

LOW INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LIHEAP)

DETAILED MODEL PLAN

PUBLIC LAW 97-35, AS AMENDED

FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2022

GRANTEE

NORTH CAROLINA

EIN

566023166 E6

NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES – DIVISION OF SOCIAL
SERVICES
ECONOMIC AND FAMILY SERVICES SECTION
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PLEASE CHECK ONE: TRIBE _____ STATE X INSULAR AREA

Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Community Services
Washington, DC 20447

August 1987, revised 05/92, 02/95, 03/96, 12/98, 11/01

OMB Approval No. 0970-0075

Expiration Date: 09/30/2020

THE PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT OF 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13)

Use of this model plan is optional. However, the information requested is required in order to receive a Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) grant in years in which the grantee is not permitted to file an abbreviated plan. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and reviewing the collection of information. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

7/31/2021

OMB Approval No. 0970-0075

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Assurances

The NC Department of Health and Human Services – Division of Social Services agrees to:
(grantee name)

(1) use the funds available under this title to--

(A) conduct outreach activities and provide assistance to low income households in meeting their home energy costs, particularly those with the lowest incomes that pay a high proportion of household income for home energy, consistent with paragraph (5);

(B) intervene in energy crisis situations;

(C) provide low-cost residential weatherization and other cost-effective energy-related home repair; and

(D) plan, develop, and administer the State's program under this title including leveraging programs,

and the State agrees not to use such funds for any purposes other than those specified in this title;

(2) make payments under this title only with respect to--

(A) households in which one or more individuals are receiving--

(i) assistance under the State program funded under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act;

(ii) supplemental security income payments under title XVI of the Social Security

Act;

(iii) food stamps under the Food Stamp Act of 1977; or

(iv) payments under section 415, 521, 541, or 542 of title 38, United States Code, or under section 306 of the Veterans' and Survivors' Pension Improvement Act of 1978; or

(B) households with incomes which do not exceed the greater of—

(i) an amount equal to 150 percent of the poverty level for such State; or

(ii) an amount equal to 60 percent of the State median income;

except that a State may not exclude a household from eligibility in a fiscal year solely on the basis of household income if such income is less than 110 percent of the poverty level for such State, but the State may give priority to those households with the highest home energy costs or needs in relation to household income.

- (3) conduct outreach activities designed to assure that eligible households, especially households with elderly individuals or disabled individuals, or both, and households with high home energy burdens, are made aware of the assistance available under this title, and any similar energy-related assistance available under subtitle B of title VI (relating to community services block grant program) or under any other provision of law which carries out programs which were administered under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 before the date of the enactment of this Act;
- (4) coordinate its activities under this title with similar and related programs administered by the Federal Government and such State, particularly low-income energy-related programs under subtitle B of title VI (relating to community services block grant program), under the supplemental security income program, under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act, under title XX of the Social Security Act, under the low-income weatherization assistance program under title IV of the Energy Conservation and Production Act, or under any other provision of law which carries out programs which were administered under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 before the date of the enactment of this Act;
- (5) provide, in a timely manner, that the highest level of assistance will be furnished to those households which have the lowest incomes and the highest energy costs or needs in relation to income, taking into account family size, except that the State may not differentiate in implementing this section between the households described in clauses 2(A) and 2(B) of this subsection;
- (6) to the extent it is necessary to designate local administrative agencies in order to carry out the purposes of this title, to give special consideration, in the designation of such agencies, to any local public or private nonprofit agency which was receiving Federal funds under any low-income energy assistance program or weatherization program under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 or any other provision of law on the day before the date of the enactment of this Act, except that—
 - (A) the State shall, before giving such special consideration, determine that the agency involved meets program and fiscal requirements established by the State; and
 - (B) if there is no such agency because of any change in the assistance furnished to programs for economically disadvantaged persons, then the State shall give special consideration in the designation of local administrative agencies to any successor agency which is

operated in substantially the same manner as the predecessor agency which did receive funds for the fiscal year preceding the fiscal year for which the determination is made;

- (7) if the State chooses to pay home energy suppliers directly, establish procedures to --
- (A) notify each participating household of the amount of assistance paid on its behalf;
 - (B) assure that the home energy supplier will charge the eligible household, in the normal billing process, the difference between the actual cost of the home energy and the amount of the payment made by the State under this title;
 - (C) assure that the home energy supplier will provide assurances that any agreement entered into with a home energy supplier under this paragraph will contain provisions to assure that no household receiving assistance under this title will be treated adversely because of such assistance under applicable provisions of State law or public regulatory requirements; and
 - (D) ensure that the provision of vendor payments remains at the option of the State in consultation with local grantees and may be contingent on unregulated vendors taking appropriate measures to alleviate the energy burdens of eligible households, including providing for agreements between suppliers and individuals eligible for benefits under this Act that seek to reduce home energy costs, minimize the risks of home energy crisis, and encourage regular payments by individuals receiving financial assistance for home energy costs;
- (8) provide assurances that,
- (A) the State will not exclude households described in clause (2)(B) of this subsection from receiving home energy assistance benefits under clause (2); and
 - (B) the State will treat owners and renters equitably under the program assisted under this title;
- (9) provide that--
- (A) the State may use for planning and administering the use of funds under this title an amount not to exceed 10 percent of the funds payable to such State under this title for a fiscal year; and
 - (B) the State will pay from non-Federal sources the remaining costs of planning and administering the program assisted under this title and will not use Federal funds for such remaining cost (except for the costs of the activities described in paragraph (16));

