



### **For Immediate Release**

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## **New program helps families pay water bills**

(Westby, WI) – A new Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) was developed as part of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic to provide water bill assistance to eligible households. Households that qualify for bill assistance will be referred to Couleecap for water conservation repairs in their home to prevent future financial struggles.

Eligible households can qualify for a one-time bill-pay benefit if they have disconnected service or are behind on their water bill. If you and/or your family qualifies for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), otherwise known as energy assistance, you will also qualify for the Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP).

LIHWAP households that require repairs to ensure that new arrearages do not occur or are mitigated to the greatest degree possible will be referred to Couleecap for Water Conservation repairs. This may include leaky faucets or toilets, water heaters, and more.

“Everyone deserves to have safe, running water in their homes without making choices to pay water bills over other important expenses. This program will not only help people who have fallen behind but will make repairs to conserve water and reduce costs to the household over time,” says Tom Mayne, Energy Services Director at Couleecap.

Other program rules do apply, including:

- The Water Conservation initiative is limited to households that are served by a utility participating in the Public Benefit program, in addition to establishing LIHWAP eligibility.
- Services are only eligible for homeowners in single-family homes. Rentals and private wells are not included in this program.
- Repairs to swimming pools, whirlpools and laterals are not allowable.
- Wastewater and sewer are not included in the Water Conservation program.
- Dwellings receiving water infrastructure repair and/or replacement via the Home Energy Plus Water Conservation Program are considered priority referrals for the purposes of the Wisconsin Weatherization Assistance program.
- LIHWAP services for water conservation are limited to the footprint within the home. Water conservation measures begin at the output side of the water meter and will include the home’s water distribution system.



To apply for the Low Income Household Water Assistance Program people should contact Energy Services Inc. (ESI) at 1-800-506-5596.

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### **About Couleecap**

Couleecap, Inc. is a private non-profit 501c3 charitable organization. Couleecap helps people in need with housing food, transportation, and more. Created in 1966, we are a community action program that fights poverty and promotes self-sufficiency in Crawford, La Crosse, Monroe, and Vernon counties. Couleecap is a member of the Community Action Network, originally created in 1964. Learn more at [couleecap.org](http://couleecap.org).



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