

Title 18: Human Services

Part 16: Divisions of Community Services

Part 16: Chapter 1: Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program

Rule 16.1 Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) State Plan

Source: Miss Code Annotated 43-1-2.

**LOW-INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LIHEAP) - FINAL
DETAILED MODEL PLAN**

PUBLIC LAW 97-35, AS AMENDED

FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2024

GRANTEE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

EIN: 64-6000807

**ADDRESS MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
 DIVISION OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
 POST OFFICE BOX 352
 JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI 39205**

NAME OF LIHEAP COORDINATOR: Tina Ruffin

E MAIL: Tina.Ruffin@mdhs.ms.gov

TELEPHONE: (601) 359-4768

FAX: (601) 359-4370

PLEASE CHECK ONE: TRIBE ☐ STATE ☒

**Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Community Services
Washington, DC 20447**

THE PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT OF 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13)

Use of this model plan is optional. However, the information requested is required in order to receive a Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) grant in years in which the grantee is not permitted to file an abbreviated plan. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and reviewing the collection of information. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Section 1**Program Components, 2605(a), 2605(b)(1) – Assurance 1, 2605(c)(1)(C)**

- 1.1 Check which components you will operate under the LIHEAP program. (Note: You must provide information for each component designated here as requested elsewhere in this plan.)

Dates of Operation

- | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------|-----------|-----------|--------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Heating assistance | Start date: | October 1 | End date: | April 30 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Cooling assistance | Start date: | May 1 | End date: | September 30 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Crisis assistance | Start date: | October 1 | End date: | September 30 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Weatherization assistance | Start date: | | End date: | |

Estimated Funding Allocation, 2604(c), 2605(k)(1), 2605(b)(9), 2605(b)(16) – Assurances 9 and 16

- 1.2 Estimate what amount of available LIHEAP funds will be used for each component that you will operate: The total of all percentages must add up to 100%.

45 % heating assistance

40 % cooling assistance

5 % crisis assistance

0 % weatherization assistance

00 % carryover to the following Federal fiscal year

10 % administrative and planning costs

0 % services to reduce home energy needs including needs assessment (Assurance 16)

00 % used to develop and implement leveraging activities

100 % **TOTAL**

Alternate Use of Crisis Assistance Funds, 2605(c)(1)(C)

- 1.3 The funds reserved for winter crisis assistance that have not been expended by March 15 will be reprogrammed to:

☐ Heating assistance

☐ Weatherization assistance

☒ Cooling assistance

☐ Other (specify): _____

Categorical Eligibility, 2605(b)(2)(A) – Assurance 2, 2605(c)(1)(A), 2605(b)(8A) – Assurance 8

- 1.4 Do you consider households categorically eligible if one household member receives one of the following categories of benefits in the left column below? ☐ Yes ☒ No

	Heating	Cooling	Crisis	Weatherization
SNAP				
TANF				
SSI				
Means-tested veteran's program				
Other (Specify): _____ _____				

- 1.5 Do you automatically enroll households without a direct annual application?

☐ Yes ☒ No -- If yes, explain:

- 1.6 How do you ensure there is no difference in the treatment of categorically eligible households from those not receiving other public assistance when determining eligibility and benefit amounts?

The benefit matrix determines benefit amounts and does not consider categorically eligible households.

SNAP Nominal Payments

1.7a Do you allocate LIHEAP funds toward a nominal payment for SNAP households?

☐ Yes ☒ No

If you answered “Yes” to question 1.7a, you must provide a response to questions 1.7b, 1.7c, and 1.7d.

1.7b Amount of Minimal Assistance: \$_____

1.7c Frequency of Assistance:

☐ Once per year

☐ Once every five years

☐ Other (describe): _____

1.7d How do you confirm that the household receiving a nominal payment has an energy cost or need?

Determination of Eligibility – Countable Income

1.8 In determining a household’s income eligibility for LIHEAP, do you use gross income or net income?

☒ Gross Income

☐ Net Income

1.9 Select all of the applicable forms of countable income used to determine a household’s income eligibility for LIHEAP.

☒ Wages

☒ Self-employment income

☒ Contract income

☐ Payments from mortgage or sales contracts

☒ Unemployment Insurance

☐ Strike pay

- ☒ Social Security Administration (SSA) benefits
 - ☒ Including MediCare deduction ☐ Excluding MediCare deduction
- ☒ Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- ☒ Retirement / pension benefits
- ☐ General Assistance benefits
- ☐ Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits
- ☐ Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits
- ☐ Women, Infants, and Children Supplemental Nutrition Program (WIC) benefits
- ☐ Loans that need to be repaid
- ☐ Cash gifts
- ☐ Savings account balance
- ☐ One-time lump-sum payments, such as rebates/credits, winnings from lotteries, refund deposits, etc.
- ☐ Jury duty compensation
- ☐ Rental income
- ☐ Income from employment through Workforce Investment Act (WIA)
- ☐ Income from work study programs
- ☒ Alimony
- ☐ Child support
- ☐ Interest, dividends, or royalties
- ☐ Commissions
- ☐ Legal settlements
- ☐ Insurance payments made directly to the insured
- ☐ Insurance payments made specifically for the repayment of a bill, debt, or estimate

- ☒ Veterans Administration (VA) benefits
- ☐ Earned income of a child under the age of 18
- ☐ Balance of retirement, pension, or annuity accounts where funds cannot be withdrawn without a penalty.
- ☐ Income tax refunds
- ☐ Stipends from senior companion programs, such as VISTA
- ☐ Funds received by household for the care of a foster child
- ☐ Ameri-Corp Program payments for living allowances, earnings, and in-kind aid.
- ☐ Reimbursements (for mileage, gas, lodging, meals, etc.)
- ☐ Other

Section 2 - HEATING ASSISTANCE**Eligibility, 2605(b)(2) – Assurance 2**

2.1 Designate the income eligibility threshold used for the heating component:

FY 2023 state's median income 60 % for all Household sizes

2.2 Do you have additional eligibility requirements for **HEATING ASSISTANCE**?

☒ Yes ☐ No

2.3 Check the appropriate boxes below and describe the policies for each.

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
● Do you require an assets test?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
● Do you have additional/differing eligibility policies for:		
• Renters?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Renters living in subsidized housing?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Renters with utilities included in the rent?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
● Do you give priority in eligibility to:		
• Elderly?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Disabled?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Young children?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Households with high energy burdens?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Other?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Explanations of policies for each “yes” checked above:

See Eligibility and Benefit Determination Attachment.

The applicant should provide either a copy of their lease; a notarized statement from the landlord detailing the heating/cooling arrangement with the client; or contract with the landlord that verifies the heating/cooling arrangement that the landlord has with the

household. Persons/households residing in public/subsidized housing dwelling unless their rent/mortgage includes utilities and they are not being billed separately for energy cost.

Determination of Benefits, 2605(b)(5) – Assurance 5, 2605(c)(1)(B)

- 2.4 Describe how you prioritize the provision of heating assistance to vulnerable households, e.g., benefit amounts, application period, etc.

Recertification for vulnerable households (elderly, disabled, families with small children, or veterans) will be done during the first month of the program year.

- 2.5 Check the variables you use to determine your benefit levels. (Check all that apply):

☒ Income

☒ Family (household) size

☒ Home energy cost or need:

☒ Fuel type

☐ Climate/region

☒ Individual bill

☐ Dwelling type

☐ Energy burden (% of income spent on home energy)

☐ Energy need

☒ Other (Describe)

See the LIHEAP Benefit Matrix Attachment. The benefit matrix has maximum amounts. The amounts of the client's bills can be paid up to the maximum amount. We do not place a minimum on the benefit matrix because the amount of the bill is paid.

Benefit Levels, 2605(b)(5) – Assurance 5, 2605(c)(1)(B)

2.6 Describe benefit levels:

\$ 1.00 Minimum benefit \$ 1,500 Maximum benefit

Total benefit for year (can be divided between heating, cooling or crisis).

2.7 Do you provide in-kind (e.g., blankets, space heaters) and/or other forms of benefits?

☒ Yes ☐ No -- If yes, describe.

Blankets, coats, heating systems, furnaces and other heating, energy-related materials/services may be provided depending on need.

Section 3: COOLING ASSISTANCE**Eligibility, 2605(c)(1)(A), 2605(b)(2) – Assurance 2**

3.1 Designate the income eligibility threshold used for the cooling component:

FY 2023 state median income 60 % for all Household sizes

3.2 Do you have additional eligibility requirements for **COOLING ASSISTANCE**

☒ Yes ☐ No

3.3 Check the appropriate boxes below and describe the policies for each.

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
● Do you require an assets test?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
● Do you have additional/differing eligibility policies for:		
• Renters?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Renters living in subsidized housing?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Renters with utilities included in the rent?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
● Do you give priority in eligibility to:		
• Elderly?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Disabled?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Young children?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Households with high energy burdens?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Other?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Explanations of policies for each “yes” checked above:

See Eligibility and Benefit Determination Attachment.

The applicant should provide either a copy of their lease; a notarized statement from the landlord detailing the heating/cooling arrangement with the client; or contract with the landlord that verifies the heating/cooling arrangement that the landlord has with the

household. Persons/households residing in public/subsidized housing dwelling unless their rent/mortgage includes utilities and they are not being billed separately for energy cost.

- 3.4 Describe how you prioritize the provision of cooling assistance to vulnerable households, e.g., benefit amounts, application period, etc.

Recertification for vulnerable households (elderly, disabled, families with small children, or veterans) will be done during the first month of the program year.

Determination of Benefits, 2605(b)(5) – Assurance 5, 2605(c)(1)(B)

- 3.5 Check the variables you use to determine your benefit levels. (Check all that apply):

☒ Income

☒ Family (household) size

☒ Home energy cost or need

☒ Fuel type

☐ Climate/region

☒ Individual bill

☐ Dwelling type

☐ Energy burden (% of income spent on home energy)

☐ Energy need

☒ Other (describe)

See the LIHEAP Benefit Matrix Attachment. The benefit matrix has maximum amounts. The amounts of the client's bills can be paid up to the maximum amount. We do not place a minimum on the benefit matrix because the amount of the bill is paid.

Benefit Levels, 2605(b)(5) – Assurance 5, 2605(c)(1)(B)

- 3.6 Describe benefit levels:

\$ 1.00 Minimum benefit \$ * 1,500 Maximum benefit

Total benefit for year (can be divided between heating, cooling or crisis).

3.7 Do you provide in-kind (e.g. fans, air conditioners) and/or other forms of benefits?

☒ Yes ☐ No -- If yes, describe.

Fans, air conditioners, cooling systems and other cooling energy-related service may be provided depending on need.

Section 4: CRISIS ASSISTANCE**Eligibility - 2604(c), 2605(c)(1)(A)**

4.1 Designate the income eligibility threshold used for the crisis component:

FY 2023 state median income 60 % for all Household sizes

4.2 Provide your LIHEAP program's definition for determining a crisis.

See Crisis & Emergency Services Attachment

4.3 What constitutes a life-threatening crisis?

See Crisis & Emergency Services Attachment. For declared natural disasters, the State will use LIHEAP funds to provide emergency housing for eligible households for up to five days to remove the household from the emergency situation. Households will be referred to other programs such as CSBG and state/local resources to provide other emergency needs to include housing/food/clothing if the home is inhabitable.

Crisis Requirements, 2604(c)

4.4 Within how many hours do you provide crisis assistance that will resolve the energy crisis for eligible households? 48 Hours

4.5 Within how many hours do you provide crisis assistance that will resolve the energy crisis for eligible households in life-threatening situations? 18 Hours

Crisis Eligibility, 2605(c)(1)(A)

4.6 Do you have additional eligibility requirements for **CRISIS ASSISTANCE**?

☐ Yes ☒ No

4.7 Check the appropriate boxes below and describe the policies for each.

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
● Do you require an assets test?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
● Do you give priority in eligibility to:		
• Elderly?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Disabled?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Young children?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- Households with high energy burdens? ☒ ☐
- Other? ☐ ☒
- In order to receive crisis assistance:
 - Must the household have received a shut-off notice or have a near empty tank? ☐ ☒
 - Must the household have been shut off or have an empty tank? ☐ ☒
 - Must the household have exhausted their regular heating benefit? ☐ ☒
 - Must renters with heating costs included in their rent have received an eviction notice? ☐ ☒
 - Must heating/cooling be medically necessary? ☐ ☒
 - Must the household have non-working heating or cooling equipment? ☐ ☒
 - Other? ☐ ☒
- Do you have additional/differing eligibility policies for:
 - Renters? ☒ ☐
 - Renters living in subsidized housing? ☒ ☐
 - Renters with utilities included in the rent? ☒ ☐

Explanations of policies for each “yes” checked above:

See Eligibility and Benefit Determination Attachment.

The applicant should provide either a copy of their lease; a notarized statement from the landlord detailing the heating/cooling arrangement with the client; or contract with the landlord that verifies the heating/cooling arrangement that the landlord has with the household. Persons/households residing in public/subsidized housing dwelling unless their rent/mortgage includes utilities, and they are not being billed separately for energy cost.

Determination of Benefits

4.8 How do you handle crisis situations?

☒ Separate component

☐ Fast Track

☐ Other

4.9 If you have a separate component, how do you determine crisis assistance benefits?

☒ Amount to resolve crisis, up to a maximum of \$1,500 depending on the Benefits Matrix amount for the household. See the LIHEAP Benefit Matrix attachment.

☐ Other

Crisis Requirements, 2604(c)

4.10 Do you accept applications for energy crisis assistance at sites that are geographically accessible to all households in the area to be served?

☒ Yes ☐ No

4.11 Do you provide individuals who are physically disabled the means to:

■ Submit applications for crisis benefits without leaving their homes?

☒ Yes ☐ No If no, explain.

Case Workers may conduct home visits or they can authorize someone to make an application on their behalf.

■ Travel to the sites at which applications for crisis assistance are accepted?

☐ Yes ☒ No If no, explain.

If you answered "No" to both options in question 4.11, please explain alternative means of intake to those who are homebound or physically disabled?

Case Workers may conduct home visits, or they can authorize someone to make an application on their behalf.

Benefit Levels, 2605(c)(1)(B)

4.12 Indicate the maximum benefit for each type of crisis assistance offered.

Winter Crisis \$_____ maximum benefit

Summer Crisis \$_____ maximum benefit

Year-round Crisis \$ *1,500 maximum benefit

Total benefit for year (can be divided between heating, cooling, or crisis).

4.13 Do you provide in-kind (e.g. blankets, space heaters, fans) and/or other forms of benefits?

☒ Yes ☐ No If yes, describe.

Blankets, coats, heating systems, furnaces and other heating, energy-related materials/services may be provided during the winter. Fans, air conditioners, cooling systems, and other cooling energy-related services may be provided during the summer.

4.14 Do you provide for equipment repair or replacement using crisis funds?

☒ Yes ☐ No

4.15 Check appropriate boxes below to indicate type(s) of assistance provided:

	Winter Crisis	Summer Crisis	Year- round Crisis
Heating system repair			X
Heating system replacement			X
Cooling system repair			X
Cooling system replacement			X
Wood stove purchase			X
Pellet stove purchase			
Solar panel(s)			
Windmill(s)			
Utility poles / Gas line hook-ups			X
Other (Specify): <u>Meter Bases, Propane Tank</u> <u>Installation/removable</u>			X

Intervention for vulnerable households can be done until the repair or replacement of units can be completed. Emergency housing in cases of extreme heat or cold, or federal/state declared disaster can be provided up to five days until crisis is solved. Meter bases on homes may be repaired or replaced.			
--	--	--	--

4.16 Do any of the utility vendors you work with enforce a winter moratorium on shut offs?

☒ Yes ☐ No

If you responded "Yes" to question 4.16, you must respond to question 4.17.

4.17 Describe the terms of the moratorium and any special dispensation received by LIHEAP clients during or after the moratorium period.

If as of 8:00 a.m. on the day of a scheduled non-pay disconnect, an excessive heat warning or a freeze warning has been issued by the National Weather Service for the county of the scheduled disconnect, such disconnects are suspended.

Section 5: WEATHERIZATION ASSISTANCE**Eligibility, 2605(c)(1)(A), 2605(b)(2) – Assurance 2**

5.1 Designate the income eligibility threshold used for the weatherization component:

HHS poverty income level _____% for all Household sizes

5.2 Do you enter into an interagency agreement to have another government agency administer a **WEATHERIZATION component**? ☐ Yes ☐ No

5.3 Name the agency. _____

5.4 Is there a separate monitoring protocol for weatherization? ☐ Yes ☐ No

WEATHERIZATION - Types of Rules

5.5 Under what rules do you administer LIHEAP weatherization? (Check only one.)

☐ Entirely under LIHEAP (not DOE) rules

☐ Entirely under DOE WAP (not LIHEAP) rules

☐ Mostly under LIHEAP rules with the following DOE WAP rule(s) where LIHEAP and WAP rules differ: (Check all that apply.)

☐ Income Threshold

☐ Weatherization of entire multi-family housing structure is permitted if at least 66% of units (50% in 2- & 4-unit buildings) are eligible units or will become eligible within 180 days.

☐ Weatherization of shelters temporarily housing primarily low income persons (excluding nursing homes, prisons, and similar institutional care facilities) is permitted.

☐ Other (describe)

☐ Mostly under DOE WAP rules, with the following LIHEAP rule(s) where LIHEAP and WAP rules differ: (Check all that apply.)

☐ Income Threshold

☐ Weatherization not subject to DOE WAP maximum statewide average cost per dwelling unit.

☐ Weatherization measures are not subject to DOE Savings to Investment Ratio (SIR) standards.

☐ Other (describe)

Eligibility, 2605(b)(5) – Assurance 5

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
5.6 Do you require an assets test?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.7 Do you have additional/differing eligibility policies for:		
• Renters?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Renters living in subsidized housing?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.8 Do you give priority in eligibility to:		
• Elderly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Disabled?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Young children?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Households with high energy burdens?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Other?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you selected "Yes" for any of the options in questions 5.6, 5.7, or 5.8, you must provide further explanation of these policies in the text field below.

Benefit Levels

5.9 Do you have a maximum LIHEAP weatherization benefit/expenditure per household?

☐ Yes ☐ No

5.10 What is the maximum amount? \$_____

Types of Assistance, 2605(c)(1), (B) & (D)

5.11 What LIHEAP weatherization measures do you provide? (Check all categories that apply.)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Weatherization needs assessments/audits | <input type="checkbox"/> Major appliance repairs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Caulking and insulation | <input type="checkbox"/> Major appliance replacement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Install storm windows | <input type="checkbox"/> Install windows/sliding glass doors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Furnace/Heating system modifications/repairs | <input type="checkbox"/> Install doors (interior/exterior) (<i>if broken</i>) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Furnace replacement | <input type="checkbox"/> Install water heater |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cooling system modifications/repairs | <input type="checkbox"/> Water conservation measures |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cooling system replacement | <input type="checkbox"/> Compact florescent light bulbs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy related roof repair | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (describe) |

Section 6: Outreach, 2605(b)(3) – Assurance 3, 2605(c)(3)(A)

6.1 Select all outreach activities that you conduct that are designed to assure that eligible households are made aware of all LIHEAP assistance available:

☒ Place posters/flyers in local and county social service offices, offices of aging, Social Security offices, VA, etc.

☒ Publish articles in local newspapers or broadcast media announcements.

☒ Include inserts in energy vendor billings to inform individuals of the availability of all types of LIHEAP assistance.

☐ Mass mailing(s) to prior-year LIHEAP recipients.

☒ Inform low income applicants of the availability of all types of LIHEAP assistance at application intake for other low-income programs.

☒ Execute interagency agreements with other low-income program offices to perform outreach to target groups.

☐ Other (specify):

Section 7: Coordination, 2605(b)(4) – Assurance 4

7.1 Describe how you will ensure that the LIHEAP program is coordinated with other programs available to low-income households (TANF, SSI, WAP, etc.)