- (10) provide that such fiscal control and fund accounting procedures will be established as may be necessary to assure the proper disbursement of and accounting for Federal funds paid to the State under this title, including procedures for monitoring the assistance provided under this title, and provide that the State will comply with the provisions of chapter 75 of title 31, United States Code (commonly known as the "Single Audit Act");
- (11) permit and cooperate with Federal investigations undertaken in accordance with section 2608;
- (12) provide for timely and meaningful public participation in the development of the plan described in subsection (c);
- (13) provide an opportunity for a fair administrative hearing to individuals whose claims for assistance under the plan described in subsection (c) are denied or are not acted upon with reasonable promptness; and
- (14) cooperate with the Secretary with respect to data collecting and reporting under section 2610.
- (15) beginning in fiscal year 1992, provide, in addition to such services as may be offered by State Departments of Public Welfare at the local level, outreach and intake functions for crisis situations and heating and cooling assistance that is administered by additional State and local governmental entities or community-based organizations (such as community action agencies, area agencies on aging and not-for-profit neighborhood-based organizations), and in States where such organizations do not administer functions as of September 30, 1991, preference in awarding grants or contracts for intake services shall be provided to those agencies that administer the low-income weatherization or energy crisis intervention programs.*

*** This assurance is applicable only to States, and to territories whose annual regular LIHEAP allotments exceed \$200,000. Neither territories with annual allotments of \$200,000 or less nor Indian tribes/tribal organizations are subject to Assurance 15.**

- (16) use up to 5 percent of such funds, at its option, to provide services that encourage and enable households to reduce their home energy needs and thereby the need for energy assistance, including needs assessments, counseling, and assistance with energy vendors, and report to the Secretary concerning the impact of such activities on the number of households served, the level of direct benefits provided to those households, and the number of households that remain unserved.

Certification to the Assurances: As Chief Executive Officer, I agree to comply with the sixteen assurances contained in Title XXVI of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981, as amended.* By signing these assurances, I also agree to abide by the standard assurances on lobbying, debarment and suspension, and a drug-free workplace.

Signature of the Tribal or Board Chairperson or Chief Executive Officer of the State or Territory.
**

Signature: _____

Title: Secretary of Department of Health and Human Services

Date: _____

*** Indian tribes/tribal organizations, and territories with annual regular LIHEAP allotments of \$200,000 or less, are not subject to assurance 15, and thus must only certify to 15 assurances.**

**** If a person other than the Chief Executive Officer of the State or territory, or Tribal Chairperson or Board Chairperson of a tribal organization, is signing the certification to the assurances, a letter must be submitted delegating such authority. (PLEASE ATTACH DELEGATION of AUTHORITY.) The delegation must include authority to sign the assurances, not just to administer the program.**

***** HHS needs the EIN (Entity Identification Number) of the State, territory or Tribal agency that is to receive the grant funds before it can issue the grant.**

In the above assurances which are quoted from the law, "State" means the 50 States, the District of Columbia, an Indian Tribe or Tribal Organization, or a Territory; "title" of the Act refers to Title XXVI of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981 (OBRA), as amended, the "Low Income Home Energy Assistance Act"; "section" means Section 2605 of OBRA; and, "subsection" refers to Section 2605(b) of OBRA.

Statutory references

2605(a)

2605(b)(1) **☉**Please check which components you will operate under the LIHEAP program:
(Note: You must provide information for each component designated here as requested elsewhere in this plan.)

		<u>Dates of Operation</u>
(use of funds)	<u> X </u> heating assistance	November <u> 1st </u> – <u> March 31st </u>
	<u> X </u> cooling assistance	<u> July 1st </u> - <u> September 30th </u>
	<u> X </u> crisis assistance	<u> Year - round </u>
	<u> X </u> weatherization assistance	<u> Year - round </u>

2605(c)(1)(C) **☉**Please estimate what amount of available LIHEAP funds will be used for each component that you will operate: **The total of all percentages must add up to 100%.**

(use of funds)	<u>% of Grant</u>	<u>Dollars</u>
	<u> 45.73 % </u> heating assistance	\$49,482,016
	<u> </u> cooling assistance	
	<u> 30.48 % </u> crisis assistance	\$32,980,981
2605(k)(1)	<u> 14.98 % </u> weatherization assistance and Heating Repair / Replacement	\$16,205,808
2605(b)(9)	<u> 8.13 % </u> administrative and planning costs	\$8,798,226.00
	<u> 0.60 % </u> NC Fast Development	\$650,388
2605(b)(16)	<u> 0 % </u> services to reduce home energy needs including needs assessment (assurance 16)	\$0.00
	<u> .08 % </u> Commission of Indian Affairs	\$87,736
	<u> 100 % </u> TOTAL	\$108,205,155

NC's Cooling Program will be funded with funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA):

<u>% of Grant</u>	<u>Dollars</u>
<u>15%</u> Weatherization/DEQ	\$13,045,569
<u>10%</u> Administration	\$8,697,046
<u>37.50%</u> Heating Program	\$32,613,922
<u>37.50%</u> Cooling Program	\$32,613,923

