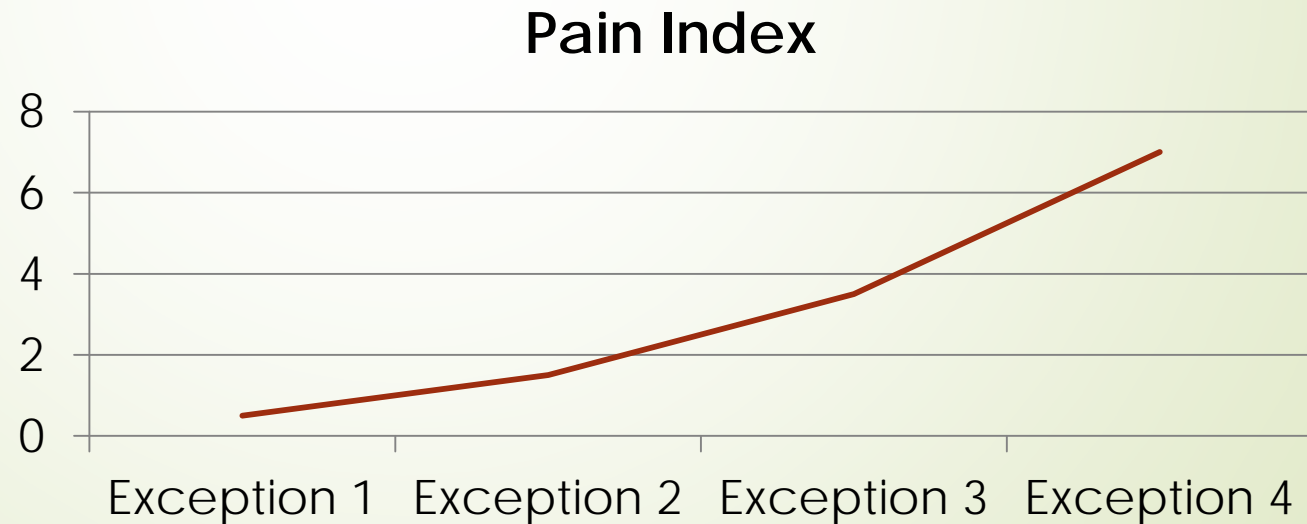


LIHEAP Program Design

Larry Dawson
February 22, 2016

THIS IS A BLOCK GRANT!

- ▶ **Flexibility within the bounds of the legislation**
 - ▶ There are limits to your creativity → "Clearly Erroneous"
- ▶ **Simple vs. Fair**



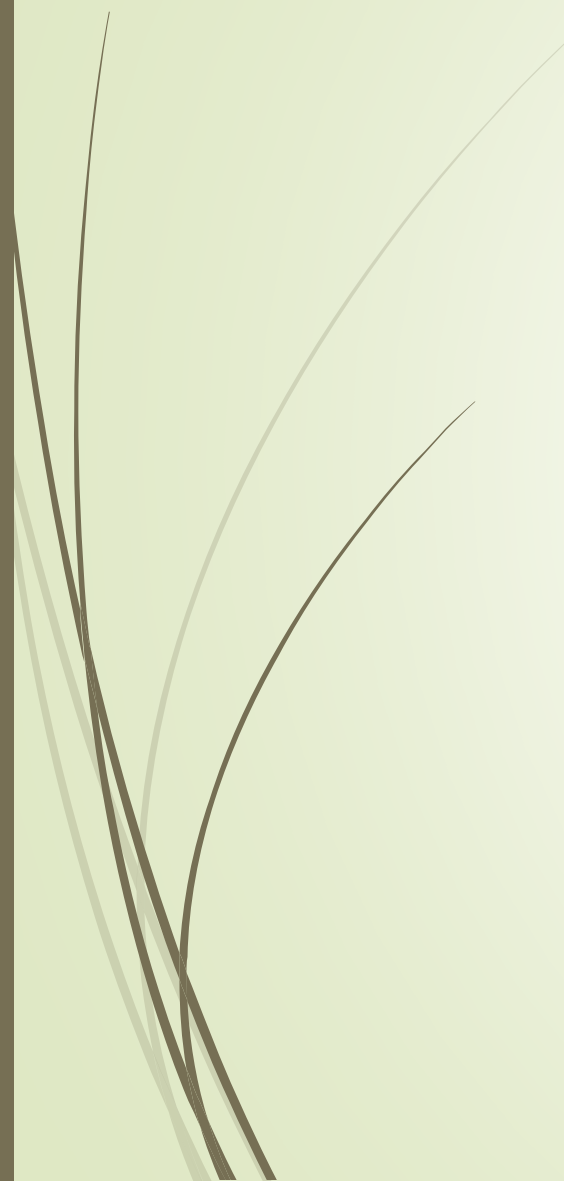
Year-round vs. Seasonal vs. Heating Only

- States are split almost evenly between “seasonal” and “heating only” with 3 states offering “year-round” programs
- Consider your climate, target population, energy costs and funding level
- Can you exhaust your funding in a seasonal program
- Can applicants be served multiple times in a program year?

