

Title 18: Human Services

Part 16: Divisions of Community Services

Part 16: Chapter 1: Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program

Rule 16.1 Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) State Plan

Source: Miss Code Annotated 43-1-2.

**LOW-INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LIHEAP) -DRAFT
DETAILED MODEL PLAN**

PUBLIC LAW 97-35, AS AMENDED

FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2024

GRANTEE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

**EIN: 64-6000807
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DIVISION OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
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PLEASE CHECK ONE: TRIBE STATE

**Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Community Services
Washington, DC 20447**

THE PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT OF 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13)
Use of this model plan is optional. However, the information requested is required in order to receive a Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) grant in years in which the grantee is not permitted to file an abbreviated plan. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and reviewing the collection of information. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Section 1

Program Components, 2605(a), 2605(b)(1) – Assurance 1, 2605(c)(1)(C)

1.1 Check which components you will operate under the LIHEAP program. (Note: You must provide information for each component designated here as requested elsewhere in this plan.)

Dates of Operation

- | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------|-----------|-----------|--------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Heating assistance | Start date: | October 1 | End date: | April 30 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Cooling assistance | Start date: | May 1 | End date: | September 30 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Crisis assistance | Start date: | October 1 | End date: | September 30 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Weatherization assistance | Start date: | | End date: | |

Estimated Funding Allocation, 2604(c), 2605(k)(1), 2605(b)(9), 2605(b)(16) – Assurances 9 and 16

1.2 Estimate what amount of available LIHEAP funds will be used for each component that you will operate: The total of all percentages must add up to 100%.

- 45 % heating assistance
- 40 % cooling assistance
- 5 % crisis assistance
- 0 % weatherization assistance
- 00 % carryover to the following Federal fiscal year
- 10 % administrative and planning costs
- 0 % services to reduce home energy needs including needs assessment (Assurance 16)
- 00 % used to develop and implement leveraging activities
- 100 % **TOTAL**

Alternate Use of Crisis Assistance Funds, 2605(c)(1)(C)

1.3 The funds reserved for winter crisis assistance that have not been expended by March 15 will be reprogrammed to:

- Heating assistance
- Weatherization assistance
- Cooling assistance
- Other (specify): _____

Categorical Eligibility, 2605(b)(2)(A) – Assurance 2, 2605(c)(1)(A), 2605(b)(8A) – Assurance 8

1.4 Do you consider households categorically eligible if one household member receives one of the following categories of benefits in the left column below? Yes No

	Heating	Cooling	Crisis	Weatherization
SNAP				
TANF				
SSI				
Means-tested veteran's program				
Other (Specify): _____				

1.5 Do you automatically enroll households without a direct annual application?

- Yes No -- If yes, explain:

1.6 How do you ensure there is no difference in the treatment of categorically eligible households from those not receiving other public assistance when determining eligibility and benefit amounts?

The benefit matrix determines benefit amounts and does not consider categorically eligible households.

SNAP Nominal Payments

1.7a Do you allocate LIHEAP funds toward a nominal payment for SNAP households?

Yes No

If you answered “Yes” to question 1.7a, you must provide a response to questions 1.7b, 1.7c, and 1.7d.

1.7b Amount of Minimal Assistance: \$ _____

1.7c Frequency of Assistance:

Once per year

Once every five years

Other (describe): _____

1.7d How do you confirm that the household receiving a nominal payment has an energy cost or need?

Determination of Eligibility – Countable Income

1.8 In determining a household’s income eligibility for LIHEAP, do you use gross income or net income?

Gross Income

Net Income

1.9 Select all of the applicable forms of countable income used to determine a household’s income eligibility for LIHEAP.

Wages

Self-employment income

Contract income

Payments from mortgage or sales contracts

Unemployment Insurance

Strike pay

- Social Security Administration (SSA) benefits
 - Including MediCare deduction Excluding MediCare deduction
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Retirement / pension benefits
- General Assistance benefits
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits
- Women, Infants, and Children Supplemental Nutrition Program (WIC) benefits
- Loans that need to be repaid
- Cash gifts
- Savings account balance
- One-time lump-sum payments, such as rebates/credits, winnings from lotteries, refund deposits, etc.
- Jury duty compensation
- Rental income
- Income from employment through Workforce Investment Act (WIA)
- Income from work study programs
- Alimony
- Child support
- Interest, dividends, or royalties
- Commissions
- Legal settlements
- Insurance payments made directly to the insured
- Insurance payments made specifically for the repayment of a bill, debt, or estimate

- Veterans Administration (VA) benefits
- Earned income of a child under the age of 18
- Balance of retirement, pension, or annuity accounts where funds cannot be withdrawn without a penalty.
- Income tax refunds
- Stipends from senior companion programs, such as VISTA
- Funds received by household for the care of a foster child
- Ameri-Corp Program payments for living allowances, earnings, and in-kind aid.
- Reimbursements (for mileage, gas, lodging, meals, etc.)
- Other

Section 2 - HEATING ASSISTANCE

Eligibility, 2605(b)(2) – Assurance 2

2.1 Designate the income eligibility threshold used for the heating component:

FY 2023 state’s median income 60 % for all Household sizes

2.2 Do you have additional eligibility requirements for **HEATING ASSISTANCE**?

Yes No

2.3 Check the appropriate boxes below and describe the policies for each.

- | | <u>Yes</u> | <u>No</u> |
|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ● Do you require an assets test? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| ● Do you have additional/differing eligibility policies for: | | |
| ● Renters? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| ● Renters living in subsidized housing? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| ● Renters with utilities included in the rent? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| ● Do you give priority in eligibility to: | | |
| ● Elderly? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ● Disabled? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ● Young children? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ● Households with high energy burdens? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ● Other? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Explanations of policies for each “yes’ checked above:

See Eligibility and Benefit Determination Attachment.

The applicant should provide either a copy of their lease; a notarized statement from the landlord detailing the heating/cooling arrangement with the client; or contract with the landlord that verifies the heating/cooling arrangement that the landlord has with the

household. Persons/households residing in public/subsidized housing dwelling unless their rent/mortgage includes utilities and they are not being billed separately for energy cost.

Determination of Benefits, 2605(b)(5) – Assurance 5, 2605(c)(1)(B)

- 2.4 Describe how you prioritize the provision of heating assistance to vulnerable households, e.g., benefit amounts, application period, etc.

Recertification for vulnerable households (elderly, disabled, families with small children, or veterans) will be done during the first month of the program year.

- 2.5 Check the variables you use to determine your benefit levels. (Check all that apply):

Income

Family (household) size

Home energy cost or need:

Fuel type

Climate/region

Individual bill

Dwelling type

Energy burden (% of income spent on home energy)

Energy need

Other (Describe)

See the LIHEAP Benefit Matrix Attachment. The benefit matrix has maximum amounts. The amounts of the client's bills can be paid up to the maximum amount. We do not place a minimum on the benefit matrix because the amount of the bill is paid.

Benefit Levels, 2605(b)(5) – Assurance 5, 2605(c)(1)(B)

2.6 Describe benefit levels:

\$ 1.00 Minimum benefit \$ 1,500 Maximum benefit

Total benefit for year (can be divided between heating, cooling or crisis).

2.7 Do you provide in-kind (e.g., blankets, space heaters) and/or other forms of benefits?

Yes No -- If yes, describe.

Blankets, coats, heating systems, furnaces and other heating, energy-related materials/services may be provided depending on need.

Section 3: COOLING ASSISTANCE

Eligibility, 2605(c)(1)(A), 2605(b)(2) – Assurance 2

3.1 Designate the income eligibility threshold used for the cooling component:

FY 2023 state median income 60 % for all Household sizes

3.2 Do you have additional eligibility requirements for **COOLING ASSISTANCE**

Yes No

3.3 Check the appropriate boxes below and describe the policies for each.

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
● Do you require an assets test?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
● Do you have additional/differing eligibility policies for:		
● Renters?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
● Renters living in subsidized housing?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
● Renters with utilities included in the rent?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
● Do you give priority in eligibility to:		
● Elderly?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
● Disabled?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
● Young children?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
● Households with high energy burdens?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
● Other?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Explanations of policies for each “yes” checked above:

See Eligibility and Benefit Determination Attachment.

The applicant should provide either a copy of their lease; a notarized statement from the landlord detailing the heating/cooling arrangement with the client; or contract with the landlord that verifies the heating/cooling arrangement that the landlord has with the

household. Persons/households residing in public/subsidized housing dwelling unless their rent/mortgage includes utilities and they are not being billed separately for energy cost.

- 3.4 Describe how you prioritize the provision of cooling assistance to vulnerable households, e.g., benefit amounts, application period, etc.

Recertification for vulnerable households (elderly, disabled, families with small children, or veterans) will be done during the first month of the program year.

Determination of Benefits, 2605(b)(5) – Assurance 5, 2605(c)(1)(B)

- 3.5 Check the variables you use to determine your benefit levels. (Check all that apply):

Income

Family (household) size

Home energy cost or need

Fuel type

Climate/region

Individual bill

Dwelling type

Energy burden (% of income spent on home energy)

Energy need

Other (describe)

See the LIHEAP Benefit Matrix Attachment. The benefit matrix has maximum amounts. The amounts of the client's bills can be paid up to the maximum amount. We do not place a minimum on the benefit matrix because the amount of the bill is paid.

Benefit Levels, 2605(b)(5) – Assurance 5, 2605(c)(1)(B)

- 3.6 Describe benefit levels:

\$ 1.00 Minimum benefit \$ * 1,500 Maximum benefit

Total benefit for year (can be divided between heating, cooling or crisis).

3.7 Do you provide in-kind (e.g. fans, air conditioners) and/or other forms of benefits?

Yes No -- If yes, describe.

Fans, air conditioners, cooling systems and other cooling energy-related service may be provided depending on need.

Section 4: CRISIS ASSISTANCE

Eligibility - 2604(c), 2605(c)(1)(A)

4.1 Designate the income eligibility threshold used for the crisis component:

FY 2023 state median income 60 % for all Household sizes

4.2 Provide your LIHEAP program’s definition for determining a crisis.

See Crisis & Emergency Services Attachment

4.3 What constitutes a life-threatening crisis?

See Crisis & Emergency Services Attachment. For declared natural disasters, the State will use LIHEAP funds to provide emergency housing for eligible households for up to five days to remove the household from the emergency situation. Households will be referred to other programs such as CSBG and state/local resources to provide other emergency needs to include housing/food/clothing if the home is inhabitable.

Crisis Requirements, 2604(c)

4.4 Within how many hours do you provide crisis assistance that will resolve the energy crisis for eligible households? 48 Hours

4.5 Within how many hours do you provide crisis assistance that will resolve the energy crisis for eligible households in life-threatening situations? 18 Hours

Crisis Eligibility, 2605(c)(1)(A)

4.6 Do you have additional eligibility requirements for **CRISIS ASSISTANCE**?

Yes No

4.7 Check the appropriate boxes below and describe the policies for each.

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
● Do you require an assets test?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
● Do you give priority in eligibility to:		
• Elderly?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Disabled?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Young children?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- Households with high energy burdens?
- Other?
- In order to receive crisis assistance:
 - Must the household have received a shut-off notice or have a near empty tank?
 - Must the household have been shut off or have an empty tank?
 - Must the household have exhausted their regular heating benefit?
 - Must renters with heating costs included in their rent have received an eviction notice?
 - Must heating/cooling be medically necessary?
 - Must the household have non-working heating or cooling equipment?
 - Other?
- Do you have additional/differing eligibility policies for:
 - Renters?
 - Renters living in subsidized housing?
 - Renters with utilities included in the rent?

Explanations of policies for each “yes” checked above:

See Eligibility and Benefit Determination Attachment.

The applicant should provide either a copy of their lease; a notarized statement from the landlord detailing the heating/cooling arrangement with the client; or contract with the landlord that verifies the heating/cooling arrangement that the landlord has with the household. Persons/households residing in public/subsidized housing dwelling unless their rent/mortgage includes utilities, and they are not being billed separately for energy cost.

Determination of Benefits

4.8 How do you handle crisis situations?

Separate component

Fast Track

Other

4.9 If you have a separate component, how do you determine crisis assistance benefits?

Amount to resolve crisis, up to a maximum of \$1,500 depending on the Benefits Matrix amount for the household. See the LIHEAP Benefit Matrix attachment.

Other

Crisis Requirements, 2604(c)

4.10 Do you accept applications for energy crisis assistance at sites that are geographically accessible to all households in the area to be served?

Yes No

4.11 Do you provide individuals who are physically disabled the means to:

■ Submit applications for crisis benefits without leaving their homes?

Yes No If yes, explain.

Case Workers may conduct home visits or they can authorize someone to make an application on their behalf.

■ Travel to the sites at which applications for crisis assistance are accepted?

Yes No If yes, explain.

Benefit Levels, 2605(c)(1)(B)

4.12 Indicate the maximum benefit for each type of crisis assistance offered.

Winter Crisis \$_____ maximum benefit

Summer Crisis \$_____ maximum benefit

Year-round Crisis \$ *1,500 maximum benefit

Total benefit for year (can be divided between heating, cooling, or crisis).

4.13 Do you provide in-kind (e.g. blankets, space heaters, fans) and/or other forms of benefits?

Yes No If yes, describe.

Blankets, coats, heating systems, furnaces and other heating, energy-related materials/services may be provided during the winter. Fans, air conditioners, cooling systems, and other cooling energy-related services may be provided during the summer.

4.14 Do you provide for equipment repair or replacement using crisis funds?

Yes No

4.15 Check appropriate boxes below to indicate type(s) of assistance provided:

	Winter Crisis	Summer Crisis	Year-round Crisis
Heating system repair			X
Heating system replacement			X
Cooling system repair			X
Cooling system replacement			X
Wood stove purchase			X
Pellet stove purchase			
Solar panel(s)			
Windmill(s)			
Utility poles / Gas line hook-ups			X
Other (Specify): <u>Meter Bases, Propane Tank Installation/removable</u> Intervention for vulnerable households can be done until the repair or replacement of units can be completed. Emergency housing in cases of extreme heat or cold, or federal/state declared disaster can be provided up to five days until crisis is solved. Meter bases on homes may be repaired or replaced.			X

4.16 Do any of the utility vendors you work with enforce a winter moratorium on shut offs?

Yes No

4.17 Describe the terms of the moratorium and any special dispensation received by LIHEAP clients during or after the moratorium period.

If as of 8:00 a.m. on the day of a scheduled non-pay disconnect, an excessive heat warning or a freeze warning has been issued by the National Weather Service for the county of the scheduled disconnect, such disconnects are suspended.

Section 5: WEATHERIZATION ASSISTANCE**Eligibility, 2605(c)(1)(A), 2605(b)(2) – Assurance 2**

5.1 Designate the income eligibility threshold used for the weatherization component:

HHS poverty income level _____% for all Household sizes

5.2 Do you enter into an interagency agreement to have another government agency administer a **WEATHERIZATION component**? Yes No

5.3 Name the agency. _____

5.4 Is there a separate monitoring protocol for weatherization? Yes No

WEATHERIZATION - Types of Rules

5.5 Under what rules do you administer LIHEAP weatherization? (Check only one.)

Entirely under LIHEAP (not DOE) rules

Entirely under DOE WAP (not LIHEAP) rules

Mostly under LIHEAP rules with the following DOE WAP rule(s) where LIHEAP and WAP rules differ: (Check all that apply.)