- ☒ Joint application for multiple programs
- ☒ Intake referrals to/from other programs
- ☐ One-stop intake centers
- ☒ Other – describe:

See Coordination of LIHEAP Activities Attachment

The State has one application for four programs – LIHEAP, CSBG, LIHWAP and Weatherization. Therefore, an application may apply for all programs during the intake process. If the weatherization agency is different from the LIHEAP agency, the LIHEAP agency refers to the weatherization agency to complete the assessment for this program. Local agencies offer all programs administered by that agency, especially to the vulnerable populations of elderly, disabled, families with children, and veterans. Local agencies refer applicants to other local offices such as SNAP and TANF if applicant is not currently receiving these services.

Also, the department has the Common Web Portal (CWP), households can apply for LIHEAP when they apply for SNAP and Medicaid.

Section 8: Agency Designation, 2605(b)(6) – Assurance 6

8.1 How would you categorize the primary responsibility of your State agency?

- ☐ Administration Agency
- ☐ Commerce Agency
- ☐ Community Services Agency
- ☐ Energy/Environment Agency
- ☐ Housing Agency
- ☒ Welfare Agency
- ☐ Other – describe:

Alternate Outreach and Intake, 2605(b)(15) – Assurance 15

If you selected “Welfare Agency” in question 8.1, you must complete questions 8.2, 8.3, and 8.4, as applicable.

8.2 How do you provide alternate outreach and intake for **HEATING ASSISTANCE**?

The State Agency also administers the State Welfare Program; however, different divisions administer the LIHEAP and Welfare Programs. The Division of Community Services partners with the Division of Economic Assistance, Division of Child Support, and other divisions within the agency to ensure that low-income elderly, disabled families have access to all eligible services. All eighty-two counties across the state are serviced by qualified Case Manager/Caseworkers that provide outreach and intake services. The typical hours of operation for eligible entities are Monday-Friday from 7:30 am – 6:00 pm.

8.3 How do you provide alternate outreach and intake for **COOLING ASSISTANCE**?

The State Agency also administers the State Welfare Program; however, different divisions administer the LIHEAP and Welfare Programs. The Division of Community Services partners with the Division of Economic Assistance, Division of Child Support, and other divisions within the agency to ensure that low-income elderly, disabled families have access to all eligible services. All eighty-two counties across the state are serviced by qualified Case Manager/Caseworkers that provide outreach and intake services. The typical hours of operations for eligible entities are Monday – Friday from 7:30 am – 6:00 pm.

8.4 How do you provide alternate outreach and intake for **CRISIS ASSISTANCE**?

The State Agency also administers the State Welfare Program, however, different divisions administer the LIHEAP and Welfare Programs. The Division of Community Services partners with the Division of Economic Assistance, Division of Child Support and other divisions within the agency to ensure that low-income elderly, disabled families have access to all eligible services. All eighty-two counties across the state are serviced by qualified Case Manager/Caseworkers that provide outreach and intake services. The typical hours of operations for eligible entities are Monday – Friday from 7:30 am – 6:00 pm.

8.5. LIHEAP Component Administration.

	<u>Heating</u>	<u>Cooling</u>	<u>Crisis</u>	<u>Weatherization</u>
8.5a: Who determines client eligibility?	CAA	CAA	CAA	N/A
8.5b: Who processes benefit payments to gas and electric vendors?	CAA	CAA	CAA	N/A
8.5c: Who processes benefit payments to bulk fuel vendors?	CAA	CAA	CAA	N/A
8.5d: Who performs installation of weatherization measures?	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

If any of your LIHEAP components are not centrally-administered by a state agency, you must complete questions 8.6, 8.7, 8.87, and, if applicable, 8.9.

8.6 What is your process for selecting local administering agencies?

We have chosen agencies based on prior experience administering similar programs such as CSBG. The State sends the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) to local agencies to respond and submit a subgrant proposal for review. The subgrant is reviewed by the Division of Community Services and Division of Procurement Services and AGs Office to ensure all fiscal and programmatic requirements are met. The subgrant is sent to the Executive Director's office for signature after division reviews have been completed and approved.

8.7 How many local administering agencies do you use?

17

8.8 Have you changed any local administering agencies from last year?

☐ Yes ☒ No

8.9 If so, why?

- ☐ Agency was in noncompliance with grantee requirements for LIHEAP
- ☐ Agency is under criminal investigation
- ☐ Added agency
- ☐ Agency closed
- ☐ Other – describe:

Section 9: Energy Suppliers, 2605(b)(7) – Assurance 7

9.1 Do you make payments directly to home energy suppliers?

Heating ☒ Yes ☐ No

Cooling ☒ Yes ☐ No

Crisis ☒ Yes ☐ No

Are there exceptions? ☐ Yes ☒ No

If yes, describe.

9.2 How do you notify the client of the amount of assistance paid?

Agencies must provide written notification to clients regarding the status of their application within 72 hours of approval for services. The notification letter must be scanned into Virtual ROMA and a copy placed into client's file. In the case of an emergency, this notification should occur within 24 hours of application for services. The person who approves the application in Virtual ROMA should generate the letter.

If a client's application is denied, the agency must provide written explanation with the reason for the denial. The Fair Hearing Process must be included in the letter sent to the client. The person who denies the application in Virtual ROMA should generate the letter.

9.3 How do you assure that the home energy supplier will charge the eligible household, in the normal billing process, the difference between the actual cost of the home energy and the amount of the payment?

Vendor Agreements the CAA has with the energy supplier provides this assurance.

9.4 How do you assure that no household receiving assistance under this title will be treated adversely because of their receipt of LIHEAP assistance?

Vendor Agreements the CAA has with the energy supplier provides this assurance.

9.5 Do you make payments contingent on unregulated vendors taking appropriate measures to alleviate the energy burdens of eligible households?

☐ Yes ☒ No. If so, describe the measures unregulated vendors may take.

Section 10: Program, Fiscal Monitoring, and Audit, 2605(b)(10) – Assurance 10

10.1. How do you ensure good fiscal accounting and tracking of LIHEAP funds?

See Fiscal Accounting and Tracking Requirements attachment.

Audit Process

10.2. Is your LIHEAP program audited annually under the Single Audit Act and OMB Circular A-133?

☒ Yes

☐ No

10.3. Describe any audit findings rising to the level of material weakness or reportable condition cited in the A-133 audits, Grantee monitoring assessments, inspector general reviews, or other government agency reviews of the LIHEAP agency from the most recently audited federal fiscal year.

Finding	Type	Brief Summary	Resolved?	Action Taken
1	<i>Financial</i>	<i>Strengthen controls to ensure proper review processes for financial reporting.</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Procedure/Policy changes</i>
2	<i>Monitoring</i>	<i>Strengthen controls over On-Site Monitoring for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).</i>	<i>In Progress</i>	<i>Procedure/Policy changes</i>
3	<i>Monitoring</i>	<i>Strengthen controls over Subrecipient Monitoring to Ensure Compliance with Uniform Guidance Auditing Requirements.</i>	<i>In Progress</i>	<i>Procedure/Policy changes</i>
4				
5				

10.4. Audits of Local Administering Agencies

- What types of annual audit requirements do you have in place for local administering agencies/district offices?

☒ Local agencies/district offices are required to have an annual audit in compliance with the Single Audit Act and OMB Circular A-133.

- ☐ Local agencies/district offices are required to have an annual audit (other than A-133).
- ☒ Local agencies/district offices' A-133 or other independent audits are reviewed by Grantee as part of compliance process.
- ☒ Grantee conducts fiscal and program monitoring of local agencies/district offices.

Compliance Monitoring

10.5. Describe the Grantee's strategies for monitoring compliance with the Grantee's and Federal LIHEAP policies and procedures by:

Grantee employees:

- ☒ Internal program review
- ☒ Departmental oversight
- ☒ Secondary review of invoices and payments
- ☐ Other program review mechanisms are in place. Describe:

Local Administering Agencies/District Offices:

- ☒ On-site evaluation
- ☒ Annual program review
- ☒ Monitoring through Central Database
- ☒ Desk reviews
- ☒ Client File Testing/Sampling
- ☐ Other program review mechanisms are in place. Describe:

10.6. Explain, or attach a copy of, your local agency monitoring schedule and protocol.

See MDHS Division of Monitoring and DCS (T&TA) attachment

10.7. Describe how you select local agencies for monitoring reviews?

Site Visits: All are monitored.

Desk Reviews: *Monthly financial and program reports are reviewed.*

10.8. How often is each local agency monitored?

Every three (3) years

10.9. What is the combined error rate for eligibility determinations? (OPTIONAL)

10.10. What is the combined error rate for benefit determinations? (OPTIONAL)

10.11. How many local agencies are currently on corrective action plans for eligibility and/or benefit determination issues?

None

10.12. How many local agencies are currently on corrective action plans for financial accounting or administrative issues?

None

Section 11: Timely and Meaningful Public Participation, 2605(b)(12) – Assurance 12, 2605(c)(2)

11.1 How did you obtain input from the public in the development of your LIHEAP plan?
Check all that apply:

- ☐ Tribal Council meeting(s)
- ☒ Public Hearing(s)
- ☒ Draft Plan posted to website and available for comment
- ☒ Hard copy of plan is available for public view and comment
- ☒ Comments from applicants are recorded
- ☒ Request for comments on draft Plan is advertised (in the Legal Notice)
- ☐ Stakeholder consultation meeting(s)
- ☐ Comments are solicited during outreach activities
- ☒ Other, describe: Draft plan posted by the Secretary of State's Office for public view and comments. Draft plan is reviewed by DHS Compliance Division.

11.2 What changes did you make to your LIHEAP plan as a result of this participation?

None

Public Hearings, 2605(a)(2)

11.3 List the date(s) and location(s) that you held public hearing(s) on the proposed use and distribution of your LIHEAP funds?

Date	Event Description
June 27, 2023	Mississippi Department of Human Services, 200 South Lamar St., Jackson, MS 39201, “Zoom Meeting”

11.4 How many parties commented on your plan at the hearing(s)?

None

11.5 Summarize the comments you received at the hearing(s).

None

11.6 What changes did you make to your LIHEAP plan as a result of the public hearing(s)?

None

Section 12: Fair Hearings, 2605(b)(13) – Assurance 13

12.1 How many fair hearings did the grantee have in the prior Federal fiscal year?

None

12.2 How many of those fair hearings resulted in the initial decision being reversed?

None

12.3 Describe any policy and/or procedural changes made in the last Federal fiscal year as a result of fair hearings?

None

12.4 Describe your fair hearing procedures for households whose applications are denied.

See Fair Hearing Policy Attachment

12.5 When and how are applicants informed of these rights?

Clients are informed of the Fair Hearing Process during intake process at the CAA. Upon intake and denial of services, a copy of the Fair Hearing Process is given or will be mailed with the denial letter to the applicant. The process for fair hearings is clearly posted in county offices. The Fair Hearing process is posted on Virtual ROMA so applicants have access during CWP process.

12.6 Describe your fair hearing procedures for households whose applications are not acted on in a timely manner.

See Fair Hearing Policy Attachment

12.7 When and how are applicants informed of these rights?

Clients are given a copy of the Fair Hearing Process during intake process at the CAA. Upon denial of services, a copy of the Fair Hearing Process is given or will be mailed with the denial letter to the applicant. The process for fair hearings is clearly posted in county offices. The Fair Hearing process is posted on Virtual ROMA so applicants have access during CWP process.

Section 13: Reduction of home energy needs, 2605(b)(16) – Assurance 16

- 13.1 Describe how you use LIHEAP funds to provide services that encourage and enable households to reduce their home energy needs and thereby the need for energy assistance?

N/A

- 13.2 How do you ensure that you don't use more than 5% of your LIHEAP funds for these activities?

N/A

- 13.3 Describe the impact of such activities on the number of households served in the previous Federal fiscal year.

N/A

- 13.4 Describe the level of direct benefits provided to those households in the previous Federal fiscal year.

N/A

- 13.5 How many households applied for these services?

0

- 13.6 How many households received these services?

0

Section 14: Leveraging Incentive Program, 2607A

14.1 Do you plan to submit an application for the leveraging incentive program?

☒ Yes ☐ No

14.2 Describe instructions to the third parties and/or local agencies for submitting LIHEAP leveraging resource information and retaining records.

The State shall participate in the LIHEAP Leveraging Program. The State and local subgrantees will solicit non-federal dollars in order to qualify to compete for leveraging incentive funds. Several organizations, individuals, etc. will be contacted to make cash and in-kind contributions, such as discounts, arrearage forgiveness, fuel funds, credit, volunteer, WX materials, waivers: disconnections, deposits, and reconnect fees, etc. * Leveraged resources/benefits that are counted under criterion (iii) in 45 CFR 96.87(d)(2) must be identified and described in the grantees LIHEAP plan and distributed as indicated in the plan. In addition, leveraging resources/benefits that are counted under criterion (ii) must be carried out under one or more components of the grantee's regular LIHEAP program.

14.3 For each type of resource and/or benefit to be leveraged in the upcoming year that will meet the requirements of 45 C.F.R. § 96.87(d)(2)(iii), describe the following:

Resource	What is the type of resource or benefit?	What is the source(s) of the resource?	How will the resource be integrated and coordinated with the LIHEAP program?
1	<i>Cash and in-kind contributions, such as discounts, arrearage forgiveness, fuel funds, credit, volunteer, WX materials, waivers: disconnections, deposits, and reconnect fees, etc.</i>	<i>Several organizations, individuals</i>	<i>The State coordinates leveraging with the LIHEAP program to provide consumer education with our clients to encourage them to conserve energy and the disadvantages of getting services interrupted. Leveraging resources also provide additional services to more clients in LIHEAP. Coordination also compliments our budget program in LIHEAP to allow clients to better manage resources.</i>
2	<i>Private sources</i>	<i>Entergy Helping Hands</i>	<i>Partnerships donated funds to pay energy related bills</i>

**Leveraged resources/benefits that are counted under criterion (iii) in 45 CFR 96.87(d)(2) must be identified and described in the grantees LIHEAP plan and distributed as indicated in the plan. In addition, leveraging resources/benefits that are counted under criterion (ii) must be carried out under one or more components of the grantee's regular LIHEAP program*

Section 15: Training

15.1. Describe the training you provide for each of the following groups:

a. Grantee Staff:

☒ Formal training on grantee policies and procedures

How often?

☒ Annually

☐ Biannually

☒ As needed

☐ Other – Describe:

☒ Employees are provided with policy manual

☐ Other – Describe:

b. Local Agencies:

☒ Formal training conference

How often?

☒ Annually

☐ Biannually

☒ As needed

☐ Other – Describe:

☒ On-site training

How often?

☐ Annually

☐ Biannually

☒ As needed

☐ Other – Describe:

☒ Employees are provided with policy manual

☐ Other – Describe:

c. Vendors

☒ Formal training conference

How often?

☐ Annually

☐ Biannually

☒ As needed

☐ Other – Describe:

☒ Policies communicated through vendor agreements

☐ Policies are outlined in a vendor manual

☐ Other – Describe:

15.2. Does your training program address fraud reporting and prevention?

☒ Yes

☐ No

Section 16: Performance Goals and Measures, 2605(b)

- 16.1 Describe your progress toward meeting the data collection and reporting requirements of the four required LIHEAP performance measures. Include timeframes and plans for meeting these requirements and what you believe will be accomplished in the coming federal fiscal year.

The State of MS has updated its centralized client tracking system (Virtual ROMA 2- VR 2) to capture, analyze and submit information regarding energy burden, targeting, restoration/prevention of loss of home energy service. The State successfully submits the LIHEAP Performance Measures Report. We continue to work with APPRISE to analyze report and use data to enhance the LIHEAP program.

There were several enhancements made specifically for LIHEAP:

- LIHEAP Monthly, Quarterly & Annual Report generated and able to be run on the fly by state users.
- Supplemental Payment Processing
- Auto allocation of LIHEAP Benefits based on Grant Specifications
- Executive Report for Households Served
- Check Reissue Feature Rolling Out August 2023 to streamline process
- System Alerts or Supplemental Payment Recipients
- VR2 Notifications

2024 Planned System Enhancements

- NEADA Report Generation
- Energy Burden Indicator on HH Profile
- Aging Report
- CWP Dashboard integration with VR to notify clients about benefits/application status, with full access accounts;
 - Offer ability to upload documents if missing during intake; ability to request appointments/ appointment letters.
- Grant Management component to help monitor & alert for budget attainment – spending tracking.
- Performance Report for Division on stabilized homes during the month to include vulnerable populations (may be Sept 2023)

Section 17: Program Integrity, 2605(b)(10)**17.1 Fraud Reporting Mechanisms**

- a. Describe all mechanisms available to the public for reporting cases of suspected waste, fraud, and abuse.

☒ Online Fraud Reporting

☒ Dedicated Fraud Reporting Hotline

☒ Report directly to local agency/district office or Grantee office

☐ Report to State Inspector General or Attorney General

☒ Forms and procedures in place for local agencies/district offices and vendors to report fraud, waste, and abuse.

☒ Other – describe: *Report to the MDHS – Office of Inspector General*

- b. Describe strategies in place for advertising the above-referenced resources.

☒ Printed outreach materials

☐ Addressed on LIHEAP application

☒ Website - MDHS website

☐ Other – describe:

17.2 Identification Documentation Requirements

- a. Indicate which of the following forms of identification are required or requested to be collected from LIHEAP applicants or their household members.

REQUIRED Type of Identification Collected	Collected from Whom?		
	Applicant Only	All Adults in HH	All Household Members
Social Security Card is photocopied and retained	Required <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Required <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Required <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Requested <input type="checkbox"/>	Requested <input type="checkbox"/>	Requested <input type="checkbox"/>
Social Security Number (without actual card)	Required <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Required <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Required <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Requested <input type="checkbox"/>	Requested <input type="checkbox"/>	Requested <input type="checkbox"/>
Government-issued identification card (i.e.: driver's license, state ID, Tribal ID, passport, etc.)	Required <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Required <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Required <input type="checkbox"/>
	Requested <input type="checkbox"/>	Requested <input type="checkbox"/>	Requested <input type="checkbox"/>
Other:	Required <input type="checkbox"/>	Required <input type="checkbox"/>	Required <input type="checkbox"/>

- b. Describe any exceptions to the above policies.

Exceptions for newborn children.

17.3 Identification Verification

Describe what methods are used to verify the authenticity of identification documents provided by clients or household members. Select all that apply.

- ☐ Verify SSNs with Social Security Administration
- ☐ Match SSNs with death records from Social Security Administration or state agency
- ☐ Match SSNs with state eligibility/management system (e.g., SNAP, TANF)
- ☐ Match with state Department of Labor system
- ☐ Match with state and/or federal corrections system
- ☐ Match with state child support system
- ☐ Verification using private software (e.g., The Work Number)
- ☐ In-person certification by staff

☐ Match SSN/Tribal ID number with tribal database

☒ Other – describe:

In Person Verification

17.4 **Citizenship/Legal Residency Verification**

What are your procedures for ensuring that household members are U.S. citizens or aliens who are qualified to receive LIHEAP benefits? Select all that apply.

☐ Clients sign an attestation of citizenship or legal residency

☒ Clients' submission of Social Security cards is accepted as proof of legal residency

☒ Noncitizens must provide documentation of immigration status

☐ Citizens must provide a copy of their birth certificate, naturalization papers, or passport

☐ Noncitizens are verified through the SAVE system

☐ Tribal members are verified through Tribal database/Tribal ID card

☐ Other – describe:

17.5 **Income Verification**

What methods does your agency utilize to verify household income? Select all that apply.

☒ Require documentation of income for all adult household members

☒ Pay stubs

☒ Social Security award letters

☐ Bank statements

☐ Tax statements

☒ Zero-income statements

☒ Unemployment Insurance letters

☐ Other – describe:

☐ Computer data matches:

☐ Income information matched against state computer system (e.g., SNAP, TANF)

☐ Proof of unemployment benefits verified with state Department of Labor

☐ Social Security income verified with SSA

☐ Utilize state directory of new hires

☐ Other – describe:

17.6 **Protection of Privacy and Confidentiality**

Describe the financial and operating controls in place to protect client information against improper use or disclosure. Select all that apply.