Total: 100

Total Grant Award: \$86,970,460

statutory
references

2605(c)(1)(C)

assistance
funds)

The funds reserved for winter crisis assistance which have not been expended by March 15 will be reprogrammed to:

Heating assistance

cooling assistance

weatherization assistance

Other(specify): **Our crisis component is a year-round program or until funds are exhausted and serves heating and cooling crisis needs. Any funding not used for heating by March 15th will remain with the crisis component and can be used for cooling crisis needs. All crisis funds not used by the end of the state fiscal year will be carried forward into the next fiscal year in accordance to LIHEAP guidelines.**

Do you accept applications for energy crisis assistance at sites that are geographically accessible to all households in the area to be served? (This is required by the statute.)

Yes No

2605(b)(2) ⑨What are your maximum eligibility limits?

2605(c)(1)(A) (Please check the components to which they apply)

Current year guidelines must be used.

(eligibility)

X 200% of the poverty guidelines:
heating _____ cooling _____ crisis _____ wx X

X 150% of the poverty guidelines:
heating X cooling X crisis X wx _____

_____ 130% of the poverty guidelines:
heating _____ cooling _____ crisis _____ wx _____

_____ 60% of the State's median income: heating _____ cooling
crisis _____ wx _____

_____ Other (specify for each component)

_____ Households automatically eligible if one person is receiving
TANF, _____ SSI, _____ Food Stamps, _____ Certain means-tested veterans
programs (heating _____ cooling _____ crisis _____ wx _____)

statutory
references

2605(c)(1)(A)

2605(b)(2)

(eligibility)

⑨Do you have additional eligibility requirements
for: **HEATING ASSISTANCE** (X Yes _____ No)

⑨Do you use: Yes No

Assets test? _____ X

⑨ Do you give priority in eligibility to:

Elderly?	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>
Disabled?	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>
Young children?	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>
Other: (If yes, please describe)	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

statutory
references

2605(c)(1)(A)

2605(b)(2)

⑨ Do you have additional eligibility requirements for:
COOLING ASSISTANCE (X Yes No)

⑨ Do you use:	<u> Yes </u>	<u> No </u>
Assets test?	<u> </u>	<u> X </u>

⑨ Do you give priority in eligibility to:

Elderly	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>
Disabled?	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>
Young children?	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>
Other: (If yes, please describe)	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

statutory
references

2604(c)

2605(c)(1)(A)

Do you have additional eligibility requirements for: **CRISIS ASSISTANCE** (X Yes _____ No)

(eligibility)

Yes No

Do you use:

Assets test?

_____ X

Must the household have received a shut-off notice or have an empty tank?

X _____

Must the household have exhausted regular benefit?

X _____

Must the household have received a rent eviction notice?

N/A _____

Must heating/cooling be medically necessary?

X _____

Other (Please explain):

⑨ What constitutes a crisis? (Please describe)

A household is in a crisis if it is experiencing or is in danger of experiencing a life threatening or health related emergency due to lack of heating/cooling, and sufficient timely, and appropriate assistance is not available from any other source. A crisis is considered life-threatening if there is no heating/cooling source and non-life threatening if there is a danger of losing heating/cooling source.

statutory
references

2605(c)(1)(A)

⑨ Do you have additional eligibility requirements for:
WEATHERIZATION (X Yes ___ No)

(eligibility)

⑨ Do you use: Yes No

Assets test? _____ X

Priority groups? (Please list) X

1. Elderly
2. Disabled
3. Families with children

⑨ Are you using Department of Energy (DOE) Low Income Weatherization Assistance Program (LIWAP) rules to establish eligibility or to establish priority eligibility for households with certain characteristics?

⑨ If yes, are there exceptions? _____ X
Please list below.

statutory
references

2605(b)(3)
2605(c)(3)(A)

Please check the outreach activities that you conduct that are designed to assure that eligible households are made aware of all LIHEAP assistance available:

provide intake service through home visits or by telephone for the physically infirm (i.e. elderly or disabled).

place posters/flyers in local and county social service offices, offices of aging, Social Security offices, VA, etc.

publish articles in local newspapers or broadcast media announcements.

include inserts in energy vendor billings to inform individuals of the availability of all types of LIHEAP assistance. make mass mailing to past recipients of LIHEAP.

informs low income applicants of the availability of all types of LIHEAP assistance at application intake for other low-income programs.

execute interagency agreements with other low-income program offices to perform outreach to target groups.

other (Please specify): **The NC Division of Social Services partners with the NC Division of Aging and Adult Services to provide outreach to aging and disabled adults regarding our heating assistance component.**

2605(b)(4)

Please describe how you will assure that LIHEAP is coordinated with similar and related programs. The description provided applies to all components unless specifically noted.

(coordination)

LIHEAP is coordinated with the following programs: Adult Services, SSI, Work First Family Assistance (TANF), Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP), Crisis Intervention Program (CIP), Weatherization, local Energy Programs, Food and Nutrition Services (SNAP), and Medicaid.

These programs conduct outreach for the LIHEAP Program.