Income Threshold

Weatherization of entire multi-family housing structure is permitted if at least 66% of units (50% in 2- & 4-unit buildings) are eligible units or will become eligible within 180 days.

Weatherization of shelters temporarily housing primarily low income persons (excluding nursing homes, prisons, and similar institutional care facilities) is permitted.

Other (describe)

Mostly under DOE WAP rules, with the following LIHEAP rule(s) where LIHEAP and WAP rules differ: (Check all that apply.)

Income Threshold

Weatherization not subject to DOE WAP maximum statewide average cost per dwelling unit.

Weatherization measures are not subject to DOE Savings to Investment Ratio (SIR) standards.

Other (describe)

Eligibility, 2605(b)(5) – Assurance 5

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
5.6 Do you require an assets test?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.7 Do you have additional/differing eligibility policies for:		
• Renters?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Renters living in subsidized housing?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.8 Do you give priority in eligibility to:		
• Elderly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Disabled?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Young children?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Households with high energy burdens?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Other?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you selected "Yes" for any of the options in questions 5.6, 5.7, or 5.8, you must provide further explanation of these policies in the text field below.

Benefit Levels

5.9 Do you have a maximum LIHEAP weatherization benefit/expenditure per household?

Yes No

5.10 What is the maximum amount? \$ _____

Types of Assistance, 2605(c)(1), (B) & (D)

5.11 What LIHEAP weatherization measures do you provide? (Check all categories that apply.)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Weatherization needs assessments/audits | <input type="checkbox"/> Major appliance repairs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Caulking and insulation | <input type="checkbox"/> Major appliance replacement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Install storm windows | <input type="checkbox"/> Install windows/sliding glass doors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Furnace/Heating system modifications/repairs | <input type="checkbox"/> Install doors (interior/exterior) (<i>if broken</i>) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Furnace replacement | <input type="checkbox"/> Install water heater |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cooling system modifications/repairs | <input type="checkbox"/> Water conservation measures |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cooling system replacement | <input type="checkbox"/> Compact florescent light bulbs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy related roof repair | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (describe) |

Section 6: Outreach, 2605(b)(3) – Assurance 3, 2605(c)(3)(A)

6.1 Select all outreach activities that you conduct that are designed to assure that eligible households are made aware of all LIHEAP assistance available:

Place posters/flyers in local and county social service offices, offices of aging, Social Security offices, VA, etc.

Publish articles in local newspapers or broadcast media announcements.

Include inserts in energy vendor billings to inform individuals of the availability of all types of LIHEAP assistance.

Mass mailing(s) to prior-year LIHEAP recipients.

Inform low income applicants of the availability of all types of LIHEAP assistance at application intake for other low-income programs.

Execute interagency agreements with other low-income program offices to perform outreach to target groups.

Other (specify):

Section 7: Coordination, 2605(b)(4) – Assurance 4

7.1 Describe how you will ensure that the LIHEAP program is coordinated with other programs available to low-income households (TANF, SSI, WAP, etc.)

- Joint application for multiple programs
- Intake referrals to/from other programs
- One-stop intake centers
- Other – describe:

See Coordination of LIHEAP Activities Attachment

The State has one application for four programs – LIHEAP, CSBG, LIHWAP and Weatherization. Therefore, an application may apply for all programs during the intake process. If the weatherization agency is different from the LIHEAP agency, the LIHEAP agency refers to the weatherization agency to complete the assessment for this program. Local agencies offer all programs administered by that agency, especially to the vulnerable populations of elderly, disabled, families with children, and veterans. Local agencies refer applicants to other local offices such as SNAP and TANF if applicant is not currently receiving these services.

Also, the department has the Common Web Portal (CWP), households can apply for LIHEAP when they apply for SNAP and Medicaid.

Section 8: Agency Designation, 2605(b)(6) – Assurance 6

8.1 How would you categorize the primary responsibility of your State agency?

- Administration Agency
- Commerce Agency
- Community Services Agency
- Energy/Environment Agency
- Housing Agency
- Welfare Agency
- Other – describe:

Alternate Outreach and Intake, 2605(b)(15) – Assurance 15

8.2 How do you provide alternate outreach and intake for **HEATING ASSISTANCE**?

The State Agency also administers the State Welfare Program; however, different divisions administer the LIHEAP and Welfare Programs. The Division of Community Services partners with the Division of Economic Assistance, Division of Child Support, and other divisions within the agency to ensure that low-income elderly, disabled families have access to all eligible services. All eighty-two counties across the state are serviced by qualified Case Manager/Caseworkers that provide outreach and intake services. The typical hours of operation for eligible entities are Monday-Friday from 7:30 am – 6:00 pm.

8.3 How do you provide alternate outreach and intake for **COOLING ASSISTANCE**?

The State Agency also administers the State Welfare Program; however, different divisions administer the LIHEAP and Welfare Programs. The Division of Community Services partners with the Division of Economic Assistance, Division of Child Support, and other divisions within the agency to ensure that low-income elderly, disabled families have access to all eligible services. All eighty-two counties across the state are serviced by qualified Case Manager/Caseworkers that provide outreach and intake services. The typical hours of operations for eligible entities are Monday – Friday from 7:30 am – 6:00 pm.

8.4 How do you provide alternate outreach and intake for **CRISIS ASSISTANCE**?

The State Agency also administers the State Welfare Program, however, different divisions administer the LIHEAP and Welfare Programs. The Division of Community Services

partners with the Division of Economic Assistance, Division of Child Support and other divisions within the agency to ensure that low-income elderly, disabled families have access to all eligible services. All eighty-two counties across the state are serviced by qualified Case Manager/Caseworkers that provide outreach and intake services. The typical hours of operations for eligible entities are Monday – Friday from 7:30 am – 6:00 pm.

8.5. LIHEAP Component Administration.

	<u>Heating</u>	<u>Cooling</u>	<u>Crisis</u>	<u>Weatherization</u>
8.5a: Who determines client eligibility?	CAA	CAA	CAA	N/A
8.5b: Who processes benefit payments to gas and electric vendors?	CAA	CAA	CAA	N/A
8.5c: Who processes benefit payments to bulk fuel vendors?	CAA	CAA	CAA	N/A
8.5d: Who performs installation of weatherization measures?	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

8.6 What is your process for selecting local administering agencies?

We have chosen agencies based on prior experience administering similar programs such as CSBG. The State sends the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) to local agencies to respond and submit a subgrant proposal for review. The subgrant is reviewed by the Division of Community Services and Division of Procurement Services and AGs Office to ensure all fiscal and programmatic requirements are met. The subgrant is sent to the Executive Director’s office for signature after division reviews have been completed and approved.

8.7 How many local administering agencies do you use?

17

8.8 Have you changed any local administering agencies from last year?

Yes No

8.9 Why?

- Agency was in noncompliance with grantee requirements for LIHEAP
- Agency is under criminal investigation
- Added agency

Agency closed

Other – describe:

Section 9: Energy Suppliers, 2605(b)(7) – Assurance 7

9.1 Do you make payments directly to home energy suppliers?

Heating Yes No

Cooling Yes No

Crisis Yes No

Are there exceptions? Yes No

If yes, describe.

9.2 How do you notify the client of the amount of assistance paid?

Agencies must provide written notification to clients regarding the status of their application within 72 hours of approval for services. The notification letter must be scanned into Virtual ROMA and a copy placed into client's file. In the case of an emergency, this notification should occur within 24 hours of application for services. The person who approves the application in Virtual ROMA should generate the letter.

If a client's application is denied, the agency must provide written explanation with the reason for the denial. The Fair Hearing Process must be included in the letter sent to the client. The person who denies the application in Virtual ROMA should generate the letter.

9.3 How do you assure that the home energy supplier will charge the eligible household, in the normal billing process, the difference between the actual cost of the home energy and the amount of the payment?

Vendor Agreements the CAA has with the energy supplier provides this assurance.

9.4 How do you assure that no household receiving assistance under this title will be treated adversely because of their receipt of LIHEAP assistance?

Vendor Agreements the CAA has with the energy supplier provides this assurance.

9.5 Do you make payments contingent on unregulated vendors taking appropriate measures to alleviate the energy burdens of eligible households?

Yes No. If so, describe the measures unregulated vendors may take.

Section 10: Program, Fiscal Monitoring, and Audit, 2605(b)(10) – Assurance 10

10.1. How do you ensure good fiscal accounting and tracking of LIHEAP funds?

See Fiscal Accounting and Tracking Requirements attachment.

Audit Process

10.2. Is your LIHEAP program audited annually under the Single Audit Act and OMB Circular A-133?

Yes No

10.3. Describe any audit findings rising to the level of material weakness or reportable condition cited in the A-133 audits, Grantee monitoring assessments, inspector general reviews, or other government agency reviews of the LIHEAP agency from the most recently audited federal fiscal year.

Finding	Type	Brief Summary	Resolved?	Action Taken
1	<i>Financial</i>	<i>Strengthen controls to ensure proper review processes for financial reporting.</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Procedure/Policy changes</i>
2				
3				
4				
5				

10.4. Audits of Local Administering Agencies

- What types of annual audit requirements do you have in place for local administering agencies/district offices?
 - Local agencies/district offices are required to have an annual audit in compliance with the Single Audit Act and OMB Circular A-133.
 - Local agencies/district offices are required to have an annual audit (other than A-133).
 - Local agencies/district offices' A-133 or other independent audits are reviewed by Grantee as part of compliance process.

- Grantee conducts fiscal and program monitoring of local agencies/district offices.

Compliance Monitoring

10.5. Describe the Grantee's strategies for monitoring compliance with the Grantee's and Federal LIHEAP policies and procedures by:

Grantee employees:

- Internal program review
- Departmental oversight
- Secondary review of invoices and payments
- Other program review mechanisms are in place. Describe:

Local Administering Agencies/District Offices:

- On-site evaluation
- Annual program review
- Monitoring through Central Database
- Desk reviews
- Client File Testing/Sampling
- Other program review mechanisms are in place. Describe:

10.6. Explain, or attach a copy of, your local agency monitoring schedule and protocol.

See MDHS Division of Monitoring and DCS (T&TA) attachment

10.7. Describe how you select local agencies for monitoring reviews?

Site Visits: *All are monitored.*

Desk Reviews: *Monthly financial and program reports are reviewed.*

10.8. How often is each local agency monitored?

Bi-annually

10.9. What is the combined error rate for eligibility determinations? (OPTIONAL)

10.10. What is the combined error rate for benefit determinations? (OPTIONAL)

10.11. How many local agencies are currently on corrective action plans for eligibility and/or benefit determination issues?

None

10.12. How many local agencies are currently on corrective action plans for financial accounting or administrative issues?

None

Section 11: Timely and Meaningful Public Participation, 2605(b)(12) – Assurance 12, 2605(c)(2)

11.1 How did you obtain input from the public in the development of your LIHEAP plan?
Check all that apply:

- Tribal Council meeting(s)
- Public Hearing(s)
- Draft Plan posted to website and available for comment
- Hard copy of plan is available for public view and comment
- Comments from applicants are recorded
- Request for comments on draft Plan is advertised (in the Legal Notice)
- Stakeholder consultation meeting(s)
- Comments are solicited during outreach activities
- Other, describe: Draft plan posted by the Secretary of State’s Office for public view and comments. Draft plan is reviewed by DHS Compliance Division.

11.2 What changes did you make to your LIHEAP plan as a result of this participation?

Will update after hearing.

Public Hearings, 2605(a)(2)

11.3 List the date(s) and location(s) that you held public hearing(s) on the proposed use and distribution of your LIHEAP funds?

Date	Event Description
June 27, 2023	Mississippi Department of Human Services, 200 South Lamar St., Jackson, MS 39201, “Zoom Meeting”

11.4 How many parties commented on your plan at the hearing(s)?

Will update after hearing.

11.5 Summarize the comments you received at the hearing(s).

Will update after hearing.

11.6 What changes did you make to your LIHEAP plan as a result of the public hearing(s)?

Will update after hearing.

Section 12: Fair Hearings, 2605(b)(13) – Assurance 13

12.1 How many fair hearings did the grantee have in the prior Federal fiscal year?

None

12.2 How many of those fair hearings resulted in the initial decision being reversed?

None

12.3 Describe any policy and/or procedural changes made in the last Federal fiscal year as a result of fair hearings?

None

12.4 Describe your fair hearing procedures for households whose applications are denied.

See Fair Hearing Policy Attachment

12.5 When and how are applicants informed of these rights?

Clients are informed of the Fair Hearing Process during intake process at the CAA. Upon intake and denial of services, a copy of the Fair Hearing Process is given or will be mailed with the denial letter to the applicant. The process for fair hearings is clearly posted in county offices. The Fair Hearing process is posted on Virtual ROMA so applicants have access during CWP process.

12.6 Describe your fair hearing procedures for households whose applications are not acted on in a timely manner.

See Fair Hearing Policy Attachment

12.7 When and how are applicants informed of these rights?

Clients are given a copy of the Fair Hearing Process during intake process at the CAA. Upon denial of services, a copy of the Fair Hearing Process is given or will be mailed with the denial letter to the applicant. The process for fair hearings is clearly posted in county offices. The Fair Hearing process is posted on Virtual ROMA so applicants have access during CWP process.

Section 13: Reduction of home energy needs, 2605(b)(16) – Assurance 16

13.1 Describe how you use LIHEAP funds to provide services that encourage and enable households to reduce their home energy needs and thereby the need for energy assistance?

N/A

13.2 How do you ensure that you don't use more than 5% of your LIHEAP funds for these activities?

N/A

13.3 Describe the impact of such activities on the number of households served in the previous Federal fiscal year.

N/A

13.4 Describe the level of direct benefits provided to those households in the previous Federal fiscal year.

N/A

13.5 How many households applied for these services?

0

13.6 How many households received these services?

0

Section 14: Leveraging Incentive Program, 2607A

14.1 Do you plan to submit an application for the leveraging incentive program?

Yes No

14.2 Describe instructions to the third parties and/or local agencies for submitting LIHEAP leveraging resource information and retaining records.

The State shall participate in the LIHEAP Leveraging Program. The State and local subgrantees will solicit non-federal dollars in order to qualify to compete for leveraging incentive funds. Several organizations, individuals, etc. will be contacted to make cash and in-kind contributions, such as discounts, arrearage forgiveness, fuel funds, credit, volunteer, WX materials, waivers: disconnections, deposits, and reconnect fees, etc. * Leveraged resources/benefits that are counted under criterion (iii) in 45 CFR 96.87(d)(2) must be identified and described in the grantees LIHEAP plan and distributed as indicated in the plan. In addition, leveraging resources/benefits that are counted under criterion (ii) must be carried out under one or more components of the grantee's regular LIHEAP program.

