Dated July 30, 2015

2016 Michigan Energy Assistance Program
Frequently Asked Questions

1. **Will we have funding by Oct. 1 and can we accept <u>and process</u> applications beginning Oct. 1?**

   Yes, you can accept applications beginning October 1. It is the first day of the 2016 Fiscal Year and Grant Term. If LARA/DHHS have the Grantees signed grant agreement before October 1, the Grantees first advance will be processed on October 1. The Electronic Fund Transfer usually takes three business days and should be received by grantees no later than October 6th.

2. **Is the mailing address required on the application? The person's mailing address is on their bill**.

   Mailing address is only required in this area of the application if it is different than the service address.

3. **We would like to discuss this question and what we do with this data. If a person has Electric Heat and Non-heat Electricity would they receive assistance up to the cap on each separately even though both are electricity?**

   The household fuel/heat type is needed for reporting purposes. Electric heat and non-heat electricity are lumped together as an All Electric household.

4. **We don't feel the client could provide an accurate $ amount for the amount needed to resolve the emergency for 30 days. Is this question needed? (Refer to prior questions)**

   Yes, clients are expected to provide the information that allows for the best estimate or projection of the amount needed to resolve the emergency for 30 days.

5. **Other than the name of the energy provider and the account number, please explain reasoning for the other questions.**

   The additional information is needed to capture information for the new LIHEAP Performance Measures starting in FY2016.

6. **Does the Income Calculation Worksheet have to be completed for every application and retained in the client's file?**

   No, if you have another way to document how income was calculated for each application. The Calculation Worksheet is a helpful tool in calculating a household's Federal Poverty Level (FPL) so it was supplied to all MEAP Grantees. The Energy Grants Section reviews a random sample of files for client eligibility and it has been difficult to determine how eligibility was calculated, which tends to lead to more questions and concerns because the calculations often are not included.

7. **If the person checks "Yes" and then explains "next week I'm losing my job" or "next week" I'm starting a new job" how do we calculate income?**

   The workshop that will be held in September will cover this type and several other scenarios. Income calculations have always been a projection of the next 30 days income. If the client just lost their job and no income is expected in the next 30 days then the income would be $0/month and FPL would be 0%. This is not new. If they do expect a paystub the first week after application date but nothing after then the income earned on the one paystub would be their income for the month and you would calculate FPL accordingly.

8. Is this necessary for the application if this information is found on the paystub? Why is the last column needed, "Covers what time period?" We recognize child care costs would not be on a paystub.

It is our goal for Applicants to fill out the application in its entirety to ensure that no information is missed. However, we are willing to discuss possible changes concerning information that may not be needed and that's considered an extra burden to provide.

9. Please explain the intent behind the "…eight calendar days…" statement. When should the application be dated?

The intent behind the "eight calendar days" was to help ensure that the assistance is met within the 10-day standard of promptness. Application assistance date should begin the day the client comes in to the office, when the volunteer visits the client's residence to start the assist, or when the application is received in the mail.

10. Several items here:

a. Other than with a power of attorney when would the applicant not sign the application form?

Applicant could have an authorized representative apply on their behalf.

b. On page three of the application is "signature of spouse" required?

No

c. Address is already on page 1, is it required again here?

It's not required but may be different if application is completed by an authorized representative.

d. **Please explain "Identification of applicant or authorized representative" on page three**.

See answer to 10a. If the head of household is unable to fill out the application, the relation to the head of household, or power of attorney, etc. would be indicated in this field.

11. **We noticed "Reason for Application" is not on the 2016 MEAP application – is this no longer required**?

We are no longer requiring that this question be included on the application. However, your organization may want to retain the question as it may be helpful for self-sufficiency purposes.

12. Do we have to submit <u>before August 4, 2015</u> a revised budget along with a budget narrative that has a new revised hourly rate different from the original hourly rate submitted in the Year 2 budget, for the affected staff?

Yes, any revisions to your work plan and budget for Year 2 should be submitted by August 4. The indirect rate will correlate directly to each Grantees budget.

13. **Do we have to submit <u>before August 4, 2015</u> a revised budget that has a new revised Indirect Cost different from the original budgeted Indirect Cost submitted for Year 2, and at what indirect rate should this be calculated?**

    See response above.

14. **Can grantees utilize a different paper application than the one provided by the MAE, if the grantee application contains all the client information that must be obtained to verify eligibility?**

    Yes, we would prefer that the grantees use the provided single application but if Grantees already have a process that captures all of the information requested they **need to submit it for approval prior to using it for the 2016 Grant Year.**

15. **If grantees do not have any changes to the Year 2 Work Plan or Budget Narrative does the proposal need to be resubmitted?**

    No.

16. **If the only change in the grantee proposal is in section V-G Personnel (no changes to work plan or budget), does the entire proposal need to be resubmitted or just the revised section (V-G)?**

    No, only the revised personnel changes need to be submitted. As mentioned previously only revised sections would need to be submitted by August 4.

