



Governor Kim Reynolds  
Lt. Governor Adam Gregg  
San Wong, Director

**Iowa LIHEAP Program Notice 20-03a (supersedes PN20-03)**

To: Executive Directors and LIHEAP Coordinators  
From: Christine Taylor, Energy Assistance Bureau Chief  
Bill Brand, DCAA Administrator  
Date: March 19, 2020  
Re: Changes to Iowa LIHEAP Programmatic Operations Due to Covid-19

**Effective Date: March 19, 2020**

**This program notice supersedes PN20-03.**

Due to Covid-19, operation of the LIHEAP program is changing to meet the needs of agencies and customers. Because this is a continuously evolving issue, the following directives are in effect until further notice.

Winter Moratorium

The Iowa Utilities Board (IUB) extended the winter moratorium to May 1, 2020.

Regular LIHEAP Season

The DCAA has extended the Regular LIHEAP Season to May 31, 2020.

Outreach Offices

Per Section 3.00 of the *Iowa LIHEAP Policy and Procedures Manual*, "Each CAA must ensure that one primary outreach office is open and taking applications in each county a minimum of 16 hours per week during the heating season". This requirement is waived through the end of the heating season, May 31, 2020.

Application Method

The requirement to see first-time applicants in person and to see applicants every third year has been waived. Out of an abundance of caution, agencies are instructed to no longer meet with applicants in person. Applications are to be accepted via: mail, email, online and by telephone.

Applications require the customer's signature. In some cases, such as when taking an application by phone, the customer signature cannot be obtained. In these cases, the worker taking the application is to read the Certification Statement (at the end of the application) to the applicant. If the applicant agrees that the information submitted is true, a note is to be made why the signature cannot be obtained. The worker's name is to be noted as well (in the signature or comments field).

### Required Documentation (SSN Verification and Income Documentation)

Social Security Number (SSN) verification and income documentation are required in order to process applications. Every attempt should be made to obtain required documentation; however, not all customers have the ability to take photos of documents, scan documents, make copies, text, use email or have the internet. If an applicant possesses the required documentation but is unable to provide it, the worker is to accept the information verbally as a hardship case and note in the file the reason for the hardship (e.g., elderly individual has neither the internet nor a smart phone).

A list is to be maintained of all hardship cases and is to include the applicant's name, address, and reason for hardship. The list is to be emailed to the state LIHEAP office weekly on Friday (Christine Taylor and John Burnquist). Missing documentation is to be obtained once social distancing restrictions are lifted, no later than August 1, 2020 (subject to change). Agencies must make a good faith, reasonable effort to obtain required documentation.

SSN waivers may be requested for children and hardship cases where the SSN verification is lost, etc., per current policy as stated in Section 7.30 of the *Iowa LIHEAP Policy and Procedures Manual*.

### Utility Bills

Utility bills are requested of applicants to verify customer accounts. If unable to obtain utility bills from applicants or via utility online portals, the worker is to contact the utility, receive the needed information, and document how the information was received (e.g., via phone, email), as appropriate.

If an applicant does not have their utility account information and the bill is not in their name, the agency must obtain a release of information from the account holder in order to contact the utility company about the account. If a release cannot be obtained and the applicant is approved for LIHEAP, a direct payment is to be made to the applicant.

### Crisis Program

As per Section 15.00 of the *Iowa LIHEAP Policy and Procedures Manual*, LIHEAP Federal regulations require that a life-threatening situation be evaluated and resolved within 48/18 hours. These regulations have not changed and must be abided by.

- Not later than 48 hours after a household applies for energy crisis benefits, each administering CAA must provide some form of assistance that will resolve the energy crisis if such household is eligible to receive such benefits;
- Not later than 18 hours after a household applies for crisis benefits, each administering CAA must provide some form of assistance that will resolve the energy crisis if such household is eligible to receive such benefits and is in a life-threatening situation;

If a heating system repair or replacement has been done and an inspection is required, it must be completed to ensure the health and safety of the household members. Individuals performing ECIP inspections are to wear personal protective equipment to ensure their safety as well as of the household members.

If a heating system repair or replacement is needed, the agency should first seek to address the need by a means other than entering the home. If a life-threatening situation exists that requires a heating system repair or replacement, individuals performing any work in the home, including individuals performing ECIP inspections, must wear personal protective equipment to ensure their safety as well as of the household members.