

# OFFICE OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

An Office of the Administration for Children & Families

## LIHEAP Fact Sheet - Outreach

Published: September 30, 2021

**Audience: Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) Grantees**

**Category: Fact Sheet**

### **PROGRAM NAME: LOW INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LIHEAP)**

#### **Purpose:**

Across the country, millions of low-income households are struggling to meet their basic home energy needs. These struggles have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) plays a critical role in helping to ensure low-income families do not have to choose between paying heating or cooling bills and purchasing food or medicine for themselves or their families. LIHEAP assists households with low incomes, particularly those with the lowest incomes that pay a high proportion of household income for home energy, with the resources needed to meet their home energy costs, and now we have the opportunity to broaden our reach and serve even more families.

#### **A Historical Investment in LIHEAP:**

Going beyond the FY 2021 regular appropriation of \$3.7 billion, the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 made \$4.5 billion available in additional funding to provide LIHEAP payments to households with limited incomes for help with bill payment assistance to reduce their heating and cooling costs, emergency assistance (which includes ensuring uninterrupted home energy supply) and weatherizing homes for energy efficiencies, such as insulation, new doors and windows, heating or cooling system repairs and replacements, and many health and safety measures. Grantees have the flexibility to design the program according to their own rules and local needs.

This historical investment in energy assistance is the single largest increase in funding for home energy assistance in our nation's history. **For this reason, it is imperative that states, tribes, and territories receiving a LIHEAP grant enhance their outreach strategies to reach additional households, with a focus on households most in need.**

#### **A Call to Action:**

LIHEAP grantees are strongly encouraged to explore all possible outreach activities and strategies to reach households in need of energy assistance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Place posters and/or flyers in state and county social service offices, offices of aging, unemployment, and Social Security offices, Veterans Affairs, and the offices of other non-profit agencies and partners.
- Publish articles in local newspapers or broadcast media announcements.
- Encourage home energy vendors to include an insert in bills to inform their customers of the availability of various types of LIHEAP assistance.
- When possible, work with home energy vendors to facilitate secure and authorized data exchanges with LIHEAP offices to identify newly eligible customers.
- Conduct mass mailing(s) to prior-year LIHEAP applicants and recipients, including applicants who did not provide all the necessary supporting documentation.
- Inform low income applicants of the availability of LIHEAP assistance (including bill payment assistance, weatherization supports, and crisis assistance) when conducting intakes for other financial and social service programs.
- Execute interagency agreements with other low-income program offices to perform outreach to target groups.
- Explore new partnership to increase awareness about LIHEAP and reach eligible households. This may include partnering with Medicare Savings Programs, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) programs, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), or Social Security Administration (SSA) offices at the state and local levels.

- Post program information that appeals to families in need, including recently eligible families on your and your partner agencies' social media accounts and websites.
- Identify and acknowledge existing barriers to technology and internet access that may prevent low-income households from accessing benefits. Then, develop strategies to safely overcome these challenges.

**Program Contacts:**

For more information about outreach strategies or questions about suggested activities, please reach out to your assigned program contact. [LIHEAP staff contacts](#)

For a list of local intake agencies in each county, see: [HHS' map of LIHEAP Local Agency Locations](#)

[Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program](#)

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Administration for Children and Families

Office of Community Services

Division of Energy Assistance

Phone: (202) 401-9351