



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

Iowa LIHEAP Program Notice 20-04

To: Executive Directors and LIHEAP Coordinators
From: Christine Taylor, Energy Assistance Bureau Chief
Bill Brand, DCAA Administrator
Date: April 9, 2020
Re: Changes to Iowa LIHEAP Programmatic Operations Due to COVID-19

Effective Date: April 9, 2020 until further notice

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. Section numbers refer to the *Iowa LIHEAP Policy and Procedures Manual*.

Section 6.10 Income Verification

Many families and individuals who would normally be ineligible due to LIHEAP's policy to use the most recent 30 days, the last 12 months, or the most recent calendar year, have recently been laid off work or are in the process of being laid off due to COVID-19 related causes. If applicants are unable to qualify for the program using a standard verification period, agencies are authorized to use a 30-day look-ahead period, May 31, 2020 for both regular LIHEAP and the crisis program.

When using a 30-day look-ahead period, the following process must be followed:

1. Request any documentation the customer can provide which shows they have been laid off, are experiencing reduced hours, or the business at which they worked has been closed.
2. If the customer is unable to provide any documentation regarding their working status, contact must be attempted to the impacted business. Documentation will include the date of contact with the impacted business, the name and title of the person contacted, and the date income was terminated or decreased. While the business may be closed to the public, the employer may still be available by phone or email.
3. When the business cannot be reached, a self-declaration by the customer may be used to attest to their anticipated gross income for the next 30 days. Customer declaration of anticipated gross earned income is to be documented by the customer, when possible, on a Minimal Income Statement form. If unable to obtain a form completed by the customer, accept the information verbally as a hardship case. Note in the file the reason for the hardship and add the applicant to the list of hardship cases. Follow-up documentation required for hardship cases, as per Program Notice 20-03a, does not apply to the 30-day look-ahead verification period.
4. Enter the anticipated gross income as if it were from the most recent 30 days. Proceed with the normal process.

In addition, the use of 2018 Federal Tax Returns as income documentation has been extended to July 15, 2020, to coincide with the federal tax return deadline extension.

Section 15.10 ECIP (Energy Crisis Intervention Payments)

Through the end of the federal fiscal year, September 30, 2020, the expenditure limit has been increased to \$1,650 for a household to receive alone, or in combination, benefits from Section 15.40 Emergency Delivery, Section 15.50 Emergency Reconnect, and/or Section 15.60 Service Continuity Crisis, in any current program year.

Section 15.50 Emergency Reconnect

The expenditure limit for emergency reconnections has been increased to \$1,000 through the end of the federal fiscal year, September 30, 2020.

Our expectation is that only the minimum amount necessary will be used to resolve the crisis.

Households may apply for multiple crisis benefits in a program year, up to the expenditure limit.

Section 15.60 Service Continuity Crisis

The expenditure limit for service continuity crises has been increased to \$1,000 through the end of the federal fiscal year, September 30, 2020.

Our expectation is that only the minimum amount necessary will be used to resolve the crisis.

Households may apply for multiple crisis benefits in a program year, up to the expenditure limit.

Appendix C – LIHEAP Income Source Guide

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, was signed into law on March 27, 2020, to battle COVID-19 and its economic effects, including immediate cash relief for individual citizens, loan programs for small business, support for hospitals and other medical providers, and various types of economic relief for impacted businesses and industries.

CARES Act economic rebates are to be excluded from income when determining LIHEAP eligibility, through the end of the federal fiscal year, September 30, 2020.

Thank you for your continued work to assist low-income households in Iowa.