Resources

- **NEADA Website**
- **OCS Website**
- **LIHEAP Clearinghouse**
- **LIHEAP Home Energy Notebook**
- **Fellow LIHEAP Directors**

Program components



LIHEAP Eligibility Criteria

- Besides the poorest residents, are you also targeting working poor?
- Categorical Eligibility?
- State Median or Federal Poverty level?
- Income eligibility only or Asset limits too?
- Serve less people more or more people less?
 - Census Data
 - *Payment matrix

What to do about zero income

- ▶ **Laissez Faire**
 - ▶ zero income numbers are low or trending downward
- ▶ **Require more documentation**
- ▶ **Require eligibility redetermination for continued benefits**
- ▶ **Limit the # of consecutive years at zero income**

WX

- **Transfer or not? If so, how much? Waiver needed?**
- **DOE Rules or LIHEAP rules or mixture?**
 - **What measures will be offered?**
 - **More flexibility in LIHEAP energy conservation measures?**
 - **Windows**
 - **Doors**
 - **Water Heaters**
 - **Etc**
- **Timely reporting is required of WX administrators**
- **When it comes to transferring LIHEAP \$ for WX, you're in the driver's seat because you are accountable for the funds**

Crisis

- **Priority?**
- **Previous regular application required?**
- **Multiple benefits provided?**
- **Is there a maximum Crisis benefit?**
- **18/48 hour rule**
 - **How do you define the difference between “Regular Crisis” and “Life Threatening Crisis”?**
 - **What procedures are in place to address life threatening situations?**
- **Crisis Benefits:**
 - **Energy Payments**
 - **Furnace/Air Conditioner**
 - **Fuel shortage (propane example)**
 - **Natural Disaster procedures**

Crisis (continued)

➤ Crisis Benefits:

- Energy Payments
- Furnace/Air Conditioner repair or replacement
 - Existing equipment required?
- Fuel shortage (propane example)
- Natural Disaster procedures
- Temporary lodging assistance
- Temporary heat source
- Blankets
- Other Energy-related assistance

Compliance with Assurances

- ▶ **Assurances should be integrated into the service provider contracts**
- ▶ **Executive Directors need to acknowledge responsibility for compliance with assurances with a sign off**

ASSURANCES for HEAP

THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR and BOARD CHAIRPERSON MUST INDICATE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE FOLLOWING REQUIREMENTS BY INITIALING THE SPACES PROVIDED IN FRONT OF EACH STATEMENT.

 / I acknowledge that every user of the OCEAN system will have a signed copy of the OCEAN data confidentiality agreement and a copy is submitted to OCA.

 / I acknowledge that every user of the OCEAN system has been informed not to share their password with anyone and that any user that is no longer employed by the agency or who no longer has the authority to use the system will be disabled in the OCEAN system or the State office will be called to disable the user account.

 / I acknowledge the requirement that all HEAP telephone systems and IVR systems will be tested and operating prior to November 1 of the current program year.

 / I acknowledge the requirement that all HEAP customer data is secure and confidential.

 / I acknowledge the requirement that all HEAP staff - managers, intake/case workers, and telephone operators - have been fully trained and have reviewed updated copies of their required reference materials prior to November 1 of the current program year. All HEAP staff are required to participate in mandatory training webinars conducted by OCA throughout the program year.

 / I acknowledge the requirement that intake workers will ensure self-declaration forms are completed in full; identification and income documentation are included and support OCEAN entries and all utility bills are included with the customers' application.

 / I acknowledge the requirement that HEAP staff is available for home visits.

 / I acknowledge the requirement that all Applicant/Customer Inquiries will be addressed within two (2) working days via e-mail, using "Reply to All" so that OCA is copied on the responses.

 / I acknowledge that the HEAP Program has a sound and effective process for handling rejected records in a 14 day calendar period if the corrections are within the control of the agency and in a 30 day calendar period for PIPP Plus Intents.

