

1100 Series

1101 **LIHEAP Crisis Assistance (LCA) – Income Eligibility Guidelines**

1102 **LCA Programmatic Reporting**

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Community Services Policy Manual	SUBJECT: INCOME ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES LOW INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM: CRISIS ASSISTANCE		EFFECTIVE DATE 02/01/09 ISSUE DATE 02/05/09

REFERENCES: Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program: Crisis Assistance (LCA) Agreement

BACKGROUND:

The LCA Agreement, Section I.B.4., states that an applicant will be considered eligible whose household income is at or below 60 percent of state median income. See CSPM Item 208 for state median income guidelines.

POLICY:

Automatic Income Eligibility

A household is automatically income-eligible for LCA funds if one or more individuals in the household are receiving Family Independence Program (FIP), Food Assistance Program (FAP), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), or Veteran’s benefits.

The agency must include documentation supporting the automatic income eligibility in the client file.

Income Eligibility Determination

The LCA income maximum is 60 percent of state median income. See CSPM 208 for state median income guidelines. Income eligibility is based on the total amount of household income expected to be received in the next 30 days. The 30-day period includes the date of application.

INCOME GUIDELINES

Income refers to total cash receipts before taxes from all sources and for all household members. Exceptions are listed in the “Income Excludes” section that follows. The income guidelines are applicable to both farm and non-farm families.

Income Includes:

1. Money, wages and salaries before any deductions.
2. Net receipts from non-farm or farm or farm self-employment (receipts from a person’s own business or from an owned or rented farm after deductions for business or farm expenses).
3. Regular payments from Social Security (net benefits after deducting non-reimbursed Medicare premiums), railroad retirement, unemployment compensation, strike benefits from union funds, worker’s compensation, veteran’s payments, public assistance (including Family Independence Program-FIP, Supplemental Security Income-SSI, and State Disability Assistance-SDA), training stipends, alimony, child support, and military family allotments.

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4. Private pensions, government employee pensions (including military retirement pay), and regular insurance or annuity payments.
5. College or university scholarships, grants, fellowships and assistantships.
6. Dividends, interest, net rental income, net royalties, periodic receipts from estates or trusts, and net gambling or lottery winnings.
7. Any lump sum payments received by Native Americans, such as from Casino income or tribal income.

Income Excludes:

Income does not include:

1. Combat zone pay
2. Capital gains.
2. Any emergency assistance program payments.
3. Any assets drawn down as withdrawals from a bank, the sale of property, a house, or a car.
4. Tax refunds, gifts, loans, lump sum inheritances, one time insurance payments, or compensation for injury.
5. Non-cash benefits such as the employer paid or union paid portion of health insurance or other employee fringe benefits, food or housing received in lieu of wages, the value of food and fuel produced and consumed on farms, the imputed value of rent from owner-occupied non-farm or farm housing, and federal non-cash benefit programs such as Medicare, Medicaid, Food Assistance Program (as well as cash received in lieu of Food Assistance Program), school lunches, and housing assistance.
6. Any portion of Social Security benefits deducted to pay Medicare premiums that will not be reimbursed.
7. Income earned through employment by a child who is age 18 and under, **and** attends school. **NOTE:** "Earnings" do not include program benefits such as Social Security, Supplemental Security Income, etc.; these **are** included in the total household income.

NOTE: Group members who are absent from the home for 90 consecutive days or more are excluded from the group and therefore, their income is excluded.

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INCOME COMPUTATIONS

Establish the LCA income computation period and determine the household's countable income for the period.

Computation Period: The LCA income computation period is 30 days in the future. The 30 day period begins the date the agency receives a signed application for deliverable heating fuel assistance.

EXAMPLE 1: On March 16 the client signs an application at the agency requesting deliverable heating fuel assistance. The income computation period is March 16 through April 14. (March has 31 days.)

EXAMPLE 2: On August 15 the outreach worker interviews the client in the client's home and receives a signed deliverable heating fuel assistance application. The income computation period is August 15 through September 14.

Countable Income: Verify and determine all non-excluded income the household expects to receive during the income computation period.

DOCUMENTATION OF INCOME

Projected income must be thoroughly documented. The following items are acceptable documentation:

- Copies of paychecks or pay stubs;
- Written statements from employers;
- Letters or other documents from income sources (e.g., DHS, Social Security, VA);
- Unemployment Compensation Benefit check stubs;
- If self-employed, accounting and other business records showing net income;
- Self-declaration of applicant, but only as a last resort;
- Other documents the program operator has reason to believe will verify the projected income of the household member(s).

NOTE: Agencies CANNOT require that a household be denied assistance by the DHS local office or any other service provider as a condition of eligibility.

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CLIENT FILE

Agencies must maintain a client file for all recipients of LCA funds. At a minimum, the file must include:

- **For Automatically Income-Eligible Households:**

1. A copy of the agency's client services application. The client and the intake worker must sign the application.
2. Documentation that a member of the household is currently receiving FIP, FAP, SSI, or Veteran's benefits.
3. The type and dollar value of the benefits provided.
4. Demonstration of Need documentation. (See CSPM Item 309.)

- **For all other households:**

1. A copy of the agency's client services application. The application must identify each member of the household as well as income sources and amounts for each member of the household being served. The client and the intake worker must sign the application.
2. A copy of all documents used to determine income eligibility; including self-declarations and documented phone conversations with caseworkers.
3. **All** calculations for each income source for the next 30 days.
4. The type and dollar value of the benefits provided.
5. Demonstration of Need documentation. (See CSPM Item 309.)

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Community Services Policy Manual	SUBJECT Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program: Crisis Assistance PROGRAMMATIC REPORTING		EFFECTIVE DATE 02/01/09 ISSUE DATE 02/05/09

ISSUANCES AFFECTED:

REFERENCES Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program: Crisis Assistance (LCA) Agreement

BACKGROUND:

LCA Agreement, Section II, J., requires the submission of programmatic reports.

POLICY:

The Grantee is required to complete and submit the LCA Programmatic Report, DHS-76, by the dates listed below.

Instructions

The LCA Programmatic Report, DHS-76 is to be submitted quarterly. The grantee will indicate the total number of households served and the number of households served in each category and poverty interval.

Note: Although income eligibility is determined at 60 percent of State Median Income, due to LIHEAP reporting requirements grantees are required to report by poverty income level.

The Grantee will submit reports April 15 for the period February 1 – March 31, July 15 for the period April 1 – June 30, and October 15 for the period July 1 – September 30. Reports must be submitted electronically to the Grantee's grant manager.