended deadline, your organization will be considered "uncooperative." Uncooperative vendors are not allowed to receive payments from EAP for water or energy services.

If the required information is later provided, the vendor may be returned to cooperative status following the completion of Commerce's review of the reconciliation.

Please contact Commerce at Eap.mail@state.mn.us if you have any questions.