☒ Policy in place prohibiting release of information without written consent

☒ Grantee LIHEAP database includes privacy/confidentiality safeguards

☒ Employee training on confidentiality for:

☒ Grantee employees

☒ Local agencies/district offices

☒ Employees must sign confidentiality agreement

☒ Grantee employees

☒ Local agencies/district offices

☒ Physical files are stored in a secure location

☐ Other – describe:

17.7 **Verifying the Authenticity of Energy Vendors**

What policies are in place for verifying vendor authenticity? Select all that apply.

☐ All vendors must register with the State

☒ All vendors must supply a valid SSN or TIN/W-9 form

- ☒ Vendors are verified through energy bills provided by the household
- ☐ Grantee and/or local agencies/district offices perform physical monitoring of vendors
- ☐ Other – describe, and note any exceptions to policies above:

17.8 Benefits Policy – Gas and Electric Utilities

What policies are in place to protect against fraud when making benefit payments to gas and electric utilities on behalf of clients? Select all that apply.

- ☒ Applicants required to submit proof of physical residency
- ☒ Applicants must submit current utility bill
- ☒ Data exchange with utilities that verifies:
 - ☒ Account ownership
 - ☒ Consumption
 - ☒ Balances
 - ☐ Payment history
 - ☐ Account is properly credited with benefit
 - ☐ Other – describe:
- ☒ Centralized computer system/database tracks payments to all utilities
- ☐ Centralized computer system automatically generates benefit level
- ☒ Separation of duties between intake and payment approval
- ☐ Payments coordinated among other heating assistance programs to avoid duplication of payments
- ☒ Payments to utilities and invoices from utilities are reviewed for accuracy
- ☒ Computer databases are periodically reviewed to verify accuracy and timeliness of payments made to utilities
- ☐ Direct payment to households are made in limited cases only

- ☒ Procedures are in place to require prompt refunds from utilities in cases of account closure
- ☐ Vendor agreements specify requirements selected above, and provide enforcement mechanism
- ☐ Other – describe:

17.9 **Benefits Policy — Bulk Fuel Vendors**

What procedures are in place for averting fraud and improper payments when dealing with bulk fuel suppliers of heating oil, propane, wood, and other bulk fuel vendors? Select all that apply.

- ☐ Vendors are checked against an approved vendors list
- ☒ Centralized computer system/database is used to track payments to all vendors
- ☐ Clients are relied on for reports of non-delivery or partial delivery
- ☐ Two-party checks are issued naming client and vendor
- ☐ Direct payment to households are made in limited cases only
- ☐ Conduct monitoring of bulk fuel vendors
- ☐ Bulk fuel vendors are required to submit reports to the Grantee
- ☒ Vendor agreements specify requirements selected above, and provide enforcement mechanism
- ☐ Other – describe:

17.10 **Investigations and Prosecutions**

Describe the Grantee's procedures for investigating and prosecuting reports of fraud, and any sanctions placed on clients/staff/vendors found to have committed fraud. Select all that apply.

- ☐ Refer to state Inspector General
- ☐ Refer to local prosecutor or state Attorney General
- ☐ Refer to US DHHS Inspector General (including referral to OIG hotline)

- ☒ Local agencies/district offices or Grantee conduct investigation of fraud complaints from public
- ☒ Grantee attempts collection of improper payments. If so, describe the recoupment process.

See Waste, Fraud & Abuse Policy

- ☒ Clients found to have committed fraud are banned from LIHEAP assistance. For how long is a household banned? 1 year (1st offense). Indefinitely (2nd offense).
- ☒ Contracts with local agencies require that employees found to have committed fraud are reprimanded and/or terminated
- ☒ Vendors found to have committed fraud may no longer participate in LIHEAP
- ☐ Other – describe:

Attachments

ATTACHMENT-TENTATIVE FFY 2024 ALLOCATIONS

(These levels are dependent on the Federal LIHEAP award at the FFY 2023 level. Adjustments will be made once the final FFY 2024 awards are known.)	
Eligible Entities	Allocation
AJFC CAA	\$1,667,529
Bolivar Co CAA	\$682,171
Central Mississippi	\$2,079,864
Coahoma Opportunities	\$485,099
Community Action of South MS	\$2,410,337
Hinds County HRA	\$1,352,215
LIFT	\$2,625,600
Madison Co. CSA	\$615,470
Mid-State Opportunities	\$1,928,270
Multi County CSA	\$2,561,931
Northeast MS	\$1,531,095
PRVO	\$4,080,898
Prairie Opportunity	\$2,380,019
South Central CAA	\$2,331,508
Southwest MS	\$1,021,741
Sunflower-Humphreys Co	\$654,884
WWISCAA	\$1,910,079
Total	\$30,318,710

ATTACHMENT- POVERTY GUIDELINES

CSBG and LIHEAP applicants must first meet income guidelines to be eligible for assistance. Also, non-elderly/non-disabled clients must be placed in case management.

- A. CSBG:** The income of all household members may not exceed 125% of the federal poverty guidelines as established by Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).
- B. LIHEAP:** The income of all household members may not exceed 60% of the state median income for Mississippi.

<i>FEDERAL POVERTY GUIDELINES EFFECTIVE</i>			
<i>Effective Dates</i>		<i>10/1/2023</i>	<i>10/1/2023</i>
<i>CSBG, LIHEAP,</i>		CSBG	LIHEAP
Number in Household	100 % Category	125% Category	60% State Median Income
unit	Percent of Poverty	Percent of Poverty	Percent of Poverty
1	\$14,580	\$18,225	\$23,493
2	\$19,720	\$24,650	\$30,722
3	\$24,860	\$31,075	\$37,951
4	\$30,000	\$37,500	\$45,180
5	\$35,140	\$43,925	\$52,408
6	\$40,280	\$50,350	\$59,637
7	\$45,420	\$56,775	\$60,993
8	\$50,560	\$63,200	\$62,348
9	\$55,700	\$69,625	\$63,703
10	\$60,840	\$76,050	\$65,059
11	\$65,980	\$82,475	\$66,414
12	\$71,120	\$88,900	\$67,770
13	\$76,260	\$95,325	\$69,125
14	\$81,400	\$101,750	\$70,480
15	\$86,540	\$108,175	\$71,836
16	\$91,680	\$114,600	\$73,191
17	\$96,820	\$121,025	\$74,547
18	\$101,960	\$127,450	\$75,902
19	\$107,100	\$133,875	\$77,257
20	\$112,240	\$140,300	\$78,613
For each additional family member add:		5140	6425
		Contact MDHS/DCS@20 members for LIHEAP	

ATTACHMENT-2024 LIHEAP BENEIFIT MATRIX**LIHEAP Benefit Matrix (Fuel Types)**

The LIHEAP Act stipulates that households with high energy costs and needs receive the greatest benefit. LIHEAP Benefits are now capped based on income levels and size of household income. LIHEAP benefits are capped at \$1500 per program year.

2024 LIHEAP BENEFIT MATRIX (Fuel Types)

Household Data	HH Size / Income	Energy Types					
	Household Size of 1	Propane	Electric*	Natural Gas	Wood /Other Fuel	Maximum Benefit	Total Electric Benefit**
	0 – 3645	800	700	700	400	1500	1500
	3646– 7290	750	650	650	360	1400	1400
	7291 – 10935	700	600	600	320	1300	1300
	10936 – 14580	650	550	550	280	1200	1200
	14581 – 18225	600	500	500	240	1100	1100
	18226 - 23493	550	450	450	200	1000	1000
	Over 23,493.49 for HH of 1	0	0	0	0	0	0

Household Data	HH Size / Income	Energy Types					
	Household Size of 2	Propane	Electric	Natural Gas	Wood /Other Fuel	Maximum Benefit	Total Electric Benefit
Income is between	0 - 4930	800	700	700	400	1500	1500
	4931 – 9860	750	650	650	360	1400	1400
	9861 – 14790	700	600	600	320	1300	1300
	14791– 19720	650	550	550	280	1200	1200
	19721 - 24650	600	500	500	240	1100	1100
	24651 - 30722	550	450	450	200	1000	1000
	Over \$30,722.49 for HH of 2	0	0	0	0	0	0

Household Data	HH Size / Income	Energy Types					
	Household Size of 3	Propane	Electric	Natural Gas	Wood /Other Fuel	Maximum Benefit	Total Electric Benefit
Income is between	0 - 6215	800	700	700	400	1500	1500
	6216 - 12430	750	650	650	360	1400	1400
	12431 - 18645	700	600	600	320	1300	1300
	18646 - 24860	650	550	550	280	1200	1200
	24861 - 31075	600	500	500	240	1100	1100
	31076 - 37951	550	450	450	200	1000	1000
	Over 37,951.49 for HH of 3	0	0	0	0	0	0

Household Data	HH Size / Income	Energy Types					
	Household Size of 4	Propane	Electric	Natural Gas	Wood /Other Fuel	Maximum Benefit	Total Electric Benefit
Income is between	0 - 7500	800	700	700	400	1500	1500
	7501 - 15000	750	650	650	360	1400	1400
	15001 - 22500	700	600	600	320	1300	1300
	22501 - 30000	650	550	550	280	1200	1200
	30001 - 37500	600	500	500	240	1100	1100
	37501 - 45180	550	450	450	200	1000	1000
	Over 45,180.49 for HH of 4	0	0	0	0	0	0

Household Data	HH Size / Income	Energy Types					
	Household Size of 5	Propane	Electric	Natural Gas	Wood /Other Fuel	Maximum Benefit	Total Electric Benefit
Income is between	0 - 8785	800	700	700	400	1500	1500
	8786 - 17570	750	650	650	360	1400	1400
	17571 - 26355	700	600	600	320	1300	1300
	26356 - 35140	650	550	550	280	1200	1200
	35141 - 43925	600	500	500	240	1100	1100
	43926 - 52408	550	450	450	200	1000	1000
	Over 52,408.49 for HH of 5	0	0	0	0	0	0

Household Data	HH Size / Income	Energy Types					
	Household Size of 6	Propane	Electric	Natural Gas	Wood /Other Fuel	Maximum Benefit	Total Electric Benefit
Income is between	0 - 10070	800	700	700	400	1500	1500
	10071 - 20140	750	650	650	360	1400	1400
	20141 - 30210	700	600	600	320	1300	1300
	30211 - 40280	650	550	550	280	1200	1200
	40281 - 50350	600	500	500	240	1100	1100
	50351 - 59637	550	450	450	200	1000	1000
	Over 59,637.49 for HH of 6	0	0	0	0	0	0

Household Data		Energy Types					
	HH Size / Income						
	Household Size of 7	Propane	Electric	Natural Gas	Wood /Other Fuel	Maximum Benefit	Total Electric Benefit
Income is between	0 - 11355	800	700	700	400	1500	1500
	11356 - 22710	750	650	650	360	1400	1400
	22711 - 34065	700	600	600	320	1300	1300
	34066 - 45240	650	550	550	280	1200	1200
	45241 - 56775	600	500	500	240	1100	1100
	56776 - 60993	550	450	450	200	1000	1000
	Over 60,993.49 for HH of 7	0	0	0	0	0	0

Household Data		Energy Types					
	HH Size / Income						
	Household Size of 8	Propane	Electric	Natural Gas	Wood /Other Fuel	Maximum Benefit	Total Electric Benefit
Income is between	0 - 12640	800	700	700	400	1500	1500
	12641 - 25280	750	650	650	360	1400	1400
	25281 - 37920	700	600	600	320	1300	1300
	37921 - 50650	650	550	550	280	1200	1200
	50651 - 62348	600	500	500	240	1100	1100
	Over 62,348.49 for HH of 8	0	0	0	0	0	0

Household Data		Energy Types					
	HH Size / Income						
	Household Size of 9	Propane	Electric	Natural Gas	Wood /Other Fuel	Maximum Benefit	Total Electric Benefit
Income is between	0 - 13925	800	700	700	400	1500	1500
	13926 - 27850	750	650	650	360	1400	1400
	27851 - 41775	700	600	600	320	1300	1300
	41776 - 55700	650	550	550	280	1200	1200
	55701 - 63703	600	500	500	240	1100	1100
	Over 63,703.49 for HH of 9	0	0	0	0	0	0

Household Data		Energy Types					
	HH Size / Income						

	Household Size of 10	Propane	Electric	Natural Gas	Wood /Other Fuel	Maximum Benefit	Total Electric Benefit
Income is between	0 - 15210	800	700	700	400	1500	1500
	15211 - 30420	750	650	650	360	1400	1400
	30421 - 45630	700	600	600	320	1300	1300
	45631 - 60840	650	550	550	280	1200	1200
	60841 - 65059	600	500	500	240	1100	1100
	Over 65,059.49 for HH of 10	0	0	0	0	0	0

Household Data	HH Size / Income	Energy Types					
	Household Size of 11	Propane	Electric	Natural Gas	Wood /Other Fuel	Maximum Benefit	Total Electric Benefit
Income is between	0 - 16495	800	700	700	400	1500	1500
	16496 - 32990	750	650	650	360	1400	1400
	32991 - 49485	700	600	600	320	1300	1300
	49486 - 66414	650	550	550	280	1200	1200
	Over 66,414.49 for HH of 11	0	0	0	0	0	0

Household Data	HH Size / Income	Energy Types					
	Household Size of 12	Propane	Electric	Natural Gas	Wood /Other Fuel	Maximum Benefit	Total Electric Benefit
Income is between	0 - 17780	800	700	700	400	1500	1500
	17781 - 35560	750	650	650	360	1400	1400
	35561 - 53340	700	600	600	320	1300	1300
	53341 - 67770	650	550	550	280	1200	1200
	Over 67,770.49 for HH of 12	0	0	0	0	0	0

Household Data	HH Size / Income	Energy Types					
	Household Size of 13	Propane	Electric	Natural Gas	Wood /Other Fuel	Maximum Benefit	Total Electric Benefit
Income is between	0 - 19065	800	700	700	400	1500	1500
	19066 - 38130	750	650	650	360	1400	1400

	38131 - 57195	700	600	600	320	1300	1300
	57196 - 69125	650	550	550	280	1200	1200
	Over 69,125.49 or HH of 13	0	0	0	0	0	0

Household Data	HH Size / Income	Energy Types					
	Household Size of 14	Propane	Electric	Natural Gas	Wood /Other Fuel	Maximum Benefit	Total Electric Benefit
Income is between	0 - 20350	800	700	700	400	1500	1500
	20351 - 40700	750	650	650	360	1400	1400
	40701 - 61050	700	600	600	320	1300	1300
	61051 - 70480	650	550	550	280	1200	1200
	Over 70,481.49 for HH of 14	0	0	0	0	0	0

Household Data	HH Size / Income	Energy Types					
	Household Size of 15	Propane	Electric	Natural Gas	Wood /Other Fuel	Maximum Benefit	Total Electric Benefit
Income is between	0 - 21635	800	700	700	400	1500	1500
	21636 - 43270	750	650	650	360	1400	1400
	43271 - 64905	700	600	600	320	1300	1300
	64906 - 71836	650	550	550	280	1200	1200
	Over 71,836.49 for HH of 15	0	0	0	0	0	0

Household Data	HH Size / Income	Energy Types					
	Household Size of 16	Propane	Electric	Natural Gas	Wood /Other Fuel	Maximum Benefit	Total Electric Benefit
Income is between	0 - 22920	800	700	700	400	1500	1500
	22921 - 45840	750	650	650	360	1400	1400
	45841 - 68760	700	600	600	320	1300	1300
	68761 - 73191	650	550	550	280	1200	1200
	Over 73,191.49 for HH of 16	0	0	0	0	0	0

Household Data	HH Size / Income	Energy Types					
----------------	------------------	--------------	--	--	--	--	--

	Household Size of 17	Propane	Electric	Natural Gas	Wood /Other Fuel	Maximum Benefit	Total Electric Benefit
Income is between	0 - 24205	800	700	700	400	1500	1500
	24206 - 48410	750	650	650	360	1400	1400
	48411 - 72615	700	600	600	320	1300	1300
	72616 - 74547	650	550	550	280	1200	1200
	Over 74,547.49 for HH of 17	0	0	0	0	0	0

Household Data	HH Size / Income	Energy Types					
	Household Size of 18	Propane	Electric	Natural Gas	Wood /Other Fuel	Maximum Benefit	Total Electric Benefit
Income is between	0 - 25490	800	700	700	400	1500	1500
	25491 - 50980	750	650	650	360	1400	1400
	50981 - 75902	700	600	600	320	1300	1300
	Over 75,902.49 for HH of 18	0	0	0	0	0	0

Household Data	HH Size / Income	Energy Types					
	Household Size of 19	Propane	Electric	Natural Gas	Wood /Other Fuel	Maximum Benefit	Total Electric Benefit
	0 - 26775	800	700	700	400	1500	1500
	26776 - 53550	750	650	650	360	1400	1400
	53551 - 77257	700	600	600	320	1300	1300
	Over 77,257.49 for HH of 19	0	0	0	0	0	0

Household Data	HH Size / Income	Energy Types					
	Household Size of 20	Propane	Electric	Natural Gas	Wood /Other Fuel	Maximum Benefit	Total Electric Benefit
Income is between	0 - 28060	800	700	700	400	1500	1500
	28061 - 56120	750	650	650	360	1400	1400
	56121 - 78613	700	600	600	320	1300	1300
	Over 78,613.49 for HH of 20	0	0	0	0	0	0

*The electric column represents the amount for households with main heating fuel other than electric.

ATTACHMENT-ELIGIBILITY

Statutory Reference 2605 (b) (5)
2605 (b) (2)
2605 (b) (8) (A)
2605(b) (10)

The State assures through Virtual ROMA that it will provide, in a timely manner, the highest level of assistance to those households (with the highest home energy needs which takes into account both the energy burden and the unique situation of the vulnerable population) which have the lowest incomes and the highest home energy cost in relation to income, taking into account family size, except that the State may not differentiate in implementing this section between the households described in the above referenced clauses.

The State further assures that it will not differentiate in the treatment of households eligible for services because of their income and as the recipients of TANF, Food Stamps, SSI or certain means-tested veterans program certified as “categorically eligible”. This applies to all LIHEAP components (cooling, heating, crisis and weatherization).

The specific measures to ensure there is no difference in eligibility determination and benefit amounts is not to use categorical eligibility in all components. All applicant households must complete the established application process, case management process and eligibility determination.

The utilization of Virtual ROMA has resulted in additional fiscal control tracking capabilities for LIHEAP funds by:

- All LIHEAP funds expended must originate via Virtual ROMA.
- LIHEAP payments only occur based on client services that are in “approved” status in Virtual ROMA.
- Greater visibility by State to view, monitor and track fiscal process and payment on a state-wide basis across agencies.
- Programmatic staff must work closely with fiscal staff to determine timeframe for payment so that program reports are generated for the specified timeframe and given to fiscal.
- Fiscal compares, reviews and authorizes payment report before any payment. Any discrepancies identified between Program Reports and the electronic payment files are reconciled by Fiscal and Program before payment occurs.
- Virtual ROMA prohibits approvals from unauthorized program users and restricts any Fiscal User from the ability to approve client services.
- Energy vendors who are registered users of Virtual ROMA are able to review their clients’ approved amounts and compare to ensure accuracy of amounts and clients’ accounts.

ATTACHMENT- ELIGIBILITY AND BENEFIT DETERMINATION**Statutory Reference 2605 (B) (2)**

Each applicant household requesting for LIHEAP assistance must complete application process for eligibility determination.

Income eligibility is set at or below 60% of the State Median Income guidelines that are in effect at the time of submission of the application. An application is taken on the applicant household by the local subgrantee agencies. All applications must be taken in the Virtual ROMA system. Assistance from another program may also be provided to eligible households, especially those households enrolled in and complying with an established service plan.

A household cannot receive more than \$1,500 in benefits for the program year unless the State issues supplemental payments. Total benefit for year (can be divided between heating, cooling or crisis). This amount may be adjusted from year to year based on the state's allocation. An exception will be given to clients in need of a heating/cooling unit. The cost of the unit is not included in the \$1,500 maximum benefit amount.