14.3 For each type of resource and/or benefit to be leveraged in the upcoming year that will meet the requirements of 45 C.F.R. § 96.87(d)(2)(iii), describe the following:

Resource	What is the type of resource or benefit?	What is the source(s) of the resource?	How will the resource be integrated and coordinated with the LIHEAP program?
1	<i>Cash and in-kind contributions, such as discounts, arrearage forgiveness, fuel funds, credit, volunteer, WX materials, waivers: disconnections, deposits, and reconnect fees, etc.</i>	<i>Several organizations, individuals</i>	<i>The State coordinates leveraging with the LIHEAP program to provide consumer education with our clients to encourage them to conserve energy and the disadvantages of getting services interrupted. Leveraging resources also provide additional services to more clients in LIHEAP. Coordination also compliments our budget program in LIHEAP to allow clients to better manage resources.</i>
2	<i>Private sources</i>	<i>Entergy Helping Hands</i>	<i>Partnerships donated funds to pay energy related bills</i>

**Leveraged resources/benefits that are counted under criterion (iii) in 45 CFR 96.87(d)(2) must be identified and described in the grantees LIHEAP plan and distributed as indicated in the plan. In addition, leveraging resources/benefits that are counted under criterion (ii) must be carried out under one or more components of the grantee's regular LIHEAP program*

Section 15: Training

15.1. Describe the training you provide for each of the following groups:

a. Grantee Staff:

Formal training on grantee policies and procedures

How often?

Annually

Biannually

As needed

Other – Describe:

Employees are provided with policy manual

Other – Describe:

b. Local Agencies:

Formal training conference

How often?

Annually

Biannually

As needed

Other – Describe:

On-site training

How often?

Annually

Biannually

As needed

Other – Describe:

Employees are provided with policy manual

Other – Describe:

c. Vendors

Formal training conference

How often?

Annually

Biannually

As needed

Other – Describe:

Policies communicated through vendor agreements

Policies are outlined in a vendor manual

Other – Describe:

15.2. Does your training program address fraud reporting and prevention?

Yes

No

Section 16: Performance Goals and Measures, 2605(b)

- 16.1 Describe your progress toward meeting the data collection and reporting requirements of the four required LIHEAP performance measures. Include timeframes and plans for meeting these requirements and what you believe will be accomplished in the coming federal fiscal year.

The State of MS has updated its centralized client tracking system (Virtual ROMA 2- VR 2) to capture, analyze and submit information regarding energy burden, targeting, restoration/prevention of loss of home energy service. The State successfully submits the LIHEAP Performance Measures Report. We continue to work with APPRISE to analyze report and use data to enhance the LIHEAP program.

Section 17: Program Integrity, 2605(b)(10)**17.1 Fraud Reporting Mechanisms**

- a. Describe all mechanisms available to the public for reporting cases of suspected waste, fraud, and abuse.

Online Fraud Reporting

Dedicated Fraud Reporting Hotline

Report directly to local agency/district office or Grantee office

Report to State Inspector General or Attorney General

Forms and procedures in place for local agencies/district offices and vendors to report fraud, waste, and abuse.

Other – describe: *Report to the MDHS – Office of Inspector General*

- b. Describe strategies in place for advertising the above-referenced resources.

Printed outreach materials

Addressed on LIHEAP application

Website - MDHS website

Other – describe:

17.2 Identification Documentation Requirements

- a. Indicate which of the following forms of identification are required or requested to be collected from LIHEAP applicants or their household members.

REQUIRED Type of Identification Collected	Collected from Whom?		
	Applicant Only	All Adults in HH	HH Members Seeking Assistance*
Social Security Card is photocopied and retained	Required <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Required <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Required <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Requested <input type="checkbox"/>	Requested <input type="checkbox"/>	Requested <input type="checkbox"/>
Social Security Number (without actual card)	Required <input type="checkbox"/>	Required <input type="checkbox"/>	Required <input type="checkbox"/>
	Requested <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Requested <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Requested <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Government-issued identification card (i.e.: driver’s license, state ID, Tribal ID, passport, etc.)	Required <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Required <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Required <input type="checkbox"/>
	Requested <input type="checkbox"/>	Requested <input type="checkbox"/>	Requested <input type="checkbox"/>
Other:	Required <input type="checkbox"/>	Required <input type="checkbox"/>	Required <input type="checkbox"/>

*Households may include members who are not seeking assistance and may not be included in the household count.

- b. Describe any exceptions to the above policies.

Exceptions for newborn children.

17.3 Identification Verification

Describe what methods are used to verify the authenticity of identification documents provided by clients or household members.

- Verify SSNs with Social Security Administration
- Match SSNs with death records from Social Security Administration or state agency
- Match SSNs with state eligibility/management system (e.g., SNAP, TANF)
- Match with state Department of Labor system
- Match with state and/or federal corrections system
- Match with state child support system
- Verification using private software (e.g., The Work Number)

- In-person certification by staff
- Match SSN/Tribal ID number with tribal database
- Other – describe:

In Person Verification

17.4 Citizenship/Legal Residency Verification

What are your procedures for ensuring that household members are U.S. citizens or aliens who are qualified to receive LIHEAP benefits?

- Clients sign an attestation of citizenship or legal residency
- Clients' submission of Social Security cards is accepted as proof of legal residency
- Noncitizens must provide documentation of immigration status
- Citizens must provide a copy of their birth certificate, naturalization papers, or passport
- Noncitizens are verified through the SAVE system
- Tribal members are verified through Tribal database/Tribal ID card
- Other – describe:

17.5 Income Verification

What methods does your agency utilize to verify household income?

- Require documentation of income for all adult household members
 - Pay stubs
 - Social Security award letters
 - Bank statements
 - Tax statements
 - Zero-income statements
 - Unemployment Insurance letters

Other – describe:

Computer data matches:

Income information matched against state computer system (e.g., SNAP, TANF)

Proof of unemployment benefits verified with state Department of Labor

Social Security income verified with SSA

Utilize state directory of new hires

Other – describe:

17.6 **Protection of Privacy and Confidentiality**

Describe the financial and operating controls in place to protect client information against improper use or disclosure.

Policy in place prohibiting release of information without written consent

Grantee LIHEAP database includes privacy/confidentiality safeguards

Employee training on confidentiality for:

Grantee employees

Local agencies/district offices

Employees must sign confidentiality agreement

Grantee employees

Local agencies/district offices

Physical files are stored in a secure location

Other – describe:

17.7 **Verifying the Authenticity of Energy Vendors**

What policies are in place for verifying vendor authenticity?

All vendors must register with the State

- All vendors must supply a valid SSN or TIN/W-9 form
- Vendors are verified through energy bills provided by the household
- Grantee and/or local agencies/district offices perform physical monitoring of vendors
- Other – describe, and note any exceptions to policies above:

17.8 **Benefits Policy – Gas and Electric Utilities**

What policies are in place to protect against fraud when making benefit payments to gas and electric utilities on behalf of clients?

- Applicants required to submit proof of physical residency
- Applicants must submit current utility bill
- Data exchange with utilities that verifies:
 - Account ownership
 - Consumption
 - Balances
 - Payment history
 - Account is properly credited with benefit
 - Other – describe:
- Centralized computer system/database tracks payments to all utilities
- Centralized computer system automatically generates benefit level
- Separation of duties between intake and payment approval
- Payments coordinated among other heating assistance programs to avoid duplication of payments
- Payments to utilities and invoices from utilities are reviewed for accuracy
- Computer databases are periodically reviewed to verify accuracy and timeliness of payments made to utilities

- Direct payment to households are made in limited cases only
- Procedures are in place to require prompt refunds from utilities in cases of account closure
- Vendor agreements specify requirements selected above, and provide enforcement mechanism
- Other – describe:

17.9 **Benefits Policy — Bulk Fuel Vendors**

What procedures are in place for averting fraud and improper payments when dealing with bulk fuel suppliers of heating oil, propane, wood, and other bulk fuel vendors?

- Vendors are checked against an approved vendors list
- Centralized computer system/database is used to track payments to all vendors
- Clients are relied on for reports of non-delivery or partial delivery
- Two-party checks are issued naming client and vendor
- Direct payment to households are made in limited cases only
- Conduct monitoring of bulk fuel vendors
- Bulk fuel vendors are required to submit reports to the Grantee
- Vendor agreements specify requirements selected above, and provide enforcement mechanism
- Other – describe:

17.10 **Investigations and Prosecutions**

Describe the Grantee's procedures for investigating and prosecuting reports of fraud, and any sanctions placed on clients/staff/vendors found to have committed fraud.

- Refer to state Inspector General
- Refer to local prosecutor or state Attorney General
- Refer to US DHHS Inspector General (including referral to OIG hotline)

Local agencies/district offices or Grantee conduct investigation of fraud complaints from public

Grantee attempts collection of improper payments. If so, describe the recoupment process.

See Waste, Fraud & Abuse Policy

Clients found to have committed fraud are banned from LIHEAP assistance. For how long is a household banned? 1 year or more

See Waste, Fraud & Abuse Policy

Contracts with local agencies require that employees found to have committed fraud are reprimanded and/or terminated

See Waste, Fraud & Abuse Policy

Vendors found to have committed fraud may no longer participate in LIHEAP

See Waste, Fraud & Abuse Policy

Other – describe:

Attachments

ATTACHMENT-TENTATIVE FFY 2024 ALLOCATIONS

(These levels are dependent on the Federal LIHEAP award at the FFY 2023 level. Adjustments will be made once the final FFY 2024 awards are known.)	
Eligible Entities	Allocation
AJFC CAA	\$1,667,529
Bolivar Co CAA	\$682,171
Central Mississippi	\$2,079,864
Coahoma Opportunities	\$485,099
Community Action of South MS	\$2,410,337
Hinds County HRA	\$1,352,215
LIFT	\$2,625,600
Madison Co. CSA	\$615,470
Mid-State Opportunities	\$1,928,270
Multi County CSA	\$2,561,931
Northeast MS	\$1,531,095
PRVO	\$4,080,898
Prairie Opportunity	\$2,380,019
South Central CAA	\$2,331,508
Southwest MS	\$1,021,741
Sunflower-Humphreys Co	\$654,884
WWISCAA	\$1,910,079
Total	\$30,318,710

ATTACHMENT- POVERTY GUIDELINES

CSBG and LIHEAP applicants must first meet income guidelines to be eligible for assistance. Also, non-elderly/non-disabled clients must be placed in case management.

A. CSBG: The income of all household members may not exceed 125% of the federal poverty guidelines as established by Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

B. LIHEAP: The income of all household members may not exceed 60% of the state median income for Mississippi.

<i>Federal Poverty Guidelines / State Median Income</i>				
<i>WX: 7/1/2022</i>				
<i>Effective Dates</i>		<i>10/1/2022</i>	<i>10/1/2022</i>	<i>10/1/2022</i>
GRANTS		CSBG	DOE/LIHEAP WX	LIHEAP, LIHEAP ARP, Water Grants (CAA, ARP)
	<i>1</i>	<i>1.25</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>\$42,577</i>
Number in Household	100 % Category	125% Category	200% Category	60% State Median Income
unit	Percent of Poverty	Percent of Poverty	Percent of Poverty	Percent of Poverty
1	\$13,590	\$16,988	\$27,180	\$22,140
2	\$18,310	\$22,888	\$36,620	\$28,952
3	\$23,030	\$28,788	\$46,060	\$35,765
4	\$27,750	\$34,688	\$55,500	\$42,577
5	\$32,470	\$40,588	\$64,940	\$49,389
6	\$37,190	\$46,488	\$74,380	\$56,202
7	\$41,910	\$52,388	\$83,820	\$57,479
8	\$46,630	\$58,288	\$93,260	\$58,756
9	\$51,350	\$64,188	\$102,700	\$60,034
10	\$56,070	\$70,088	\$112,140	\$61,311
11	\$60,790	\$75,988	\$121,580	\$62,588
12	\$65,510	\$81,888	\$131,020	\$63,866
13	\$70,230	\$87,788	\$140,460	\$65,143
14	\$74,950	\$93,688	\$149,900	\$66,420
15	\$79,670	\$99,588	\$159,340	\$67,697
16	\$84,390	\$105,488	\$168,780	\$68,975
17	\$89,110	\$111,388	\$178,220	\$70,252
18	\$93,830	\$117,288	\$187,660	\$71,529
19	\$98,550	\$123,188	\$197,100	\$72,807
20	\$103,270	\$129,088	\$206,540	\$74,084
For each additional family member add:	4720	5900	9440	Contact MDHS/DCS@20 members for LIHEAP

ATTACHMENT-2023 LIHEAP BENEFIT MATRIX

LIHEAP Benefit Matrix (Fuel Types)

The LIHEAP Act stipulates that households with high energy costs and needs receive the greatest benefit. LIHEAP Benefits are now capped based on income levels and size of household income. LIHEAP benefits are capped at \$1500 per program year.

2023 LIHEAP BENEFIT MATRIX (Fuel Ty

Household Data	HH Size / Income	Energy Types					
	Household Size of 1	Propane	Electric*	Natural Gas	Wood /Other Fuel	Maximum Benefit	Total Electric Benefit**
	0 – 3398	800	700	700	400	1500	1500
	3399– 6795	750	650	650	360	1400	1400
	6796 – 10193	700	600	600	320	1300	1300
	10194 – 13590	650	550	550	280	1200	1200
	13591 – 16988	600	500	500	240	1100	1100
	16989- 22140	550	450	450	200	1000	1000
	Over 22,140.49 for HH of 1	0	0	0	0	0	0

Household Data	HH Size / Income	Energy Types					
	Household Size of 2	Propane	Electric	Natural Gas	Wood /Other Fuel	Maximum Benefit	Total Electric Benefit
Income is between	0 - 4578	800	700	700	400	1500	1500
	4579 – 9155	750	650	650	360	1400	1400
	9156 – 13733	700	600	600	320	1300	1300
	13734 – 18310	650	550	550	280	1200	1200
	18311 - 22888	600	500	500	240	1100	1100
	22889 - 28952	550	450	450	200	1000	1000
	Over \$28,952.49 for HH of 2	0	0	0	0	0	0

Household Data	HH Size / Income	Energy Types					
	Household Size of 3	Propane	Electric	Natural Gas	Wood /Other Fuel	Maximum Benefit	Total Electric Benefit
Income is between	0 - 5758	800	700	700	400	1500	1500
	5759 - 11515	750	650	650	360	1400	1400
	11516 - 17273	700	600	600	320	1300	1300
	17274 - 23030	650	550	550	280	1200	1200
	23031 - 28788	600	500	500	240	1100	1100
	28789 - 35764	550	450	450	200	1000	1000

	Over 35,764.49 for HH of 3	0	0	0	0	0	0
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Household Data	HH Size / Income	Energy Types					
	Household Size of 4	Propane	Electric	Natural Gas	Wood /Other Fuel	Maximum Benefit	Total Electric Benefit
Income is between	0 - 6938	800	700	700	400	1500	1500
	6939 - 13875	750	650	650	360	1400	1400
	13876 - 20813	700	600	600	320	1300	1300
	20814 - 27750	650	550	550	280	1200	1200
	27751 - 34688	600	500	500	240	1100	1100
	34689 - 42577	550	450	450	200	1000	1000
	Over 42577.49 for HH of 4	0	0	0	0	0	0

Household Data	HH Size / Income	Energy Types					
	Household Size of 5	Propane	Electric	Natural Gas	Wood /Other Fuel	Maximum Benefit	Total Electric Benefit
Income is between	0 - 8118	800	700	700	400	1500	1500
	8119 - 16235	750	650	650	360	1400	1400
	16236 - 24353	700	600	600	320	1300	1300
	24354 - 32470	650	550	550	280	1200	1200
	32471 - 40588	600	500	500	240	1100	1100
	40589 - 49389	550	450	450	200	1000	1000
	Over 49,389.49 for HH of 5	0	0	0	0	0	0