The goal of the Commission of Indian Affairs is to provide awareness among Native Americans regarding assistance available through various community resources, including help with heating and cooling needs. The Division of Social Services contracts with the Commission to conduct outreach and make referrals to local departments of social services for energy assistance.

2605(b)(5)
2605(b)(2)
2605(b)(8A)

⑨The statute requires that there be no difference in the treatment of households eligible because of their income and those eligible because they receive benefits under TANF, Food Stamps, SSI, or certain means-tested veteran’s programs ("categorically eligible"). How do you ensure there is no difference when determining eligibility and benefit amounts? This applies to all components unless specifically noted below.

(benefit levels)

To be eligible for our heating component (LIEAP), all households whether categorically or non-categorically eligible, must have income at or below 150% of the current Federal poverty level. Priority in eligibility is given to disabled persons and households with a member age 60. Households may apply at the local county department of social services.

To be eligible for our cooling component (Summer Cooling Program), all households whether categorically or non-categorically eligible, must have at or below 150% of the Federal poverty level. Priority in eligibility is given to disabled persons, households with a member age 60and older and households with children age 5 and under.

To be eligible for our crisis component (CIP) categorically or noncategorical, households must have income at or below 150% of the current Federal poverty level and must be experiencing or in danger of experiencing a heating or cooling crisis. Households may apply at the local county department of social services.

To be eligible for the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP), a household must have income at or below 200% of the current Federal poverty level, and it must be cost-effective to weatherize the home. The grantee agrees to weatherize all households determined to be income eligible within the dollars available and consistent with program priorities. The grantee agrees that all households receive equal treatment in the calculation of benefits but not necessarily equal dollars. Households apply at their local community action agency. The Heating and Air Repair and Replacement Program (HARRP) is a program administered alongside WAP. Households must be at or below 200% of the current Federal poverty level.

statutory
references

HEATING COMPONENT

2605(b)(5) **Ⓞ** Please check the variables you use to determine your benefit levels (check all that apply):

(determination
of benefits)

 X income

 X family (household) size

 home energy cost or need

 X fuel type

climate/region

individual bill

dwelling type

 energy burden

(% of income spent on home energy)

 energy need

other (describe)

2605(b)(5)
2605(c)(1)(B)

(benefit
levels)

⑨ Describe how you will assure that the highest benefits go to households with the lowest incomes and the highest energy costs or needs in relation to income, considering family size
Please describe benefit levels or attach a copy of your payment matrix.

The benefit amount is based upon household size, income, fuel type and the household's situation at the time of application; except for resources. North Carolina will increase benefit matrix by \$100 for each section based upon the above criteria. Please see the attached payment matrix.

⑨ Do you provide in-kind (e.g., blankets, space heaters) and/or other forms of benefits?

Yes No If yes, please describe.

If deliverable fuels are no longer available at the time of the supplemental payment it will be given to the electric vendor. This will assist in fraud prevention. The supplemental payment will be given as a credit for the approved applicant.

2605(b)(5)
2605(c)(1)(B)

(benefit
levels)

⑨ Describe how you will assure that the highest benefits will go to households with the lowest incomes and the highest energy costs or needs in relation to income, taking into account family size. Please describe benefit levels or attach a copy of your payment matrix.

North Carolina will utilize American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to administer the cooling component. Benefits will be based on the household's electric costs and a flat rate will be sent to the electric vendor on behalf of the household. North Carolina will utilize the option to use unspent funds after the program season ends for a one-time supplemental payment for all approved applicants. The payment will be given as direct vendor payments.

⑨ Do you provide in-kind (e.g. fans) and/or other forms of benefits?

Yes No If yes, please describe.

statutory references

2605(b)(5)
2605(c)(1)(B)
(benefit
determination

CRISIS COMPONENT

Ⓞ How do you handle crisis situations?

X separate component _____ other (please explain)

Ⓞ If you have a separate component, how do you determine crisis assistance benefits?

X amount to resolve crisis, up to maximum

_____ other (please describe)

(benefit
levels)

Ⓞ Please indicate the maximum benefit for each type of crisis assistance offered.

heating \$ _____ maximum benefit

cooling \$ _____ maximum benefit

year-round \$ 1,000 maximum benefit

In the Energy Programs Policy Manual, counties are informed of the maximum allowable amount. The maximum benefit amount is \$1,000 for FY22. This policy allows counties to be consistent across the state regarding crisis assistance benefit amounts.

Ⓞ Do you provide in-kind (e.g. blankets, space heaters, fans) and/or other forms of benefits?

X Yes ___ No If yes, please describe.

In-kind services such as blankets, space heaters, fans, bulk air conditioners, and warm clothing are provided using crisis intervention funds.

statutory
references

2605(b)(5)

WEATHERIZATION & OTHER ENERGY RELATED

2605(c)(1)
(B) & (D)

HOME REPAIR AND IMPROVEMENTS

☉What LIHEAP weatherization services/materials do you provide? (Check all categories that apply.)