Priority is given to the elderly and disabled. Live-in attendants' income can be excluded if it is determined that (1) the live-in is essential to the care and well-being of the person; and (2) would not be living in the unit except to provide the necessary supportive services.

ATTACHMENT-COORDINATION OF LIHEAP ACTIVITIES**Statutory reference 2605 (b) (4)**

The State agrees to coordinate its activities under this title with similar and related programs administered by the Federal Government and the State, particularly low-income energy-related programs under Subtitle B of Title VI (relating to Community Services Block Grant Program), under the Supplemental Security Income Program under Part A of Title IV of the Social Security Act, under Title XX of the Social Security Act, under the Low-Income Weatherization Assistance Program, under Title IV of the Energy Conservation and Production Act, or under any other provision of law which carries out programs which were administered under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, before the date of the enactment of this Act.

The Division of Community Services (DCS) of the Mississippi Department of Human Services administers LIHEAP, the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG), Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) and the Low-Income Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP). By operating these programs under one division, it provides high potential for enhancing coordination. Also, it minimizes duplication of services between LIHEAP and other related programs under the Social Security Act, the Energy Conservation and Production Act and other related programs which are administered under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964. A referral mechanism is in place (through the case management approach) to refer to, and receive referrals from other social service providers and energy vendors. LIHEAP clients identified as high energy users due to the poor condition of their homes are referred to the Weatherization Assistance Program, and priority is given to elderly and disabled individuals.

Other forms of coordination involves soliciting local funds as leveraging from organizations, individuals, philanthropy agencies and energy vendors. The leveraging funds generated are used to maintain the level of service or to assist additional eligible clients. Subgrantees are encouraged to participate in leveraging local funds to supplement LIHEAP.

DCS will use one automated intake application for all the programs (LIHEAP, LIHWAP, WAP, and CSBG), called the Virtual ROMA Tracking System. In addition, each applicant household's case folder (personal data information) is placed in one file known as a single filing system. The one intake application process and single filing system are viable means of coordinating efforts. It has the potential of cost savings. Eligible LIHEAP clients are also approved for LIHWAP at the time of intake since both programs have the same eligibility requirements.

MDHS elects to approach recipients of the LIHEAP program in a manner with the goal of assisting those in need of immediate assistance and to assist with the long-term success of the whole family through the use of referrals and assessments.

ATTACHMENT- CRISIS ASSISTANCE**Statutory reference 2604 (c), 2605 (c) (1) (A)**

Mississippi offers a year-round crisis assistance component of LIHEAP, entitled the Energy Crisis Intervention Program (ECIP), which provides assistance to low-income households who have encountered a crisis situation within the last 30 days.

- A. Life Threatening Crisis- Eligible households with a life-threatening energy crisis must have the crisis relieved within 18 hours of an approved application. Resolution of a life-threatening crisis may include, but is not limited to: arranging for an immediate supply of fuel, securing a payment arrangement with the energy vendor, pledging the amount of bill to prevent shutoff or to restore service, purchase of heating/cooling equipment, etc. The following are considered life threatening:
1. Disaster (fire, gas leak, etc.),
 2. Person(s) on life support or medical devices that require electricity,
 3. Domestic violence, and/or
 4. Elderly/disabled or child abuse/neglect.
- B. Non-Life Threatening Crisis- Eligible households with a non-life threatening energy crisis must have the crisis relieved within 48 hours of an approved application. Resolution of a life-threatening crisis may include, but is not limited to; arranging for an immediate supply of fuel, securing a payment arrangement with the energy vendor, pledging the amount of bill to prevent shutoff or to restore service, purchase of heating/cooling equipment, etc. The following situations are considered non-life threatening:
- a. Unexpected expense such as death of an immediate family member, funeral expenses, high medical expenses, etc;
 - b. Income loss within the last thirty (30) days (of date the subgrantee was contacted) due to layoff or termination of benefits;
 - c. Services are disconnected or threatened to be turned off;
 - d. Theft;
 - e. Displacement of a minor child (under the age of 18) due to client's inability to pay utilities, rent, etc.; and/or

- f. Other documented emergency within the last thirty (30) days, as deemed acceptable by the subgrantee.
- C. LIHEAP Assistance for Disaster Relief- Natural disaster (fire, hurricane, tornado, flood, etc.) or extreme inclement weather conditions determined by the National Weather Service and/or declared by the President or Governor. Allowable uses of LIHEAP funds for home energy-related needs resulting from a natural disaster or disasters as listed in Section A (1-2) of this chapter include:
- a. Costs to temporarily house or shelter individuals in which homes have been destroyed or damaged;
 - i. Hotels (up to 5 days),
 - ii. Apartments (1 month rent and deposit), or
 - iii. Other living situations that place people in settings to preserve health and safety and to move them away from the crisis situation;
 - b. Costs for transportation (such as cars, shuttles, buses) to move individuals away from the crisis area to shelters, when health and safety is endangered by loss of access to heating or cooling;
 - c. Utility reconnection costs (does not include water and sewage);
 - d. Repair or replacement cost for furnaces, air conditioners and heaters;
 - e. Insulation repair;
 - f. Coats and blankets, as tangible benefits to keep individuals warm;
 - g. Crisis payments for utilities and utility deposits;
 - h. Purchase and installation of fans, air conditioners and heaters;
 - i. Purchase and installation of generators;
 - j. Costs associated with mobile outreach; and
 - k. Other things as needed (contact DCS for approval).
 - l. The costs related to utility cost such utilities, deposits, reconnect fees, and late fees are counted against the annual matrix amount per household. Other costs shall not be counted against the annual max benefit amount per household (C1-2, C4-6, C8-11).

D. Deceased Head of Household

- a. If the applicant dies before the application for services is approved, the application shall be approved if **all** apply:
 - i. All eligibility information received is accurate and meets income guidelines;
 - ii. The bill is for an outstanding balance, not a deposit; and
 - iii. There are other household members.
 - b. This will allow the household to become stable until a new intake can be done to name a new head of household. The agency may assist the new head of household with changing the service into his/her name and paying any necessary deposits to do so.
 - c. If the application is for a deposit for services, the application should be denied. If the household has another adult member, a new intake must be done to name a new head of household.
- E. Subgrantees shall, under no circumstances tell a client that they must have a disconnect notice to apply for assistance. This may put a household in a crisis situation which could be avoided by assisting with regular LIHEAP assistance.
- F. Applicants who are ineligible for crisis benefits shall be referred to other organizations that may be able to assist, or the subgrantee may contact energy vendor on applicant's behalf to see if payment arrangement or extension is available.
- G. Multiple emergency requests by a client may result in the subgrantee referring client to CSBG program for intensive case management.

ATTACHMENT-PROGRAM, FISCAL MONITORING AND AUDIT**Statutory reference 2605 (b)(10)****Fiscal, Accounting and Tracking Requirements**

The State requires Subgrantees requesting LIHEAP funds to submit Monthly Cost Worksheets in Smartsheet. These Cost Worksheets show expenditures such as Program Assistance (regular), ECIP, Assurance 16 (if budgeted) and Administration. Subgrantees are required to submit Claim Support Forms (to request funds) based on Current Needs. Federal funds made available to the State under this title will disburse administrative and programmatic funds to Subgrantees in accordance with the LIHEAP Statute, and the overall contractual allocation for each subgrantee regulates the maximum allowable expenditures. The expenditures and draw downs are processed in the MDHS-Division of Procurement Services. The SF-425 Federal Fiscal Reports (FFR) are generated in the MDHS – Division of Budgets & Accounting as well as the monthly reports for DCS verification and tracking. Documentation from Virtual ROMA will be required to support costs reflected on Cost Worksheets and Claims Support Forms as a means to adhere to mandates by Division of Monitoring to monitor costs reported. Procedural manuals are in place which covers a range of fiscal and accounting rules and regulations with which Subgrantees must comply. Also, to further account for LIHEAP federal funds, 16 of 17 DCS Subgrantees use the same accounting software, GMS, which allows tracking through Virtual ROMA. It allows easy access in training new personnel, as well as existing personnel in the effective use of the GMS software and DCS requirements.

Subgrantees are required to have and submit an annual audit performed annually by an independent Certified Public Accountant. Also, the State complies with the Single Audit Act requirement.

The State continuously provides training and technical assistance to the subgrantees on program and fiscal management to enhance program compliance and quality service delivery to eligible households, and special training for new staff to ensure program compliance.

Subgrants will be monitored no less frequently than every three (3) years by the Division of Monitoring. Periodic reviews to the subgrantee, both announced and unannounced will be conducted by the Division of Community Services.

The Director of Monitoring reviews and approves audit findings and received from the Monitoring Supervisor and provides the draft report for review to the Division of Community Services prior to submitting to the subgrantee. Audit findings are addressed on the monitoring report.

SINGLE AUDIT MANAGEMENT REPORT AND FINDINGS REPORT



STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
OFFICE OF THE STATE AUDITOR
SHAD WHITE
STATE AUDITOR

July 18, 2023

Single Audit Management Report

Robert Anderson, Executive Director
Mississippi Department of Human Services
200 South Lamar St.
Jackson, MS 39201

Dear Mr. Anderson:

Enclosed for your review is the single audit findings for the Mississippi Department of Human Services for Fiscal Year 2022. In these findings, the Auditor's Office recommends the Mississippi Department of Human Services:

Single Audit Findings:

1. Strengthen Controls to Ensure Compliance with the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) Reporting Requirements.
2. Strengthen Controls Over Subrecipient Monitoring for the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Programs.
3. Strengthen Controls Over On-site Monitoring Requirements for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance (LIHEAP) Program.

Please review the recommendations and submit a plan to implement them by July 28, 2023. The enclosed findings contain more information about our recommendations.

During future engagements, we may review the findings in this management report to ensure procedures have been initiated to address these findings.

The purpose of this report on internal control over compliance is solely to describe the scope of our testing of internal control over compliance on each major federal program and the results of that testing based on the requirements of *Office of Management and Budget's Uniform Guidance*. Accordingly, this report is not suitable for any other purpose. However, this report is a matter of public record and its distribution is not limited.

I hope you find our recommendations enable the Mississippi Department of Human Services to carry out its mission more efficiently. I appreciate the cooperation and courtesy extended by the officials and employees of the Mississippi Department of Human Services. If you have any questions or need more information, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Angela Mire, CPA
Director, Financial and Compliance Audit Division
Enclosures

Mississippi Department of Human Services
July 18, 2023
Page 2

SINGLE AUDIT FINDINGS

In conjunction with our audit of federal assistance received by the State of Mississippi, the Office of the State Auditor has completed its audit of the State's major federal programs administered by the Mississippi Department of Human Services for the year ended June 30, 2022.

Our procedures and tests cannot and do not provide absolute assurance that all federal legal requirements have been met. In accordance with *Section 7-7-211, Mississippi Code Annotated (1972)*, the Office of the State Auditor, when deemed necessary, may conduct additional procedures and tests of transactions for this or other fiscal years to ensure compliance with legal requirements.

Report on Compliance for Each Major Federal Program

We have audited the Mississippi Department of Human Services' compliance with the types of compliance requirements identified as subject to audit in the OMB *Compliance Supplement* that could have a direct and material effect on the federal programs selected for audit that are administered by the Mississippi Department of Human Services for the year ended June 30, 2022.

Responsibilities of Management for Compliance

Management is responsible for compliance with the requirements referred to above and for the design, implementation, and maintenance of effective internal control over compliance with the requirements of laws, statutes, regulations, rules, and provisions of contracts or grant agreements applicable to Mississippi Department of Human Services's federal programs.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of Compliance

We conducted our audit of compliance in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America; the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States; and the audit requirements of Title 2 U.S. Code of Federal Regulations Part 200, *Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards* (Uniform Guidance). Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether material noncompliance with the compliance requirements referred to above occurred, whether due to fraud or error, and express an opinion on the State of Mississippi's compliance based on our audit. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not absolute assurance and therefore is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards, *Government Auditing Standards*, and the Uniform Guidance will always detect material noncompliance when it exists. The risk of not detecting material noncompliance resulting from fraud is higher than for that resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control. Noncompliance with the compliance requirements referred to above is considered material if there is a substantial likelihood that, individually or in the aggregate, it would influence the judgment made by a reasonable user of the report on compliance about Mississippi Department of Human Services' compliance with the requirements of each major federal program as a whole.

In performing an audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards, *Government Auditing Standards*, and the Uniform Guidance, we:

- Exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.
- Identify and assess the risks of material noncompliance, whether due to fraud or error, and design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks. Such procedures include examining, on a test basis, evidence regarding Mississippi Department of Human Services' compliance with the compliance requirements referred to above and performing such other procedures as we considered necessary in the circumstances.

Mississippi Department of Human Services
July 18, 2023
Page 3

- Obtain an understanding of Mississippi Department of Human Services' internal control over compliance relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances and to test and report on internal control over compliance in accordance with the Uniform Guidance, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of Mississippi Department of Human Services' internal control over compliance. Accordingly, no such opinion is expressed.

We are required to communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and any significant deficiencies and material weaknesses in internal control over compliance that we identified during the audit.

Other Matters

The results of our auditing procedures disclosed other instances of noncompliance which are required to be reported in accordance with the Uniform Guidance and which are described in the accompanying schedule of findings and questioned costs as items **2022-019, 2022-018, and 2022-017**.

Report on Internal Control over Compliance

A deficiency in internal control over compliance exists when the design or operation of a control over compliance does not allow management or employees, in the normal course of performing their assigned functions, to prevent, or detect and correct, noncompliance with a type of compliance requirement of a federal program on a timely basis. A *material weakness in internal control over compliance* is a deficiency, or a combination of deficiencies, in internal control over compliance, such that there is a reasonable possibility that material noncompliance with a type of compliance requirement of a federal program will not be prevented, or detected and corrected, on a timely basis. A *significant deficiency in internal control over compliance* is a deficiency, or a combination of deficiencies, in internal control over compliance with a type of compliance requirement of a federal program that is less severe than a material weakness in internal control over compliance, yet important enough to merit attention by those charged with governance.

Our consideration of internal control over compliance was for the limited purpose described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of Compliance section above and was not designed to identify all deficiencies in internal control over compliance that might be material weaknesses or significant deficiencies in internal control over compliance and therefore, material weaknesses or significant deficiencies may exist that were not identified. However, we identified certain deficiencies in internal control over compliance described in the accompanying schedule of findings and questioned costs as items **2022-019, 2022-018, and 2022-017** to be material weaknesses.

Our audit was not designed for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of internal control over compliance. Accordingly, no such opinion is expressed.

The purpose of this report on internal control over compliance is solely to describe the scope of our testing of internal control over compliance and the results of that testing based on the requirements of the Uniform Guidance. Accordingly, this report is not suitable for any other purpose.

Mississippi Department of Human Services
 July 18, 2023
 Page 4

Findings and Recommendations

REPORTING

Material Weakness

Material Noncompliance

2022-019 Strengthen Controls to Ensure Compliance with the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) Reporting Requirements

ALN Number 93.558 Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
 93.667 Social Services Block Grant (SSBG)
 93.568 Low Income Home Energy Assistance (LIHEAP)
 10.542 and 10.649 Pandemic EBT Benefits
 93.596 and 93.575 Child Care Development Fund (CCDF)

Federal Award No.	G2201MSTANF	G2201MSCCDM	G2201MSLIEA
	G2201MSCDD	G2201MSSOSR	225MS410S9007

Federal Agency Department of Health and Human Services

Pass-through Entity N/A

Questioned Costs N/A

Criteria Per the *Code of Federal Regulations (2 cfr 170.200)*, “(a) federal awarding agencies are required to publicly report Federal awards that equal or exceed the micro-purchase threshold and publish the required information on a public-facing, OMB-designated, government wide website and follow Uniform Guidance to support Transparency Act implementation. (b) Federal awarding agencies that obtain post-award data on subaward obligations outside of this policy should take the necessary steps to ensure that their recipients are not required, due to the combination of agency-specific and Transparency Act reporting requirements, to submit the same or similar data multiple times during a given reporting period.”

The Internal Control – Integrated Framework published by the Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission (COSO) and the U.S. Government Accountability Office Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government (Green Book) specifies that a satisfactory control environment is only effective when control activities exist. This includes but is not limited to the entity determining which laws and regulations apply to the entity and setting objectives that incorporate these requirements.

Condition When performing testwork related to Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) Reporting as of June 30, 2022, the auditor noted that the Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS) did not perform reporting over FFATA for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Child Care Development Fund (CCDF), Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), and Pandemic EBT as required by the *Code of Federal Regulations (2 cfr 170.200)*.

Mississippi Department of Human Services
 July 18, 2023
 Page 5

Cause	MDHS staff failed to follow grant regulations requiring FFATA reporting.
Effect	Failure to report any applicable awards and subawards resulted in MDHS being in noncompliance with federal reporting requirements and could result in a misstatement of federal expenditures to the federal awarding agency.
Recommendation	We recommend the Mississippi Department of Human Services strengthen controls to ensure compliance with the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) Reporting.
Repeat Finding	Yes, 2021-010.
Statistically Valid	No.

SUBRECIPIENT MONITORING

Material Weakness *Material Noncompliance*

2022-017	<u>Strengthen Controls over On-Site Monitoring for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).</u>	
ALN Number	93.568 Low Income Home Energy Assistance (LIHEAP)	
Federal Award No.	G2001MSLIE4 2001MSE5C3	G2101MSLIEAR
Federal Agency	Department of Health and Human Services	
Pass-through Entity	N/A	
Questioned Costs	None	
Criteria	<p>The terms and conditions of the grant agreements between the Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services require MDHS to administer grants in compliance with the <i>Code of Federal Regulations (2 cfr Part 200)</i>. The <i>Code of Federal Regulations (2 cfr Part 200.331)</i> designates MDHS as a pass through entity to properly identify subgrant requirements to subrecipients, evaluate the risk of noncompliance for each subrecipient, and monitor the activities of subrecipients as necessary to ensure that subgrants are used for authorized purposes, complies with the terms and conditions of the subgrants and achieves performance goals.</p> <p>The auditor evaluated the Mississippi Department of Human Services' (MDHS's) compliance with subrecipient monitoring requirements based on written policies and procedures designed by MDHS's Office of Compliance – Division of Monitoring (DM) to satisfy during-the-award monitoring requirements. DM procedures require: an on-site monitoring review of each subrecipient contract at least once during the subgrant period. Monitoring tools/checklists are used during each on-site monitoring review to provide</p>	

Mississippi Department of Human Services
 July 18, 2023
 Page 6

guidance and to document a review was performed. The on-site monitoring workpapers are reviewed and approved by DM supervisory personnel prior to issuance of a written report, the Initial Report of Findings & Recommendations, which is used for communicating finding(s) and/or questioned costs to subrecipients. The written report should be issued within 60 days from the date of the exit conference, which is normally held on the last day of the on-site review. Additionally, if the initial report identifies any administrative findings or questioned costs, a response to the findings is required to be submitted by the subrecipient to DM within thirty (30) working days from the date the report was issued.

Additionally, *The Internal Control – Integrated Framework published by the Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission (COSO) Manual* specifies that a satisfactory control environment is only effective when there are adequate control activities in place. Effective control activities dictate that: the agency perform appropriate multi-level reviews over the monitoring process and the agency ensures timely communication from the subgrantees and timely resolution of findings in order to prevent; detect; and deter fraud, waste, and abuse or the misuse of federal funds.

Condition

When performing testwork over subrecipient on-site monitoring for 123 subgrant contracts during state fiscal year 2021, we noted the following exceptions:

- Four instances, or 3 percent, in which the Supervisor's Checklist was not included for Subrecipient on the FY 2021 Monitoring Reviews Smartsheet; therefore, auditor could not verify Supervisory Review of the Monitoring process.
- Two instances, 2 percent, in which Initial Report was not issued within 60 working days of the exit conference.
- One instance, or 1 percent, in which the Division of Monitoring did not receive a response from a subrecipient in regards to the Initial Finding Letter, or the response was not received within 30 days of the receipt of the Initial Findings Letter.
- Three instances, or 2 percent, in which auditor could not verify clearance or resolution of monitoring findings.

