



NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**

ROY COOPER • Governor

MANDY COHEN, MD, MPH • Secretary

SUSAN OSBORNE • Assistant Secretary for County Operations for
Human Services

November 10, 2021

Dear County Directors of Social Services

Attention: Energy Administrators, Managers & Supervisors

Subject: Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP)

Priority: Information & Action

As discussed previously, the state and county workgroup had planned to utilize the Low-Income Household Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) funds provided through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to issue an automatically authorized payment to households in a certain priority group, similar to the automatic authorized payments using the CARES Act funds in FY 2021. The use of the ARPA funds must be approved through the state budget, and, as of the date of this letter, the state budget has not been passed. Until the budget passes, we are unable to move forward with any plans that utilize the ARPA funds, for payment.

Due to the continuing pandemic, the workgroup and the Division recognizes that there is still a need to limit the number of people who are coming into the local county DSS offices to apply for services. So, the workgroup has formulated an alternative plan utilizing regular LIEAP funding to provide an automatic authorized LIEAP payment for households with individuals aged 60 or older or disabled receiving DAAS services and who received a LIEAP payment within the last fiscal year.

Eligible households will receive a notice with prepopulated information from the households' 2020-2021 LIEAP application. The households will be instructed to update any changes and return the document to the local county department of social services.

- If changes are reported, the county must update the information in NC FAST and determine if the household is eligible for the 2021-2022 LIEAP payment.
- If no changes are reported, 2020-2021 LIEAP information will be used to approve the application. Benefit amounts will be based on regular LIEAP rules and income and household size will be used to determine eligibility.
- Under the State Plan for FY 2022, household resources will not be counted for 2021-2022 and must be removed from the application in the NC FAST system.
- On November 15, 2021, a report will be posted to FAST HELP for county workers.
- On November 15, 2021 the cloned applications for eligible participants will be generated in NC FAST with the application date of December 1, 2021 and will be available for workers to make any necessary changes.

NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES • DIVISION OF SOCIAL SERVICES • ECONOMIC AND FAMILY SERVICES

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- Notices will be mailed to households who are eligible to receive the automatic authorized payment utilizing regular LIEAP funds on November 19, 2021 letting them know that they are eligible for the automatically authorized payment and asking them to call the county if the information on the letter is not accurate.

Since the automatic authorized payment will follow normal LIEAP guidelines, many households may receive a lesser LIEAP benefit than they received last year. Once the state budget is approved, ARPA funding will to be used to issue a one-time supplement to these households.

Starting December 1, 2021, households with individuals aged 60 or older or receiving DAAS services that did not receive an automated LIEAP notice will be able to apply via ePASS, over the phone, in person or submit a paper application via mail, fax or drop off at local county DSS office.

On January 3, 2022, all households can apply for LIEAP. There are plans to issue a pandemic automatic authorized payment for targeted households and we will be working jointly with the NCACDSS Workgroup to determine the criteria. The goal will be to maximize automatic payments and minimize the numbers of beneficiaries who have to complete a new application. Guidance regarding these households and the plans to use the ARPA funds is forthcoming.

If you have any questions, please contact Jasmyne Simmons via email at Jasmyne.Simmons@dhhs.nc.gov.

Sincerely,



Carla West, Senior Director for Economic Security

CLW/js

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