
LOW-INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Dear Colleague Letter

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Community Services
Division of Energy Assistance
330 C Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201
<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ocs/programs/liheap>

Date: July 21, 2016

TO: LOW INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LIHEAP)
GRANTEES

SUBJECT: Summer 2016 Heat Wave and LIHEAP Assistance

Dear Colleagues:

Recent weather reports and [media alerts](#) are highlighting the heat wave that is anticipated to begin this week in the central and southeastern portions of the United States. Temperatures are expected to be at least 100 degrees, and will feel even higher after factoring in humidity. The heat wave is projected to spread to the mid-Atlantic and Northeast areas by this weekend and into next week.

LIHEAP, given its block grant structure, gives each of you broad discretion and flexibility to make adjustments to your program now and throughout the rest of this summer to mitigate the risks of weather related events, including this heat wave. You may adjust your policies now, and if they involve significant changes, you may submit a revised 2016 Plan within a reasonable amount of time after implementing the policy change(s).

Examples of ways you can adjust your program now include, but are not limited to:

- Establishing cooling centers, which might include working with other public facilities such as local libraries, community center, and government buildings to establish a waiting area where people can remain cool during the hottest periods of the day (usually 10am-4pm). It might also include coordinating with emergency response teams in states, tribes, territories and localities to ensure that they are aware of cooling centers, how to refer people to LIHEAP for immediate needs, help move homebound individuals to cooling centers if needed, and other related issues.
- Loaning or giving air conditioning units, especially targeting vulnerable households that will most likely be homebound or feel the temperature change the greatest, such as seniors, young kids, disabled individuals, and those on ventilators or certain medications

such as for diabetes

- Providing higher crisis or cooling benefit payments for electric bills to help off-set the higher demand for air conditioning
- Providing targeted outreach to identify households at greatest risk, such as those who are homebound, to ensure they are in a temperature safe environment. This may include telephone calls, home visits, Public Service Announcements, etc. Interventions might include making sure they have working A/C units, set the thermostat to a temperature that is safe for their medical needs—which might involve them consulting with their nurse or doctor—helping transport them to a cooling center, etc.
- Providing education to applicants and recipients about how to keep their homes cool during this time

Here are some resources on our LIHEAP web site that provide more information on how to use LIHEAP to help with extreme heat and other weather related needs for home energy:

- June 21, 2016 LIHEAP Blog on Cooling Assistance:
<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/blog/2016/06/cooling-assistance-to-reduce-heat-stress>
- May 24, 2016 LIHEAP Dear Colleague Letter on Extreme Heat Prevention:
<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ocs/resource/dear-colleague-notice-on-extreme-heat-week-resources>
- Standing LIHEAP Information Memorandum/Special Topic on Disaster Relief:
<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ocs/resource/liheap-disaster-relief>

Please feel free to contact your [OCS Regional Liaison](#) if you have any questions. Thank you for taking proactive steps to provide assistance to vulnerable communities during this extreme heat period.

Sincerely,

/s/
Jeannie L. Chaffin
Director
Office of Community Services

/s/
Lauren Christopher
Director
Division of Energy Assistance