Cause

Staff were either unaware or did not follow identified policies and procedures for monitoring requirements.

Effect

MDHS programmatic funding divisions rely upon DM monitoring procedures to verify compliance with program regulations and to identify potential problem areas needing corrective action. Failure to properly monitor subrecipients in an effective manner could allow noncompliance with federal regulations to occur and go undetected, potentially resulting in questioned costs.

Recommendation

We recommend the Mississippi Department of Human Services' Office of Compliance – Division of Monitoring (DM) strengthen controls over subrecipient monitoring. We also recommend the agency ensure subgrants are monitored timely and that the "Report of Findings & Recommendations" prepared as a result of the on-site monitoring be issued in a timely manner to enable immediate corrective action procedures to be initiated. Additionally, we

Mississippi Department of Human Services
 July 18, 2023
 Page 7

recommend that the agency maintain all supporting monitoring tools, reports, and correspondence in the monitoring file.

Repeat Finding Yes, 2021-013; 2020-030 in 2020; 2019-042 in 2019; 2018-046 in 2018; 2017-037.

Statistically Valid No.

Material Weakness
Material Noncompliance

2022-018 Strengthen Controls over Subrecipient Monitoring to Ensure Compliance with Uniform Guidance Auditing Requirements.

ALN Number 93.558 Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
 93.575, 93.596 Child Care Development Fund (CCDF)

Federal Award No. G2001MSTANF
 G2001MSCCDF

Federal Agency Department of Health and Human Services

Pass-through Entity N/A

Questioned Costs None

Criteria The *Code of Federal Regulations (2 cfr §200.331(f))* states all pass-through entities (PTE's) must verify that every subrecipient is audited as required by Subpart F - Audit Requirements of this part when it is expected that the subrecipient's Federal awards expended during the respective fiscal year equaled or exceeded the threshold set forth in § 200.501 Audit requirements.

The *Code of Federal Regulations (2 cfr § 200.512(a)(1))* states the audit must be completed and the data collection form described in paragraph (b) of this section and reporting package described in paragraph (c) of this section must be submitted within the earlier of 30 calendar days after receipt of the auditor's report(s), or nine months after the end of the audit period. If the due date falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or Federal holiday, the reporting package is due the next business day.

Additionally, per the MDHS Subgrant/Agreement Manual: All MDHS subgrantees are required to complete the MDHS Subgrantee Audit Information Form (MDHS-DPI-002). This form must be submitted to the Division of Monitoring no later than ninety (90) calendar days after the end of the subgrantee's fiscal year. This form is necessary to certify the sources and amounts of all Federal awards received and expended by the subgrantee.

Condition When performing testwork related to OMB Single Audit Monitoring as of June 30, 2022, the auditor noted two instances in which the Mississippi Department of

Mississippi Department of Human Services
July 18, 2023
Page 8

Human Services (MDHS) did not ascertain whether Single Audit Requirements were being met by subgrantees.

Cause Failure to properly monitor subrecipients could allow noncompliance with federal regulations to occur and go undetected, potentially resulting in fraud, waste, and abuse within the agency.

Effect Staff were either unaware or did not follow identified policies and procedures for monitoring requirements.

Recommendation We recommend the Mississippi Department of Human Services' Office of Compliance - Division of Monitoring (DM) strengthen controls over subrecipient monitoring for Uniform Guidance audits to ensure recipients expending \$750,000 or more in Federal funds during their fiscal year are meeting Uniform Guidance Audit requirements.

Repeat Finding Yes, 2021-014; 2020-031 in 2020; 2019-043 in 2019; 2018-047 in 2018; 2017-038 in 2017; 2016-028 in 2016; 2015-009 in 2015; and 2014-016 in 2014.

Statistically Valid No.

End of Report

ATTACHMENT – LETTER OF AUTHORIZATION

*State of Mississippi***TATE REEVES**
Governor

August 11, 2020

Mr. Clarence H. Carter, Director
Office of Community Services
Administration for Children and Families
U. S. Department of Health and Human Services
370 L'Enfant Promenade, S.W., 5th Floor, West
Washington, D.C. 20447

Dear Mr. Carter:

I hereby authorize Mr. Robert G. "Bob" Anderson, Executive Director of the Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS), to be the official signature authority for all funds appropriated to MDHS by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. In addition, I authorize Mr. Anderson to sign all assurances for the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) and Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) grant applications outlined in the respective statute, as amended. To comply with the LIHEAP statute, Mr. Anderson is duly authorized to certify that MDHS will comply with the 16 assurances contained in the LIHEAP Act, Title XXVI of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981 as amended, in the administration and operation of its Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

Should you need additional information, please contact Mr. Anderson at (601)359-4457 or P.O. Box 352, Jackson, Mississippi 39205.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tate Reeves".
Tate Reeves
GOVERNOR

TR:BA:tr
cc: Mr. Bob Anderson



Robert G. Anderson
Executive Director

August 11, 2020

Mr. Clarence H. Carter, Director
Office of Community Services
Administration for Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human
Services 370 L'Enfant Promenade, S. W., 5th
Floor, West Washington, D. C. 20447

Dear Mr. Carter:

I hereby authorize the Director of the Division of Community Services (DCS) of the Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS), to be the official designee of signature authority for all funds appropriated to MDHS-DCS by the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services for the On-Line Data Collection System (OLDC) purpose only. In addition, I authorize the Director of the Division of Community Services to sign all assurances for the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) and Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) grant applications outlined in the respective statute, as amended. To comply with the LIHEAP statute, the Director of the Division of Community Services is duly authorized to certify that MDHS will comply with the 16 assurances contained in the LIHEAP Act, Title XXVI of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981 as amended, in the administration and operation of its Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

The Director of the Division of Community Services, Ms. Tina Ruffin, will serve as the state liaison for the implementation of the Community Services Block Grant and the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Programs. All routine correspondence from your office should be directed to Ms. Ruffin and you may contact her directly at P.O. Box 352, Jackson, Mississippi 39205 or telephone (601) 359-4768.

Sincerely,

Robert G. "Bob" Anderson
Executive Director

BA:tr

200 S. Lamar St., P.O. Box 352 | Jackson, MS 39205 | (601) 359-4500

Offering Mississippians young and old tangible help today to create lasting hope for tomorrow.

ATTACHMENT – COMPLIANCE MONITORING**Division of Monitoring****Policy**

The Division of Monitoring is tasked with ensuring that all subgrants of the Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS) are administered in compliance with laws and regulations applicable to Federal financial assistance programs, agency policies and in accordance with the terms of the subgrant agreement and this subgrant manual in its entirety. Monitoring is a review process used in determining a subgrantee's compliance with the requirements of MDHS and/or Federal programs, adhering to applicable laws and regulations, and measuring progress toward stated results and outcomes. The Division of Monitoring along with the Programmatic Funding Divisions are responsible for oversight of the development of appropriate monitoring instruments specifically designed to ensure compliance with program requirements, cost principles, and federal regulations.

MDHS monitoring reviews are performed in accordance with 2 C.F.R. §200, Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards and have the following objectives:

1. Ensure accountability and compliance with applicable Federal and State laws applicable to Federal financial assistance programs;
2. Ensure funds awarded to subgrantees are used for authorized purposes;
3. Ensure compliance with the terms of the subgrant agreement;
4. Identify technical assistance and training needs;
5. Ensure follow-up on issues and implementation of corrective actions;
6. Provide guidance to subgrantees in establishing and maintaining sound business accounting procedures; and
7. Safeguard federal funds against fraud, waste, and abuse.

In general, the Subgrant monitoring procedures will consist of the following:

1. Notification of a monitoring review via a schedule letter;
2. Entrance Conference;
3. Examination of fiscal and programmatic requirements;
4. Exit Conference;
5. Initial Findings Letter;
6. Corrective Action Response and/or follow up;
7. Final Decision Letter; and
8. Administrative Hearings as required.

Monitoring of fiscal and programmatic requirements includes but is not limited to:

1. Reviewing expenditures to ensure funds are expended in line with the approved budget narrative;
2. Reviewing claims submitted by the Subgrantee;
3. Reviewing documentation supporting expenses reported under MDHS subgrants;

4. Reviewing the subgrantee's single audit and/or program-specific audit results and evaluating audit findings and the subgrantee's corrective action plan; and
5. Performing desk and/or on-site reviews of the fiscal and programmatic records and observing subgrantee operations.

Monitoring Reviews for Program and Fiscal Compliance

The Division of Monitoring will conduct on-site and/or desk reviews of MDHS subgrants for programmatic and fiscal compliance. The reviews may be performed on any subgrant at any time and may be repeated as often as deemed necessary by MDHS. Subgrantees will receive a Schedule Letter as notification of the impending monitoring review fourteen (14) calendar days prior to the monitoring review. The Schedule Letter requests information and documentation from the Subgrantee required to complete the monitoring review. MDHS reserves the right to conduct unannounced reviews at its discretion.

Each review will conclude with an exit conference in which the monitor(s) will discuss with the subgrantee signatory official (or designee) and other appropriate staff the preliminary results of the review and whether any documentation remains outstanding.

The Division of Monitoring will issue an Initial Findings Letter within thirty (30) calendar days after the exit conference. The monitoring report will provide a description of each finding of noncompliance, identified questioned costs, and any required corrective action(s) to be taken by the subgrantee. If the 30th calendar day falls on the weekend, the report will be issued the following Monday. If due date falls on a State holiday, the report will be issued the following business day.

Corrective Action Procedures

The Initial Findings Letter is provided to the subgrantee via electronic mail correspondence. The Division of Monitoring uses the current contact information included in the subgrant agreement. It is the responsibility of the subgrantee to notify the Division of Monitoring if the correspondence should be submitted to a different individual within the subgrantee organization. Copies of all correspondence submitted to the subgrantee are also provided to the applicable MDHS Programmatic Funding Division.

The subgrantee is required to provide a written response to the Division of Monitoring within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt of the Initial Findings Letter, unless otherwise indicated. Any extensions to provide documentation must be requested in writing and submitted before the final due date. The corrective action plan must be specific and include:

1. A statement of whether the subgrantee agrees with the finding or not.
2. A detailed plan of how the subgrantee will correct each individual finding to prevent this or similar finding in the future or justification for the subgrantee's disagreement with the finding(s).
3. Any subgrantee documents, forms, policy changes, reports, accounting tools, time sheets, data collection forms, etc. that ensure the subgrantee has corrected the finding(s)

4. If the subgrantee disagrees with a finding(s) identified in the report, detailed documentation must also be submitted to refute the questioned finding(s) and/or costs.
5. If the subgrantee agrees with the findings, the subgrantee must repay funds identified as questioned costs to MDHS.
6. The corrective action plan must be signed by the Authorized Official or designee. (The designee is the person granted permission to sign the Authorized Official's signature.)

The Division of Monitoring will issue a Final Decision Letter based on the corrective action response received from the subgrantee. If findings and/or questioned costs remain unresolved in the Final Decision Letter, and the subgrantee disagrees with the final findings, the subgrantee can appeal the findings. The subgrantee must request a Subgrant Agency Appeal within thirty (30) calendar days from the date of receipt of the Final Decision Letter. Please refer to Title 18 of the Administrative Code, Part 23, Chapter 7, Subgrant Administrative Agency Appeals for more information.

Single Audit Requirements

Subgrantees must have a single-audit conducted, in accordance with 2 C.F.R. §200.514, by an independent auditor if the Subgrantee expends \$750,000 or more during the non-Federal entity's fiscal year in Federal awards. Total federal grant awards not only include those received from the MDHS, but also those received from any other source.

As part of its subrecipient monitoring functions, the Division of Monitoring reviews the single audit reports for federal grant subrecipients that receive federal grants from MDHS. This monitoring is done to ensure that federal grants are used for authorized purposes, in compliance with federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of federal awards, as required by 2 C.F.R. §200.331. The subgrantee must submit the audit report to MDHS by the earlier of thirty (30) calendar days after receipt of the auditor's reports or nine (9) months from the end of the audit period.

In compliance with 2 C.F.R. §200.512, Report Submission, subgrantees must electronically submit a data collection form and the reporting package directly to the Federal Audit Clearinghouse designated by OMB.

A subgrantee that expends Federal financial assistance during the subgrant's fiscal year of:

1. Less than \$750,000.00 shall be exempt from Federal audit requirements unless the subgrantee meets a requirement in 2 C.F.R. §200.503. However, the subgrantee must make records available for review by the appropriate officials and cannot constrain in any manner such as a Federal or State agency, from carrying out or arranging audits; 2.
2. \$750,000.00 or more under only one (1) Federal program and the Federal program's statutes, regulations or the terms and conditions of the Federal award do not require a financial statement audit of the subgrant, may elect to have a program-specific audit in accordance with 2 C.F.R. §200.507; or
3. \$750,000.00 or more under more than one (1) Federal program shall have an organization wide audit performed in accordance with 2 C.F.R. §200.501(c).

Program-Specific Audit

If the subgrantee meets the applicable standard for a program-specific audit, it must follow Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS) and the program specific audit guide. A listing of current program-specific audit guides can be found in the compliance supplement provided on the Office of Management and Budget website. If a current program specific audit guide is not available, the subgrantee and auditor must have basically the same responsibilities for the Federal program as they would have for an audit of a major program in a single audit.

Limited Scope of Audits of Specific Compliance Areas

MDHS may engage an independent Certified Public Accountant to perform a Limited Scope Audit of specified MDHS subgrants. The need for this type of review shall be determined on an individual basis and shall be documented by MDHS. The results of this review shall be communicated to the subgrantee and to the applicable MDHS Programmatic Funding Division in a written notice.

Discovery of Possible Fraud, Mismanagement, or Program Abuse

If an allegation or suspicion of fraud, waste mismanagement, and/or program abuse is discovered while conducting a monitoring review, the subgrantee will be referred to the Office of Inspector General (OIG) for further investigation.

Subgrantees shall report any suspected fraud, waste and/or abuse to the Office of Inspector General. The Office of Inspector General accepts tips and complaints regarding potential fraud, waste and/or abuse in the following ways:

- Phone – 1-800-299-6905;
- Email – fraud@mdhs.ms.gov; and
- MDHS Fraud Tip Form located at <https://www.mdhs.ms.gov/report-fraud/>.

Division of Community Services (DCS)**Statutory Reference 2605(b)(10)****TRAINING & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (T&TA)**

DCS staff uses several tools and checklists to conduct an overall comprehensive review of the agencies' operations. Throughout both the programmatic and fiscal review process there should be ongoing, open communication with the staff to facilitate clarification of facts and prevent misunderstandings, provide the reviewer with a full understanding of the agencies' operations, and provide the agency with a full understanding of the review process.

Preliminary areas of noncompliance should be summarized and discussed with the Executive Director and/or designated staff during the exit conference. Copies of specific documents, supporting schedules, and reports obtained during the site visit to facilitate preparation of the report should be discussed during the exit conference. The agency is given the opportunity to provide comments and present additional information or explanation regarding a specific finding before it is included in the report.

The report should include specific timelines for any required corrective action associated with each finding. Copies of the report should be mailed to agency's Board and the agency's Executive Director. A copy should also be provided to the DCS Program Director and Compliance Officer.

The agency is required to respond in writing to each of the findings and observations mentioned in the report, including a detailed plan for taking corrective actions and implementing required changes. The initial response is due within 30 days from the date of the report. The agency's plan for resolution and corrective action will be reviewed by Compliance Team to ensure that all findings have been adequately addressed.

In the event an agency is unable or unwilling to correct a specified area of noncompliance within the prescribed timeline, DCS will report the deficiency to MDHS-Inspector General. If MDHS determines that the agency remains noncompliance in a specified area, DCS may contact DHHS to initiate proceedings to terminate the organization's designation as a Community Action Agency.

ATTACHMENT-FAIR HEARING PROCESS**Statutory Reference 2605(b)(13)**

A. A fair hearing is available for any applicant or recipient upon written request. A fair hearing provides an opportunity for a more formal review by the subgrantee's Board of Directors concerning the point(s) of dissatisfaction. If the applicant or recipient is still dissatisfied from said Boards' decision, the decision may be appealed to the Division of Administrative Hearings.

B. Basis for a Fair Hearing

- 1) Applicant(s) or recipient(s) shall be provided a copy of the 'Fair Hearing Process' during each application or recertification. Upon denial of services, a copy of the 'Fair Hearing Process' will be mailed with the denial letter to the applicant. A copy of the process will also be clearly posted in all subgrantee office locations.
- 2) The basis for a fair hearing is listed below:
 - a. An applicant or recipient whose application or recertification concerning eligibility assistance was denied;
 - b. An applicant or recipient whose claims for assistance are not acted upon reasonable promptness; or
 - c. Any other adverse action that detrimentally effects the applicant or recipient by the subgrantee and/or agency
- 3) Some issues are not subject to fair hearings, in which includes but not limited to, a subgrantee failing to have enough funds for the county that the applicant resides in. In this case, said subgrantee should refer applicant(s) to other social service providers, or use non-federal funds if available. If a county runs out of funds before the end of the program year, said subgrantee must maintain a list of applicants who could not be served. These applicants must receive priority when scheduling appointments at the start of the new program year or if additional funds are awarded.

C. Appeal to the Subgrantee Level

- 1) After having exhausted all channels of resolution with the Executive Director of the Subgrantee, the applicant or recipient must submit a written request for a fair

hearing to the subgrantee Board of Directors within thirty (30) calendar days that the adverse action occurred. The written request must include the following:

- a. Name and address of applicant or recipient,
 - b. Name of subgrantee,
 - c. Date of denial notice or adverse action taken,
 - d. Reason for said action,
 - e. Justification stating why action should not be taken,
 - f. Statement requesting a fair hearing, and
 - g. Two (2) signed and dated copies of the request (original and one copy).
- 2) Upon receipt of the applicant or recipient's request, the subgrantee Board of Directors must set the date of the fair hearing for the next scheduled board meeting. The fair hearing will be conducted at the discretion of the Board of Directors for the subgrantee. Said board shall render a written decision within five (5) business days of the fair hearing date.

D. Appeal to MDHS

- 1) Written Appeal to MDHS for Fair Hearing: After having exhausted all channels for resolution at the subgrantee level, the applicant or recipient has thirty (30) calendar days from the date of the subgrantee Board of Directors' decision letter to submit a written request. The written request must include a copy of the original hearing request and the Board of Directors' decision letter. The request should be submitted to:

Mississippi Department of Human Services
Director of Administrative Hearings
Post Office Box 352
Jackson, Mississippi 39205
- 2) Notice for the Fair Hearing: The recipient or applicant and subgrantee shall receive written notice of the hearing, in which will include a statement of the date and time the hearing is to be held. The hearing may be held telephonically unless a face-to-face hearing is requested. A fair hearing shall be scheduled within seven (7) calendar days the Director of Administrative Hearings receives a proper written request.
- 3) Evidence and/or Documents: All documents relating to any pending proceeding must be submitted to the Director of Administrative Hearings Division of MDHS at the address listed above.
- 4) Informal Disposition: Informal disposition may be made of any case by written stipulation, agreed settlement, consent order, or default.

- 5) Postponement/Continuance: The hearing officer may grant a postponement or a continuance of the fair hearing for good cause based upon a written, advanced request by either party.
- 6) Conduct of Fair Hearings: Subject to the hearing officer's ruling and recommended decision, opportunity must be given to all parties to respond, present evidence, argue all issues involved and call witnesses. A recording of each fair hearing should be made. If a party fails to appear, it may forfeit all rights.
- 7) Order of Hearing: The hearing officer calls the fair hearing to order; introduces himself/herself and gives a brief statement of the nature of the proceeding; states what documents the record contains; calls for opening statements by each party; questions witnesses at will, and adjourns the fair hearing after all evidence has been presented. During testimony, the applicant, recipient or subgrantee's representative(s) may question witnesses, cross-examine the other party's witnesses, and redirect if necessary.
- 8) Recommended Decisions and Final Decisions The hearing officer shall have the responsibility of preparing a statement summarizing the facts brought out in the fair hearing, indicating the policy governing the issue at hand, and making a recommended decision based on the evidence presented. The recommended decision shall be based only on evidence, testimony, and documents presented at the fair hearing. Following the fair hearing adjournment, the hearing officer will forward, both the record and recommended decision, to the MDHS Executive Director for adoption, modification, or reversal. The final decision of the MDHS Executive Director will be forwarded to the recipient or applicant along with the Executive Director of the subgrantee. The decision of the MDHS Executive Director shall be final and binding. The recipient or applicant has exhausted all administrative appeals after the decision from the MDHS Executive Director has been rendered.