Household Data	HH Size / Income	Energy Types					
	Household Size of 6	Propane	Electric	Natural Gas	Wood /Other Fuel	Maximum Benefit	Total Electric Benefit
Income is between	0 - 9298	800	700	700	400	1500	1500
	9299 - 18595	750	650	650	360	1400	1400
	18596 - 27893	700	600	600	320	1300	1300
	27894 - 37190	650	550	550	280	1200	1200
	37191 - 46488	600	500	500	240	1100	1100

	46489 - 56201	550	450	450	200	1000	1000
	Over 56,201.49 for HH of 6	0	0	0	0	0	0

Household Data	HH Size / Income	Energy Types					
	Household Size of 7	Propane	Electric	Natural Gas	Wood /Other Fuel	Maximum Benefit	Total Electric Benefit
Income is between	0 - 10478	800	700	700	400	1500	1500
	10479 - 20955	750	650	650	360	1400	1400
	20956 - 31433	700	600	600	320	1300	1300
	31434 - 41910	650	550	550	280	1200	1200
	41911 - 52538	600	500	500	240	1100	1100
	52539 - 57478	550	450	450	200	1000	1000
	Over 57,478.49 for HH of 7	0	0	0	0	0	0

Household Data	HH Size / Income	Energy Types					
	Household Size of 8	Propane	Electric	Natural Gas	Wood /Other Fuel	Maximum Benefit	Total Electric Benefit
Income is between	0 - 11658	800	700	700	400	1500	1500
	11659 - 23315	750	650	650	360	1400	1400
	23316 - 34973	700	600	600	320	1300	1300
	34974 - 46630	650	550	550	280	1200	1200
	46631 - 58756	600	500	500	240	1100	1100
	Over 58,756.49 for HH of 8	0	0	0	0	0	0

Household Data	HH Size / Income	Energy Types					
	Household Size of 9	Propane	Electric	Natural Gas	Wood /Other Fuel	Maximum Benefit	Total Electric Benefit
Income is between	0 - 12838	800	700	700	400	1500	1500
	12839 - 25675	750	650	650	360	1400	1400
	25676 - 38513	700	600	600	320	1300	1300
	38514 - 51350	650	550	550	280	1200	1200
	51351 - 60033	600	500	500	240	1100	1100

	Over 60,033.49 for HH of 9	0	0	0	0	0	0
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Household Data	HH Size / Income	Energy Types					
	Household Size of 10	Propane	Electric	Natural Gas	Wood /Other Fuel	Maximum Benefit	Total Electric Benefit
Income is between	0 – 14018	800	700	700	400	1500	1500
	14019 - 28035	750	650	650	360	1400	1400
	28036 - 42053	700	600	600	320	1300	1300
	42054 - 56070	650	550	550	280	1200	1200
	56071 - 61310	600	500	500	240	1100	1100
	Over 61,310.49 for HH of 10	0	0	0	0	0	0

Household Data	HH Size / Income	Energy Types					
	Household Size of 11	Propane	Electric	Natural Gas	Wood /Other Fuel	Maximum Benefit	Total Electric Benefit
Income is between	0 -15198	800	700	700	400	1500	1500
	15199 - 30395	750	650	650	360	1400	1400
	30396 - 45593	700	600	600	320	1300	1300
	45594 - 62588	650	550	550	280	1200	1200
	Over 62,588.49 for HH of 11	0	0	0	0	0	0

Household Data	HH Size / Income	Energy Types					
	Household Size of 12	Propane	Electric	Natural Gas	Wood /Other Fuel	Maximum Benefit	Total Electric Benefit
Income is between	0 - 16378	800	700	700	400	1500	1500
	16379 - 32755	750	650	650	360	1400	1400
	32756 - 49133	700	600	600	320	1300	1300
	49134 - 63865	650	550	550	280	1200	1200

ATTACHMENT-ELIGIBILITY

Statutory Reference 2605 (b) (5)
2605 (b) (2)
2605 (b) (8) (A)
2605(b) (10)

The State assures through Virtual ROMA that it will provide, in a timely manner, the highest level of assistance to those households (with the highest home energy needs which takes into account both the energy burden and the unique situation of the vulnerable population) which have the lowest incomes and the highest home energy cost in relation to income, taking into account family size, except that the State may not differentiate in implementing this section between the households described in the above referenced clauses.

The State further assures that it will not differentiate in the treatment of households eligible for services because of their income and as the recipients of TANF, Food Stamps, SSI or certain means-tested veterans program certified as “categorically eligible”. This applies to all LIHEAP components (cooling, heating, crisis and weatherization).

The specific measures to ensure there is no difference in eligibility determination and benefit amounts is not to use categorical eligibility in all components. All applicant households must complete the established application process, case management process and eligibility determination.

The utilization of Virtual ROMA has resulted in additional fiscal control tracking capabilities for LIHEAP funds by:

- All LIHEAP funds expended must originate via Virtual ROMA.
- LIHEAP payments only occur based on client services that are in “approved” status in Virtual ROMA.
- Greater visibility by State to view, monitor and track fiscal process and payment on a state-wide basis across agencies.
- Programmatic staff must work closely with fiscal staff to determine timeframe for payment so that program reports are generated for the specified timeframe and given to fiscal.
- Fiscal compares, reviews and authorizes payment report before any payment. Any discrepancies identified between Program Reports and the electronic payment files are reconciled by Fiscal and Program before payment occurs.
- Virtual ROMA prohibits approvals from unauthorized program users and restricts any Fiscal User from the ability to approve client services.
- Energy vendors who are registered users of Virtual ROMA are able to review their clients’ approved amounts and compare to ensure accuracy of amounts and clients’ accounts.

ATTACHMENT- ELIGIBILITY AND BENEFIT DETERMINATION**Statutory Reference 2605 (B) (2)**

Each applicant household requesting for LIHEAP assistance must complete application process for eligibility determination.

Income eligibility is set at or below 60% of the State Median Income guidelines that are in effect at the time of submission of the application. An application is taken on the applicant household by the local subgrantee agencies. All applications must be taken in the Virtual ROMA system. Assistance from another program may also be provided to eligible households, especially those households enrolled in and complying with an established service plan.

A household cannot receive more than \$1,500 in benefits for the program year unless the State issues supplemental payments. Total benefit for year (can be divided between heating, cooling or crisis). This amount may be adjusted from year to year based on the state's allocation. An exception will be given to clients in need of a heating/cooling unit. The cost of the unit is not included in the \$1,500 maximum benefit amount.

Priority is given to the elderly and disabled. Live-in attendants' income can be excluded if it is determined that (1) the live-in is essential to the care and well-being of the person; and (2) would not be living in the unit except to provide the necessary supportive services.

ATTACHMENT-COORDINATION OF LIHEAP ACTIVITIES**Statutory reference 2605 (b) (4)**

The State agrees to coordinate its activities under this title with similar and related programs administered by the Federal Government and the State, particularly low-income energy-related programs under Subtitle B of Title VI (relating to Community Services Block Grant Program), under the Supplemental Security Income Program under Part A of Title IV of the Social Security Act, under Title XX of the Social Security Act, under the Low-Income Weatherization Assistance Program, under Title IV of the Energy Conservation and Production Act, or under any other provision of law which carries out programs which were administered under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, before the date of the enactment of this Act.

The Division of Community Services (DCS) of the Mississippi Department of Human Services administers LIHEAP, the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG), Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) and the Low-Income Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP). By operating these programs under one division, it provides high potential for enhancing coordination. Also, it minimizes duplication of services between LIHEAP and other related programs under the Social Security Act, the Energy Conservation and Production Act and other related programs which are administered under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964. A referral mechanism is in place (through the case management approach) to refer to, and receive referrals from other social service providers and energy vendors. LIHEAP clients identified as high energy users due to the poor condition of their homes are referred to the Weatherization Assistance Program, and priority is given to elderly and disabled individuals.

Other forms of coordination involves soliciting local funds as leveraging from organizations, individuals, philanthropy agencies and energy vendors. The leveraging funds generated are used to maintain the level of service or to assist additional eligible clients. Subgrantees are encouraged to participate in leveraging local funds to supplement LIHEAP.

DCS will use one automated intake application for all the programs (LIHEAP, LIHWAP, WAP, and CSBG), called the Virtual ROMA Tracking System. In addition, each applicant household's case folder (personal data information) is placed in one file known as a single filing system. The one intake application process and single filing system are viable means of coordinating efforts. It has the potential of cost savings. Eligible LIHEAP clients are also approved for LIHWAP at the time of intake since both programs have the same eligibility requirements.

MDHS elects to approach recipients of the LIHEAP program in a manner with the goal of assisting those in need of immediate assistance and to assist with the long-term success of the whole family through the use of referrals and assessments.

ATTACHMENT- CRISIS ASSISTANCE**Statutory reference 2604 (c), 2605 (c) (1) (A)**

Mississippi offers a year-round crisis assistance component of LIHEAP, entitled the Energy Crisis Intervention Program (ECIP), which provides assistance to low-income households who have encountered a crisis situation within the last 30 days.

- A. Life Threatening Crisis- Eligible households with a life-threatening energy crisis must have the crisis relieved within 18 hours of an approved application. Resolution of a life-threatening crisis may include, but is not limited to: arranging for an immediate supply of fuel, securing a payment arrangement with the energy vendor, pledging the amount of bill to prevent shutoff or to restore service, purchase of heating/cooling equipment, etc. The following are considered life threatening:
1. Disaster (fire, gas leak, etc.),
 2. Person(s) on life support or medical devices that require electricity,
 3. Domestic violence, and/or
 4. Elderly/disabled or child abuse/neglect.
- B. Non-Life Threatening Crisis- Eligible households with a non-life threatening energy crisis must have the crisis relieved within 48 hours of an approved application. Resolution of a life-threatening crisis may include, but is not limited to; arranging for an immediate supply of fuel, securing a payment arrangement with the energy vendor, pledging the amount of bill to prevent shutoff or to restore service, purchase of heating/cooling equipment, etc. The following situations are considered non-life threatening:
- a. Unexpected expense such as death of an immediate family member, funeral expenses, high medical expenses, etc;
 - b. Income loss within the last thirty (30) days (of date the subgrantee was contacted) due to layoff or termination of benefits;
 - c. Services are disconnected or threatened to be turned off;
 - d. Theft;
 - e. Displacement of a minor child (under the age of 18) due to client's inability to pay utilities, rent, etc.; and/or

- f. Other documented emergency within the last thirty (30) days, as deemed acceptable by the subgrantee.
- C. LIHEAP Assistance for Disaster Relief- Natural disaster (fire, hurricane, tornado, flood, etc.) or extreme inclement weather conditions determined by the National Weather Service and/or declared by the President or Governor. Allowable uses of LIHEAP funds for home energy-related needs resulting from a natural disaster or disasters as listed in Section A (1-2) of this chapter include:
- a. Costs to temporarily house or shelter individuals in which homes have been destroyed or damaged;
 - i. Hotels (up to 5 days),
 - ii. Apartments (1 month rent and deposit), or
 - iii. Other living situations that place people in settings to preserve health and safety and to move them away from the crisis situation;
 - b. Costs for transportation (such as cars, shuttles, buses) to move individuals away from the crisis area to shelters, when health and safety is endangered by loss of access to heating or cooling;
 - c. Utility reconnection costs (does not include water and sewage);
 - d. Repair or replacement cost for furnaces, air conditioners and heaters;
 - e. Insulation repair;
 - f. Coats and blankets, as tangible benefits to keep individuals warm;
 - g. Crisis payments for utilities and utility deposits;
 - h. Purchase and installation of fans, air conditioners and heaters;
 - i. Purchase and installation of generators;
 - j. Costs associated with mobile outreach; and
 - k. Other things as needed (contact DCS for approval).
 - l. The costs related to utility cost such utilities, deposits, reconnect fees, and late fees are counted against the annual matrix amount per household. Other costs shall not be counted against the annual max benefit amount per household (C1-2, C4-6, C8-11).

D. Deceased Head of Household

- a. If the applicant dies before the application for services is approved, the application shall be approved if **all apply**:
 - i. All eligibility information received is accurate and meets income guidelines;
 - ii. The bill is for an outstanding balance, not a deposit; and
 - iii. There are other household members.
 - b. This will allow the household to become stable until a new intake can be done to name a new head of household. The agency may assist the new head of household with changing the service into his/her name and paying any necessary deposits to do so.
 - c. If the application is for a deposit for services, the application should be denied. If the household has another adult member, a new intake must be done to name a new head of household.
- E. Subgrantees shall, under no circumstances tell a client that they must have a disconnect notice to apply for assistance. This may put a household in a crisis situation which could be avoided by assisting with regular LIHEAP assistance.
- F. Applicants who are ineligible for crisis benefits shall be referred to other organizations that may be able to assist, or the subgrantee may contact energy vendor on applicant's behalf to see if payment arrangement or extension is available.
- G. Multiple emergency requests by a client may result in the subgrantee referring client to CSBG program for intensive case management.

ATTACHMENT-PROGRAM, FISCAL MONITORING AND AUDIT**Statutory reference 2605 (b)(10)****Fiscal, Accounting and Tracking Requirements**

The State requires Subgrantees requesting LIHEAP funds to submit Monthly Cost Worksheets in Smartsheet. These Cost Worksheets show expenditures such as Program Assistance (regular), ECIP, Assurance 16 (if budgeted) and Administration. Subgrantees are required to submit Claim Support Forms (to request funds) based on Current Needs. Federal funds made available to the State under this title will disburse administrative and programmatic funds to Subgrantees in accordance with the LIHEAP Statute, and the overall contractual allocation for each subgrantee regulates the maximum allowable expenditures. The expenditures and draw downs are processed in the MDHS-Division of Procurement Services. The SF-425 Federal Fiscal Reports (FFR) are generated in the MDHS – Division of Budgets & Accounting as well as the monthly reports for DCS verification and tracking. Documentation from Virtual ROMA will be required to support costs reflected on Cost Worksheets and Claims Support Forms as a means to adhere to mandates by Division of Monitoring to monitor costs reported for the month. Procedural manuals are in place which covers a range of fiscal and accounting rules and regulations with which Subgrantees must comply. Also, to further account for LIHEAP federal funds, 16 of 17 DCS Subgrantees use the same accounting software, GMS, which allows tracking through Virtual ROMA. It allows easy access in training new personnel, as well as existing personnel in the effective use of the GMS software and DCS requirements.

Subgrantees are required to have and submit an annual audit performed annually by an independent Certified Public Accountant. Also, the State complies with the Single Audit Act requirement.

The State continuously provides training and technical assistance to the subgrantees on program and fiscal management to enhance program compliance and quality service delivery to eligible households, and special training for new staff to ensure program compliance.

Subgrants will be monitored bi-annually by the Division of Monitoring. Periodic reviews to the subgrantee, both announced and unannounced will be conducted by the Division of Community Services.

The Director of Monitoring reviews audit findings and forward them to the Division of Community Services and the Monitoring Supervisor. Audit findings are place on a spreadsheet and addressed during monitoring visits with the entity and addressed on the monitoring report.

