

Oglala Lakota Nation

LIHEAP Policy Manual

Revised 08-2016

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Section 1 - Definitions

Vulnerable population – Elders, children and handicapped

Benefit – Amount received

Benefit level – amount calculation of benefit

Regular benefit – first amount received by LIHEAP

Crisis – assistance in a difficult or dangerous situation

Income – an individual's earned/unearned income

Earned income – to come to be by working or earning income

Unearned income – not earned by working

Matrix – used to determine benefit amount

Eligible – able to receive something

Ineligible – not qualified to receive benefit

Certification – the act of making something official, official approval

Weatherization – to make better, protected against inclement weather

Tracking – process of application

Section 2 – Types of Assistance

There are four types of assistance that we provide to eligible Tribal households which are; **heating, cooling, crisis, and weatherization**, all are based on availability of funds for that fiscal year. Priority is based on Elderly, Disabled, households with Children, and households with high energy burdens. The timeframe for the assistance are:

Heating: October - March

Cooling: May – August

Weatherization: October – August

We provide plastic, screen, caulking, glass for broken windows, hot water heaters, fans and air conditioners in the summer and heaters in the winter. This assistance is prioritized to Elders, families with Children and disabled.

Crisis: May - August

Assistance is provided when a household already received assistance and is disconnected or on the verge of disconnection or out of propane. The response for life-threatening is deemed priority and the staff will act immediately, we have a network of available resources that we contact if the amount needed to reconnect is greater than the benefit. It is documented by the staff member receiving the call or if they come in person.

The number of benefits that an eligible household can receive is:

1. Regular benefit
2. Crisis benefit
3. Weatherization

Section 3 – Intake Process

The LIHEAP staff schedules and notifies all nine district Service Centers of the dates and times when the staff will be in each of the locations. A public service announcement (PSA) will also be sent to the local radio station (KILI) to be aired throughout the time designated to remind Tribal membership of the dates and times.

LIHEAP applications can be mailed to the office, but faxed applications are prohibited because of the risk of it **not** being sent to the right office and confidentiality will be breached.

LIHEAP applications can be taken to the local Service Center with (HIPPA) certified staff, they in turn forward them to the LIHEAP office.

The LIHEAP staff or the Service Center staff can take and complete applications to the home bound members in their districts.

The eligible client must receive the regular benefit before requesting a crisis benefit.

Section 4 – Determination of Eligibility

The Oglala Lakota Nation LIHEAP serves Bennett, Jackson and Oglala Lakota Counties, Tribal membership in those counties are encouraged to apply. The income threshold utilized by the Tribe is the 75% and 150 % (FPG) Federal Poverty Guidelines to define countable income. The formula used to calculate countable income is based on the type of income (weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, semi-annual, or annually), the amount as well as the household size. (See Matrix).

Eligibility for Crisis is determined after they have been approved for assistance and received their regular assistance. The data on the application captures medical conditions that requires electricity for CPAP machines or home dialysis patients as well as children on nebulizers.

If a disconnection or shut-off notice is presented to us at the time of intake of application, first we certify the application to determine eligibility, if they are, we immediately research the situation by calling the Company to verify payments by customer. Once a crisis is determined, we identify the amount required to stay on or reconnect, we proceed with the **Guarantee to Pay**, if the amount is greater than the benefit, we contact other available Tribal resources to assist with additional assistance required to stay connected or get re-connected. The LIHEAP program follows the Tribal Financial Management System process for checks to vendors that can be timely, so the Guarantee to Pay is accepted by our vendors and it assures immediate services to the client.

Section 5 – Required Documents

The required documentation needed to receive assistance is

- a complete application with all required social security numbers and birthdates,
- income verification of all family members over the age of 18 wages, tanf, ssi, ssa, va, unemployment, pension
- utility receipt with head of household name on the ticket
- housing calculation sheet (if necessary)
- medical statement (if necessary)

Section 6 – Benefit Determination and Tracking

Once an application is complete, an amount is determined by the approved Matrix document. The LIHEAP staff will inform the client of the amount that was approved and provides them with a certification of approved amount, vendor information and informs the client of when the benefit will go into effect. The application is designed for staff to document received and track all benefits received.

The computerized data base is also designed for the information collected on the application for better and accurate tracking and retrieval of information.

Section 7 – Reports & Record Keeping

The LIHEAP Director provided monthly and annual reports to the Tribal Executive Director which requires the LIHEAP staff to keep accurate record keeping.

The LIHEAP Director provides an annual Household Reports to the funding agency.

The Tribal Accountant provides the Carryover and Re-allotment and 425 financial report to the funding agency

Section 8 – Appeals

The Tribe's LIHEAP application and certification process is designed to address an appeal by providing the Client a **certification** upon completion of the application. The client immediately knows if they are ineligible and for what reason, they are told if changes arise in their household or employment situation, they can come back in before March 31st and inform the staff of the changes, the staff will recalculate the amount to determine if they meet the eligibility

A. Public Inspection of Tribal Plan

The Oglala Lakota Nation made public the notice for comments or ideas prior to the plan preparation, surveys were conducted at the annual Oglala Nation Wacipi Health Fair this year. The program attends a monthly program fair held in one of the nine districts on the reservation. At these program fairs were able to share information with interested Tribal members who visit our booth, we are exchanging information and ideas also with other programs who provide assistance, who we network with along with telephone calls we receive in the office that is documented.

Attached is a copy of the Public Notice as well as the sign in sheets and samples of the survey and comments received.