(types of
assistance)

- Weatherization needs assessments/audits.
- Storm Windows
- Caulking, insulation, storm windows, etc.
- Furnace/heating system modifications/repairs
- Furnace replacement
- Cooling system modifications/repairs
- Water conservation measures
- Compact florescent light bulbs
- Energy related roof repair
- Major appliance repair
- Major appliance replacement
- Window sliding glass doors
- Doors
- Water heater
- Cooling efficiency mods/repairs/replacement
- Other (Please describe) **duct sealing, general heat waste reduction, LED bulbs, spray foam and community solar**

Note:

(benefit
levels)

☉Do you have a maximum LIHEAP weatherization benefit/expenditure per household? _____ Yes No

If yes, what is the maximum amount? \$ _____

☉Under what rules do you administer LIHEAP weatherization? (Check only one.)

(types of
rules)

- Entirely under LIHEAP (not DOE) rules
- Entirely under DOE LIWAP rules
- Mostly under LIHEAP rules with the following DOE LIWAP rule(s) where LIHEAP and LIWAP rules differ (Check all that apply):

Weatherize buildings if at least 66% of units (50% in 2- & 4-unit buildings) are eligible units or will become eligible within 180 days

Weatherize shelters temporarily housing primarily low income persons (excluding nursing homes, prisons, and similar institutional care facilities). _____ Other (Please describe)

_____ Mostly under DOE LIWAP rules, with the following LIHEAP rule(s) where LIHEAP and LIWAP rules differ (Check all that apply.)

_____ Weatherization not subject to DOE LIWAP maximum statewide average cost per dwelling unit. Other (Please describe.)

2605(b)(6) The state or tribe administers LIHEAP through the following local agencies:

- county welfare offices
- community action agencies (weatherization component only)
- community action agencies (heating, cooling or crisis)
- charitable organizations
- not applicable (i.e. state energy office)
- tribal office
- other, describe:

Ⓞ Have you changed local administering agencies from last year?
_____ Yes No
If yes, please describe how you selected them.

(agency designation)

Ⓞ What components are affected by the change?

2605(c)(1)(E) Ⓞ Please describe any additional steps (other than those described elsewhere in this plan) that will be taken to target assistance to households with high home energy burdens. **(This applies to all components. If all steps to target households with high home energy burdens are described elsewhere in the plan, no further information is required here.)**

(targeting of assistance)

Targeted outreach consists of the most vulnerable population for the heating component, which includes the disabled and persons age 60 and above for priority in access to benefits by allowing these groups to apply for heating assistance from November 1st through December 31st. All other households are potentially eligible from January 1st through March 31st, or until funds are exhausted. These target households often have limited resources due to a low, fixed income.

Allowing the most vulnerable population to apply for assistance before all other households helps ensure they will receive a benefit prior to the end of the heating season and prior to funds being exhausted.

statutory references

2605(b)(7)
(energy
suppliers)

☉ Do you make payments directly to home energy suppliers?

Heating X Yes No

Cooling X Yes No

Crisis X Yes No

If yes, are there exceptions? Yes X No If
yes, please describe.

All vendors who agree to accept LIEAP, CIP and Cooling as payment for energy service must enter into an agreement with the county department of social services to accept payment in order to continue or provide heating or cooling service to the recipient household. This agreement meets all assurances requirements in Section 2605(7).

2605(b)(7)(A)

☉ If you make payments directly to home energy suppliers, how do you notify the client of the amount of assistance paid? (Please describe)

The state requires that the applicant for the CIP, LIEAP and Cooling be notified of the application and the amount of payment paid on his behalf to the vendor if approved. This is done via form, Energy Programs Notice of Approval/Denial (DSS-8107).

2605(b)(7)
(B) & (C)

☉ How do you make sure the home energy supplier performs what is required in this assurance? If vendor agreements are used, they may be attached. Indicate each component for which this description applies.

Once eligibility has been determined, an applicant is provided a system generated Approval/Denial Notice (DSS-8107). If eligibility is approved, payment is submitted to the utility provider for the household. North Carolina uses an Energy Provider Agreement (DSS-8163) to ensure vendors do not treat recipients adversely. This contract ensures funds paid on behalf of the recipient are properly applied to the recipient’s account to alleviate a heating or cooling emergency. The Home Energy Supplier Agreement meets all assurances in Section 2605(7). A copy of the DSS-8107 and DSS-8163 is attached.

statutory
references

2605(b)(8)(B)

Ⓞ Is there any difference in the way owners and renters are treated? If yes, please describe.

(owners
and
renters)

HEATING ASSISTANCE

_____ Yes X No

COOLING ASSISTANCE

_____ Yes X No

CRISIS ASSISTANCE

_____ Yes X No

WEATHERIZATION

_____ Yes X No

statutory
references

2605(b)(10)

⑨How do you ensure good fiscal accounting and tracking of LIHEAP funds? (Please describe. Include a description of how you monitor fiscal activities.)

(Program, fiscal
Monitoring, and
Audit)

North Carolina's Division of Social Services operates under a county administered state supervised system. The county departments of social services determine eligibility for client participation in the heating, cooling and crisis components of LIHEAP. Both state and county administrative costs of direct caseworkers are charged directly to the appropriate program and supervisory and overhead costs are allocated in accordance with the cost allocation plan approved by the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Cost Allocation.

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services fiscal/budget Division tracks in-house and sub grantee and administrative costs. Indirect costs are handled through cognizant agencies prior to the final indirect cost rate being developed.