SINGLE AUDIT MANAGEMENT REPORT AND FINDINGS REPORT

**STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
OFFICE OF THE STATE AUDITOR
SHAD WHITE
STATE AUDITOR**

February 23, 2022

Financial Audit Management Report

Robert Anderson, Executive Director
Mississippi Department of Human Services
200 South Lamar St.
Jackson, MS 39201

Dear Mr. Anderson:

Enclosed for your review is the financial audit finding for the Mississippi Department of Human Services for the Fiscal Year 2021. In this finding, the Auditor's Office recommends the Mississippi Department of Human Services:

1. Strengthen Controls to Ensure Proper Review Processes for Financial Reporting.

Please review the recommendation and submit a plan to implement it by March 4, 2022. The enclosed finding contains more information about our recommendation.

During future engagements, we may review the finding in this management report to ensure procedures have been initiated to address this finding.

The purpose of this report is solely to describe the scope of our testing of internal control and compliance and the result of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on the effectiveness of the Mississippi Department of Human Services' internal control or on compliance. This report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* in considering the Mississippi Department of Human Services' internal control and compliance. Accordingly, this communication is not suitable for any other purpose. However, this report is a matter of public record and its distribution is not limited.

I hope you find our recommendation enables the Mississippi Department of Human Services to carry out its mission more efficiently. I appreciate the cooperation and courtesy extended by the officials and employees of the Mississippi Department of Human Services throughout the audit. If you have any questions or need more information, please contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Stephanie C. Palmertree".

Stephanie C. Palmertree, CPA CGMA
Director, Financial Audit and Compliance Division
Enclosures

Mississippi Department of Human Services
February 23, 2022
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FINANCIAL AUDIT MANAGEMENT REPORT

The Office of the State Auditor has completed its audit of selected accounts included on the financial statements of the Mississippi Department of Human Services for the year ended June 30, 2021. These financial statements will be consolidated into the State of Mississippi's *Annual Comprehensive Financial Report*. We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States.

Our procedures and tests cannot and do not provide absolute assurance that all state legal requirements have been met. In accordance with *Section 7-7-211, Miss. Code Ann. (1972)*, the Office of the State Auditor, when deemed necessary, may conduct additional procedures and tests of transactions for this or other fiscal years to ensure compliance with legal requirements.

Internal Control over Financial Reporting

In planning and performing our audit of selected accounts included on the financial statements of the Department of Human Services as of and for the year ended June 30, 2021, in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America, we considered the Mississippi Department of Human Services' internal control over financial reporting (internal control) to determine the audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances for the purpose of expressing our opinion on these accounts, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of internal control. Accordingly, we do not express an opinion on the effectiveness of the Mississippi Department of Human Services' internal control.

A deficiency in internal control exists when the design or operation of a control does not allow management or employees, in the normal course of performing their assigned functions, to prevent, or detect and correct, misstatements on a timely basis. *A material weakness* is a deficiency, or a combination of deficiencies, in internal control such that there is a reasonable possibility that a material misstatement of the entity's financial statements will not be prevented, or detected and corrected on a timely basis. *A significant deficiency* is a deficiency, or a combination of deficiencies, in internal control that is less severe than a material weakness, yet important enough to merit attention by those charged with governance.

Our consideration of internal control was for the limited purpose described in the first paragraph of this section and was not designed to identify all deficiencies in internal control that might be material weaknesses or significant deficiencies and therefore, material weaknesses or significant deficiencies may exist that were not identified. However, we identified a deficiency in internal control, identified in this letter as item **2021-001** that we consider to be a material weakness.

Compliance and Other Matters

As part of obtaining reasonable assurance about whether selected accounts included on the financial statements of the Mississippi Department of Human Services are free of material misstatement, we performed tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts and grant agreements, noncompliance with which could have a direct and material effect on the determination of financial statement amounts. However, providing an opinion on compliance with those provisions was not an objective of our audit and, accordingly, we do not express such an opinion. The results of our tests disclosed no instances of noncompliance or other matters that are required to be reported under *Government Auditing Standards*.

Mississippi Department of Human Services
 February 23, 2022
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Finding and Recommendation
MATERIAL WEAKNESS

2021-001 Strengthen Controls to Ensure Proper Review Processes for Financial Reporting.

Repeat Finding Yes, 2020-008.

Criteria The *Internal Control – Integrated Framework* published by the Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission (COSO) and the *U.S. Government Accountability Office Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government* (Green Book) specifies that a satisfactory control environment is only effective when control activities exist. This includes but is not limited to the review process of transactions, proper support of transactions, proper documentation and support of methodologies used in accounting practices, proper support of information and communication within the agency, and a commitment to competence by management.

The Mississippi Agency Accounting Policies and Procedures (MAAPP) manual Section 27.30.05 states that supporting schedules provide the details, which support the adjusted MAGIC balances on the GAAP Trial Balance.

MAAPP manual Section 30.20.10 states, "While each state employee has personal responsibility for maintaining internal controls, the agency head is ultimately responsible and must assume ownership for internal control. All agency management must support the agency's internal control philosophy, promote compliance, and maintain control within their areas of responsibility. Chief financial officers have key oversight and policy enforcement roles over fiscal matters. Other agency managers may hold lead responsibility for compliance with non-financial aspects of laws, directives, policies, procedures, and the code of ethics ... Agencies are to maintain adequate written documentation for activities conducted in connection with risk assessments, internal control reviews, and follow-up actions. This documentation is to be available for review by agency management, the Office of State Auditor, and DFA."

Condition The Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS) operates by dividing daily operations into different departments with different functions. During the audit for FYE June 30, 2021, we noted that the different departments do not communicate and exchange information. For example, the Grant Schedule is created using information for the state fiscal end. These accruals and expenditures are not reconciled with the TANF Programmatic Division's federal fiscal year end reporting. The agency does not have in place any overarching policies to ensure the integrity and accuracy of information between divisions. Additionally, policies and procedures in Budgets and Account and Grants Management divisions are often unwritten or out of date. Lastly, the auditor noted that MDHS does not maintain written policies and procedures over the review and approval of the Federal Subgrant Activity Schedule. In the aggregate, these instances result in a material weakness in the agency's overall control environment. Examples of these errors include:

- Two instances in which the amounts recorded as "Passed to Subrecipients" were coded to the incorrect CFDA number on the Schedule of Federal Grant Activity.
- 19 instances in which amounts recorded as amounts passed to sub-grantees on the Federal Subgrant Activity Schedule (form 27.30.30) did not agree to

Mississippi Department of Human Services
 February 23, 2022
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amounts recorded as “amounts passed to subrecipients” on the Schedule of Federal Grant Activity.

- 96 instances in which amounts recorded as “Current Year Subgrant Federal Expenditures” on the Federal Subgrant Activity Schedule (form 27.30.70) did not agree to supporting documentation as provided by the agency.
- 147 instances in which the amounts recorded as “Paid to Sub-grantee” per the Federal Subgrant Activity Schedule (form 27.30.70) did not agree to amounts reported on the KOB1 report (Internal Order Report) within the Mississippi Accountability System for Government Information and Collaboration (MAGIC).

Cause	MDHS did not possess or enforce proper internal controls structures over financial reporting. Additionally, management has not enforced a commitment to competence at the agency, and has allowed multiple errors in financial reporting to remain undetected by agency personnel. Lack of written policies has contributed to agency personnel not performing adequate reviews over financial information. Lastly, different departments within the agency do not communicate and reconcile accounting information between them to verify the accuracy of that reported information.
Effect	Without proper internal control structures over financial reporting, erroneous financial statements and corresponding schedules could be compiled, resulting in a misrepresentation of the financial standing of the Mississippi Department of Human Services.
Recommendation	We recommend management at the Department of Human Services evaluate internal control procedures over the review and approval of GAAP Packet information and the Federal Sub-Grant Activity Schedule. Additionally, we recommend existing staff obtain the needed training to be able to accurately report and review financial information, and the agency develop overarching policies aimed at ensuring communication about and reconciliation of financial statement information in performed regularly.

End of Report

ATTACHMENT – LETTER OF AUTHORIZATION



State of Mississippi

TATE REEVES
Governor

August 11, 2020

Mr. Clarence H. Carter, Director
Office of Community Services
Administration for Children and Families
U. S. Department of Health and Human Services
370 L'Enfant Promenade, S.W., 5th Floor, West
Washington, D.C. 20447

Dear Mr. Carter:

I hereby authorize Mr. Robert G. "Bob" Anderson, Executive Director of the Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS), to be the official signature authority for all funds appropriated to MDHS by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. In addition, I authorize Mr. Anderson to sign all assurances for the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) and Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) grant applications outlined in the respective statute, as amended. To comply with the LIHEAP statute, Mr. Anderson is duly authorized to certify that MDHS will comply with the 16 assurances contained in the LIHEAP Act, Title XXVI of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981 as amended, in the administration and operation of its Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

Should you need additional information, please contact Mr. Anderson at (601)359-4457 or P.O. Box 352, Jackson, Mississippi 39205.

Sincerely,


Tate Reeves
GOVERNOR

TR:BA:tr
cc: Mr. Bob Anderson



Robert G. Anderson
Executive Director

August 11, 2020

Mr. Clarence H. Carter, Director
Office of Community Services
Administration for Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human
Services 370 L'Enfant Promenade, S. W., 5th
Floor, West Washington, D. C. 20447

Dear Mr. Carter:

I hereby authorize the Director of the Division of Community Services (DCS) of the Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS), to be the official designee of signature authority for all funds appropriated to MDHS-DCS by the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services for the On-Line Data Collection System (OLDC) purpose only. In addition, I authorize the Director of the Division of Community Services to sign all assurances for the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) and Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) grant applications outlined in the respective statute, as amended. To comply with the LIHEAP statute, the Director of the Division of Community Services is duly authorized to certify that MDHS will comply with the 16 assurances contained in the LIHEAP Act, Title XXVI of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981 as amended, in the administration and operation of its Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

The Director of the Division of Community Services, Ms. Tina Ruffin, will serve as the state liaison for the implementation of the Community Services Block Grant and the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Programs. All routine correspondence from your office should be directed to Ms. Ruffin and you may contact her directly at P.O. Box 352, Jackson, Mississippi 39205 or telephone (601) 359-4768.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert G. Anderson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Robert G. "Bob" Anderson
Executive Director

BA:tr

200 S. Lamar St., P.O. Box 352 | Jackson, MS 39205 | (601) 359-4500

Offering Mississippians young and old tangible help today to create lasting hope for tomorrow.

ATTACHMENT-COMPLIANCE MONITORING**Statutory Reference 2605(b)(10)****Division of Monitoring (DPI)****MONITORING**

The Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS) is required to monitor the activities of its subgrantees by following the Single Audit Act Amendments of 1996, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-133, *Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations*, and the OMB Circular A-133 Compliance Supplement. MDHS shall monitor each project, program, subgrant, function, or activity supported by a Federal award to assure compliance with applicable Federal regulations and that performance goals are achieved.

POLICY

MDHS has established uniform monitoring policies designed to ensure that all subgrants under the jurisdiction of MDHS are administered in compliance with Federal requirements and with the terms of the subgrant agreements. Monitoring subgrants, for compliance with the applicable Federal regulations, State laws, Agency policies, and the terms of the subgrant agreements, is the responsibility of the MDHS Division of Monitoring.

Subgrant monitoring procedures may include several of the various options available. These options include: reviewing reports submitted by the subgrantee; reviewing documentation supporting expenses reported under MDHS subgrants; reviewing the subgrantee's single audit or program-specific audit results and evaluating audit findings and the subgrantee's corrective action plan; performing on-site reviews of fiscal and programmatic records and observing subgrantee operations; and/or, arranging for limited scope audits of specific compliance areas.

Planning Considerations

When determining the extent of monitoring procedures to perform, MDHS will consider factors such as the amount of the subgrant, the percentage of a Federal program's total funds awarded to subgrantees, and the complexity of the compliance requirements. To determine the appropriateness of monitoring procedures, MDHS will consider the cost-effectiveness of monitoring procedures compared to the relative size and complexity of the Federal awards administered by the subgrantee. The following factors will also be considered when determining the monitoring procedures to be performed to ensure compliance with the Federal regulations, State laws, Agency policies and procedures, and the terms of the subgrant agreement:

1. The amount of the subgrant in relation to the total amount of the program;
2. Prior experience of the subgrantee operating subgrants supported by Federal funds;

3. Results of the MDHS follow-up on prior year single audit findings;
4. Results of the review of documents submitted by the subgrantee;
5. Results of the desk review of supporting documentation for expenditures;
6. Results of previous on-site fiscal and programmatic reviews; and/or,

Monitoring Procedures

1. Review of Reports Submitted by Subgrantees

Subgrants may be monitored by reviewing reports submitted by the subgrantee for compliance with the subgrant agreement and program instructions. For example, the monthly reporting worksheets may be reviewed for accuracy and completeness or the quarterly programmatic report may be reviewed to ensure that each element of the Scope of Services is being met.

2. Review of Supporting Documentation for Expenditures

Subgrants may be monitored by performing a desk review of supporting documentation for expenditures reported under the subgrant. This review consists of contacting the subgrantee and requesting documents to support certain amounts included on the subgrantee's reporting worksheets. These documents will be examined by the monitors to determine compliance with the subgrant agreement and with State and Federal regulations. The results of the desk review will be communicated in a written report to the subgrantee and to the MDHS Funding Division.

Desk reviews may be conducted at any time by staff of the MDHS, Division of Monitoring. The desk review procedure may be used in lieu of or in conjunction with an on-site fiscal review or as a follow-up to an on-site fiscal review to ensure that corrective actions have been implemented.

Fiscal monitoring through a desk review will include, at a minimum, a review of all documents to support all expenses reported for one month of the subgrant period. Documents shall be reviewed to support costs reported on the reporting worksheet submitted for the month in which the highest dollar amount of expenses was reported as of the date that the schedule letter was prepared to begin the desk review and request support documents.

When fiscal monitoring is initiated through a desk review and sufficient documents are not provided by the subgrantee/contractor to support costs reported on the reporting worksheet, the desk review shall cease and fiscal monitoring shall be completed through an on-site review.

Fiscal monitoring shall not be performed through a desk review on the first subgrant awarded to a subgrantee. In addition, monitoring through a desk review shall be alternated with on-site reviews so that on-site fiscal monitoring is performed at least every other year.

Monitoring for programmatic compliance cannot be performed through a desk review.

3. Review of the Subgrantee's Single Audit Report for Compliance, Evaluation of Audit Findings, and Follow-up on Corrective Actions

Subgrantees that expend \$500,000.00 or more of Federal financial assistance during the subgrantee's fiscal year shall have an audit performed by an independent Certified Public Accountant in accordance with the Single Audit Act and OMB Circular A-133. As a part of MDHS' monitoring of each of its subgrants, these independent auditor's reports shall be obtained from the subgrantees and reviewed for compliance with Federal regulations.

Any audit findings identified in the independent auditor's reports, as well as the subgrantees proposed corrective action plans, shall be evaluated by the MDHS Funding Divisions. If the subgrantee's corrective action plan is acceptable, a management decision will be issued by the MDHS Funding Division to resolve the audit findings. The MDHS Division of Monitoring will follow-up on the subgrantee's corrective action plan during the next on-site fiscal review that is conducted.

4. On-Site Reviews for Program Compliance

On-site reviews for program compliance are required to be conducted at least once during the subgrant period for every MDHS subgrant. On-site reviews for program compliance may be performed on any subgrant at any time and may be repeated as often as deemed necessary by MDHS. These reviews for program compliance will be conducted by the MDHS Division of Monitoring.

