

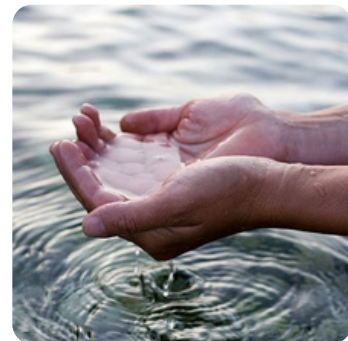
Water is a human right and every family deserves access to safe, reliable water they can afford. Yet, across the country, communities face mounting threats to their water security. Increased climate change-related flooding, sea-level rise, and drought threaten people's homes, lives, and the ecosystems they rely upon. Over [2 million people](#) in the United States lack access to water and sanitation systems, and affordable access is an increasing challenge for the [100 million living](#) at or below federal poverty. Race is the strongest predictor of water access and decades of structural racism, infrastructure underinvestment, and unjust policies have rendered low income, rural, and communities of color at the forefront of these issues.

The Water Equity and Climate Resilience (WECR) Caucus's federal advocacy focuses on closing water access and affordability gaps in the United States while increasing the capacity of frontline water justice organizations to effectively engage in federal policy and advocate for safe, affordable, and reliable water for all.

Federal Policy Priorities

Water Affordability

Aging infrastructure, increased safeguards against water contamination, and updating water systems to respond to climate change are all driving up the cost of water infrastructure and services. We can solve this crisis and ensure every person in the U.S. has access to safe drinking water they can afford without having to choose between keeping the lights on or paying other bills. Federal policy to advance water affordability includes increasing federal funding to maintain and update critical infrastructure, designing water bills that are reasonable and account for a household's ability to pay, and funding a permanent and universal federal water assistance program.



National Low-Income Water Bill Assistance

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Congress established the [Low Income Household Water Assistance Program](#) (LIHWAP), a temporary program administered by the Dept. of Health and Human Services, to assist low-income households in paying past due bills and rates for drinking water and/or wastewater services. This temporary program provided over \$1 billion in assistance to 1.4 million households across the U.S. and ended in 2023. The WECR Caucus is asking Congress to authorize and fund a permanent, national low-income water assistance program.

Equitable Infrastructure Implementation

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law) provided \$43 billion in water infrastructure funding to strengthen and rebuild America's water infrastructure by replacing pipes, upgrading water facilities, and ensuring water systems are resilient for the future. These funds are being delivered to communities through State Revolving Funds (SRFs), with 49% to be distributed as grants or forgivable loans to disadvantaged communities. The WECR Caucus federal advocacy workgroup is working to ensure this level of investment in the nation's water systems continues, and SRF programs prioritize disadvantaged communities.

About the Water Equity & Climate Resilience Caucus

The [Water Equity & Climate Resilience Caucus](#), anchored by PolicyLink, is a national network of nearly 70 organizations centering frontline communities of color and low-income communities in working to achieve water equity and climate justice through federal and state policy advocacy. Together, the Caucus strategizes, builds power, and pushes for policy change, centering the voices and solutions of communities most affected by water challenges and the climate crisis. To learn more about the WECR Caucus, contact Yasmin Zaerpoor, Director of Water Equity and Climate Resilience, PolicyLink (yasmin@policylink.org).