E. Appeal to U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

- 1) If the final MDHS decision is not satisfactory, the applicant or recipient has ten (10) calendar days to submit a written request to U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Said request should be sent to:

Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Office of Community Services
370 L'Enfant Promenade, S.W., 5th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20449

- 2) The written request must include a copy of the original hearing request, the Board of Directors' decision letter, and the final decision from MDHS. A decision and/or hearing will be issued and/or conducted based on the discretion of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- 3) Note: If at any point during the fair hearings process the original adverse action or denial decision is overturned, the proper actions will be taken by the subgrantee.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-2(4); Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-4* Revised: May 2022

ATTACHMENT - LIHEAP STATE PLAN PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The state of MS updated its centralized client tracking system (Virtual ROMA 2 (VR2) to capture, analyze and submit information regarding energy burden targeting, restoration/prevention of loss of home energy service. We signed vendor agreements to include performance language, new performance related fields in VR system to allow collection and reporting of energy information required to produce the performance report and identify high energy users.

During the coming federal fiscal year, we plan to accomplish successful targeting of clients with high energy burdens. Additionally, we plan to utilize the benefit targeting/reduction indices to designate users who are high energy and allow for greater LIHEAP benefits and modify our benefit matrix beyond income. We will partner with our top vendors to get performance information more frequently. Presently, we are getting this information on an annual basis.

A vendor meeting will be scheduled to discuss results of the Performance Measures Report and to obtain greater participation from all energy vendors. We were able to capture information from the more propane vendors for this year's report.

ATTACHMENT- WASTE, FRAUD & ABUSE

The Mississippi Department of Human Services has a zero tolerance for the commission or concealment of acts of waste, fraud and abuse. Allegations of such acts will be investigated and pursued to their logical conclusion, including legal action when warranted.

- A. Waste involves the taxpayers not receiving a reasonable value for money in connection with any government funded activities due to an inappropriate act or omission by players with control over or access to government resources.
- B. Fraud is a type of illegal act involving the obtaining of something of value through willful misrepresentation or a false representation of a material fact, whether by words or by conduct, by false or misleading allegations, or by concealment of that which should have been disclosed, which deceives another so that he acts, or fails to act to his detriment.
- C. Abuse involves behavior that is deficient or improper when compared with behavior that a prudent person would consider reasonable and necessary business practice given the facts and circumstances. Abuse also includes misuse of authority or position for personal financial interests or those of an immediate or close family member or business associate.
- D. Types of Waste and Abuse include, but are not limited to:
 - 1) Employee- Omitting client information, ghost clients, charging application fees, former employee having access to software, receiving kickback from vendor, etc.
 - 2) Client- Misrepresenting household size or income, falsifying application, forging documents needed to complete intake, etc.
 - 3) Vendor/Contractor- Charging a higher amount than the lowest allowable, doctoring delivery tickets, providing financial incentive to staff to overlook unallowable charges, double charges, incorrect pricing, etc.
- E. Reporting Related to Waste, Fraud, and Abuse
 - 1) Employee (MDHS) - Any employee who has knowledge of waste, fraud or abuse, or has a good reason to suspect that such conduct has occurred, shall adhere to this policy. When suspected fraudulent activity, waste, or abuse is observed by, or made known to an employee, the employee shall immediately report the activity to their direct supervisor. If the employee believes that the supervisor is involved with the activity, they shall immediately report the activity to the Division of Community Services' Director. If the employee believes that the

Division Director may be involved with the activity, the employee shall report the activity to the Office of Inspector General at 1-800-299-6905.

- 2) Employee (Subgrantee) - Any employee who has knowledge of waste, fraud or abuse, or has a good reason to suspect that such conduct has occurred, shall adhere to the procedure in this policy. When suspected fraudulent activity, waste, or abuse is observed by, or made known to, an employee, the employee shall immediately report the activity to his/her direct supervisor. If the employee believes that the supervisor is involved with the activity, s/he shall immediately report the activity to the Executive Director. If the employee believes that the Executive Director may be involved with the activity, the employee shall report the activity to the Board of Directors. If it is believed that the Board is involved, it shall be reported to the Office of Inspector General at 1-800-299-6905.
- 3) Client or General Public - DCS cannot compel citizens and clients to report suspected instances of waste, fraud and abuse. DCS, however, strongly encourages citizens and clients to report such. Once management at the subgrantee level or at the state level has been informed of suspected waste, fraud or abuse, management shall provide the client with the established procedures for filing a report. The Office of Inspector General may be contacted at 1-800-299-6905.
- 4) Vendor - Any citizens, customer, vendor or agency that has knowledge of waste, fraud or abuse, or has a good reason to suspect that such conduct has occurred should report the occurrence to the Office of Inspector General at 1-800-299-6905 and may result in an investigation being conducted.
- 5) A confidential report may be submitted through the Virtual Roma website found on <https://virtualroma.mdhs.ms.gov>. If the reporting party does not have access to this system, reporting may be completed at the following contact information:

Call toll free number: 1-800-299-6905

Fax number: 601- 359- 5047

Address: Office of Inspector General

200 South Lamar Street

Jackson, MS 39201

- 6) Providing specific occurrence details of suspected waste, fraud, and abuse will expedite investigative efforts. There is no requirement to submit identifying information from those who wish to report suspected waste, fraud, and abuse.
- 7) Tips will be investigated in the order that they have been received with no preference given to those who provided identifying information.

F. Penalties for Substantiated Waste, Fraud, and Abuse- Once an investigation has been completed and reviewed by MDHS Office of Inspector General, penalties may be enforced as follows:

- 1) Employee - Employees of MDHS or Subgrantee who have been found guilty of waste, fraud and abuse are subject to prosecution and/or recoupment of any benefits provided, following due process as defined in subgrantee regulations and may be terminated.
- 2) Client - If it is the client's first offense they will be ineligible for services for an entire year from the date of the decision and benefits recouped. If it is the client's second offense, they will be disqualified permanently from the program and is subject to prosecution and/or recoupment of any benefits provided, following due process as defined in agency regulations.
- 3) Vendors and Contractors - Vendors/Contractors suspected of fraud and/or misrepresentation may be suspended from participation and may be subject to prosecution and/or recoupment of any benefits provided, following due process as defined in agency regulations.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-2(4); Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-4* Revised: May 2022

ATTACHMENT-LEGAL NOTICE & PUBLIC COMMENTS

Statutory reference 2605 (b) (12)

**MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
MEMORANDUM**

TO: Veronica Ratliff
Division of Procurement Services

FROM: Nicole McBeath
Division of Community Services

DATE: May 17, 2023

SUBJECT: Publication of Legal Notice

The Division of Community Services requests that a legal notice concerning the Legislative Public Hearing on the Community Services Block Grant and Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Programs be published in the classified section of the twelve newspapers listed (See attachment). The information should be advertised on **May 24, 2023 and June 14, 2023** in each newspaper. **Please send us the copies of the newspaper advertisements from three different publishers as soon as they are announced.**

Should you have any questions, please contact Nicole McBeath at 601-359-4765.

TMR:nm

Attachments

LEGAL GRANTS
(Block Grants)
MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF
HUMAN SERVICES
Division of Community Services
Legislative Public Hearing

The Mississippi Department of Human Services, Division of Community Services will be conducting the Legislative Public Hearing on the Community Services Block Grant and Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Programs under Title 26 of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981, as amended. The hearing for the 2024 programs is scheduled for Tuesday, June 27, 2023, at 11:00 am through Zoom meeting by the Mississippi Department of Human Services. Participants can join the Zoom meeting via <https://mdhs.zoom.us/j/87131268954?pwd=QVVTY0NpM0lkTFZKWFZPWnBIZTV4Zz09>, or through One tap mobile: meeting ID: 871 3126 8954, Passcode: 971254, One tap mobile +13017158592,,87131268954#,,, *971254# US (Washington DC), or +13052241968,,87131268954#,,, *971254# US. If lines are busy, please try one of the following numbers, +1 346 248 7799 US (Houston), +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago), or +1 646 876 9923 US (New York) and the meeting ID: 871 3126 8954, Passcode: 971254.

The Community Services Block Grant provides funds for a range of activities to ameliorate the causes and effects of poverty. For Fiscal Year 2024, at least 90 percent of the funds allocated to the State through these grants will be contracted to non-profit community action agencies, migrant seasonal farm worker organizations or community-based organizations that meet the eligibility requirements as described in Section 675 of the Community Services Block Grant Act, as amended. The eligibility requirements for the program are outlined in the application process.

The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program assists eligible households to pay the costs of home energy bills and other energy-related services, for example, wood, kerosene, electricity, gas, heaters, blankets, fans, and air conditioners. For Fiscal Year 2024, at least 90 percent of the funds allocated to the State through these grants will be contracted to private, nonprofit, and public agencies designated in accordance with Public Law 97-35, as amended. The eligibility requirements for the program are outlined in the application process.

Copies of the state plans are available for review at the Mississippi Department of Human Services by calling 601-359-4768 or 1-800-421-0762.

Inquiries, comments, or suggestions regarding the block grant plans and/or eligibility requirements must be received on or before July 6, 2023, by the Division of Community Services, P. O. Box 352, Jackson, Mississippi 39205. Public comments will be reviewed before finalizing the 2024 State Plans for these programs.

Mississippi Department of Human Services
Division of Community Services

NEWSPAPERS

- | | | | |
|----|---|-----|---|
| 1. | The Jackson Advocate
115 East Hamilton
Jackson, MS 39202 | 7. | The Clarion Ledger
Post Office Box 40
Jackson, MS 39205-0040 |
| 2. | The Natchez Democrat
Post Office Box 1447
Natchez, MS 39121-39221 | 8. | The Vicksburg Evening Post
Post Office Box 951
Vicksburg, MS 39180 |
| 3. | The Commercial Dispatch
Post Office Box 511
Columbus, MS 39703 | 9. | The Northeast MS Daily Journal
Post Office Box 909
Tupelo, MS 38801 |
| 4. | The Delta Democrat Times
Post Office Box 1618
Greenville, MS 38701 | 10. | The Hattiesburg American
Post Office Box 1111
Hattiesburg, MS 39401 |
| 5. | The Daily Corinthian
Post Office Box 119
Corinth, MS 38834 | 11. | The Clarksdale Press Registrar
Post Office Box 1119
Clarksdale, MS 38614 |
| 6. | The Gulf Publishing Company
Post Office Box 4567
Biloxi, MS 39535 | 12. | The Meridian Star
Post Office Box 1591
Meridian, MS 39301 |

ATTACHMENT- 2024 LIHEAP & CSBG PUBLIC HEARING AGENDA**MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF COMMUNITY SERVICES****LEGISLATIVE PUBLIC HEARING
2024 LIHEAP & CSBG PROGRAMS**

**Zoom Meeting
200 South Lamar Street
Jackson, Mississippi**

**Tuesday, June 27, 2023
11:00 a.m.**

AGENDA

Opening Remarks and Introduction.....Nicole McBeath
Deputy Director

Purpose of Hearing

Presentation of FY 2024 State Plans:

- LIHEAP.....Nicole McBeath
Deputy Director

Questions/Comments.....Attendees

- CSBG.....Jessica Davis
Program Director

Questions/Comments.....Attendees

Roll Call

Closing Remarks

ATTACHMENT- PUBLIC COMMENTS

**LIHEAP & CSBG Legislative Public
Hearing**

**Transcript of Proceedings
June 27, 2023**

All depositions & exhibits are available for downloading at
www.brookscourtreporting.com
Please call or e-mail depo@brookscourtreporting.com if you need a
Username and Password.



**Mississippi - Louisiana - Tennessee - New York
1-800-245-3376**

Transcript of Proceedings 6/27/2023

Page 1

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

DIVISION OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

LEGISLATIVE PUBLIC HEARING

2024 LIHEAP & CSBG PROGRAMS

Zoom Meeting

200 South Lamar Street

Jackson, Mississippi

Tuesday, June 27, 2023

11:00 a.m.

Jackson
Gulfport

Brooks Court Reporting
1-800-245-3376

Meridian
New Orleans

Transcript of Proceedings 6/27/2023

Page 2	Page 4
<p>1 AGENDA</p> <p>2</p> <p>3 Opening Remarks and</p> <p>4 Introduction.....Nicole McBeath</p> <p>5 Deputy Director</p> <p>6</p> <p>7 Purpose of Hearing</p> <p>8</p> <p>9 Presentation of FY 2024 State Plans:</p> <p>10 • LIHEAP.....Nicole McBeath</p> <p>11 Deputy Director</p> <p>12</p> <p>13 Questions/Comments.....Attendees</p> <p>14</p> <p>15 • CSBG.....Jessica Davis</p> <p>16 Program Director</p> <p>17</p> <p>18 Questions/Comments.....Attendees</p> <p>19</p> <p>20 Roll Call</p> <p>21 Closing Remarks</p> <p>22</p> <p>23</p> <p>24</p> <p>25</p>	<p>1 questions, and participate in this important session.</p> <p>2 And we look forward to your continued support in the</p> <p>3 year of 2024.</p> <p>4 We would like to take this opportunity to</p> <p>5 thank our legislatures, other public officials, and</p> <p>6 citizens of this great state for their attendance.</p> <p>7 And at this time, I would like to see if there</p> <p>8 are any elective officials in attendance. And if are,</p> <p>9 please, unmute your device and state your name and</p> <p>10 title.</p> <p>11 SENATOR SIMMONS: Senator Derrick Simmons.</p> <p>12 MS. NICOLE MCBEATH: Good morning, Senator</p> <p>13 Simmons.</p> <p>14 SENATOR SIMMONS: Good morning.</p> <p>15 MS. NICOLE MCBEATH: Is there anyone else?</p> <p>16 All right. We'll move on with the LIHEAP presentation.</p> <p>17 SENATOR HILLMAN FRAZIER: Good morning,</p> <p>18 Senator Hillman Frazier Hinds County.</p> <p>19 MS. NICOLE MCBEATH: Okay. Good morning, Mr.</p> <p>20 Senator Frazier.</p> <p>21 MS. KEISHA BUTLER: Good morning, Keisha</p> <p>22 Butler SMO.</p> <p>23 MS. NICOLE MCBEATH: Please, mute your phones</p> <p>24 and also computer devices.</p> <p>25 SENATOR HILLMAN FRAZIER: And Senator Sollie</p>
Page 3	Page 5
<p>1 MS. NICOLE MCBEATH: Now on behalf of the</p> <p>2 Mississippi Department of Human Service, under</p> <p>3 leadership are Mr. Bob Anderson the Exec Director. Tina</p> <p>4 Ruffin Director of Division of Community Services. And</p> <p>5 I am Nicole McBeath Deputy Director of Community</p> <p>6 Services.</p> <p>7 We welcome you to the federal fiscal year 2024</p> <p>8 Virtual Legislative Public Hearing for the Community</p> <p>9 Service LIHEAP Grant and Low-Income Home Energy</p> <p>10 Assistance Program at the Mississippi Department of</p> <p>11 Human Services at 11:00 o'clock a.m.</p> <p>12 The purpose of this hearing is to inform the</p> <p>13 public of the CSBG Application pursuant to 676AC3 of the</p> <p>14 Community Services Block Grant Act and the</p> <p>15 LIHEAP application under Title 26 of the Omnibus Budget</p> <p>16 Reconciliation Act of 1981 as amended.</p> <p>17 Evidence that a Legislative Public Hearing on</p> <p>18 the State plans were conducted, and that the plans were</p> <p>19 made available for public inspection and review, must be</p> <p>20 submitted with the State plans.</p> <p>21 We hold the hearing annually to present the</p> <p>22 goals and objectives of the State plans for funding of</p> <p>23 the CSBG and LIHEAP Programs to the Department of Health</p> <p>24 and Human Services.</p> <p>25 Please, feel free to make comments, ask</p>	<p>1 Norwood, he's with me. Hinds County. He's with Hinds</p> <p>2 County. And I'm in the Mississippi Delta.</p> <p>3 MS. NICOLE MCBEATH: Thank you.</p> <p>4 MS. GAIL DOTSON: Gail Dotson, Prairie</p> <p>5 Opportunity.</p> <p>6 MS. NICOLE MCBEATH: We're going to be doing</p> <p>7 roll call for everybody else later. And, of course, the</p> <p>8 agencies will be submitting a sign-in list.</p> <p>9 So now the purpose of LIHEAP. The LIHEAP</p> <p>10 statute, Title 26 of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation</p> <p>11 Act of 1981 states the purpose of LIHEAP is to assist</p> <p>12 eligible households with the cost of their home energy</p> <p>13 bills, such as electricity, gas, kerosene wood, et</p> <p>14 cetera, and other energy related services like</p> <p>15 air-conditioners, heaters, hot water heaters, blankets,</p> <p>16 and fans.</p> <p>17 LIHEAP defines vulnerable population as</p> <p>18 children 0 to five years of age, older adults, person</p> <p>19 with chronic health conditions, homeless persons,</p> <p>20 low-income people, disabled persons.</p> <p>21 And studies have shown that high outdoor temps</p> <p>22 lead to higher indoor temps, especially, for certain</p> <p>23 structures, which means pre-existing health conditions</p> <p>24 make these populations more vulnerable.</p> <p>25 LIHEAP goals, to target and provide financial</p>

2 (Pages 2 to 5)**Jackson
Gulfport****Brooks Court Reporting
1-800-245-3376****Meridian
New Orleans**

