



ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES

Office of Community Services | 330 C Street, S.W., Washington, DC 20201
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Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program Action Transmittal

AT#: LIHEAP-AT-2023-05

DATE: June 9, 2023

TO: All LIHEAP Grant Recipients

SUBJECT: Model Plan Application for LIHEAP Funding for Federal Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 (Application deadline Friday, September 1, 2023)

ATTACHMENT(S): 1. How to Use the Clone Report Feature in OLDC to Submit a New FY 2024 LIHEAP Plan

PURPOSE: To provide LIHEAP grant recipients with instructions for how to apply online for FY 2024 LIHEAP funding, confirm the September 1, 2023 Plan deadline, and remind grant recipients they can “clone” or pre-populate their prior data into a new Plan submission to reduce administrative reporting burden.

BACKGROUND: States, the District of Columbia, territories, and tribes/tribal organizations that wish to administer the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) must submit an application for funds by September 1st each federal fiscal year (FY), covering a grant period of October 1 through September 30. Section 2605(c)(3) of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981 (42 U.S.C. § 8624(c)(1)), as amended, provides that the Secretary shall make available a model LIHEAP Plan which may be used to prepare the application required under Sections 2605(a)(1) and (c)(1) (42 U.S.C. § 8624(a)(1) and (c)(1)). The Office of Community Services (OCS) has the responsibility to review and accept LIHEAP Plan submissions on behalf of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ (HHS) Administration for Children and Families (ACF), which is the agency that administers LIHEAP at the federal level. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approved ACF’s LIHEAP Plan under clearance number 0970-0075 effective through December 31, 2023.

KEY MODEL PLAN SUBMISSION INFORMATION:

Plan Submission Deadline:

The deadline for the FY 2024 Plan is **September 1, 2023**.

Grant recipients must submit an application (LIHEAP Plan) via the Online Data Collection (OLDC), located within [GrantSolutions](#), each FY in order to receive LIHEAP funds from ACF. Further information about the submission and review timeframes is explained in the last section of this AT, under *Timely Submission and Completion of Plans*.

Note: The [application flexibility](#) OCS offered in FY 2022 during the Public Health Emergency (pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 247d) was not a permanent change. Now that the [expiration date](#) for the Public Health Emergency for COVID-19 has passed, LIHEAP grant recipients must follow the regular application process as outlined below.

Transferring Prior-Year Information into a New Plan (OLDC “Clone” Feature):

All grant recipients must complete the entire LIHEAP Plan for FY 2024 in OLDC. Grant recipients can transfer information from the FY 2023 LIHEAP Plan (prior plan) into the new Plan by using the “Clone Report” feature in OLDC. Attachment 1 provides step-by-step instructions for how to use the “Clone Report” feature.

After transferring prior year information into the new Plan, at a minimum, grant recipients must update responses to the following sections:

- SF-424 Mandatory Grant Application section – Fields 1.d., 7.f. (this section will be used as the official point of contact for the Notice of Awards and federal LIHEAP website), 14.a., and 14.b. Funding Period and Authorized Official through the Letter of Delegation
- Section 2—Heating Assistance, 2605(b)(2) – Question 2.1 Eligibility Threshold;
- Section 3—Cooling Assistance, 2605(b)(2) – Question 3.1 Eligibility Threshold;
- Section 4 – Crisis Assistance, 2605(c) – Question 4.1 Eligibility Threshold;
- Section 5—Weatherization Assistance, 2605(b)(2) – Question 5.1 Eligibility Threshold;
- Section 8 – Agency Designation, 2605(b)(6)-Assurance 6 – Question 8.8;
- Section 10 – Program, Fiscal Monitoring, and Audit, 2605(b)(10)-Assurance 10 – Questions 10.3, 10.9-10.12;
- Section 11 – Timely and Meaningful Public Participation, 2605(b)(12), 2605(c)(2) – Questions 11.1-11.6;
- Section 12 – Fair Hearings, 2605(b)(10) – Questions 12.1-12.3;
- Section 13 – Reduction of home energy needs, 2605(b)(16) – Questions 13.1-13.6; and
- Section 16 – Performance Goals and Measures, 2605(b). This section is required of state grant recipients only and optional for other grant recipients.
- Attach supporting documentation or provide links to supporting documents online, as needed, such as policies and procedures.

