



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

December 2, 2021

Dear County Directors of Social Services

Attention: Energy Administrators, Managers & Supervisors

Subject: Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP)

Priority: Information & Action

The Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) was implemented on December 1, 2021. As you have been made aware, there have been many questions and concerns regarding this program. Because the intent was to be able to automatically authorize payments through data matching, funds were not loaded into NC FAST to avoid any overpayments. However, due to the lack of data that was provided from water providers to complete successful data matches, it is necessary for us to load the allocated LIHWAP funds into NC FAST so that payments can be made. Therefore, the process for LIHWAP has to be changed. The Division understands the frustration that the unclear guidance has caused and apologizes for the confusion and inconvenience.

Previous guidance instructed counties to process LIHWAP payments for data matched and categorically eligible households outside of NC FAST and list those households on a spreadsheet for tracking purposes. Counties were also advised to manually track LIHWAP funds using the funding authorization that was issued. After careful consideration, it has been determined that this process could potentially cause LIHWAP funds to be overly obligated. To eliminate the need for county staff to manually track LIHWAP funds through spreadsheets and allow for automated and accurate tracking of LIHWAP funds to prevent over obligations, counties are being advised to take the following actions:

- Enter an application into NC FAST for all households that have been successfully data matched by NC FAST, including those households matched and processed under previous guidance prior to this letter. These households do not need to complete an application or interview, entering the application in NC FAST is solely for the purposes of tracking and issuing payments. Document that the household was auto matched and not required to complete an interview.
- Enter an application into NC FAST for households that were not data matched by NC FAST but have been manually determined categorically eligible, including any cases matched and processed under previous guidance prior to this letter. These households do not need to complete an application or interview, entering the application in NC FAST is solely for the

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

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purposes of tracking and issuing payments. Document that the household was auto matched and not required to complete an interview.

- All auto and manual data match payments must be processed prior to 1/1/2022.
- Process all applications in NC FAST for households wishing to apply for LIHWAP who are part of priority groups 1 and 2 that were not data matched or deemed categorically eligible.
- See job aid titled “ Energy – Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) Application to Case.”

Authorize the application for the amount that is needed to restore services or prevent disconnection. Although requiring an application for all households will increase the workload for Energy staff, this process will resolve any funding issues that are currently occurring with the LIHWAP funding process. Refer to Energy Programs policy section 600.07 for guidance regarding application timeframes.

LIHWAP funds from the funding authorization that was posted on November 23, 2021, as well as additional LIHWAP funds from the America Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) will be loaded into NC FAST as soon as possible. Communication will be sent once this process has been completed.

All previous guidance that has been provided regarding data matched and categorically eligible households is now obsolete upon receipt of this letter.

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/jhs

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