Transcript of Proceedings 6/27/2023

Page 6	Page 8
<p>1 assistance and consumer education to</p> <p>2 all low-income households being served, considering both</p> <p>3 energy consumption and vulnerability of one</p> <p>4 or more household members disabled, elderly, children,</p> <p>5 and veterans, while at the same time, reducing the</p> <p>6 client's burden of energy cost and consumption to</p> <p>7 increase energy portability for LIHEAP recipient</p> <p>8 households.</p> <p>9 To identify households with the highest energy</p> <p>10 burden and also case management to provide additional</p> <p>11 services to include household resources. Perform legend</p> <p>12 activities, to serve additional LIHEAP clients, or</p> <p>13 provide a greater level of assistance to stabilize</p> <p>14 clients.</p> <p>15 Low income people, especially, vulnerable</p> <p>16 population achieve their potential by strengthening</p> <p>17 family and other supported services through referrals.</p> <p>18 LIHEAP Benefit Matrix. Federal LIHEAP Act</p> <p>19 stipulates households with the lowest income receive the</p> <p>20 greatest LIHEAP benefit. The maximum amount a client</p> <p>21 can receive per program year from January 1 through</p> <p>22 December 31st is \$1500. And based on income, limits may</p> <p>23 be less than the maximum benefit amount.</p> <p>24 LIHEAP benefits are grouped and capped by</p> <p>25 energy types, such as electricity, natural gas, propane,</p>	<p>1 contact Community Services for the annual income.</p> <p>2 This slides shows the 2024 LIHEAP Tentative</p> <p>3 Allocations by agency, which is based on the 2023 LIHEAP</p> <p>4 award that's dated November 10, 2022.</p> <p>5 Once we receive the 2024 LIHEAP final award,</p> <p>6 these allocations will be revised through modifications.</p> <p>7 And I'll give y'all all a moment, so look at your</p> <p>8 allocation, and you can write it down.</p> <p>9 This chart is the Federal Fiscal year 2022</p> <p>10 LIHEAP Household Report Households Served for the period</p> <p>11 of October 1, 2021, through September 30th, 2022.</p> <p>12 And for heating, it was a total of 28,891</p> <p>13 households served. Cooling was 27,141 households. Year</p> <p>14 around crisis 5,981 households. Emergency equipment was</p> <p>15 2,036 households. Any type of LIHEAP assistance was</p> <p>16 45,436 households, and this number is unduplicated. For</p> <p>17 bill payment assistance, it was total 45,187 households.</p> <p>18 These are the LIHEAP Agencies that give into</p> <p>19 the LIHEAP funds to in the Counties they serve. We</p> <p>20 have: AJFC. Bolivar County. Central Mississippi,</p> <p>21 Incorporated. Coahoma Opportunities. Community Action</p> <p>22 of South Mississippi. Hinds County Human Resource</p> <p>23 Agency. LIFT, Incorporated. Madison County Citizen</p> <p>24 Service Agency. Mid-State Opportunity. Multi-County</p> <p>25 Community Services Agency. Northeast Mississippi</p>
Page 7	Page 9
<p>1 other fuel, and wood. And each energy type has a</p> <p>2 maximum benefit. This chart is an example of the LIHEAP</p> <p>3 Benefit Matrix for 2024, showing the different income</p> <p>4 levels in the household size.</p> <p>5 So, for example, a household size of one with</p> <p>6 income between 0 to \$3,645, can receive 800 in propane,</p> <p>7 700 in electric, or 700 natural gas, or 400 in wood or</p> <p>8 other fuel, for a maximum benefit amount of \$1500.</p> <p>9 And if the house is total electric, they can</p> <p>10 receive the full amount of \$1500. And as you look at</p> <p>11 that household size of one, as the income increases, the</p> <p>12 benefit amounts goes down.</p> <p>13 The 2024 Federal Poverty Guidelines for CSBG</p> <p>14 LIHEAP effective October 1, 2023. This chart is used to</p> <p>15 determine income eligibility for our clients. The first</p> <p>16 column is the number of household from one to 20</p> <p>17 members. The second column is the Federal Poverty</p> <p>18 Guideline annual income. The third column is the CSBG</p> <p>19 Federal Poverty Guidelines. And Jessica Davis will go</p> <p>20 over that in her presentation.</p> <p>21 The last column is the LIHEAP Poverty</p> <p>22 Guidelines, and it is at 60 percent of the State Median</p> <p>23 Income. So a household size of one is eligible for</p> <p>24 LIHEAP if they make \$23,493 or less. And if the number</p> <p>25 of the people in the household exceeds 20, please,</p>	<p>1 Community Services. PRVO. Prairie Opportunity. South</p> <p>2 Central Community Action Agency. Southwest Opportunity.</p> <p>3 Sunflower Humphreys Counties Progress. And WWISCAA.</p> <p>4 Legislative Public Hearing. Legislative</p> <p>5 Public Hearing, Federal fiscal year 2024</p> <p>6 CSBG/LIHEAP Legislative Public Hearing held on June</p> <p>7 27th, 2023. Notice of the public hearing appeared in 12</p> <p>8 different Newspapers statewide.</p> <p>9 Public Inspection of the Plan. Federal fiscal</p> <p>10 year 2024 CSBG/LIHEAP State Plan availability for</p> <p>11 inspection was made known -- was made known in the</p> <p>12 Public Hearing announcement described above.</p> <p>13 Opportunity for comments were also available</p> <p>14 during the virtual Public Hearing held on June 27th, via</p> <p>15 Zoom meeting, via e-mail to tina.ruffin@mdhs.ms.gov or</p> <p>16 mail to the Mississippi Department of Human Services,</p> <p>17 200 South Lamar Street, Jackson, Mississippi 39201.</p> <p>18 I will turn it over for any questions,</p> <p>19 comments, or concerns. Please make sure you unmute your</p> <p>20 device, state your name, agency or organization that you</p> <p>21 represent and proceed for the court reporter.</p> <p>22 No questions or comments before we move on?</p> <p>23 Okay. That concludes the LIHEAP portion of the</p> <p>24 presentation. I will now turn it over to Jessica Davis</p> <p>25 for the CSBG presentation.</p>

3 (Pages 6 to 9)**Jackson
Gulfport****Brooks Court Reporting
1-800-245-3376****Meridian
New Orleans**

Transcript of Proceedings 6/27/2023

Page 10	Page 12
<p>1 MS. JESSICA DAVIS: Good morning. This is the 2 beginning of the Federal fiscal year 2024 CSBG LIHEAP. 3 CSBG state plan portion. CSBG serves as the State of 4 Mississippi -- this serves as State of Mississippi's 5 application for Federal CSBG funding. 6 It describes Mississippi's proposed use of 7 Federal fiscal year 2024 CSBG funding to produce 8 positive outcome -- outcomes towards the elimination of 9 the causes and effects of poverty. 10 Here's a listing of our 16 Community Action 11 Agencies as Nicole said earlier and read out, the only 12 change is that Madison County does not serve as a CSBG 13 Community Action Agency. 14 The Legislative Public Hearing Requirements. 15 Legislative in the Federal fiscal year FY2024 CSBG, the 16 Legislative Public Hearing held on June 27th, 2023. The 17 notice of the Public Hearing appeared in 12 different 18 newspapers statewide. 19 The Public Inspection of the Plan. FFY2024 20 CSBG/LIHEAP State Plan availability for inspection was 21 made known in the public hearing announcement described 22 above. Opportunities for comments were also available 23 during the Public Hearing held on today via Zoom meeting 24 or via e-mail to tina.ruffin@mdhs.ms.gov or by mail at 25 the Mississippi Department of Human Services, 200 South</p>	<p>1 and quality board of directors ensuring more diversity 2 in service delivery, Community Involvement and 3 Partnerships. 4 And this last one was added on this year, 5 which is to establish a Leadership Institute to promote 6 leadership skills to upcoming CAA Staff to achieve 7 effectual succession planning. 8 The Distribution & Allocation of CSBG Funding. 9 In accordance within the CSBG Act: 90 percent of the 10 State of Mississippi's total CSBG allocation must be 11 distributed to the State's eligible entities. 12 25 percent of each eligible entity's 13 allocation must be allocated to the Supportive Services 14 activity for direct client services. 15 15 percent of each eligible entity's 16 allocation may be used for the Administration Activity. 17 And last is -- last is, 60 percent of each 18 eligible entity's allocation must be used for Case 19 Management Activity. 20 The Distribution and Use of Discretionary 21 Funds. 22 MDHS/DCS will allocate at least 5 percent of 23 CSBG funds received by the State to support 24 discretionary projects related to the purposes of the 25 CSBG Act and the six national goals.</p>
Page 11	Page 13
<p>1 Lamar Street, Jackson, Mississippi 39201. 2 The purposes of CSBG funding are: To remove 3 obstacles and solve problems that block the achievement 4 of self-sufficiency. 5 To secure and retain meaningful employment. 6 To attain an adequate education. 7 Make better use of available income. 8 Achieve greater participation in the affairs 9 of the community involved. 10 To obtain and maintain adequate housing and a 11 suitable living environment. 12 And obtain emergency assistance through loans, 13 grants, or other means to meet immediate an urgent 14 family and individual needs. 15 The Goals, Objectives & Assurances. To 16 sponsor financial literacy certification for CAA Staff 17 and certified staff can provide financial counseling to 18 Case Management clients. 19 Assist clients in obtaining new skills for the 20 Work From Home economy to include distance learning 21 initiatives. 22 To engage and support clients to access and 23 expand their skill-set to obtain meaningful employment 24 or new careers. 25 To emphasize the need for legal, effective,</p>	<p>1 A percentage of discretionary funds are allocated 2 based on the following activities: 3 Capacity Building has 66 percent, which is 4 T&TA, IT needs for the Virtual Roma system and staff 5 training. 6 And other CSBG purposes: The 34 percent, 7 which is new and existing community projects for seniors 8 and youth. 9 The Federal Poverty Guidelines as Nicole 10 stated are below. The Federal Poverty Guidelines is 125 11 percent of and it begins for a household of one is 12 18,225. And it increases by 6,425 for each additional 13 person. 14 The 2024 CSBG Tentative Allocations. We're 15 going to take a brief moment for you to look at your 16 allocation for your agency and write it down. 17 Okay. Now we have the Case Management 18 Services and what all CSBG can provide. 19 It can provide employment, which includes job 20 training services and assistance. 21 Employment services and assistance. 22 Work support services and vocational training. 23 Education and Cognitive Development. 24 Adult basic education. 25 General Equivalency preparation and tuition</p>

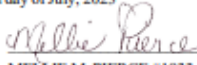
4 (Pages 10 to 13)**Jackson
Gulfport****Brooks Court Reporting
1-800-245-3376****Meridian
New Orleans**

Transcript of Proceedings 6/27/2023

Page 14	Page 16
<p>1 assistance.</p> <p>2 Housing. Housing services.</p> <p>3 Housing financial assistance.</p> <p>4 Weatherization services.</p> <p>5 Transitional shelter.</p> <p>6 And home ownership counseling.</p> <p>7 Income and Asset Building, which includes</p> <p>8 LIHEAP assistance.</p> <p>9 Money management education.</p> <p>10 Budget preparation.</p> <p>11 Income management assistance.</p> <p>12 Consumer credit counseling.</p> <p>13 And tax prepared preparation assistance.</p> <p>14 It also provides health and social behavioral</p> <p>15 development, which includes also weatherization</p> <p>16 services.</p> <p>17 Health education training.</p> <p>18 Medical and dental assistance services.</p> <p>19 Social security benefits claims assistance.</p> <p>20 Emergency services.</p> <p>21 Temporary housing assistance.</p> <p>22 Energy crisis assistance.</p> <p>23 Emergency food and clothing.</p> <p>24 And spousal/child – spousal/child crisis</p> <p>25 intervention.</p>	<p>1 Okay. Bolivar? I only need one person to</p> <p>2 speak up. Bolivar? Present.</p> <p>3 Okay. CMI? Present.</p> <p>4 Coahoma? Present.</p> <p>5 Community Action of South Mississippi?</p> <p>6 Present.</p> <p>7 Hinds County? Hinds County here.</p> <p>8 Okay. LIFT? Present.</p> <p>9 Madison? Present.</p> <p>10 Mid-State? Present.</p> <p>11 Multi-county? Present.</p> <p>12 Northeast Mississippi? Present.</p> <p>13 PRVO? Present.</p> <p>14 Prairie Opportunity? Present.</p> <p>15 South Central? Present.</p> <p>16 SMO? Present.</p> <p>17 Sun-Hum? Present.</p> <p>18 WWISCAA? Present.</p> <p>19 Mathen (phonetic)? Present.</p> <p>20 Okay. Thank y'all. Now we're open up for the</p> <p>21 state agency staff. Verkista White. Jessica Davis.</p> <p>22 Deborah Travis. Dedra Jones. Paul McSwain. Likeba</p> <p>23 Bentley. Alicia Jackson. Latoya Pope.</p> <p>24 We have -- I think they have voice/audio</p> <p>25 issues. But we have Paul McSwain, Alicia Jackson,</p>
Page 15	Page 17
<p>1 And lastly it can provide nutritional</p> <p>2 education training and meal assistance.</p> <p>3 The Individual and Family National Performance</p> <p>4 Indicators, the NPIs from January 1st to December 31st,</p> <p>5 2022. Some of the highlights were employment,</p> <p>6 unemployed adults who obtained employment up to a living</p> <p>7 wage was a 100 -- was 817.</p> <p>8 Education and Cognitive Development,</p> <p>9 individuals who obtained a recognized credential,</p> <p>10 certificate, or degree relating to achievement or</p> <p>11 educational or vocational was 278.</p> <p>12 56 individuals who opened a savings account or</p> <p>13 IDA.</p> <p>14 There were 2,738 households who avoided</p> <p>15 eviction, and 8,619 seniors who maintained an</p> <p>16 independent living situation.</p> <p>17 MS. NICOLE MCBEATH: As we conclude, are there</p> <p>18 any questions, comments, or concerns? No questions or</p> <p>19 comments? Okay. We'll go ahead and start the role</p> <p>20 call. I will start with the agencies first. I will</p> <p>21 call out the agency name, you'll unmute and state</p> <p>22 present. And after that, of course, I'll be looking for</p> <p>23 all the agencies to submit their e-mail, their sign-in</p> <p>24 sheets of all their (inaudible) shortly afterwards.</p> <p>25 So AJFC? Present.</p>	<p>1 Latoya Pope. Frances Strainer. Frances Brown.</p> <p>2 Okay. Are there any other participants on the</p> <p>3 meeting? If so, just state your name and organization</p> <p>4 you represent.</p> <p>5 We have Woodlan Pittman and Candace Timms.</p> <p>6 And as always, the Division of Community Services would</p> <p>7 like to thank each and everyone of you for attending</p> <p>8 this years Virtual Public Hearing and for all the hard</p> <p>9 work that y'all continue to do in making this program</p> <p>10 successful.</p> <p>11 We truly appreciate you and couldn't do this</p> <p>12 without you. Please, keep up the good work. I also</p> <p>13 like to thank the senators who are in attendance, I</p> <p>14 appreciate you taking time out of your busy schedule to</p> <p>15 make this public hearing also a success.</p> <p>16 This now concludes the Public Hearing for the</p> <p>17 Federal Fiscal Year 2024.</p> <p>18 (Time Noted: 11:45 a.m.)</p> <p>19</p> <p>20</p> <p>21</p> <p>22</p> <p>23</p> <p>24</p> <p>25</p>

5 (Pages 14 to 17)**Jackson
Gulfport****Brooks Court Reporting
1-800-245-3376****Meridian
New Orleans**

Transcript of Proceedings 6/27/2023

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 18</p> <p>1 CERTIFICATE OF COURT REPORTER 2 I, Mellie M. Pierce, Licensed Court 3 Reporter for the State of Mississippi do hereby certify 4 that the foregoing contains a true and correct 5 transcript of the LJHEAP Public Hearing 2024 as taken by 6 me in the aforementioned matter at the time and place 7 heretofore stated, as taken by stenotype and later 8 reduced to typewritten form under my supervision 9 by means of computer-aided transcription. 10 I further certify that under the 11 authority vested in me by the State of Mississippi 12 that the witness was placed under oath by me to 13 truthfully answer all questions in the matter. 14 I further certify that, to the best of 15 my knowledge, I am not in the employ of or related 16 to any party in this matter and have no interest, 17 monetary or otherwise, in the final outcome of 18 this matter. 19 This is the 13th day of July, 2023 20 21  22 MELLIE M. PIERCE #1933 23 My Commission Expires: 24 October 27, 2023 25</p>	

6 (Page 18)

Jackson
GulfportBrooks Court Reporting
1-800-245-3376Meridian
New Orleans

ATTACHMENT- VENDOR AGREEMENT FORM**Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS)
Division of Community Services (DCS)****Vendor Agreement
Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program**

The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) provides assistance to eligible low-income households to pay home energy costs. Payments for assistance will be made by _____ on behalf of eligible households

_____ LIHEAP Agency
to the LIHEAP Energy Vendor who provides the source of electricity or gas services. Checks or ACH deposit will be issued to the LIHEAP Energy Vendor with a list of eligible households attached to it.

This vendor agreement is between:

LIHEAP Agency:	Address, Phone Number and Email Address:
LIHEAP Energy Vendor Legal Name:	Address, Phone Number and Email Address:
Tax ID Number/EIN Number:	

Services provided and billed by LIHEAP Energy Vendor (Mark an "X"):

Electricity Fees _____ Natural Gas Fees _____
Propane Fees _____ Other Fees (please list) _____

Counties served by your company: _____

By signing this agreement and accepting payments on behalf of eligible households, the LIHEAP Energy Vendor assures:

- The account number is assigned to each household eligible for electric or gas assistance;
- That eligible households will be charged in a normal business process, the difference between the actual cost of electricity or gas services and the amount of payment made through this program;
- That eligible households will not be treated adversely or differently because of such assistance;
- That there will be no discrimination either in the cost of goods supplied or services provided, against the households on whose behalf payments are made;
- That the amount paid by LIHEAP agency will be credited to individual eligible household account indicated on the listing that accompanies the check or ACH deposit;
- Provide electricity or gas services to each eligible and approved residential household for which payment is provided under LIHEAP;
- Restore electricity or gas services upon payment for households that have been disconnected;
- To not refuse service or otherwise discriminate in the marketing and provision of service to any household because of race, religion, color, national origin, gender, familial status, source of income, level of income, disability, financial status or qualification for low-income services;

Revised
July 1, 2022

- To not refuse service or otherwise discriminate in the marketing and provision of service to any household because of race, religion, color, national origin, gender, familial status, source of income, level of income, disability, financial status or qualification for low-income services;
- To not take any adverse action on a household account when an application for assistance is pending, until such time that eligibility for services is determined;
- To not interrupt services if a pledge was sent to LIHWAP Vendor and the LIHWAP agency is meeting the obligations under this agreement;
- That it will cooperate with DCS by providing requested information to DCS regarding annual water/wastewater usage and cost for LIHWAP households, if applicable;
- To provide at no cost to the LIHWAP Agency, household, or MDHS-DCS, written information on a household's home water/wastewater costs, bill payment history or arrearage history for no more than the previous 12 monthly billing periods; and
- To report any instance of fraud, waste, and abuse concerning customer (household), LIHWAP agency, employee, or LIHWAP vendor, please contact the MDHS Division of Program Integrity at 1-800-299-6905. The report may result in an investigation being conducted and/or permanent disqualification from participating in the LIHWAP.

The LIHWAP vendor agrees to handle payments in the following manner:

- Payments must be applied **ONLY to residential water/wastewater accounts** of the individuals listed, except if: (a) the account is in the name of the spouse who lives at the same address; (b) the account is in the name of a deceased spouse; or (c) verification is obtained from vendor or landlord stating that applicant is responsible for affected utility bill;
- Payments must not be applied to account balances that have previously been written off or paid with other funds;
- Provide written reconciliation and confirmation on a regular basis to LIHWAP agency that benefits have been credited appropriately to households and their services have been restored on a timely basis or disconnection status has been removed if applicable;
- Payments must **not** be applied to business accounts;
- Payment must be applied **only** for home water/wastewater services. The following payments are prohibited: repairs, garbage collections, fraudulent services, meter tampering and returned check fees;
- If a credit balance results from the payment to a household's account, the credit balance must be refunded to the LIHWAP agency within 60 days. **CASH REFUNDS TO THE HOUSEHOLD OR LIHWAP AGENCY ARE STRICTLY PROHIBITED;**
- Should a credit balance result on an account in which the account holder dies (and there are no other adults in household), or moves out of the LIHWAP Vendor's service area, any amount exceeding the balance owed the LIHWAP Vendor must be refunded to the LIHWAP Agency within 60 days;
- Refund any interest resulting from unused LIHWAP payment made on behalf of the household;
- All household accounts should be credited immediately, but no later than ten (10) days after receipt of check from LIHWAP agency. It is important that all branch offices of LIHWAP vendor are contacted to ensure that household accounts are credited in a timely manner;
- The LIHWAP Vendor agrees to provide at least one contact person and phone number to the LIHWAP Agency who will ensure that all accounts are credited and answer questions concerning water/wastewater disconnections and payments;
- Refunds must be identified with the year credit occurred, name, address, and account number of the recipient;
- Reconnection fees shall be waived, unless prohibited by city ordinance, and a listing be provided to LIHWAP agency on a monthly basis;
- Cooperate with any Federal, State, or local investigation, audit, or program review. The LIHWAP vendor will allow LIHWAP Agency representatives access to all books and records

09/27/21

relating to LIHWAP households for the purpose of compliance verification with this Agreement;
and;

- Understand that failure to cooperate with any Federal, State, or local investigation, audit, or program review may result in the immediate disqualification from participation in the LIHWAP.

By signing this agreement and pledging payments of eligible households, the LIHWAP agency assures:

- To not provide pledges on behalf of households without having adequate funds to pay such pledge;
- Pledges will be made **only** on approved applications in the MDHS Virtual ROMA system;
- Payment will occur within twenty (20) business days after application has been approved; and
- Provide LIHWAP Vendor with a list of names, telephone numbers and email addresses of LIHWAP Agency staff designated to approve pledges on behalf of the agency.