A note on leveraging activities: The LIHEAP Plan includes an optional section to explain possible leveraging activities the grant recipient may take during FY 2024. Completing this section of the Plan is one requirement to receiving a separate leveraging grant from ACF, if funding is available. However, ACF awards leveraging grants in the fiscal year following the year the grant recipient conducted the leveraging activities. Therefore, if funding is available, ACF would award leveraging grants in FY 2024 based upon a separate leveraging report that would be reconciled against the responses in the FY 2023 LIHEAP Plan for leveraging activities that took place in FY 2023. ACF last awarded leveraging grants in FY 2012 and has no estimate for when federal leveraging grants will become available again.

Assurances and Certifications:

The assurances displayed in the second to last section of the LIHEAP Plan are from the federal LIHEAP statute (42 U.S.C. § 8624(b)(1)-(16)). LIHEAP regulations at 45 C.F.R. § 96.10(b) require that the 16 assurances (15 for tribes) in the LIHEAP statute be certified by the grant recipient's Chief Executive Officer or "by an individual authorized to make such certifications on behalf of the Chief Executive Officer." When submitting your Plan, please be sure that the governor or tribal chairperson (1) certifies the assurances or (2) has specifically delegated authority to "certify" the LIHEAP Assurances to another person and/or position (not merely the department or agency). The grant recipient must attach the delegation letter to the Plan in OLDC and the letter must explicitly specify that the individual is authorized to certify the federal LIHEAP assurances.

In addition to the Plan, grant recipients must also complete or update the Mandatory Grant Application SF- 424, which is the first section of the LIHEAP Plan in OLDC. The person that is designated to "certify to the LIHEAP assurances" must have an OLDC account and, while logged into their OLDC account, must be the person that clicks the "Certify" and "Click to Sign" buttons for the LIHEAP Plan in OLDC. Therefore, if the governor or tribal chairperson chooses not to designate someone else to sign the LIHEAP assurances, then the governor or tribal chairperson must have their own OLDC account and "certify" the FY 2024 LIHEAP Plan.

The OLDC Grant Administrator in your office can establish additional OLDC accounts for users such as the governor or tribal chairperson. A [tutorial](#) on how to create new accounts in OLDC is available on GrantSolutions. Please contact your [LIHEAP regional liaison](#) if you need additional assistance.

States, the District of Columbia, and territories receiving more than \$200,000 must describe in their new FY 2024 Plan how they will carry out assurance 15 (Section 2605(b)(15) of the LIHEAP statute. Assurance 15 requires such grant recipients to offer LIHEAP intake services in addition to those available through agencies also administering the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. An attachment detailing this plan may be added or entered in any of the fields in Sections 2, 3, and 4.

Other Certifications:

1. Section 18 – All LIHEAP grant recipients must agree to the Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, and Other Responsibility Matters.
2. Section 19 – All LIHEAP grant recipients must submit the Certification Regarding Drug-Free Workplace Requirements unless a state has submitted a statewide assurance to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. When completing this certification, be sure to enter the grant recipient's physical address in the appropriate fields, rather than a P.O. Box.
3. Section 20 – States and the District of Columbia must file the Certification Regarding Lobbying and, if applicable, Form LLL, which discloses lobbying payments. Tribes and tribal organizations are not required to file the Certification Regarding Lobbying.

The LIHEAP Plan form in OLDC, Sections 18-20, incorporates all of the above certifications. Please ensure that the certification checkbox is marked in each required certification's section.

Public Participation:

- **States and Territories:** The federal law requires states and territories to conduct public hearings on the initial FY 2024 LIHEAP Plan (42 U.S.C. Section 8624(a)(2)). Grant recipients should follow their own state and territorial procedures for public hearings.
- **Tribes:** No hearing is required of tribal grant recipients. However, tribal grant recipients are required to obtain timely and meaningful public participation/input from their communities regarding their proposed/draft FY 2024 LIHEAP Plan. This may include some combination of web postings, public service announcements, comments by email/phone, stakeholder calls, etc. Tribes must follow their tribal-wide rules for public participation that they would use with tribal funding. **Note:** Timely means that the public participation process must be completed in advance of and prior to the submission of the Plan to get public comments and allow enough time for internal review.

Required Plan Attachments:

The following documents must be attached to the application in OLDC to be considered complete.

- Delegation Letter (required if someone other than the Chief Executive, e.g., a governor or tribal chairperson certified the FY Plan in OLDC).
- Benefit matrices showing at least three varying measures (income, household size, and energy needs) to determine benefit types, such as heating, cooling, and crisis assistance.
- Minutes, notes, or transcripts of public hearing(s) (states/territories only) or public participation (tribes).