Expenditures on all components of the LIHEAP are recorded in the Division of Social Services' accounting records by Fund, Cost Center and line item. Documentation for county expenditures (administrative costs, crisis, and heating assistance) are maintained by the county finance officers.

Documentation of state office expenditures are maintained by the NC Division of Social Services accounting office.

Applications for the crisis, cooling and heating component are taken by county department of social services personnel and additional State and local governmental entities or community-based organizations. The applications are processed by the county and are retained by the county.

⑨How do you monitor program activities? (Please be sure to include a description of how you monitor eligibility and benefit determination.)

Monitoring of program eligibility for heating assistance, cooling and crisis assistance is accomplished by either an on-site review by the Division of Social Services or by quality control staff by the county department of social services. Monitoring is required by DHHS. Case records are randomly selected and reviewed. The number of cases reviewed in each county for heating assistance is based on the county size. Corrective action is taken on any deficiencies cited. The Division of Social Services monitors and evaluates the corrective actions taken by the county. The monitoring forms are audited by the State Auditor's Office each year.

Benefit levels for the heating assistance component are set by the state per the payment matrix. Benefit levels for the CIP are based on the crisis need. Benefits levels for Cooling is based on income and energy need. All assistance programs are reviewed as part of the monitoring process described above.

The Department of Health and Human Services accounting system records documentation for sub grantee expenditures for Weatherization. The administrative and program costs are maintained at the local level. Disbursements are made monthly based on the receipt of the monthly report from the sub grantees.

Monitoring of program eligibility for Weatherization assistance is accomplished by on-site reviews by the Department of Health and Human Services. Department of Environmental Quality staff programmatic monitors assure that approximately two monitoring visits are made to each sub grantee per year.

☉ How is your LIHEAP program audited?

Under the Single Audit Act? X Yes No

If not, please describe:

For States and Territories:

☉ Is there an annual audit of local administering agencies? X Yes No

If not, please explain.

statutory
references

2605(b) (12)

(timely and

meaningful
public

participation)

☉ How did you get timely and meaningful public participation in the development of the plan? (Please describe.)

I. Heating, Cooling and Crisis

North Carolina agrees to provide for public participation in the development of the plan described in Subsection (c).

North Carolina posted the LIHEAP announcement one week before the proposed plan was viewed. The announcement invited the public to come back to review and make comments regarding the plan the following week. The announcement was available at the Division of Social Services office in Raleigh and to the 100 county departments of social services. County departments were also encouraged to share this information with other partner agencies. North Carolina distributed copies of the proposed plan to the fore mentioned agencies for public review and comments during (insert date). The plan was made available online at <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/> . The counties were required to complete an attestation form which outlines what was done at the county level during that period.

II. Weatherization

The annual application for funding (state plan) for the Weatherization Program is submitted to and approved by the Policy Advisory Council and presented for public hearing prior to submission to the Federal Department of Energy. Copies of the proposed State Plan are mailed to each sub grantee and relevant State agencies along with the Notice of Public Hearing. The Notice of Public Hearing is printed in 4 to 5 newspapers across the State, and copies of the Plan are available on request to any interested individual or organization.

2605(a)(2)

☉Did you conduct public hearings on the proposed use and distribution of your LIHEAP funds?

 X Yes No when and where?

(Not required for Tribes and tribal organizations)

(public
hearings)

Division of Social Services held a public hearing for the LIHEAP Block Grant, on Friday August 20, 2021 at 1pm via a live webinar format. The plan was posted on the Division of Social Services website and all 100 DSS County websites from August 16-20, 2021 until the public hearing. Citizens could comment on the Plan during public hearing or could submit written comments until Monday August 23, 2021.

statutory
references

2605(b) (13)

☉Describe your fair hearing procedures for households whose applications are denied or not acted on in a timely manner. When are applicants informed of these rights?

(fair hearings)

I. CRISIS, COOLING & HEATING

Households that apply for crisis, cooling or heating assistance, rights are explained at the time of application. North Carolina issues notices for both approved and denied cases for CIP and LIEAP. The notice includes fair hearing rights. The household has the right to an appeal when:

- a. It is denied the right to apply for benefits; or**
- b. Benefits are denied; or**

- c. **A decision is not made on its application in a timely manner; or**
- d. **The payment is less than the household believes it should be.**

Households have 60 calendar days from the date on the approval or the denial notice to request a hearing. The hearing can be requested orally or in writing.

The household has a right to request a State hearing only after a local appeal hearing has been held, and a decision has been rendered. The household must request a State appeal within five calendar days from the date of the local hearing decision. The State hearing officer will have 15 calendar days to render a decision.

If the household is not satisfied with the final decision

following the State hearing, it may, within 30 calendar days of the receipt of the decision, file a petition for judicial review in superior court.

II. WEATHERIZATION

The Weatherization Program provides funds to local community action agencies for the purchase and installation of materials such as ceiling, wall and floor insulation, caulking, and weatherstrip on the homes of low-income families, particularly the elderly and handicapped, to make homes more efficient, reduce monthly utility bills, and provide a more healthful living environment.

All clients are entitled to a fair hearing if they believe they have been incorrectly denied assistance, or the agency did not act upon their application within a reasonable time.

