

NOVEMBER 16TH & 17TH , 2021

LIHWAP WEBINAR

Q&A

1. How will the payments be issued to the vendors?

i A check from the local county DSS office will be sent to vendors.

2. Has the Docusign been sent to Directors by Aqua?

i Yes, vendors should have received the docusign vendor agreement from Aqua. Please contact Rita Black at RFBlack@essential.co. Any providers that enroll through the portal after 11/22/2021 will need to sign their vendor agreements through the portal.

3. Will counties have to enter vendor agreements in NC FAST?

i Yes, counties will follow the same process as entering energy providers into NC FAST. Once the vendor portal is available, vendors will have the ability to register themselves and the county will not have to. After 11/22/2021, vendors that do not have a vendor agreement signed will need to sign the vendor agreement through the portal.

4. If the water/wastewater vendors send the data match agreements to the counties, do the counties send those to anyone at the state level?

i No. The county needs to keep the agreements.

5. Can vendors submit agreements or data after November 12th?

i Deadline was extended to 11/19/2021 but is now passed for data. Vendor agreements for enrollment for LIHWAP can still be done through the Energy Portal.

6. For walk ins who are determined categorically eligible and not data share, how is that payment made with no application? How will payments be tracked?

i All applicants including categorically eligible and data matched households will be keyed as an application in NC FAST. Payments will be tracked via NC FAST and payment request generated by the system.

7. When will we get the list of vendors who have submitted data?

i The data match will be done November 19th and NC FAST will provide information to county DSS offices about auto matched customers by the COB 11/24/2021.

8. If we already have the vendor in NC FAST for CIP/LIEAP, do we just add the category water and wastewater to the vendor?

i No. You will create a separate water vendor for water. After 11/22/2021, vendors will need to enroll in the Energy portal.

9. Is there a 3rd version of the vendor agreement?

i Yes, the final version of the vendor agreement was sent out via listserv to the counties and vendors on November 4, 2021.

10. For clarification, we had a vendor that stated they sent the agreement electronically, does the county still need a copy to key into NC FAST?

i A hard copy or electronic copy is acceptable. Counties must enter the agreement information into NC FAST and approved by Information Support.

11. If the county receives multiple request in one day, how should the county process applications? Chronological order and using a hierarchy of the priority until all funds are exhausted.

i Yes, counties will process all applications in priority group 1, priority group 2 beginning December 1, 2021. Then priority group 3 starting January 3, 2022.

12. Has there been anything set in data match for categorically eligible households that are not responsible for water?

i When the county gets the bill, they need to verify this information. Households have to be responsible for a water bill to receive a LIHWAP payment.

13. Where can the updated vendor agreement be found that does not have the 90 day requirement?

i On the DHHS LIHWAP website and updated agreement was sent via listserv on November 4, 2021.

14. What is the timeframe for sending out LIHWAP policy?

i The revised LIHWAP policy was posted on Friday December 3, 2021 in the Energy Manual.

15. Does the county need to send agreements to the State?

i No, all agreements received will be kept on file in the county DSS office.

16. How will the county know if the vendor sent in the agreement?

i Counties should be keeping track of vendor and data share agreements since vendors will be submitting these agreements to the local county DSS offices.

17. If we do not get a vendor agreement from a vendor but get applications from their customers?

- i** Vendors must have a signed agreement to participate in the program. If a vendor does not have a signed agreement, the vendor's customers will be denied. As a best practice, it is recommended that the county reach out to the vendor and explain one of their customers has applied and inquire as to whether they would like to sign a vendor agreement. If the vendor still refuses to sign the vendor agreement, it is important to explain to the applicant why their application is being denied.

18. Will letters be sent to clients that are categorically eligible to let them know they do not need to apply?

- i** Applicants that were successfully data matched will receive a letter. Counties will not need to manually send the DSS-8105 for these data matched approvals. Since all applicants will have a keyed application in NC FAST, the system will generate and send the DSS-8105.

19. Has an application been drafted yet?

- i** Yes, a paper application has been drafted and in approval process. This will be added to the DHHS forms website and counties will be notified once this is posted.