 / I acknowledge that the Agency has a Client Appeal Process that includes review, investigation and notification steps that correspond with the lead up to the Energy Assistance Guidelines Appeal Process.

Program Integrity

- ▶ **Proper controls in place at all levels**
 - ▶ **Payments must go to ELIGIBLE households**
 - ▶ 2010 GAO Report (7 states reviewed)
 - ▶ **Third Party Applicant Data Verification**
- ▶ **Monitoring of subgrantees**
 - ▶ **Eligibility**
 - ▶ **Correct benefits provided**
 - ▶ **File completeness**
 - ▶ **Accessibility**
 - ▶ **Fiscal practices**
- ▶ **Fraud Procedures**

Program Performance

- **Is data collection centralized or decentralized?**
 - Centralized public assistance systems containing LIHEAP
 - Centralized LIHEAP systems
 - Centralized systems containing LIHEAP , Weatherization, and/or CSBG
 - Decentralized systems that compile local data manually
 - Spreadsheets
- **Main concerns**
 - Accuracy and accountability
 - Adaptability to changing reporting requirements
 - Grant funds management
 - Privacy/security

Program Performance(continued)

- ▶ **Reporting (OLDC)**
 - ▶ **Keep password active**
 - ▶ **Model/State Plan Due Sept 1**
 - ▶ **HHS monitors based on what you put in your Plan**
 - ▶ **Use the Clone feature to save time on data entry of previous year data(AT-2015-03)**

Program Performance(continued)

➤ Reporting (OLDC)

➤ Household Report

- Detail assistance included in your State's Plan, particularly LIHEAP funds transferred for Weatherization purposes;
- Ensure data collection systems are adequate;
- Utilize warning messages to fix data errors before submission to ACF; and
- Include adequate notation in reporting on LIHEAP households assisted with home energy repair or replacement and Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) nominal payments
- Contact HHS before submitting the LIHEAP Household Report Long Form to OLDC after the deadline

Program Performance(continued)

➤ Reporting (OLDC)

➤ LIHEAP Performance Data Form Due Feb 4

- Grantee Survey

- LIHEAP Performance Measures

- Other Measures

➤ Carryover and Re-allotment Due Aug 1

➤ Quarterly Allocation Estimates

➤ Federal Financial Report Due Dec 31

➤ Leveraging Report

Vendor Agreements

- **Agreements protect the interests of all parties**
- **In place for every vendor?**
- **What are the lengths of the agreements?**
- **Enforce agreements?**

Allocation of funds among components

- ▶ **Priorities?? Prevent disconnections vs. Reconnections?**
 - ▶ **Refer to Budget Discussion**

Policy Advisory Committee

- **Bring in stakeholders**
- **Direct feedback on State Plan**
- **Transparency fosters trust and cooperation**
- **Pseudo staff(Get stakeholders to do some gratis work for you)**
- **Fresh ideas**

Public Hearings

- ▶ **How do you publish your Plan?**
 - ▶ State website
 - ▶ Local agency websites
 - ▶ State Library
 - ▶ Reception Desk at your State agency
 - ▶ Others?
- ▶ **Ensure any public copies are clearly marked as drafts before the Plan is published for the hearing**

Furnace assistance

- **Priority**
- **How much funding?**
- **Cost Limits**
- **Furnace assistance program dates**
- **Timely install and verification**
- **Inspection?**

Cooling

- **Priority**
- **Funding**
- **Benefit level(varied or flat)**
- **AC units**
 - **Central AC or window units**
 - **Voucher**
 - **Install(Owner or state responsibility)**

Appliances

- Refrigerators
- Freezers
- Ranges

Customer Service

➤ Targeted Outreach

- IL partnered with Disability organization to ensure all intake sites were accessible and compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act

➤ Communication is the key

- Clear instructions for application requirements
- Clear and timely decisions on eligibility determination
- Consistency

Special projects

- **Percentage of Income Payment Program(PIPP)**
- **Others**

Interaction with legislators

- **Reporting**
- **Assist advocates with data when seeking additional funding or revised consumer protection legislation**

Funding Sources

- **LIHEAP**
- **State funds**
- **Ratepayer Funds**
- **Charitable**
- **Other**

Partnerships

- **States/Tribes**
- **CAAs/CSBG/WAP**
- **Local Govt**
- **Utilities**
- **Energy Vendors**

**Could you use a little Philosophical
Friday in your life?**



Questions?

If you have questions or need more information, please contact NEADA and we will make sure your question is referred to the correct person and answered promptly.

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