



Administration for Children and Families

Office of Community Services  
Division of Energy Assistance

# **LIHEAP SELECTED TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION**

National Energy Directors Association (NEADA)

Winter Meeting

March 24, 2015

Washington, D.C



# Topics for Discussion

- Uses of Funds
- LIHEAP Income Eligibility
- Client Eligibility Determination Process
- Crisis Program Management
- LIHEAP-funded Weatherization
- Payment Matrix Development
- Reporting Due Dates



## Uses of LIHEAP Funds

- Heating Assistance = Bill Payment Assistance
- Cooling Assistance = Bill Payment Assistance
- Crisis Assistance = Crisis Benefit
- LIHEAP-Weatherization  $\leq 15\%^*$  (Clean & Tunes, repair & replacements, building shell, etc.)
- Administrative Uses  $\leq 10\%$  (Personnel & non-Personnel)
- Assurance 16  $\leq 5\%$  (Case management, outreach, budget counseling)
- Other: H-EAT  $> \$20$  to SNAP households

Must Equal 100%

\*without a waiver, up to 40% in FY 16 proposal.



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# Eligibility: Determining Minimum and Maximum Income

First, decide whether to use Federal Poverty Guidelines (FPG) or State Median Income (SMI)

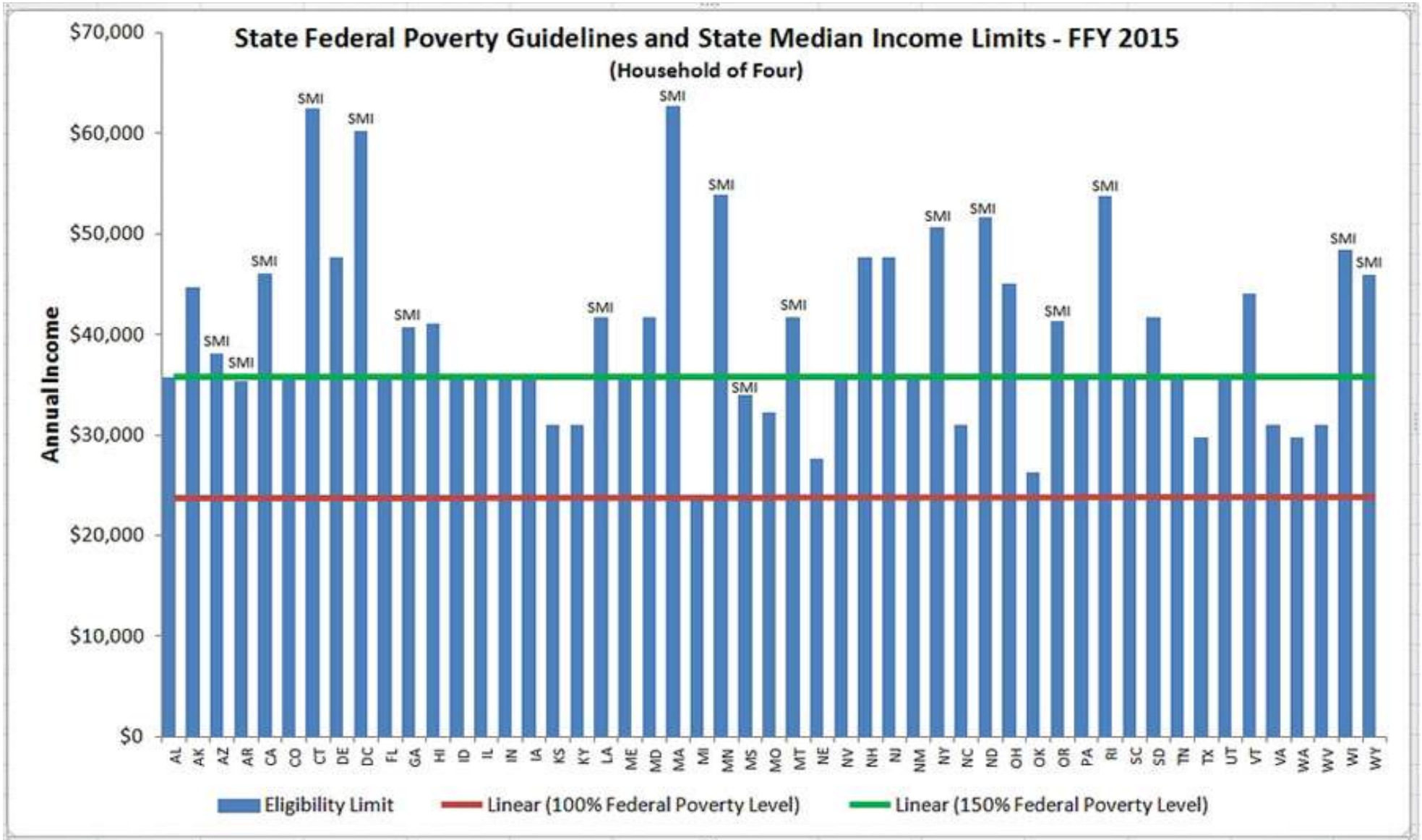
- If using SMI, grantees may set households income eligibility up to 60% SMI; or
- If using FPG, grantees may set households income eligibility be up to 150%.
- Whether using SMI or FPG, household income eligibility may be set no lower than 110% FPG.