The on-site programmatic reviews are formal in nature and are normally preceded by written notification to the subgrantee and to the appropriate MDHS Funding Division Directors. However, unannounced on-site programmatic reviews may also be conducted. On-site entrance and exit conferences will be conducted with subgrantee officials and a written report will be issued communicating the results of the review to the subgrantee and to the MDHS Funding Divisions. The Agency shall follow-up on the subgrantee's corrective action plan for any programmatic monitoring findings.

5. On-Site Reviews for Fiscal Compliance

On-site reviews for fiscal compliance will be conducted by the Division of Monitoring, as provided under this section. These visits may also be conducted at the request of the MDHS Executive Director or the MDHS Funding Division Director.

These reviews are formal in nature and are normally preceded by written notification to the subgrantee. The appropriate Funding Division Directors shall also receive written notification of on-site fiscal reviews. However, unannounced on-site fiscal reviews may also be conducted. On-site entrance conferences will be conducted with subgrantee officials. Exit conferences will be conducted and a written report will be issued communicating the results of the review to the

subgrantee and to the MDHS Funding Divisions. MDHS shall follow-up on the subgrantee's corrective action plan for any fiscal monitoring findings.

6. Limited Scope Audits of Specific Compliance Areas

The Agency may engage an independent Certified Public Accountant to perform a Limited Scope Audit of certain MDHS subgrants. The need for this type of review shall be determined on an individual basis and shall be documented by the Division of Monitoring. The results of this review shall be communicated to the subgrantee and to the MDHS Funding Divisions in a written report.

Corrective Action Process

The Initial Report of Findings and Recommendations that is forwarded to the subgrantee and to the MDHS funding division shall require a written response from the subgrantee within fifteen (15) working days. Upon receipt of the response from the subgrantee, the Director of the Division of Monitoring and other appropriate staff shall assess each response for adequacy. If all responses are adequate, a letter will be issued to the subgrantee clearing all findings. If any responses do not adequately address the findings, the subgrantee will be notified in writing by the issuance of a Status Report acceptable to MDHS requiring a second response from the subgrantee within ten (10) working days.

If the subgrantee fails to satisfactorily resolve all of the monitoring findings, the Division of Monitoring will issue a Final Notice Letter to the subgrantee demanding that the subgrantee refund the amount of questioned costs and advising the subgrantee of the procedures to follow if they wish to request an administrative hearing with the MDHS Executive Director.

If the subgrantee does not respond to the Final Notice Letter, the subgrantee will be referred to the State of Mississippi Office of the Attorney General to recover the unresolved questioned costs, and the Agency may begin procedures for debarment and suspension against the subgrantee organization and the subgrantee authorized official.

Discovery of Possible Fraud, Mismanagement, or Program Abuse

In the event indications of possible fraud, mismanagement, or program abuse are discovered during the course of monitoring subgrants, the Director of the Division of Monitoring shall notify the Chief Compliance Officer, who shall notify the MDHS Inspector General. The MDHS Inspector General and appropriate personnel will decide the course of action to be taken, including the degree of disclosure to subgrantee personnel and to the MDHS Funding Divisions. The format for reporting such incidents will be determined by the Chief Compliance Officer and/or the MDHS Inspector General.

Division of Community Services (DCS)**Statutory Reference 2605(b)(10)****TRAINING & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (T&TA)**

DCS staff uses several tools and checklists to conduct an overall comprehensive review of the agencies' operations. Throughout both the programmatic and fiscal review process there should be ongoing, open communication with the staff to facilitate clarification of facts and prevent misunderstandings, provide the reviewer with a full understanding of the agencies' operations, and provide the agency with a full understanding of the review process.

Preliminary areas of noncompliance should be summarized and discussed with the Executive Director and/or designated staff during the exit conference. Copies of specific documents, supporting schedules, and reports obtained during the site visit to facilitate preparation of the report should be discussed during the exit conference. The agency is given the opportunity to provide comments and present additional information or explanation regarding a specific finding before it is included in the report.

The report should include specific timelines for any required corrective action associated with each finding. Copies of the report should be mailed to agency's Board and the agency's Executive Director. A copy should also be provided to the DCS Program Director and Compliance Officer.

The agency is required to respond in writing to each of the findings and observations mentioned in the report, including a detailed plan for taking corrective actions and implementing required changes. The initial response is due within 30 days from the date of the report. The agency's plan for resolution and corrective action will be reviewed by Compliance Team to ensure that all findings have been adequately addressed.

In the event an agency is unable or unwilling to correct a specified area of noncompliance within the prescribed timeline, DCS will report the deficiency to MDHS-Inspector General. If MDHS determines that the agency remains noncompliance in a specified area, DCS may contact DHHS to initiate proceedings to terminate the organization's designation as a Community Action Agency.

ATTACHMENT-FAIR HEARING PROCESS**Statutory Reference 2605(b)(13)**

~~A.~~ A fair hearing is available for any applicant or recipient upon written request. A fair hearing provides an opportunity for a more formal review by the subgrantee's Board of Directors concerning the point(s) of dissatisfaction. If the applicant or recipient is still dissatisfied from said Boards' decision, the decision may be appealed to the Division of Administrative Hearings.

~~B.~~ Basis for a Fair Hearing

- 1) Applicant(s) or recipient(s) shall be provided a copy of the 'Fair Hearing Process' during each application or recertification. Upon denial of services, a copy of the 'Fair Hearing Process' will be mailed with the denial letter to the applicant. A copy of the process will also be clearly posted in all subgrantee office locations.
- 2) The basis for a fair hearing is listed below:
 - a. An applicant or recipient whose application or recertification concerning eligibility assistance was denied;
 - b. An applicant or recipient whose claims for assistance are not acted upon reasonable promptness; or
 - c. Any other adverse action that detrimentally affects the applicant or recipient by the subgrantee and/or agency
- 3) Some issues are not subject to fair hearings, in which includes but not limited to, a subgrantee failing to have enough funds for the county that the applicant resides in. In this case, said subgrantee should refer applicant(s) to other social service providers, or use non-federal funds if available. If a county runs out of funds before the end of the program year, said subgrantee must maintain a list of applicants who could not be served. These applicants must receive priority when scheduling appointments at the start of the new program year or if additional funds are awarded.

~~C.~~ Appeal to the Subgrantee Level

- 1) After having exhausted all channels of resolution with the Executive Director of the Subgrantee, the applicant or recipient must submit a written request for a fair

hearing to the subgrantee Board of Directors within thirty (30) calendar days that the adverse action occurred. The written request must include the following:

- a. Name and address of applicant or recipient,
- b. Name of subgrantee,
- c. Date of denial notice or adverse action taken,
- d. Reason for said action,
- e. Justification stating why action should not be taken,
- f. Statement requesting a fair hearing, and
- g. Two (2) signed and dated copies of the request (original and one copy).

- 2) Upon receipt of the applicant or recipient's request, the subgrantee Board of Directors must set the date of the fair hearing for the next scheduled board meeting. The fair hearing will be conducted at the discretion of the Board of Directors for the subgrantee. Said board shall render a written decision within five (5) business days of the fair hearing date.

~~D~~. Appeal to MDHS

- 1) Written Appeal to MDHS for Fair Hearing: After having exhausted all channels for resolution at the subgrantee level, the applicant or recipient has thirty (30) calendar days from the date of the subgrantee Board of Directors' decision letter to submit a written request. The written request must include a copy of the original hearing request and the Board of Directors' decision letter. The request should be submitted to:

Mississippi Department of Human Services
Director of Administrative Hearings
Post Office Box 352
Jackson, Mississippi 39205

- 2) Notice for the Fair Hearing: The recipient or applicant and subgrantee shall receive written notice of the hearing, in which will include a statement of the date and time the hearing is to be held. The hearing may be held telephonically unless a face-to-face hearing is requested. A fair hearing shall be scheduled within seven (7) calendar days the Director of Administrative Hearings receives a proper written request.
- 3) Evidence and/or Documents: All documents relating to any pending proceeding must be submitted to the Director of Administrative Hearings Division of MDHS at the address listed above.
- 4) Informal Disposition: Informal disposition may be made of any case by written stipulation, agreed settlement, consent order, or default.

- 5) Postponement/Continuance: The hearing officer may grant a postponement or a continuance of the fair hearing for good cause based upon a written, advanced request by either party.
- 6) Conduct of Fair Hearings: Subject to the hearing officer's ruling and recommended decision, opportunity must be given to all parties to respond, present evidence, argue all issues involved and call witnesses. A recording of each fair hearing should be made. If a party fails to appear, it may forfeit all rights.
- 7) Order of Hearing: The hearing officer calls the fair hearing to order; introduces himself/herself and gives a brief statement of the nature of the proceeding; states what documents the record contains; calls for opening statements by each party; questions witnesses at will, and adjourns the fair hearing after all evidence has been presented. During testimony, the applicant, recipient or subgrantee's representative(s) may question witnesses, cross-examine the other party's witnesses, and redirect if necessary.
- 8) Recommended Decisions and Final Decisions The hearing officer shall have the responsibility of preparing a statement summarizing the facts brought out in the fair hearing, indicating the policy governing the issue at hand, and making a recommended decision based on the evidence presented. The recommended decision shall be based only on evidence, testimony, and documents presented at the fair hearing. Following the fair hearing adjournment, the hearing officer will forward, both the record and recommended decision, to the MDHS Executive Director for adoption, modification, or reversal. The final decision of the MDHS Executive Director will be forwarded to the recipient or applicant along with the Executive Director of the subgrantee. The decision of the MDHS Executive Director shall be final and binding. The recipient or applicant has exhausted all administrative appeals after the decision from the MDHS Executive Director has been rendered.

~~E.~~ Appeal to U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

- 1) If the final MDHS decision is not satisfactory, the applicant or recipient has ten (10) calendar days to submit a written request to U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Said request should be sent to:

Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Office of Community Services
370 L'Enfant Promenade, S.W., 5th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20449

- 2) The written request must include a copy of the original hearing request, the Board of Directors' decision letter, and the final decision from MDHS. A decision and/or hearing will be issued and/or conducted based on the discretion of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- 3) Note: If at any point during the fair hearings process the original adverse action or denial decision is overturned, the proper actions will be taken by the subgrantee.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-2(4); Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-4* Revised: May 2022

ATTACHMENT - LIHEAP STATE PLAN PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The state of MS updated its centralized client tracking system (Virtual ROMA 2 (VR2) to capture, analyze and submit information regarding energy burden targeting, restoration/prevention of loss of home energy service. We signed vendor agreements to include performance language, new performance related fields in VR system to allow collection and reporting of energy information required to produce the performance report and identify high energy users.

During the coming federal fiscal year, we plan to accomplish successful targeting of clients with high energy burdens. Additionally, we plan to utilize the benefit targeting/reduction indices to designate users who are high energy and allow for greater LIHEAP benefits and modify our benefit matrix beyond income. We will partner with our top vendors to get performance information more frequently. Presently, we are getting this information on an annual basis.

A vendor meeting will be scheduled to discuss results of the Performance Measures Report and to obtain greater participation from all energy vendors. We were able to capture information from the more propane vendors for this year's report.

ATTACHMENT- WASTE, FRAUD & ABUSE

The Mississippi Department of Human Services has a zero tolerance for the commission or concealment of acts of waste, fraud and abuse. Allegations of such acts will be investigated and pursued to their logical conclusion, including legal action when warranted.

- A. Waste involves the taxpayers not receiving a reasonable value for money in connection with any government funded activities due to an inappropriate act or omission by players with control over or access to government resources.
- B. Fraud is a type of illegal act involving the obtaining of something of value through willful misrepresentation or a false representation of a material fact, whether by words or by conduct, by false or misleading allegations, or by concealment of that which should have been disclosed, which deceives another so that he acts, or fails to act to his detriment.
- C. Abuse involves behavior that is deficient or improper when compared with behavior that a prudent person would consider reasonable and necessary business practice given the facts and circumstances. Abuse also includes misuse of authority or position for personal financial interests or those of an immediate or close family member or business associate.
- D. Types of Waste and Abuse include, but are not limited to:
 - 1) Employee- Omitting client information, ghost clients, charging application fees, former employee having access to software, receiving kickback from vendor, etc.
 - 2) Client- Misrepresenting household size or income, falsifying application, forging documents needed to complete intake, etc.
 - 3) Vendor/Contractor- Charging a higher amount than the lowest allowable, doctoring delivery tickets, providing financial incentive to staff to overlook unallowable charges, double charges, incorrect pricing, etc.
- E. Reporting Related to Waste, Fraud, and Abuse
 - 1) Employee (MDHS) - Any employee who has knowledge of waste, fraud or abuse, or has a good reason to suspect that such conduct has occurred, shall adhere to this policy. When suspected fraudulent activity, waste, or abuse is observed by, or made known to an employee, the employee shall immediately report the activity to their direct supervisor. If the employee believes that the supervisor is involved with the activity, they shall immediately report the activity to the Division of Community Services' Director. If the employee believes that the

Division Director may be involved with the activity, the employee shall report the activity to the Office of Inspector General at 1-800-299-6905.

- 2) Employee (Subgrantee) - Any employee who has knowledge of waste, fraud or abuse, or has a good reason to suspect that such conduct has occurred, shall adhere to the procedure in this policy. When suspected fraudulent activity, waste, or abuse is observed by, or made known to, an employee, the employee shall immediately report the activity to his/her direct supervisor. If the employee believes that the supervisor is involved with the activity, s/he shall immediately report the activity to the Executive Director. If the employee believes that the Executive Director may be involved with the activity, the employee shall report the activity to the Board of Directors. If it is believed that the Board is involved, it shall be reported to the Office of Inspector General at 1-800-299-6905.
- 3) Client or General Public - DCS cannot compel citizens and clients to report suspected instances of waste, fraud and abuse. DCS, however, strongly encourages citizens and clients to report such. Once management at the subgrantee level or at the state level has been informed of suspected waste, fraud or abuse, management shall provide the client with the established procedures for filing a report. The Office of Inspector General may be contacted at 1-800-299-6905.
- 4) Vendor - Any citizens, customer, vendor or agency that has knowledge of waste, fraud or abuse, or has a good reason to suspect that such conduct has occurred should report the occurrence to the Office of Inspector General at 1-800-299-6905 and may result in an investigation being conducted.
- 5) A confidential report may be submitted through the Virtual Roma website found on <https://virtualroma.mdhs.ms.gov>. If the reporting party does not have access to this system, reporting may be completed at the following contact information:

Call toll free number: 1-800-299-6905

Fax number: 601- 359- 5047

Address: Office of Inspector General

200 South Lamar Street

Jackson, MS 39201

- 6) Providing specific occurrence details of suspected waste, fraud, and abuse will expedite investigative efforts. There is no requirement to submit identifying information from those who wish to report suspected waste, fraud, and abuse.
- 7) Tips will be investigated in the order that they have been received with no preference given to those who provided identifying information.