For Tribal Applicants:

HHS encourages directly funded tribes that receive smaller annual LIHEAP grants to consider joining an existing consortium in their state(s) or form a consortium with neighboring tribes to reduce the administrative burden of the LIHEAP Plan submission and the required reports. For information on how to form or join a consortium, inquire with your [LIHEAP regional liaison](#). This information is available under Section B of the [LIHEAP Grantee Resource Guide](#) (formerly known as the Tribal Manual).

FY 2023 LIHEAP CARRYOVER AND REALLOTMENT REPORT:

The federal statute requires that complete LIHEAP Plans MUST include data from grant recipients regarding the amount of funding they intend to carry over from the current federal fiscal year.

The Carryover and Reallotment Report includes the amount of all regular block grant funds each grant recipient will carry over from FY 2023 to FY 2024 up to the 10 percent limit. The report also includes any balance of funds that the grant recipient has available for reallotment by ACF (i.e., due to exceeding the carryover limit or failure to obligate within the allowed timeframe). Prompt submission of this report allows grant recipients and ACF to identify potential under-obligation of funds so that program administration adjustments might be made to ensure timely obligation of funds before the end of the federal fiscal year.

The deadline for the initial FY 2023 Carryover Report (0970-0106) is August 1, 2023. ACF will consider reasonable extension requests on a case-by-case basis upon advance written request from grant recipients. ACF will issue a separate AT with further instructions for the FY 2023 Carryover and Reallotment Report.

Grant recipients must submit the final Carryover and Reallotment Report data by December 29, 2023, as they reconcile the data with their FY 2023 Federal Financial Report SF- 425 and for states, the LIHEAP Performance Data Form (LIHEAP PDF).

Timely Submission and Completion of Plan and Reports: OCS requires grant recipients to submit the initial FY 2023 LIHEAP Carryover and Reallotment Report **by August 1, 2023** and the annual LIHEAP Plan through OLDC **no later than September 1, 2023**.

These documents are only accepted via the OLDC system unless technical limitations require an alternative submission method. If this is the case, please contact your [LIHEAP Regional Liaison](#) in advance of the deadline.

As noted above, all necessary information must be included in the Plan and properly certified by the appropriate grant recipient official before it can be accepted by OCS as complete and ready for ACF to issue a grant award.

Submission Deadline Extension: If a grant recipient anticipates needing an extension of the September 1st Plan submission deadline, the grant recipient must submit a letter requesting a deadline extension. The letter must be uploaded as an attachment to an “initialized” FY 2024 Plan and provide a specific, reasonable alternative date and a brief explanation of the reason for needing an extension. Tribal grant recipients must obtain written agreement of the extension date from the states in which the tribe’s service areas are located. The state’s email or letter of concurrence must also be included as an attachment to the initialized 2024 Plan. **Extension requests must be submitted to OCS prior to September 1, 2023.**

Follow-up Action on Plan Submissions: Upon receipt of 2024 Plans, OCS staff will review the Plans and either reject the Plan back to the grant recipient via OLDC or accept the plan in OLDC. Grant recipients whose plans are “accepted” in OLDC have no further action to take on the Plan. Grant recipients whose plans are “rejected” in OLDC must take immediate action to edit their Plans according to the comments in the OLDC review sections of the Plan and resubmit the edited Plan to OCS within the deadline indicated in the Plan review remarks in OLDC. The federal LIHEAP regulations require that this editing process must be completed no later than December 15, 2023. This deadline is only regarding edits and attachments that are necessary to resolve missing or inadequate information in the original Plan submission.

ACF will only issue FY 2024 LIHEAP funding upon receipt and acceptance of a LIHEAP Plan submission that ACF considers “complete” with respect to statutorily required information.

All LIHEAP grant recipients have an ongoing responsibility throughout the grant period to submit revised Plans and reports, as needed, to reflect changes to ensure ACF has final, actual program data.

INQUIRIES: For questions regarding the Model Plan, please contact your [LIHEAP Regional Liaison](#).

RELATED REFERENCES: The [Low Income Home Energy Assistance Act](#), as amended (42 U.S.C. § 8621 *et seq.*); [LIHEAP IM 2023-01 Federal Poverty Guidelines for Optional Use in FFY 2023 and Mandatory Use in FFY 2024](#) ; and [LIHEAP IM 2023-02 State Median Income Estimates for Optional Use in FFY 2023 and Mandatory Use in FFY 2024](#).

Thank you for your attention and OCS looks forward to continuing to provide high quality services to OCS partners.

/s/

Dr. Lanikque Howard

Director

Office of Community Services