**Note:** HHS publishes the FPG's each year through an IM on the LIHEAP web site. Grantees must use the most currently available FPG's by October 1 each year (45 C.F.R. § 96.85).



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# Why Determine Eligibility and Benefit Payment Levels?

- Section 2605(b)(5) of the LIHEAP Statute (42 U.S.C. § 8624(b)(5)) requires that the highest level of assistance go to:
  - Households which have the lowest incomes;
  - AND**
  - Households with the highest energy costs or needs;
  - AND**
  - Taking into account family size.



# Eligibility versus Benefit Levels

- Step one:     **Eligibility**—whether a household meets the minimum requirements to receive LIHEAP assistance, such as household income cap.
- Step two:     **Benefit levels**—the amount of assistance given to households that are determined eligible for LIHEAP.



## **Eligibility:**

# **What is Household Income**

- The LIHEAP statute does not define “income.”
- Grantees must define what they consider “income” to ensure that all households are treated the same when determining whether a household is income eligible for LIHEAP benefits.
- Categorical eligibility option: grantees can choose to make certain households eligible based on receiving benefits from other needs-tested Federal programs.



State	TANF	SSI	SNAP	VA	Other Qualifying Programs or Conditions
<b>Alaska</b>	X	X	X		Auto eligibility for heating and crisis
<b>Arkansas</b>			X		Applications are mailed to eligible SNAP households that contain an elderly or person with a disability. Auto eligibility for heating and cooling
<b>Connecticut</b>	X				All household members participate in the program
<b>Delaware</b>			X		Automatically eligible for a nominal heating benefit
<b>Hawaii</b>	X	X	X		Auto eligibility for cooling and crisis
<b>Idaho</b>	X	X	X		Auto eligibility for heating, crisis and weatherization
<b>Kansas</b>	X	X			Auto eligibility for weatherization only
<b>Kentucky</b>	X	X	X	X	Auto eligibility for heating, cooling, crisis and weatherization
<b>Massachusetts</b>			X		SNAP recipient households with limited energy burden are eligible to receive an annual benefit of \$21 based on their residential energy cost and affordability threshold
<b>Montana</b>	X	X	X	X	TANF, SSI and SNAP recipients are eligible for heating. Crisis and weatherization include households eligible for VA
<b>Nebraska</b>	X	X	X		If Nebraska received an application within the last year for either TANF, AABD, or SNAP, the LIHEAP program is able to use this application on file to determine eligibility for heating, cooling and crisis.
<b>New Jersey</b>			X		SNAP households are automatically eligible for heating.
<b>New York</b>	X		X		TANF and SNAP recipients are automatically eligible for heating, cooling, crisis and weatherization
<b>Oklahoma</b>	X	X	X		Preauthorization process for heating and cooling if a household received SNAP, TANF, or SSP state supplemental payment for aged, blind, or disabled
<b>Pennsylvania</b>			X		The Heat and Eat program gives a nominal heating benefit to SNAP recipients if they have not otherwise received a LIHEAP benefit.
<b>Rhode Island</b>			X		SNAP recipients are eligible for nominal benefit
<b>South Dakota</b>			X		Auto eligibility for heating
<b>West Virginia</b>	X	X	X		Auto eligibility for heating and crisis
<b>Washington</b>			X		Categorical eligibility is only used for the \$20.01 benefits provided through the WA Basic Food Partnership