The agency's appeals process, or procedure must specify:

- a. the name and address of the person/persons with whom the appeal should be filed,**

- b. the time requirements on the applicant for filing the appeal,**
- c. the method of review to be used, i.e. formal hearing, staff/client interviews, etc., time allowed to request the appeal,**
- d. the time requirements on the organization for review of the appeal and rendering of a final decision, and**
- e. the next level of appeal including to whom, time allowed to request the appeal, the method of review to be used, the time requirements on the organization for review of the appeal and rendering a final decision.**

In no instance, should staff that recommended or made the initial decision regarding ineligibility be the individual that the appeal is made to or have the authority to decide the validity of an appeal or be involved in the final disposition of the appeal. It

is recommended that the final level of appeal be the agency's board of directors or committee thereof.

statutory
references

2605(b)(15)

For States and Puerto Rico only (not applicable to Tribes and tribal organizations, or to territories whose annual regular LIHEAP allotments are \$200,000 or less):

☉ Does the State agency that administers the following LIHEAP component also administer the State's welfare program?

YES

(alternate
outreach
and intake)

HEATING ASSISTANCE

 X Yes No

If yes, describe alternate process for outreach and intake:

Counties form an energy program outreach planning committee that creates the opportunity for county-level collaboration to discuss and plan how to effectively reach county residents to inform them of the services provided by the energy programs. This includes additional state and local governmental entities or community-based organizations as part of the committee along with state-level engagement of these entities and organizations. When agencies are first contacted, the county explains the purpose of the energy programs, solicit their participation on the committee and their assistance with outreach.

I. OUTREACH

At the first committee meeting, it is suggested that the county director or his designee do the following.

- A. Explain LIEAP, Summer Cooling, and CIP; and**
- B. Provide informational materials on LIEAP and CIP (e.g., DSS-8117, flyers, manual material); and**
- C. Poll the various agencies on the types of assistance they might provide in the outreach effort (e.g., transportation, distribution of informational literature, etc.)**

While individual contacts with agencies would be needed during the course of the program, the committee approach helps to ensure coordination and prevent duplication of effort.

II. APPLICATION-TAKING

- A. The requirement for intake may be met in one of three ways.**
 - 1. The county may set up outpost locations at one or more of the outside agencies and have a county caseworker take applications.**
 - 2. The county may contract out application-taking to one of the outside agencies.**

- 3. The county may have these agencies take applications in addition to the county department of social services.**

If the county chooses option 2 or 3 above, the county department must contact the agencies to determine whether they are interested in taking heating or cooling applications. It is suggested that the county department of social services have a Memorandum of Understanding or written agreement with the agency in order to ensure that deadlines and the confidentiality requirements are met.

- B. Following are guidelines as to how application-taking requirements may be fulfilled.**

- 1. The county director or their designee must meet with the agencies which will be taking applications and discuss the following.**
 - a. Explanation of LIEAP, Summer Cooling and CIP Application Process**
 - b. Forms needed to take applications for the LIEAP and crisis components and how they will be supplied; and**
 - c. Training needs for staff who will take applications; and**
 - d. Coordination procedures between the county department of social services and other agencies; and**
 - e. Critical time frames for receiving applications; and**
 - f. Procedures to avoid duplication; and**
 - g. Memorandum of Understanding or written agreement.**

2. County Department’s Responsibility

- a. **Training the other agency staff to take and process CIP applications; and**
- b. **Maintaining fiscal responsibility for the programs; and**
- c. **Maintaining confidentiality of information in case records; and**
- d. **Requesting and verifying information needed to process automatic and nonautomatic LIEAP, Summer Cooling and CIP benefits.**

III. OUTREACH AND APPLICATION-TAKING PLAN

Each county is required to submit yearly an Energy Programs Outreach Plan, which addresses outreach and application-taking activities for CIP benefits.

COOLING ASSISTANCE

Yes No

If yes, describe alternate process for outreach and intake:

CRISIS ASSISTANCE

Yes No

If yes, describe alternate process for outreach and intake:

Counties form an energy program outreach planning committee that creates the opportunity for county-level collaboration to discuss and plan how to effectively reach county residents to inform them of the services provided by the energy programs. This includes additional State and local governmental entities or community-based organizations as part of the committee along with state-level

engagement of these entities and organizations. When agencies are first contacted, the county explains the purpose of the Energy Programs, solicit their participation on the committee and their assistance with outreach.

I. OUTREACH

At the first committee meeting, it is suggested that the county director or his designee do the following.

- A. Explain LIEAP, CIP and Summer Cooling; and**
- B. Provide informational materials on LIEAP, CIP and Summer Cooling (e.g., DSS-8117, flyers, manual material); and**
- C. Poll the various agencies on the types of assistance they might provide in the outreach effort (e.g., transportation, distribution of informational literature, etc.)**

While individual contacts with agencies would be needed during the program, the committee approach helps to ensure coordination and prevent duplication of effort.

II. APPLICATION-TAKING

- A. The requirement for intake may be met in one of three ways.**
 - 1. The county may set up outpost locations at one or more of the outside agencies and have a county caseworker take applications.**
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- 3. The county may have these agencies take applications in addition to the county department of social services.**

If the county chooses option 2 or 3 above, the county department must contact the agencies to determine whether they are interested in taking heating or cooling applications. It is suggested that the county department of social services have a Memorandum of Understanding or written agreement with the agency to ensure that deadlines and the confidentiality requirements are met.