17. **Besides the interim status reports changing to reflect year to date totals versus only quarterly are all other reporting requirements all the same as year 1?**

    At this time we have not made any additional changes.

18. **Are there any changes to the data or information that will be reported out on in the Interim Project Status Reports, FSR's, Unduplicated Household Served, or Client list reports?**

    At this time we have not made any additional changes. However, we have not reviewed any suggestions that may have been included in the Interim Status Reports that are due on July 31, 2015.

19. **If a grantee uses a web interface will an electronic signature from the client suffice or keep the application in compliance for the signature on the application.**

    Yes, an electronic signature may suffice as long as it is captured (e.g. screenshot) and included in the client's file. It is the Grantees responsibility to provide the required documentation for each customer that is assisted whether the application is filed in person or electronically. It is especially important to be able to determine the date of application and to be able to determine if electronic assistance is meeting the 10 day standard of promptness.

20. **For the current grant year (2015), information related to household members being disabled is captured as part of the application process. It doesn't appear that this question is on the new application (2016), is this something that will no longer be of interest?**

For Federal Reporting purposes (TANF) this information is still important and we will revise our application to include capturing this information.

21. **On the bottom of page one of the application, under "Emergency Need", is this a required field? In some cases, utility based budget programs may receive applications from customers that are current on their account. Are these customers still eligible to participate in the program, and if so, may we omit this section in these cases?**

    We will discuss this information further at the workshop scheduled to occur in September.

22. **Is there additional information available to further define "Unusual employment related expenses" referred to under the Income Expenses section on page three of the application?**

    Unusual employment related expenses will be further defined during the workshop. This was highlighted because this is an area that has generated a lot of questions for those calculating Client Eligibility. It is our goal to provide clarity in determining an applicant's FPL.

23. *As outlined in the Request for Proposal, Year 2 grant awards will be based upon submission of the Year 1 Interim Project Status Report on July 31, 2015 (Section IV-B, Monitoring and Reporting Program Performance). The Michigan Agency for Energy (MAE) (Energy Grants staff have been transferred from the MPSC to MAE) and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) will review and evaluate the performance, progress, and effectiveness of each awarded grant project, including timeliness and accuracy of all required reports. If the Year 1 grant project performance is not deemed satisfactory, the MAE and DHHS will not approve continuation of the Year 2 grant.* ***<u>If the Year 1 grant project is deemed satisfactory, the MAE and DHHS will determine funding levels and approve continuation of each grant consistent with the Year 2 Work Plan.</u>***

    Question: If deemed satisfactory, how soon will we hear back?

    It is our intent to notify all Grantees as soon as possible, which means approximately two to three weeks after the Year 2 proposals are due.

24. *Depending on the outcomes of the Year 1 grant project,* ***<u>revisions to the Year 2 work plan and budget narrative may be submitted for approval</u>*** *by MAE and DHHS.*

    Question: I'm assuming the budget page will also be required? AND are these the *<u>only</u>* documents needed to submit for Year 2 or will you need the complete application package that was previously submitted?

    Yes, only revisions to your work plan and budget for Year 2 should be submitted by August 4.

25. Question: **If deemed satisfactory, how soon will we hear back**?

    Once a grantee has been notified of their award amount, they will have a quick turnaround time to make sure their proposal is ready for their signature and the signatures of DHHS and LARA. Specific due dates will be given at that point to ensure that documentation will be submitted by MAE to the State Administration Board for official approval.

26. **Will the Eligibility Verification guidelines be changing in year 2? If so, what is the time frame to inform grantees?**

Yes, it is our goal to provide any updates to the guideline prior to the September training.

27. In the eligibility expenses portion of the application will there be a list of "unusual employment related expenses" that are acceptable?

A similar question was asked in #22. Unusual employment related expenses will be further defined during the workshop. We will provide a list, however we realize that there could always be a situation that is not covered by our list.

28. In the Signature Requirement portion of the application is the signature of spouse required? What exactly are we looking for in the section "Identification of applicant or authorized representative?

No, a spouses signature is not required but there instances where both spouses are present and want to sign. Therefore, the space is provided for times when it could be utilized.

29. In the common app it states "Have you received energy assistance from another agency or thorough a provider-sponsored program since October 1?" Under the household eligibility verification guidelines it on page 14 #6 "Have you received energy assistance services from another agency in the past 12 months?"

We have revised our Draft 2016 Household Eligibility Guidelines to reflect the October 1st date.

30. Recommendation/Question regarding the September Training Workshop:

One recommendation to offer is that the workshop be recorded made available on the MPSC website for future training needs.

Thanks for the recommendation; we will plan to have the workshop recorded and available for future reference on our MAE and MPSC websites.