



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 3, 2021

Dear County Directors of Social Services

Attention: Energy Administrators, Managers & Supervisors

Subject: Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) Update

Priority: Information & Action

To say that we are learning a lot about what it takes to stand up a new program is an understatement (even if it is a temporary program)! I have a few updates and clarifications related to the program. Our intent was to ease the burden on the counties by conducting a data match process with the water and wastewater vendors to identify clients in our system that would be categorically eligible for LIHWAP benefits. As you have probably figured out, it did not work as well as we hoped. While some counties have received lists of cases that were able to be matched, most received very few if any at all.

I want to ensure that everyone is aware that they **do not** have to use data matching in your county, but you do have to provide the opportunity to apply to everyone who is in the priority one and priority two group. Applications can be made through ePass, over the phone, printing the application and sending it in by fax, mail, or drop off, or coming into the office to apply. The policy has been updated to clearly distinguish that the county has the option on how they want to proceed – whether they want to work with the data matching and/or their vendors to match categorically eligible households or whether they want to require everyone to apply. Optional data matching must be completed prior to 1/1/2022. The processing timeframe for all other applications has been increased from 10 business days to 30 calendar days.

The NC FAST job aid has also been updated and is being loaded into FAST help. The job aid makes it clear what fields need to be completed in NC FAST when entering an application for a household that is categorically eligible for LIHWAP. This is true whether you are using the data matched files to create payments, or you are working applications received from a household that is categorically eligible. When completing the application in NC FAST for categorically eligible cases, answer “NO” to applicable questions and make a note under the communications tab in the Notes folder stating that the application is either a “Categorically

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Eligible Priority 1 or 2 Application”. I have attached the job aid to this email for your convenience.

The funds allocated for LIHWAP have now been uploaded into NC FAST. Counties can go ahead and approve LIHWAP applications that are pending since 12/1.

We were made aware that there was some inconsistencies in the Q&A documents that were posted today and are working to correct them. We will repost as soon as possible.

Thank you for all you do, I know that you are all overworked and understaffed. On behalf of everyone who is struggling to ensure that they have safe and accessible water – THANK YOU.

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/rc

EFS-FNSEP-96-2021