# Benefit Determination: Payment Matrix

- Develop a payment matrix to set different payment levels.
- A payment matrix is a chart on which all of the required factors (income, energy costs or needs, and family size) are considered to vary the benefit amounts for each household.



# **Benefit Determination: Three Required Variables to Consider when Building Your Payment Matrix**

1. Household Income;
2. Household Size; and
3. Energy Cost or Need



# Benefit Determination: Household Size

- Prorate the benefit amount based on household composition number;
- Count only persons residing in the dwelling unit sharing a primary heating or cooling system;
- Do not count non-qualified aliens. They are ineligible to receive Federal benefits. (Do count their income though!)



# **Benefit Determination: Determining Energy Cost or Need**

**Choose one or more of the following:**

- Fuel Type
- Individual Bill Amount
- Energy Burden
- Other
- Climate or Region
- Dwelling Type
- Household Need (specific to situation)



# Benefit Determination Variable Example:

## Varying Benefits Based on Energy Burden

- **Energy Burden =**

$$\frac{\text{dollar amount of current energy bill}}{\text{total household monthly income}} = \text{\% of income spent on home energy each month}$$

- **Decision Point:**

include or exclude any low-income rate discounts in total cost of energy bill?



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<http://www.liheapch.acf.hhs.gov/tables/FY2015/assets.htm>

### Asset Tests/Limits

<http://www.liheapch.acf.hhs.gov/tables/FY2015/heatbenefit.htm>

### Initial FY 2015 Benefits

TYPE OF ASSISTANCE	Average Household Benefit*	Household Benefit Range*
Heating	\$304	\$80–\$1,161
Cooling	\$274	\$123–\$776
Winter/year-round crisis	\$370	\$104–\$928
Summer crisis	\$225	\$100–\$590

\* Unpublished FY 2015 Data



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### **Crisis Program Timelines\***

- Regular Crisis - 48 hours
- Life Threatening Crisis – 18 hours
- Local offices or sub-grantees need to understand the distinction.
- Written policies and service delivery procedures must be developed.
- The effective start time starts at eligibility determination.
- Consider developing after-hour policies.

\* States may have a *FastTrack* program, which serves crisis clients within 18 to 48 hours w/out providing a crisis benefit.





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### **LIHEAP-Funded Weatherization Program**

- Grantees can set aside up to 15% of their allocation for Weatherization purposes (or between 15-25% with a prior written waiver from ACF).
- Typical uses may include furnace repairs, replacements, clean and tune, HVAC systems, building shell, home energy related health and safety repairs.
- Must allocate funds in LIHEAP State Plan; Choose WAP rule; follow-up administrative cost threshold; report back to HHS.