F. Penalties for Substantiated Waste, Fraud, and Abuse- Once an investigation has been completed and reviewed by MDHS Office of Inspector General, penalties may be enforced as follows:

- 1) Employee - Employees of MDHS or Subgrantee who have been found guilty of waste, fraud and abuse are subject to prosecution and/or recoupment of any benefits provided, following due process as defined in subgrantee regulations and may be terminated.
- 2) Client - If it is the client's first offense they will be ineligible for services for an entire year from the date of the decision and benefits recouped. If it is the client's second offense, they will be disqualified permanently from the program and is subject to prosecution and/or recoupment of any benefits provided, following due process as defined in agency regulations.
- 3) Vendors and Contractors - Vendors/Contractors suspected of fraud and/or misrepresentation may be suspended from participation and may be subject to prosecution and/or recoupment of any benefits provided, following due process as defined in agency regulations.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-2(4); Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-4* Revised: May 2022

ATTACHMENT-LEGAL NOTICE & PUBLIC COMMENTS

Statutory reference 2605 (b) (12)

**MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
MEMORANDUM**

TO: Veronica Ratliff
Division of Procurement Services

FROM: Nicole McBeath
Division of Community Services

DATE: May 17, 2023

SUBJECT: Publication of Legal Notice

The Division of Community Services requests that a legal notice concerning the Legislative Public Hearing on the Community Services Block Grant and Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Programs be published in the classified section of the twelve newspapers listed (See attachment). The information should be advertised on **May 24, 2023 and June 14, 2023** in each newspaper. **Please send us the copies of the newspaper advertisements from three different publishers as soon as they are announced.**

Should you have any questions, please contact Nicole McBeath at 601-359-4765.

TMR:nm

Attachments

LEGAL GRANTS
(Block Grants)
MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF
HUMAN SERVICES
Division of Community Services
Legislative Public Hearing

The Mississippi Department of Human Services, Division of Community Services will be conducting the Legislative Public Hearing on the Community Services Block Grant and Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Programs under Title 26 of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981, as amended. The hearing for the 2024 programs is scheduled for Tuesday, June 27, 2023, at 11:00 am through Zoom meeting by the Mississippi Department of Human Services. Participants can join the Zoom meeting via <https://mdhs.zoom.us/j/87131268954?pwd=QVVTY0NpM0lkTFZKWFZPWnBIZTV4Zz09>, or through One tap mobile: meeting ID: 871 3126 8954, Passcode: 971254, One tap mobile +13017158592,,87131268954#,,,,*971254# US (Washington DC), or +13052241968,,87131268954#,,,,*971254# US. If lines are busy, please try one of the following numbers, +1 346 248 7799 US (Houston), +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago), or +1 646 876 9923 US (New York) and the meeting ID: 871 3126 8954, Passcode: 971254.

The Community Services Block Grant provides funds for a range of activities to ameliorate the causes and effects of poverty. For Fiscal Year 2024, at least 90 percent of the funds allocated to the State through these grants will be contracted to non-profit community action agencies, migrant seasonal farm worker organizations or community-based organizations that meet the eligibility requirements as described in Section 675 of the Community Services Block Grant Act, as amended. The eligibility requirements for the program are outlined in the application process.

The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program assists eligible households to pay the costs of home energy bills and other energy-related services, for example, wood, kerosene, electricity, gas, heaters, blankets, fans, and air conditioners. For Fiscal Year 2024, at least 90 percent of the funds allocated to the State through these grants will be contracted to private, nonprofit, and public agencies designated in accordance with Public Law 97-35, as amended. The eligibility requirements for the program are outlined in the application process.

Copies of the state plans are available for review at the Mississippi Department of Human Services by calling 601-359-4768 or 1-800-421-0762.

Inquiries, comments, or suggestions regarding the block grant plans and/or eligibility requirements must be received on or before July 6, 2023, by the Division of Community Services, P. O. Box 352, Jackson, Mississippi 39205. Public comments will be reviewed before finalizing the 2024 State Plans for these programs.

Mississippi Department of Human Services
Division of Community Services

NEWSPAPERS

- | | | | |
|----|---|-----|---|
| 1. | The Jackson Advocate
115 East Hamilton
Jackson, MS 39202 | 7. | The Clarion Ledger
Post Office Box 40
Jackson, MS 39205-0040 |
| 2. | The Natchez Democrat
Post Office Box 1447
Natchez, MS 39121-39221 | 8. | The Vicksburg Evening Post
Post Office Box 951
Vicksburg, MS 39180 |
| 3. | The Commercial Dispatch
Post Office Box 511
Columbus, MS 39703 | 9. | The Northeast MS Daily Journal
Post Office Box 909
Tupelo, MS 38801 |
| 4. | The Delta Democrat Times
Post Office Box 1618
Greenville, MS 38701 | 10. | The Hattiesburg American
Post Office Box 1111
Hattiesburg, MS 39401 |
| 5. | The Daily Corinthian
Post Office Box 119
Corinth, MS 38834 | 11. | The Clarksdale Press Registrar
Post Office Box 1119
Clarksdale, MS 38614 |
| 6. | The Gulf Publishing Company
Post Office Box 4567
Biloxi, MS 39535 | 12. | The Meridian Star
Post Office Box 1591
Meridian, MS 39301 |

ATTACHMENT- 2024 LIHEAP & CSBG PUBLIC HEARING AGENDA

Will be attached after hearing.

ATTACHMENT- PUBLIC COMMENTS

Will be attached after the hearing.

ATTACHMENT- VENDOR AGREEMENT FORM

**Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS)
Division of Community Services (DCS)**

**Vendor Agreement
Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program**

The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) provides assistance to eligible low-income households to pay home energy costs. Payments for assistance will be made by _____ on behalf of eligible households

_____ LIHEAP Agency
to the LIHEAP Energy Vendor who provides the source of electricity or gas services. Checks or ACH deposit will be issued to the LIHEAP Energy Vendor with a list of eligible households attached to it.

This vendor agreement is between:

LIHEAP Agency:	Address, Phone Number and Email Address:
LIHEAP Energy Vendor Legal Name:	Address, Phone Number and Email Address:
Tax ID Number/EIN Number:	

Services provided and billed by LIHEAP Energy Vendor (Mark an "X"):

Electricity Fees _____ Natural Gas Fees _____
Propane Fees _____ Other Fees (please list) _____

Counties served by your company: _____

By signing this agreement and accepting payments on behalf of eligible households, the LIHEAP Energy Vendor assures:

- The account number is assigned to each household eligible for electric or gas assistance;
- That eligible households will be charged in a normal business process, the difference between the actual cost of electricity or gas services and the amount of payment made through this program;
- That eligible households will not be treated adversely or differently because of such assistance;
- That there will be no discrimination either in the cost of goods supplied or services provided, against the households on whose behalf payments are made;
- That the amount paid by LIHEAP agency will be credited to individual eligible household account indicated on the listing that accompanies the check or ACH deposit;
- Provide electricity or gas services to each eligible and approved residential household for which payment is provided under LIHEAP;
- Restore electricity or gas services upon payment for households that have been disconnected;
- To not refuse service or otherwise discriminate in the marketing and provision of service to any household because of race, religion, color, national origin, gender, familial status, source of income, level of income, disability, financial status or qualification for low-income services;

Revised
July 1, 2022

- To not refuse service or otherwise discriminate in the marketing and provision of service to any household because of race, religion, color, national origin, gender, familial status, source of income, level of income, disability, financial status or qualification for low-income services;
- To not take any adverse action on a household account when an application for assistance is pending, until such time that eligibility for services is determined;
- To not interrupt services if a pledge was sent to LIHWAP Vendor and the LIHWAP agency is meeting the obligations under this agreement;
- That it will cooperate with DCS by providing requested information to DCS regarding annual water/wastewater usage and cost for LIHWAP households, if applicable;
- To provide at no cost to the LIHWAP Agency, household, or MDHS-DCS, written information on a household's home water/wastewater costs, bill payment history or arrearage history for no more than the previous 12 monthly billing periods; and
- To report any instance of fraud, waste, and abuse concerning customer (household), LIHWAP agency, employee, or LIHWAP vendor, please contact the MDHS Division of Program Integrity at 1-800-299-6905. The report may result in an investigation being conducted and/or permanent disqualification from participating in the LIHWAP.

The LIHWAP vendor agrees to handle payments in the following manner:

- Payments must be applied **ONLY to residential water/wastewater accounts** of the individuals listed, except if: (a) the account is in the name of the spouse who lives at the same address; (b) the account is in the name of a deceased spouse; or (c) verification is obtained from vendor or landlord stating that applicant is responsible for affected utility bill;
- Payments must not be applied to account balances that have previously been written off or paid with other funds;
- Provide written reconciliation and confirmation on a regular basis to LIHWAP agency that benefits have been credited appropriately to households and their services have been restored on a timely basis or disconnection status has been removed if applicable;
- Payments must **not** be applied to business accounts;
- Payment must be applied **only** for home water/wastewater services. The following payments are prohibited: repairs, garbage collections, fraudulent services, meter tampering and returned check fees;
- If a credit balance results from the payment to a household's account, the credit balance must be refunded to the LIHWAP agency within 60 days. **CASH REFUNDS TO THE HOUSEHOLD OR LIHWAP AGENCY ARE STRICTLY PROHIBITED;**
- Should a credit balance result on an account in which the account holder dies (and there are no other adults in household), or moves out of the LIHWAP Vendor's service area, any amount exceeding the balance owed the LIHWAP Vendor must be refunded to the LIHWAP Agency within 60 days;
- Refund any interest resulting from unused LIHWAP payment made on behalf of the household;
- All household accounts should be credited immediately, but no later than ten (10) days after receipt of check from LIHWAP agency. It is important that all branch offices of LIHWAP vendor are contacted to ensure that household accounts are credited in a timely manner;
- The LIHWAP Vendor agrees to provide at least one contact person and phone number to the LIHWAP Agency who will ensure that all accounts are credited and answer questions concerning water/wastewater disconnections and payments;
- Refunds must be identified with the year credit occurred, name, address, and account number of the recipient;
- Reconnection fees shall be waived, unless prohibited by city ordinance, and a listing be provided to LIHWAP agency on a monthly basis;
- Cooperate with any Federal, State, or local investigation, audit, or program review. The LIHWAP vendor will allow LIHWAP Agency representatives access to all books and records

09/27/21

relating to LIHWAP households for the purpose of compliance verification with this Agreement;
and;

- Understand that failure to cooperate with any Federal, State, or local investigation, audit, or program review may result in the immediate disqualification from participation in the LIHWAP.

By signing this agreement and pledging payments of eligible households, the LIHWAP agency assures:

- To not provide pledges on behalf of households without having adequate funds to pay such pledge;
- Pledges will be made **only** on approved applications in the MDHS Virtual ROMA system;
- Payment will occur within twenty (20) business days after application has been approved; and
- Provide LIHWAP Vendor with a list of names, telephone numbers and email addresses of LIHWAP Agency staff designated to approve pledges on behalf of the agency.

The parties acknowledge that this Agreement and the services provided by the LIHWAP Vendor and the LIHWAP Agency are governed by and subject to the federal and state laws and regulations in accordance with the Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program supplemental terms and conditions.

The Mississippi Department of Human Services may terminate this agreement by written notice for failure of either party to comply with the provisions stated herein or when it is deemed to be in the best interest of the State, household, or to comply with applicable laws and regulations.

Signature of LIHWAP Agency Officer	Signature of LIHWAP Vendor Officer
Printed Name & Title	Printed Name & Title
Date	Date

09/27/21

Section 18: Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, and Other Responsibility Matters**Section 18: Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, and Other Responsibility Matters****Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, and Other Responsibility Matters--Primary Covered Transactions****Instructions for Certification**

1. By signing and submitting this proposal, the prospective primary participant is providing the certification set out below.
2. The inability of a person to provide the certification required below will not necessarily result in denial of participation in this covered transaction. The prospective participant shall submit an explanation of why it cannot provide the certification set out below. The certification or explanation will be considered in connection with the department or agency's determination whether to enter into this transaction. However, failure of the prospective primary participant to furnish a certification or an explanation shall disqualify such person from participation in this transaction.
3. The certification in this clause is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when the department or agency determined to enter into this transaction. If it is later determined that the prospective primary participant knowingly rendered an erroneous certification, in addition to other remedies available to the Federal Government, the department or agency may terminate this transaction for cause or default.BrBbr.
4. The prospective primary participant shall provide immediate written notice to the department or agency to which this proposal is submitted if at any time the prospective primary participant learns that its certification was erroneous when submitted or has become erroneous by reason of changed circumstances.
5. The terms covered transaction, debarred, suspended, ineligible, lower tier covered transaction, participant, person, primary covered transaction, principal, proposal, and voluntarily excluded, as used in this clause, have the meanings set out in the Definitions and Coverage sections of the rules implementing Executive Order 12549. You may contact the department or agency to which this proposal is being submitted for assistance in obtaining a copy of those regulations.
6. The prospective primary participant agrees by submitting this proposal that, should the proposed covered transaction be entered into, it shall not knowingly enter into any lower tier covered transaction with a person who is proposed for debarment under 48 CFR part 9, subpart 9.4, debarred, suspended, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this covered transaction, unless authorized by the department or agency entering into this transaction.
7. The prospective primary participant further agrees by submitting this proposal that it will include the clause titled "Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion-Lower Tier Covered Transaction," provided by the department or agency entering into this covered transaction, without modification, in all lower tier covered transactions and in all solicitations for lower tier covered transactions.
8. A participant in a covered transaction may rely upon a certification of a prospective participant in a lower tier covered transaction that it is not proposed for debarment under 48 CFR part 9, subpart 9.4, debarred, suspended, ineligible, or

voluntarily excluded from the covered transaction, unless it knows that the certification is erroneous. A participant may decide the method and frequency by which it determines the eligibility of its principals. Each participant may, but is not required to, check the List of Parties Excluded from Federal Procurement and Nonprocurement Programs.

9. Nothing contained in the foregoing shall be construed to require establishment of a system of records in order to render in good faith the certification required by this clause. The knowledge and information of a participant is not required to exceed that which is normally possessed by a prudent person in the ordinary course of business dealings.

10. Except for transactions authorized under paragraph 6 of these instructions, if a participant in a covered transaction knowingly enters into a lower tier covered transaction with a person who is proposed for debarment under 48 CFR part 9, subpart 9.4, suspended, debarred, ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction, in addition to other remedies available to the Federal Government, the department or agency may terminate this transaction for cause or default.

Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, and Other Responsibility Matters--Primary Covered Transactions

(1) The prospective primary participant certifies to the best of its knowledge and belief, that it and its principals:

(a) Are not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded by any Federal department or agency;

(b) Have not within a three-year period preceding this proposal been convicted of or had a civil judgment rendered against them for commission of fraud or a criminal offense in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a public (Federal, State or local) transaction or contract under a public transaction; violation of Federal or State antitrust statutes or commission of embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements, or receiving stolen property;

(c) Are not presently indicted for or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a governmental entity (Federal, State or local) with commission of any of the offenses enumerated in paragraph (1)(b) of this certification; and

(d) Have not within a three-year period preceding this application/proposal had one or more public transactions (Federal, State or local) terminated for cause or default.

(2) Where the prospective primary participant is unable to certify to any of the statements in this certification, such prospective participant shall attach an explanation to this proposal.

Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion--Lower Tier Covered Transactions

Instructions for Certification

1. By signing and submitting this proposal, the prospective lower tier participant is providing the certification set out below.

2. The certification in this clause is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was entered into. If it is later

determined that the prospective lower tier participant knowingly rendered an erroneous certification, in addition to other remedies available to the Federal Government the department or agency with which this transaction originated may pursue available remedies, including suspension and/or debarment.

3. The prospective lower tier participant shall provide immediate written notice to the person to which this proposal is submitted if at any time the prospective lower tier participant learns that its certification was erroneous when submitted or had become erroneous by reason of changed circumstances.