20. How do we handle water bills that include other fees and services?

- i** If the amount needed to restore water or wastewater services includes other charges related to the water bill that cannot be separated out or the vendor declines to separate them out, then LIHWAP payments will cover the whole amount needed to restore service. Please note that other services could include trash, electricity, etc. If the vendor cannot or will not separate these out from the water/wastewater bill, you are allowed to approve the full amount to prevent disconnection or reconnect services.

21. Policy says you have to have a copy of the bill. Can we call the vendor to get the information if the client doesn't have a bill?

- i** Yes.

22. So we are not putting applications into NC FAST, we're just sending approval and denial notices?

- i** For data match and categorically eligible households and all other households, an application is now required.

For all LIHWAP applications processed in NC FAST, when the application is disposed, a DSS-8105 LIHWAP notice will generate and it will be sent via central print from NC FAST. Counties will not need to print this notice.

23. Policy states that we must document on the person page the amount paid, vendor info and how we determined the household was categorically eligible. If they are identified through the data matching, do we still document?

- i** Yes, even with the application please document if the household was data matched for reporting purposes.

24. Will NC FAST show allocations for counties for LIHWAP like for CIP & LIEAP?

i Yes.

25. How are payment amounts determined and what is the maximum benefit?

i Priority Groups 1 & 2, Whatever is needed to prevent disconnection of service or resote services for the applicant will be paid. Priority Group 3 the amount will be based on household size and income and the max a household can receive is \$600.

26. Will pledges be made for priority groups 1 & 2?

i Yes, pledges will need to be made in order to prevent disconnection of service and/or to reconnect service to ensure the applicant doesn't experience extended loss of service.

27. How will funding be tracked in NC FAST for households that do not require an application?

i All households will require an application and will be tracked in NC FAST.

28. How will we handle water bills with their electric combined on bill?

i Our Federal partners provided additional clarification regarding combined bills. For priority groups 1 and 2 (those who have had their water disconnected or are facing disconnection), the full amount needed to reconnect or prevent disconnection of service, even if it includes costs other than water (such as electric), can be paid. For priority group 3, electric cost cannot be paid, only water and waste water services.

29. What if a household is not data matched but categorically eligible?

i Worker will perform a search in NC FAST to verify they are receiving FNS, WF or received a LIEAP payment last year to be categorically eligible. Worker will key application in NC FAST only filling out household and vendor information. If household is not categorically eligible, they will submit a full application through NC FAST.

30. Projected date for LIHWAP allocations to be released due to some counties need to submit to their county commissioners for approval?

i LIHWAP allocations were released on 11/23/2021 via Listserv Message #2021-214

31. Can a bill be paid in a deceased or minor child's name?

i No.

32. Will there be LIHWAP job aids and will there any training in the sandbox?

i There will be a job aid posted to Fast Help prior to December 1st.

33. Will an 8105 need to be produced for all applications even for the ones in NC FAST?

i All applications are in NC FAST and NC FAST will generate the notices.

34. How do we code LIHWAP for daysheet?

i The SIS Code (887) and Program Code (WAP) for the Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) can be used.

35. Will LIHWAP be keyed separately from CIP/LIEAP?

i Yes. They can be taken at the same time. There is a combined cip and lieap app but LIHWAP is a separate application.

36. Are SSI recipients considered categorically eligible?

i No. Categorical eligibility is based on if the household is receiving FNS, WF or received LIEAP last year 2020-2021.

37. Do vendors enroll themselves into the portal?

i Yes, vendors enroll themselves into the portal. They can use the job aid named: Energy Provider Portal-Utility Provider job aid for further assistance. Any portal related issues please contact DSS Automation at DHHS.dss.automation@dhhs.nc.gov. Providers can contact Jasmyne Simmons at Jasmyne.Simmons@dhhs.nc.gov for their vendor portal access code.

38. Vendors not enrolled in portal, how to handle their customers.

i Counties are encouraged to reach out to vendors that are not enrolled in the portal for the LIHWAP program before denying applications for that vendor. Helping to explain how this program can benefit their clients may prompt them to enroll.