The parties acknowledge that this Agreement and the services provided by the LIHWAP Vendor and the LIHWAP Agency are governed by and subject to the federal and state laws and regulations in accordance with the Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program supplemental terms and conditions.

The Mississippi Department of Human Services may terminate this agreement by written notice for failure of either party to comply with the provisions stated herein or when it is deemed to be in the best interest of the State, household, or to comply with applicable laws and regulations.

Signature of LIHWAP Agency Officer

Signature of LIHWAP Vendor Officer

Printed Name & Title

Printed Name & Title

Date

Date

09/27/21

Section 18: Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, and Other Responsibility Matters**Section 18: Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, and Other Responsibility Matters****Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, and Other Responsibility Matters--Primary Covered Transactions****Instructions for Certification**

1. By signing and submitting this proposal, the prospective primary participant is providing the certification set out below.

2. The inability of a person to provide the certification required below will not necessarily result in denial of participation in this covered transaction. The prospective participant shall submit an explanation of why it cannot provide the certification set out below. The certification or explanation will be considered in connection with the department or agency's determination whether to enter into this transaction. However, failure of the prospective primary participant to furnish a certification or an explanation shall disqualify such person from participation in this transaction.

3. The certification in this clause is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when the department or agency determined to enter into this transaction. If it is later determined that the prospective primary participant knowingly rendered an erroneous certification, in addition to other remedies available to the Federal Government, the department or agency may terminate this transaction for cause or default.BrBbr.

4. The prospective primary participant shall provide immediate written notice to the department or agency to which this proposal is submitted if at any time the prospective primary participant learns that its certification was erroneous when submitted or has become erroneous by reason of changed circumstances.

5. The terms covered transaction, debarred, suspended, ineligible, lower tier covered transaction, participant, person, primary covered transaction, principal, proposal, and voluntarily excluded, as used in this clause, have the meanings set out in the Definitions and Coverage sections of the rules implementing Executive Order 12549. You may contact the department or agency to which this proposal is being submitted for assistance in obtaining a copy of those regulations.

6. The prospective primary participant agrees by submitting this proposal that, should the proposed covered transaction be entered into, it shall not knowingly enter into any lower tier covered transaction with a person who is proposed for debarment under 48 CFR part 9, subpart 9.4, debarred, suspended, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this covered transaction, unless authorized by the department or agency entering into this transaction.

7. The prospective primary participant further agrees by submitting this proposal that it will include the clause titled "Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion-Lower Tier Covered Transaction," provided by the department or agency entering into this covered transaction, without modification, in all lower tier covered transactions and in all solicitations for lower tier covered transactions.

8. A participant in a covered transaction may rely upon a certification of a prospective participant in a lower tier covered transaction that it is not proposed for debarment under 48 CFR part 9, subpart 9.4, debarred, suspended, ineligible, or

voluntarily excluded from the covered transaction, unless it knows that the certification is erroneous. A participant may decide the method and frequency by which it determines the eligibility of its principals. Each participant may, but is not required to, check the List of Parties Excluded from Federal Procurement and Nonprocurement Programs.

9. Nothing contained in the foregoing shall be construed to require establishment of a system of records in order to render in good faith the certification required by this clause. The knowledge and information of a participant is not required to exceed that which is normally possessed by a prudent person in the ordinary course of business dealings.

10. Except for transactions authorized under paragraph 6 of these instructions, if a participant in a covered transaction knowingly enters into a lower tier covered transaction with a person who is proposed for debarment under 48 CFR part 9, subpart 9.4, suspended, debarred, ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction, in addition to other remedies available to the Federal Government, the department or agency may terminate this transaction for cause or default.

Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, and Other Responsibility Matters--Primary Covered Transactions

(1) The prospective primary participant certifies to the best of its knowledge and belief, that it and its principals:

(a) Are not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded by any Federal department or agency;

(b) Have not within a three-year period preceding this proposal been convicted of or had a civil judgment rendered against them for commission of fraud or a criminal offense in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a public (Federal, State or local) transaction or contract under a public transaction; violation of Federal or State antitrust statutes or commission of embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements, or receiving stolen property;

(c) Are not presently indicted for or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a governmental entity (Federal, State or local) with commission of any of the offenses enumerated in paragraph (1)(b) of this certification; and

(d) Have not within a three-year period preceding this application/proposal had one or more public transactions (Federal, State or local) terminated for cause or default.

(2) Where the prospective primary participant is unable to certify to any of the statements in this certification, such prospective participant shall attach an explanation to this proposal.

Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion--Lower Tier Covered Transactions

Instructions for Certification

1. By signing and submitting this proposal, the prospective lower tier participant is providing the certification set out below.

2. The certification in this clause is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was entered into. If it is later

determined that the prospective lower tier participant knowingly rendered an erroneous certification, in addition to other remedies available to the Federal Government the department or agency with which this transaction originated may pursue available remedies, including suspension and/or debarment.

3. The prospective lower tier participant shall provide immediate written notice to the person to which this proposal is submitted if at any time the prospective lower tier participant learns that its certification was erroneous when submitted or had become erroneous by reason of changed circumstances.

4. The terms covered transaction, debarred, suspended, ineligible, lower tier covered transaction, participant, person, primary covered transaction, principal, proposal, and voluntarily excluded, as used in this clause, have the meaning set out in the Definitions and Coverage sections of rules implementing Executive Order 12549. You may contact the person to which this proposal is submitted for assistance in obtaining a copy of those regulations.

5. The prospective lower tier participant agrees by submitting this proposal that, [[Page 33043]] should the proposed covered transaction be entered into, it shall not knowingly enter into any lower tier covered transaction with a person who is proposed for debarment under 48 CFR part 9, subpart 9.4, debarred, suspended, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this covered transaction, unless authorized by the department or agency with which this transaction originated.

6. The prospective lower tier participant further agrees by submitting this proposal that it will include this clause titled "Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion-Lower Tier Covered Transaction," without modification, in all lower tier covered transactions and in all solicitations for lower tier covered transactions.

7. A participant in a covered transaction may rely upon a certification of a prospective participant in a lower tier covered transaction that it is not proposed for debarment under 48 CFR part 9, subpart 9.4, debarred, suspended, ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from covered transactions, unless it knows that the certification is erroneous. A participant may decide the method and frequency by which it determines the eligibility of its principals. Each participant may, but is not required to, check the List of Parties Excluded from Federal Procurement and Nonprocurement Programs.

8. Nothing contained in the foregoing shall be construed to require establishment of a system of records in order to render in good faith the certification required by this clause. The knowledge and information of a participant is not required to exceed that which is normally possessed by a prudent person in the ordinary course of business dealings.

9. Except for transactions authorized under paragraph 5 of these instructions, if a participant in a covered transaction knowingly enters into a lower tier covered transaction with a person who is proposed for debarment under 48 CFR part 9, subpart 9.4, suspended, debarred, ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction, in addition to other remedies available to the Federal Government, the department or agency with which this transaction originated may pursue available remedies, including suspension and/or debarment.

Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility an Voluntary Exclusion--Lower Tier Covered Transactions

(1) The prospective lower tier participant certifies, by submission of this proposal, that neither it nor its principals is presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction by any Federal department or agency.

(2) Where the prospective lower tier participant is unable to certify to any of the statements in this certification, such prospective participant shall attach an explanation to this proposal.

☒ By checking this box, the prospective primary participant is providing the certification set out above.

Section 19: Certification Regarding Drug-Free Workplace Requirements

Section 19: Certification Regarding Drug-Free Workplace Requirements

This certification is required by the regulations implementing the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988: 45 CFR Part 76, Subpart, F. Sections 76.630(c) and (d)(2) and 76.645(a)(1) and (b) provide that a Federal agency may designate a central receipt point for STATE-WIDE AND STATE AGENCY-WIDE certifications, and for notification of criminal drug convictions. For the Department of Health and Human Services, the central point is: Division of Grants Management and Oversight, Office of Management and Acquisition, Department of Health and Human Services, Room 517-D, 200 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, DC 20201.

Certification Regarding Drug-Free Workplace Requirements (Instructions for Certification)

1. By signing and/or submitting this application or grant agreement, the grantee is providing the certification set out below.
2. The certification set out below is a material representation of fact upon which reliance is placed when the agency awards the grant. If it is later determined that the grantee knowingly rendered a false certification, or otherwise violates the requirements of the Drug-Free Workplace Act, the agency, in addition to any other remedies available to the Federal Government, may take action authorized under the Drug-Free Workplace Act.
3. For grantees other than individuals, Alternate I applies.
4. For grantees who are individuals, Alternate II applies.
5. Workplaces under grants, for grantees other than individuals, need not be identified on the certification. If known, they may be identified in the grant application. If the grantee does not identify the workplaces at the time of application, or upon award, if there is no application, the grantee must keep the identity of the workplace(s) on file in its office and make the information available for Federal inspection. Failure to identify all known workplaces constitutes a violation of the grantee's drug-free workplace requirements.
6. Workplace identifications must include the actual address of buildings (or parts of buildings) or other sites where work under the grant takes place. Categorical descriptions may be used (e.g., all vehicles of a mass transit authority or State highway department while in operation, State employees in each local unemployment office, performers in concert halls or radio studios).
7. If the workplace identified to the agency changes during the performance of the grant, the grantee shall inform the agency of the change(s), if it previously identified the workplaces in question (see paragraph five).
8. Definitions of terms in the Nonprocurement Suspension and Debarment common rule and Drug-Free Workplace common rule apply to this certification. Grantees' attention is called, in particular, to the following definitions from these rules:

Controlled substance means a controlled substance in Schedules I through V of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 812) and as further defined by regulation (21 CFR 1308.11 through 1308.15);

Conviction means a finding of guilt (including a plea of nolo contendere) or imposition of sentence, or both, by any judicial body charged with the responsibility to determine violations of the Federal or State criminal drug statutes;

Criminal drug statute means a Federal or non-Federal criminal statute involving the manufacture, distribution, dispensing, use, or possession of any controlled substance;

Employee means the employee of a grantee directly engaged in the performance of work under a grant, including: (i) All direct charge employees; (ii) All indirect charge employees unless their impact or involvement is insignificant to the performance of the grant; and, (iii) Temporary personnel and consultants who are directly engaged in the performance of work under the grant and who are on the grantee's payroll. This definition does not include workers not on the payroll of the grantee (e.g., volunteers, even if used to meet a matching requirement; consultants or independent contractors not on the grantee's payroll; or employees of subrecipients or subcontractors in covered workplaces).

Certification Regarding Drug-Free Workplace Requirements

Alternate I. (Grantees Other Than Individuals)

The grantee certifies that it will or will continue to provide a drug-free workplace by:

- (a) Publishing a statement notifying employees that the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, or use of a controlled substance is prohibited in the grantee's workplace and specifying the actions that will be taken against employees for violation of such prohibition;
- (b) Establishing an ongoing drug-free awareness program to inform employees about --
 - (1) The dangers of drug abuse in the workplace;
 - (2) The grantee's policy of maintaining a drug-free workplace;
 - (3) Any available drug counseling, rehabilitation, and employee assistance programs; and
 - (4) The penalties that may be imposed upon employees for drug abuse violations occurring in the workplace;
- (c) Making it a requirement that each employee to be engaged in the performance of the grant be given a copy of the statement required by paragraph (a);
- (d) Notifying the employee in the statement required by paragraph (a) that, as a condition of employment under the grant, the employee will --
 - (1) Abide by the terms of the statement; and
 - (2) Notify the employer in writing of his or her conviction for a violation of a criminal drug statute occurring in the workplace no later than five calendar days after such conviction;
- (e) Notifying the agency in writing, within ten calendar days after receiving notice under paragraph (d)(2) from an employee or otherwise receiving actual notice of such conviction. Employers of convicted employees must provide notice, including position title, to every grant officer or other designee on whose grant activity the convicted employee was working, unless the Federal agency has designated a central point for the receipt of such notices. Notice shall include the identification

<p>number(s) of each affected grant; (f) Taking one of the following actions, within 30 calendar days of receiving notice under paragraph (d)(2), with respect to any employee who is so convicted - (1) Taking appropriate personnel action against such an employee, up to and including termination, consistent with the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; or (2) Requiring such employee to participate satisfactorily in a drug abuse assistance or rehabilitation program approved for such purposes by a Federal, State, or local health, law enforcement, or other appropriate agency; (g) Making a good faith effort to continue to maintain a drug-free workplace through implementation of paragraphs (a), (b), (c), (d), (e) and (f). (B) The grantee may insert in the space provided below the site(s) for the performance of work done in connection with the specific grant:</p>		
Place of Performance (Street address, city, county, state, zip code)		
200 South Lamar Street * Address Line 1		
Address Line 2		
Address Line 3		
Jackson * City	MS * State	39201 * Zip Code
<p>Check if there are workplaces on file that are not identified here.</p> <p>Alternate II. (Grantees Who Are Individuals)</p> <p>(a) The grantee certifies that, as a condition of the grant, he or she will not engage in the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, or use of a controlled substance in conducting any activity with the grant;</p> <p>(b) If convicted of a criminal drug offense resulting from a violation occurring during the conduct of any grant activity, he or she will report the conviction, in writing, within 10 calendar days of the conviction, to every grant officer or other designee, unless the Federal agency designates a central point for the receipt of such notices. When notice is made to such a central point, it shall include the identification number(s) of each affected grant.</p> <p>[55 FR 21690, 21702, May 25, 1990]</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> By checking this box, the prospective primary participant is providing the certification set out above.</p>		

Section 20: Certification Regarding Lobbying

Section 20: Certification Regarding Lobbying
<p>The submitter of this application certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:</p> <p>(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.</p> <p>(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions</p> <p>(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.</p> <p>Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance</p> <p>The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:</p> <p>If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> By checking this box, the prospective primary participant is providing the certification set out above.</p>

Assurances**Assurances****(1) use the funds available under this title to--**

(A) conduct outreach activities and provide assistance to low income households in meeting their home energy costs, particularly those with the lowest incomes that pay a high proportion of household income for home energy, consistent with paragraph (5);

(B) intervene in energy crisis situations;

(C) provide low-cost residential weatherization and other cost-effective energy-related home repair; and

(D) plan, develop, and administer the State's program under this title including leveraging programs, and the State agrees not to use such funds for any purposes other than those specified in this title;

(2) make payments under this title only with respect to--

(A) households in which one or more individuals are receiving--

(i) assistance under the State program funded under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act;

(ii) supplemental security income payments under title XVI of the Social Security Act;

(iii) food stamps under the Food Stamp Act of 1977; or

(iv) payments under section 415, 521, 541, or 542 of title 38, United States Code, or under section 306 of the Veterans' and Survivors' Pension Improvement Act of 1978; or

(B) households with incomes which do not exceed the greater of -

(i) an amount equal to 150 percent of the poverty level for such State; or

(ii) an amount equal to 60 percent of the State median income;

(except that a State may not exclude a household from eligibility in a fiscal year solely on the basis of household income if such income is less than 110 percent of the poverty level for such State, but the State may give priority to those households with the highest home energy costs or needs in relation to household income.

(3) conduct outreach activities designed to assure that eligible households, especially households with elderly individuals or disabled individuals, or both, and households with high home energy burdens, are made aware of the assistance available under this title, and any similar energy-related assistance available under subtitle B of title VI (relating to community services block grant program) or under any other provision of law which carries out programs which were administered under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 before the date of the enactment of this Act;

(4) coordinate its activities under this title with similar and related programs administered by the Federal Government and such State, particularly low-income

energy-related programs under subtitle B of title VI (relating to community services block grant program), under the supplemental security income program, under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act, under title XX of the Social Security Act, under the low-income weatherization assistance program under title IV of the Energy Conservation and Production Act, or under any other provision of law which carries out programs which were administered under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 before the date of the enactment of this Act;

(5) provide, in a timely manner, that the highest level of assistance will be furnished to those households which have the lowest incomes and the highest energy costs or needs in relation to income, taking into account family size, except that the State may not differentiate in implementing this section between the households described in clauses 2(A) and 2(B) of this subsection;

(6) to the extent it is necessary to designate local administrative agencies in order to carry out the purposes of this title, to give special consideration, in the designation of such agencies, to any local public or private nonprofit agency which was receiving Federal funds under any low-income energy assistance program or weatherization program under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 or any other provision of law on the day before the date of the enactment of this Act, except that -

(A) the State shall, before giving such special consideration, determine that the agency involved meets program and fiscal requirements established by the State; and

(B) if there is no such agency because of any change in the assistance furnished to programs for economically disadvantaged persons, then the State shall give special consideration in the designation of local administrative agencies to any successor agency which is operated in substantially the same manner as the predecessor agency which did receive funds for the fiscal year preceding the fiscal year for which the determination is made;

(7) if the State chooses to pay home energy suppliers directly, establish procedures to --

(A) notify each participating household of the amount of assistance paid on its behalf;

(B) assure that the home energy supplier will charge the eligible household, in the normal billing process, the difference between the actual cost of the home energy and the amount of the payment made by the State under this title;

(C) assure that the home energy supplier will provide assurances that any agreement entered into with a home energy supplier under this paragraph will contain provisions to assure that no household receiving assistance under this title will be treated adversely because of such assistance under applicable provisions of State law or public regulatory requirements; and

(D) ensure that the provision of vendor payments remains at the option of the State in consultation with local grantees and may be contingent on unregulated vendors taking appropriate measures to alleviate the energy burdens of eligible households, including providing for agreements between suppliers and individuals eligible for benefits under this Act that seek to reduce home energy costs, minimize the risks of home energy crisis, and encourage regular payments by individuals receiving financial assistance for home energy costs;

(8) provide assurances that,

(A) the State will not exclude households described in clause (2)(B) of this subsection from receiving home energy assistance benefits under clause (2), and

(B) the State will treat owners and renters equitably under the program assisted under this title;

(9) provide that--

(A) the State may use for planning and administering the use of funds under this title an amount not to exceed 10 percent of the funds payable to such State under this title for a fiscal year; and

(B) the State will pay from non-Federal sources the remaining costs of planning and administering the program assisted under this title and will not use Federal funds for such remaining cost (except for the costs of the activities described in paragraph (16));

(10) provide that such fiscal control and fund accounting procedures will be established as may be necessary to assure the proper disbursement of and accounting for Federal funds paid to the State under this title, including procedures for monitoring the assistance provided under this title, and provide that the State will comply with the provisions of chapter 75 of title 31, United States Code (commonly known as the "Single Audit Act");

(11) permit and cooperate with Federal investigations undertaken in accordance with section 2608;

(12) provide for timely and meaningful public participation in the development of the plan described in subsection (c);

(13) provide an opportunity for a fair administrative hearing to individuals whose claims for assistance under the plan described in subsection (c) are denied or are not acted upon with reasonable promptness; and

(14) cooperate with the Secretary with respect to data collecting and reporting under section 2610.

(15) * beginning in fiscal year 1992, provide, in addition to such services as may be offered by State Departments of Public Welfare at the local level, outreach and intake functions for crisis situations and heating and cooling assistance that is administered by additional State and local governmental entities or community-based organizations (such as community action agencies, area agencies on aging and not-for-profit neighborhood-based organizations), and in States where such organizations do not administer functions as of September 30, 1991, preference in awarding grants or contracts for intake services shall be provided to those agencies that administer the low-income weatherization or energy crisis intervention programs.

* This assurance is applicable only to States, and to territories whose annual regular LIHEAP allotments exceed \$200,000. Neither territories with annual allotments of \$200,000 or less nor Indian tribes/tribal organizations are subject to Assurance 15.

(16) use up to 5 percent of such funds, at its option, to provide services that encourage and enable households to reduce their home energy needs and

thereby the need for energy assistance, including needs assessments, counseling, and assistance with energy vendors, and report to the Secretary concerning the impact of such activities on the number of households served, the level of direct benefits provided to those households, and the number of households that remain unserved.

Plan Attachments

PLAN ATTACHMENTS
The following documents must be attached to this application
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Delegation Letter is required if someone other than the Governor or Chairman Certified this Report.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Heating component benefit matrix, if applicable
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cooling component benefit matrix, if applicable
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minutes, notes, or transcripts of public hearing(s).