

LIHEAP-CEAP Overview (Program Year 2025-2026)

The federally funded Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), administered by the Office of Community Services within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), provides funding to states to assist low-income households in offsetting their home energy costs. In Connecticut, LIHEAP is administered by the Department of Social Services (DSS) as the Connecticut Energy Assistance Program (CEAP). DSS contracts with the state's nine Community Action Agencies (CAAs) to provide CEAP services to all eligible households, including taking applications and determining eligibility. Last year, approximately 240 deliverable fuel vendors participated in the program to assist with the provision of fuel for approved households across the state.

Funding (estimated)

CEAP budget for FFY 26 is approximately \$89.2 million:

- \$81.7 million which equals the FFY 25 LIHEAP Block Grant final award
- \$7.3 million in FFY 25 LIHEAP carry forward funds
- \$225,000 in LIHEAP vendor refunds

Projected Expenditures (proposed)

Expenditure Category	Amount
LIHEAP Benefits Payments	\$76,288,527
LIHEAP Administration	\$8,123,037
LIHEAP Assurance 16	\$1,200,000
Heating System Repair & Replacement	\$1,200,000
System Enhancements	\$275,000
DEEP Weatherization Barrier Remediation	\$500,000
Outreach Activities	\$50,000
LIHEAP SNAP	\$1,600,000
Total	\$89,236,564

Eligibility

- Maximum income limit: 60% of state median income (table below)
- Asset limit: none
- Categorically income-eligible if receive SNAP, TFA, Refugee Cash, State Supplement, or SSI
 - The first four can be verified through a data match with DSS (not SSI)
 - The data match is automatic when applying online through <https://portal.ct.gov/heatinghelp>
 - Must still apply and submit appropriate program documents to qualify for assistance (e.g., provide a copy of utility bill to be determined eligible)

60% State Median Income (SMI):

Household Size	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Annual Income	\$47,764	\$62,460	\$77,157	\$91,854	\$106,550	\$121,247	\$124,002	\$126,758

Benefits

- Based on income, household size, vulnerability, fuel type (deliverable fuel or utility heated household), and whether pay directly or as part of rent
 - Renters with heat included in their rent can get a one-time "Rental Assistance" benefit
- All households that pay for their own heat (deliverable fuel or utility heated) can receive a "Basic" benefit
 - If a household who utilizes deliverable fuel, has exhausted their "Basic" benefit and is running out of fuel, can receive up to three (3) issuances of "Crisis" benefits
- Vulnerable households receive a larger "Basic" benefit than their income comparable non-vulnerable households

- Vulnerable households are households with a member who is age 60+, or has a disability, or has a child that is under age 6

Program Year 2025 - 2026 Benefit Matrix

Basic Benefit:	Income Level		Vulnerable Households	Non-Vulnerable Households	Rental Assistance Benefit
	Level 1	At or below 125% FPL	\$645	\$595	\$125
	Level 2	126% - 200% FPL	\$495	\$445	\$100
	Level 3	201% FPL to 60% SMI	\$345	\$295	\$75
Crisis Assistance Benefit:	Income Level		Benefit (Vulnerable & Non-Vulnerable)		
	Levels 1 – 3		\$425 per delivery (can get 3 deliveries)		

- Scenario for a Vulnerable Level 1 deliverable fuel household that receives maximum benefit:
Basic Benefit (\$645) + Crisis 1 (\$425) + Crisis 2 (\$425) and Crisis 3 (\$425) = \$1,920

FFY 2026 Important Dates

September 1, 2025	Start of CEAP application season for FFY 2026
November 3, 2025	First day for fuel deliveries that can be paid by the program
April 1, 2026	Deadline for fuel authorizations for deliveries
May 29, 2026	Last day that a household can apply to establish its eligibility for benefits
June 17, 2026	Last day vendors can submit deliverable fuel bills or clients can submit invoices to CAAs

FFY 2026 Program Year

- CAAs will begin accepting online applications on Monday, September 1, 2025, and in-person applications on Tuesday, September 2, 2025, due to the Labor Day holiday.
- DSS projects enrollment growth of 5% of the average approved household count for FFY 2024 and FFY 2025
 - Program enrollment is driven by several factors:
 - processing and eligibility efficiencies that DSS implemented in coordination with the CAAs
 - enhanced outreach and accessibility (e.g., <https://portal.ct.gov/heatinghelp>, www.CAFCA.org and CAA updated websites for CEAP)
 - higher energy costs, particularly for deliverable fuel
 - colder winters
 - recipients negatively impacted by federal program qualification changes to Medicaid and SNAP
 - outreach – DSS created CEAP logo for expanding outreach messages specific to image and services
- DSS continues to enhance program operations and improve customer service
 - maintain categorical eligibility determination functions
 - maintain simplified eligibility standards for renters who have heat included in their rent
 - continue DSS data matching with utilities to support Low-Income Discount Rate (LIDR) determination
 - continue CEAP online applicant portal with an automatic data filler for returning customers
 - continue online application automatic income eligibility verification interface for households participating in certain DSS programs such as SNAP or TFA
- Vendor Pricing Models and Online Portal and Application
 - Convened workgroup in program year 2024 - 2025, pursuant to PA 24-145, to examine deliverable fuel pricing best practice
 - Issued report to legislature on pricing best practice

- Developed and adopted pricing methodology, as identified below:
 - Discount Off Retail (DOR)
 - Margin Over Rack (MOR)
- Eliminated county differentials, now leveraging four state terminals: Bridgeport, Hartford, New Haven & Norwich for regional pricing
- Created and launched a CEAP online deliverable vendor portal for vendors to submit their Vendor Conditions of Participation documents. Vendor submission, DSS review, and acceptance will occur within the online portal to assist with seamless participation within CEAP

HOW TO APPLY

- Online at <https://portal.ct.gov/heatinghelp>
- Contact your local CAA directly. Walk in, call, or email
 - CAA contact info is on the DSS website: <https://portal.ct.gov/heatinghelp>
- Call 2-1-1 to get connected to your local CAA
- A downloadable application is available on the DSS website: <https://portal.ct.gov/heatinghelp>

Outreach

- State website ct.gov/heatinghelp; info on www.211ct.org; and text info service (text CTWARM to 898211)
- Dedicated marketing campaign (\$50,000 budgeted in 2026); press releases; PSAs; and DSS social media
- 2-1-1 phone support links callers to their local CAAs (over 160 CAA-affiliated intake sites across the state)
- Information posted in all DSS Resource Centers and on the DSS Digital Network