4. The terms covered transaction, debarred, suspended, ineligible, lower tier covered transaction, participant, person, primary covered transaction, principal, proposal, and voluntarily excluded, as used in this clause, have the meaning set out in the Definitions and Coverage sections of rules implementing Executive Order 12549. You may contact the person to which this proposal is submitted for assistance in obtaining a copy of those regulations.

5. The prospective lower tier participant agrees by submitting this proposal that, [[Page 33043]] should the proposed covered transaction be entered into, it shall not knowingly enter into any lower tier covered transaction with a person who is proposed for debarment under 48 CFR part 9, subpart 9.4, debarred, suspended, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this covered transaction, unless authorized by the department or agency with which this transaction originated.

6. The prospective lower tier participant further agrees by submitting this proposal that it will include this clause titled "Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion-Lower Tier Covered Transaction," without modification, in all lower tier covered transactions and in all solicitations for lower tier covered transactions.

7. A participant in a covered transaction may rely upon a certification of a prospective participant in a lower tier covered transaction that it is not proposed for debarment under 48 CFR part 9, subpart 9.4, debarred, suspended, ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from covered transactions, unless it knows that the certification is erroneous. A participant may decide the method and frequency by which it determines the eligibility of its principals. Each participant may, but is not required to, check the List of Parties Excluded from Federal Procurement and Nonprocurement Programs.

8. Nothing contained in the foregoing shall be construed to require establishment of a system of records in order to render in good faith the certification required by this clause. The knowledge and information of a participant is not required to exceed that which is normally possessed by a prudent person in the ordinary course of business dealings.

9. Except for transactions authorized under paragraph 5 of these instructions, if a participant in a covered transaction knowingly enters into a lower tier covered transaction with a person who is proposed for debarment under 48 CFR part 9, subpart 9.4, suspended, debarred, ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction, in addition to other remedies available to the Federal Government, the department or agency with which this transaction originated may pursue available remedies, including suspension and/or debarment.

Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility an Voluntary Exclusion--Lower Tier Covered Transactions

(1) The prospective lower tier participant certifies, by submission of this proposal, that neither it nor its principals is presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction by any Federal department or agency.

(2) Where the prospective lower tier participant is unable to certify to any of the statements in this certification, such prospective participant shall attach an explanation to this proposal.

By checking this box, the prospective primary participant is providing the certification set out above.

Section 19: Certification Regarding Drug-Free Workplace Requirements

Section 19: Certification Regarding Drug-Free Workplace Requirements

This certification is required by the regulations implementing the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988: 45 CFR Part 76, Subpart, F. Sections 76.630(c) and (d)(2) and 76.645(a)(1) and (b) provide that a Federal agency may designate a central receipt point for STATE-WIDE AND STATE AGENCY-WIDE certifications, and for notification of criminal drug convictions. For the Department of Health and Human Services, the central pint is: Division of Grants Management and Oversight, Office of Management and Acquisition, Department of Health and Human Services, Room 517-D, 200 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, DC 20201.

Certification Regarding Drug-Free Workplace Requirements (Instructions for Certification)

1. By signing and/or submitting this application or grant agreement, the grantee is providing the certification set out below.
2. The certification set out below is a material representation of fact upon which reliance is placed when the agency awards the grant. If it is later determined that the grantee knowingly rendered a false certification, or otherwise violates the requirements of the Drug-Free Workplace Act, the agency, in addition to any other remedies available to the Federal Government, may take action authorized under the Drug-Free Workplace Act.
3. For grantees other than individuals, Alternate I applies.
4. For grantees who are individuals, Alternate II applies.
5. Workplaces under grants, for grantees other than individuals, need not be identified on the certification. If known, they may be identified in the grant application. If the grantee does not identify the workplaces at the time of application, or upon award, if there is no application, the grantee must keep the identity of the workplace(s) on file in its office and make the information available for Federal inspection. Failure to identify all known workplaces constitutes a violation of the grantee's drug-free workplace requirements.
6. Workplace identifications must include the actual address of buildings (or parts of buildings) or other sites where work under the grant takes place. Categorical descriptions may be used (e.g., all vehicles of a mass transit authority or State highway department while in operation, State employees in each local unemployment office, performers in concert halls or radio studios).
7. If the workplace identified to the agency changes during the performance of the grant, the grantee shall inform the agency of the change(s), if it previously identified the workplaces in question (see paragraph five).
8. Definitions of terms in the Nonprocurement Suspension and Debarment common rule and Drug-Free Workplace common rule apply to this certification. Grantees' attention is called, in particular, to the following definitions from these rules:

Controlled substance means a controlled substance in Schedules I through V of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 812) and as further defined by regulation (21 CFR 1308.11 through 1308.15);

Conviction means a finding of guilt (including a plea of nolo contendere) or imposition of sentence, or both, by any judicial body charged with the responsibility to determine violations of the Federal or State criminal drug statutes;

Criminal drug statute means a Federal or non-Federal criminal statute involving the manufacture, distribution, dispensing, use, or possession of any controlled substance;

Employee means the employee of a grantee directly engaged in the performance of work under a grant, including: (i) All direct charge employees; (ii) All indirect charge employees unless their impact or involvement is insignificant to the performance of the grant; and, (iii) Temporary personnel and consultants who are directly engaged in the performance of work under the grant and who are on the grantee's payroll. This definition does not include workers not on the payroll of the grantee (e.g., volunteers, even if used to meet a matching requirement; consultants or independent contractors not on the grantee's payroll; or employees of subrecipients or subcontractors in covered workplaces).

Certification Regarding Drug-Free Workplace Requirements

Alternate I. (Grantees Other Than Individuals)

The grantee certifies that it will or will continue to provide a drug-free workplace by:

- (a) Publishing a statement notifying employees that the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, or use of a controlled substance is prohibited in the grantee's workplace and specifying the actions that will be taken against employees for violation of such prohibition;
- (b) Establishing an ongoing drug-free awareness program to inform employees about --
 - (1) The dangers of drug abuse in the workplace;
 - (2) The grantee's policy of maintaining a drug-free workplace;
 - (3) Any available drug counseling, rehabilitation, and employee assistance programs; and
 - (4) The penalties that may be imposed upon employees for drug abuse violations occurring in the workplace;
- (c) Making it a requirement that each employee to be engaged in the performance of the grant be given a copy of the statement required by paragraph (a);
- (d) Notifying the employee in the statement required by paragraph (a) that, as a condition of employment under the grant, the employee will --
 - (1) Abide by the terms of the statement; and
 - (2) Notify the employer in writing of his or her conviction for a violation of a criminal drug statute occurring in the workplace no later than five calendar days after such conviction;
- (e) Notifying the agency in writing, within ten calendar days after receiving notice under paragraph (d)(2) from an employee or otherwise receiving actual notice of conviction. Employers of convicted employees must provide notice, including position title, to every grant officer or other designee on whose grant activity the convicted employee was working, unless the Federal agency has designated a central point for the receipt of such notices. Notice shall include the identification

number(s) of each affected grant;
 (f) Taking one of the following actions, within 30 calendar days of receiving notice under paragraph (d)(2), with respect to any employee who is so convicted -(1) Taking appropriate personnel action against such an employee, up to and including termination, consistent with the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; or
 (2) Requiring such employee to participate satisfactorily in a drug abuse assistance or rehabilitation program approved for such purposes by a Federal, State, or local health, law enforcement, or other appropriate agency;
 (g) Making a good faith effort to continue to maintain a drug-free workplace through implementation of paragraphs (a), (b), (c), (d), (e) and (f).
 (B) The grantee may insert in the space provided below the site(s) for the performance of work done in connection with the specific grant:

Place of Performance (Street address, city, county, state, zip code)

200 South Lamar Street
 * **Address Line 1**

Address Line 2

Address Line 3

Jackson * City	MS * State	39201 * Zip Code
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Check if there are workplaces on file that are not identified here.

Alternate II. (Grantees Who Are Individuals)

(a) The grantee certifies that, as a condition of the grant, he or she will not engage in the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, or use of a controlled substance in conducting any activity with the grant;

(b) If convicted of a criminal drug offense resulting from a violation occurring during the conduct of any grant activity, he or she will report the conviction, in writing, within 10 calendar days of the conviction, to every grant officer or other designee, unless the Federal agency designates a central point for the receipt of such notices. When notice is made to such a central point, it shall include the identification number(s) of each affected grant.

[55 FR 21690, 21702, May 25, 1990]

By checking this box, the prospective primary participant is providing the certification set out above.

Section 20: Certification Regarding Lobbying

<p>Section 20: Certification Regarding Lobbying</p>
<p>The submitter of this application certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:</p> <p>(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.</p> <p>(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions</p> <p>(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.</p> <p>Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance</p> <p>The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:</p> <p>If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> By checking this box, the prospective primary participant is providing the certification set out above.</p>

Assurances

Assurances
<p>(1) use the funds available under this title to--</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(A) conduct outreach activities and provide assistance to low income households in meeting their home energy costs, particularly those with the lowest incomes that pay a high proportion of household income for home energy, consistent with paragraph (5);</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(B) intervene in energy crisis situations;</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(C) provide low-cost residential weatherization and other cost-effective energy-related home repair;and</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(D)plan, develop, and administer the State's program under this title including leveraging programs, and the State agrees not to use such funds for any purposes other than those specified in this title;</p> <p>(2) make payments under this title only with respect to--</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(A) households in which one or more individuals are receiving--</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">(i)assistance under the State program funded under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act;</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">(ii) supplemental security income payments under title XVI of the Social Security Act;</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">(iii) food stamps under the Food Stamp Act of 1977; or</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">(iv) payments under section 415, 521, 541, or 542 of title 38, United States Code, or under section 306 of the Veterans' and Survivors' Pension Improvement Act of 1978; or</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(B) households with incomes which do not exceed the greater of -</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">(i) an amount equal to 150 percent of the poverty level for such State; or</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">(ii) an amount equal to 60 percent of the State median income;</p> <p>(except that a State may not exclude a household from eligibility in a fiscal year solely on the basis of household income if such income is less than 110 percent of the poverty level for such State, but the State may give priority to those households with the highest home energy costs or needs in relation to household income.</p> <p>(3) conduct outreach activities designed to assure that eligible households, especially households with elderly individuals or disabled individuals, or both, and households with high home energy burdens, are made aware of the assistance available under this title, and any similar energy-related assistance available under subtitle B of title VI (relating to community services block grant program) or under any other provision of law which carries out programs which were administered under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 before the date of the enactment of this Act;</p> <p>(4) coordinate its activities under this title with similar and related programs administered by the Federal Government and such State, particularly low-income</p>

energy-related programs under subtitle B of title VI (relating to community services block grant program), under the supplemental security income program, under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act, under title XX of the Social Security Act, under the low-income weatherization assistance program under title IV of the Energy Conservation and Production Act, or under any other provision of law which carries out programs which were administered under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 before the date of the enactment of this Act;

(5) provide, in a timely manner, that the highest level of assistance will be furnished to those households which have the lowest incomes and the highest energy costs or needs in relation to income, taking into account family size, except that the State may not differentiate in implementing this section between the households described in clauses 2(A) and 2(B) of this subsection;

(6) to the extent it is necessary to designate local administrative agencies in order to carry out the purposes of this title, to give special consideration, in the designation of such agencies, to any local public or private nonprofit agency which was receiving Federal funds under any low-income energy assistance program or weatherization program under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 or any other provision of law on the day before the date of the enactment of this Act, except that -

(A) the State shall, before giving such special consideration, determine that the agency involved meets program and fiscal requirements established by the State; and

(B) if there is no such agency because of any change in the assistance furnished to programs for economically disadvantaged persons, then the State shall give special consideration in the designation of local administrative agencies to any successor agency which is operated in substantially the same manner as the predecessor agency which did receive funds for the fiscal year preceding the fiscal year for which the determination is made;

(7) if the State chooses to pay home energy suppliers directly, establish procedures to --

(A) notify each participating household of the amount of assistance paid on its behalf;

(B) assure that the home energy supplier will charge the eligible household, in the normal billing process, the difference between the actual cost of the home energy and the amount of the payment made by the State under this title;

(C) assure that the home energy supplier will provide assurances that any agreement entered into with a home energy supplier under this paragraph will contain provisions to assure that no household receiving assistance under this title will be treated adversely because of such assistance under applicable provisions of State law or public regulatory requirements; and

(D) ensure that the provision of vendor payments remains at the option of the State in consultation with local grantees and may be contingent on unregulated vendors taking appropriate measures to alleviate the energy burdens of eligible households, including providing for agreements between suppliers and individuals eligible for benefits under this Act that seek to reduce home energy costs, minimize the risks of home energy crisis, and encourage regular payments by individuals receiving financial assistance for home energy costs;

(8) provide assurances that,

(A) the State will not exclude households described in clause (2)(B) of this subsection from receiving home energy assistance benefits under clause (2), and

(B) the State will treat owners and renters equitably under the program assisted under this title;

(9) provide that--

(A) the State may use for planning and administering the use of funds under this title an amount not to exceed 10 percent of the funds payable to such State under this title for a fiscal year; and

(B) the State will pay from non-Federal sources the remaining costs of planning and administering the program assisted under this title and will not use Federal funds for such remaining cost (except for the costs of the activities described in paragraph (16));

(10) provide that such fiscal control and fund accounting procedures will be established as may be necessary to assure the proper disbursement of and accounting for Federal funds paid to the State under this title, including procedures for monitoring the assistance provided under this title, and provide that the State will comply with the provisions of chapter 75 of title 31, United States Code (commonly known as the "Single Audit Act");

(11) permit and cooperate with Federal investigations undertaken in accordance with section 2608;

(12) provide for timely and meaningful public participation in the development of the plan described in subsection (c);

(13) provide an opportunity for a fair administrative hearing to individuals whose claims for assistance under the plan described in subsection (c) are denied or are not acted upon with reasonable promptness; and

(14) cooperate with the Secretary with respect to data collecting and reporting under section 2610.

(15) * beginning in fiscal year 1992, provide, in addition to such services as may be offered by State Departments of Public Welfare at the local level, outreach and intake functions for crisis situations and heating and cooling assistance that is administered by additional State and local governmental entities or community-based organizations (such as community action agencies, area agencies on aging and not-for-profit neighborhood-based organizations), and in States where such organizations do not administer functions as of September 30, 1991, preference in awarding grants or contracts for intake services shall be provided to those agencies that administer the low-income weatherization or energy crisis intervention programs.

* This assurance is applicable only to States, and to territories whose annual regular LIHEAP allotments exceed \$200,000. Neither territories with annual allotments of \$200,000 or less nor Indian tribes/tribal organizations are subject to Assurance 15.

(16) use up to 5 percent of such funds, at its option, to provide services that encourage and enable households to reduce their home energy needs and

thereby the need for energy assistance, including needs assessments, counseling, and assistance with energy vendors, and report to the Secretary concerning the impact of such activities on the number of households served, the level of direct benefits provided to those households, and the number of households that remain unserved.

Plan Attachments

PLAN ATTACHMENTS
The following documents must be attached to this application
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Delegation Letter is required if someone other than the Governor or Chairman Certified this Report.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Heating component benefit matrix, if applicable
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cooling component benefit matrix, if applicable
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minutes, notes, or transcripts of public hearing(s).