#### **Rules:**

**(1) Entirely DOE WAP rules; (2) Entirely LIHEAP rules; (3) A combination of both rules. (4) Maximum benefit amount.**



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# LIHEAP Reports and Deadlines



# Reports for LIHEAP Grantees

**For Federal Fiscal Year: October 1, 2014 – September 30, 2015**

## Required

- LIHEAP Plan
- Carryover & Reallotment Report
- Household Report – Long (states)/Short (tribes) Form
- SF 425 – Federal Financial Report
- Performance Data Form
- Benefit Matrix

## Optional

- Leveraging Report
- Weatherization Waiver
- Sub-awardee List



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# 2016 LIHEAP Plan

**Due September 1, 2015**

- First Come, First Served!!!
- Extensions are not encouraged: request must be made in writing by September 1<sup>st</sup> (email to your ACF Liaison is okay)
- Changes to Plan during the FY 2015 program are done by:
  - Written amendments/Revised 2015 Plan in OLDC by September 30, 2015 (no prior approval needed)
  - “Substantial” amendments must have meaningful timely public inspection



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# 2015 Carryover & Reallotment Report

**Due August 1, 2015**

- Carryover and Reallotment Report is due 2 months before the end of the fiscal year.
- Estimates may later prove to be inaccurate.
- Submit a corrected report as soon as possible.
- Submission through OLDC.
- Required for 2016 Plan to be ready for funding.



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# 2015 Household Report

**Due September 1, 2015**

- Okay to submit estimates if program still open.
- If changes are made, Final report is due Dec 15, 2015.
- Must have unduplicated counts of households receiving any type of assistance
- LIHEAP WAP data is required if funds are used.
- Submission through OLDC
- Required for 2016 Plan to be ready for funding



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# 2015 Performance Data Form

**Due January 31, 2016**

- First section (formerly the Grantee Survey) due for 2015
- Remainder on performance measures data optional for 2015 (required for federal FY 2016)
- Required of states only
- Submission through OLDC



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# 2015 SF 425 – Federal Financial Report

**Due by December 31, 2015**

- All grantees must submit a report on Standard Form (SF) 425 describing the amount of LIHEAP funds obligated during each fiscal year.
- A separate SF 425 must be submitted on each type of LIHEAP funding received, such as block grant, contingency, REACH, and Leveraging.
- Revised SF-425 must be submitted the following year to reflect changes in carryover and expenditures, etc.





# Leveraging Report

**We have not announced a due date**

- Optional
- Announcement is made roughly a month in advance.
- Describes non-federal sources of funding used to assist LIHEAP-eligible clients with home energy.
- You must have described your leveraging activities in your FY 2015 Plan prior to September 30, 2015, if you anticipate submitting a leveraging application in 2016 (should funding be available).



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# Weatherization Waiver

**Accepted between April 1-September 30, 2015**

- Only needed if you wish to exceed 15% cap
- Request is for between 15 and 25% of total 2015 LIHEAP funds payable.
- There is no required format for the waiver request, but it must be in writing.
- Contact your ACF Liaison for instructions.
- The content of the waiver request is described in our regulations – 45 C.F.R. § 96.87.
  - <http://archive.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ocs/liheap/guidance/regulations/regh.html>



# OLDC (Online Data Collection) Reminder

- Web-based tool used to collect LIHEAP reports except for weatherization waiver, including:
  - SF-425
  - LIHEAP Plan
  - Household Report
  - Carryover and Reallotment Report
  - Performance Data Form
- You need to request online access for username and password.
  - <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ocs/resource/funding-applications>



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# Questions

**Lauren Christopher, Director, Division of Energy Assistance**

[Lauren.christopher@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:Lauren.christopher@acf.hhs.gov)

(202) 401-4870

**Akm Rahman, Operations Branch Chief, Division of Energy Assistance**

[Akm.rahman@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:Akm.rahman@acf.hhs.gov)

(202) 401-5306

### Operations Branch: Regional Liaisons

Rosa Chapman; [Rosa.chapman@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:Rosa.chapman@acf.hhs.gov); (202) 260-6424 (Regions VI, VII and X)

Josephine Rago-Adia; [josephine.rago-adia@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:josephine.rago-adia@acf.hhs.gov); (202) 401-4710 (Regions II, III, IV, V)

Margarita Valladares; [Margarita.valladares@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:Margarita.valladares@acf.hhs.gov); (202) 205-4711 (Regions I and IX)

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ocs/programs/liheap>