- B. Following are guidelines as to how application-taking requirements may be fulfilled.**

- 1. The county director or their designee must meet with the agencies which will be taking applications and discuss the following.**
 - a. Explanation of LIEAP, CIP and Summer Cooling Application Process**
 - b. Forms needed to take applications for the LIEAP, cooling and crisis components and how they will be supplied; and**
 - c. Training needs for staff who will take applications; and**
 - d. Coordination procedures between the county department of social services and other agencies; and**
 - e. Critical time frames for receiving applications; and**
 - f. Procedures to avoid duplication; and**
 - g. Memorandum of Understanding or written agreement.**

2. County Department’s Responsibility

- a. Training the other agency staff to take and process CIP applications; and**
- b. Maintaining fiscal responsibility for the programs; and**
- c. Maintaining confidentiality of information in case records; and**
- d. Requesting and verifying information needed to process automatic and nonautomatic LIEAP, CIP and Cooling benefits.**

e.

III. OUTREACH AND APPLICATION-TAKING PLAN

Each county is required to submit yearly an Energy Programs Outreach Plan, which addresses outreach and application-taking activities for LIEAP, CIP and Cooling benefits.

statutory
references

2605(b)(16)

Ⓞ Do you use LIHEAP funds to provide services that encourage and enable households to reduce their home energy needs and thereby the need for energy assistance? (This assurance refers to activities such as needs assessments, counseling, and assistance with energy vendors.)

_____ Yes X No

If yes, please describe these activities.

If yes, how do you ensure that you don't use more than 5% (statutory ceiling) of your LIHEAP funds for these activities?

statutory

references

2607A

(leveraging)

⑨ Please describe leveraging activities planned for the fiscal year. **(This entry is optional. *)** Complete this entry if you plan to apply for LIHEAP leveraging incentive funds and to include in your leveraging report resources/benefits provided to low income households this fiscal year under criterion (iii) in 45 CFR 96.87(d)(2). Provide the following information for each:

- (1) Identify and described each resource/benefit;
- (2) Identify the source(s) of each resource; and
- (3) Describe the integration/coordination of each resource/benefit with the LIHEAP program, consistent with 1 or more of conditions A-H in 45 CFR 96.87(d)(2)(iii).

The state, non-profit agencies, and county departments of social services receive in-kind contributions and money from fuel funds, city and county governments, and private citizens and corporations. Nonprofit agencies and county departments of social services sign guarantees of deposits for utilities. A utility company has a rate reduction program for SSI recipients. The funds received, deposit guarantees, and rate reduction program assist persons with energy expenses who meet the federal LIHEAP eligibility guidelines.

Examples of fuel funds are Progress Energy's Energy Neighbor, Wake Electric Round-Up Program, Haywood Electric Helping Each Member Cope, Piedmont Natural Gas' Share the Warmth Program, Fayetteville Public Works Commission-Project People Who Care and South River EMC- Helping Hands who contribute money to the State for disbursement to counties in their service area.

All the above programs are considered prior to, or in conjunction with, the use of LIHEAP crisis funds. Many of the agencies disbursing the funds administer the above programs and the Crisis Program under LIHEAP. Other agencies coordinate with the agencies that administer the Crisis Program under LIHEAP before disbursing funds. There is no duplication of benefits.

* Leveraged resources/benefits that are counted under criterion (iii) in 45 CFR 96.87(d) (2) must be identified and described in the grantee's LIHEAP plan and distributed as indicated in the plan. In addition, leveraging resources/benefits that are counted under criterion (ii) must be carried out under one or more components of the grantee's regular LIHEAP program.

statutory
references

2605(b)
(performance)
goals and
measures)

🕒 Please describe performance goals and measures planned for the fiscal year. **(This entry is optional.)**

ADDITIONAL CERTIFICATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

Attached are additional certifications required as follows:

- * **Lobbying certification**, which must be filed by all States and territories. If applicable, Form LLL, which discloses lobbying payments, must be submitted. **(Tribes and tribal organizations are EXEMPT)**
- * **Debarment and suspension certification**, which must be filed by all grantees.
- * **Drug-free workplace requirement certification**, which must be filed by all grantees, unless the grantee has filed a statewide certification with the Department of Health and Human Services. **STATES ONLY:** If you have filed a statewide certification for the drugfree workplace requirement, please check here: _____
- * One of the new requirements included in the 1994 reauthorization of the statute is that grantees must include in their annual application for funds a report on the number and income levels of households applying for and receiving LIHEAP assistance, and on the number of recipient households that have members who are elderly, disabled, or young children.

All Tribes and those territories with allotments of less than \$200,000 need only submit data on the number of households served by each component (heating, cooling, weatherization and crisis). The approval for the collection of information contained in the **LIHEAP Household Report** is covered by OMB approval number 0970-0060.
- * Though not a part of this application, the report on funds to be carried over or available for reallocation as required by section 2607(a) for the preceding year must be submitted by August 1 of each year. A grant award for the current fiscal year may not be made until the carryover/reallocation report is received. The approval for the collection of information contained in the **LIHEAP Carryover and Reallocation Report** is covered by OMB approval number 0970-0106.