



# **Community Services Block Grant Program (CSBG) POLICY MANUAL**

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

DIVISION OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

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## Table of Contents

Part 28 Chapter 1: Introduction.....	4
Rule 1.1 Legal Authority. ....	4
Rule 1.2 Program Purpose. ....	4
Rule 1.3 Manual Purpose.....	5
Rule 1.4 Non-Discrimination Statement. ....	5
Rule 1.5 Hatch Act. ....	6
Rule 1.6 Organizational Structure of CSBG. ....	6
Rule 1.7 Partner Roles in Administration of Program. ....	7
Part 28 Chapter 2: Definitions .....	10
Rule 2.1 Definitions. ....	10
Part 28 Chapter 3: Priority Populations .....	12
Rule 3.1 Priority Populations.....	12
Part 28 Chapter 4: Client Application Process .....	13
Rule 4.1 Client Application Process. ....	13
Rule 4.2 Before Initiating Application. ....	13
Rule 4.3 Initiating Application. ....	14
Rule 4.4 After Submitting Application. ....	15
Rule 4.5 Notices from Subgrantee to Applicant .....	16
Rule 4.6 Non-Availability of Funds/ Waitlist .....	16
Part 28 Chapter 5: Client Eligibility Requirements. ....	17
Rule 5.1 Eligibility Requirements. ....	17
Rule 5.2 Residency. ....	17
Rule 5.3 Immigration Status. ....	17
Rule 5.4 Renters. ....	18
Rule 5.5 Roomer/Boarders .....	18
Rule 5.6 College Students .....	19
Rule 5.7 Hardships .....	20
Rule 5.8 Employee Familial and /or Personal Interest Applicants. ....	20
Rule 5.9 CSBG Eligibility Criteria.....	21
Rule 5.10 Eligibility Documentation. ....	22
Rule 5.11 Authorization of Release of Information. ....	24
Rule 5.12 Affidavits. ....	24

Rule 5.13 Income Eligibility and Calculations. ....	24
Rule 5.14 Threatening Behavior. ....	29
Part 28 Chapter 6: Program Process and Procedures .....	31
Rule 6.1 Appointments. ....	31
Rule 6.2 Walk-ins. ....	31
Rule 6.3 Transfers.....	31
Rule 6.4 Virtual ROMA. ....	32
Rule 6.5 Household Benefit. ....	33
Rule 6.6 Fees and Deposits. ....	33
Rule 6.7 Client Confidentiality. ....	34
Rule 6.8 Case Management. ....	35
Rule 6.9 Priority Population Procedures. ....	37
Rule 6.10 Crisis and Emergency Services. ....	37
Part 28 Chapter 7: Vendor Requirements .....	41
Rule 7.1 Vendor Agreements. ....	41
Rule 7.2 Vendor Refunds. ....	41
Rule 7.3 Vendor Payments. ....	42
Part 28 Chapter 8: Program Compliance .....	43
Rule 8.1 Reporting and Accountability. ....	43
Rule 8.2 Client Complaints/Concerns. ....	44
Rule 8.3 CSBG Performance Management .....	45
Rule 8.4 State Performance Management. ....	46
Rule 8.5 Case Files. ....	46
Rule 8.6 Waste, Fraud, and Abuse. ....	47
Rule 8.7 Whistleblower Protection. ....	49
Rule 8.8 Criminal/Illegal Activities.....	49
Rule 8.9 Monitoring and Audit.....	50
Rule 8.10 Fair Hearing Process .....	51
APPENDIX .....	55
Board Policy .....	55
Subgrantee List .....	62
Authorization of Release of Information Form .....	65

Request for Additional Information .....	66
Notification of Services Form .....	67
Pending Notification of Services .....	68
Landlord Verification Form .....	69
Paper Intake Application .....	70
Affidavit .....	73
Federal Poverty Guidelines .....	74

## Part 28 Chapter 1: Introduction

The Community Services Block Grant Program (CSBG) is administered by the Division of Community Services (DCS) at the Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS). CSBG is designed to provide appropriate and timely assistance/referrals to eligible households to promote self-sufficiency. Information contained in this manual is in compliance with the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981, DCS regulations, and the CSBG state plan.

**Rule 1.1 Legal Authority.** CSBG is authorized by the Community Services Block Grant Act (under Title XXVI of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981, as amended.)

- A. Statute- Sections of the CSBG Act are listed below as amended. The CSBG Act is codified the United States Code at: 49 U.S.C. 9901.
- B. Regulations- The HHS regulations for the CSBG Act are found in Title 45 (Public Welfare) of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 96 (Block Grants).

*Source: 45 CFR 98; Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-2(4); Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-4 Revised: May 2022*

**Rule 1.2 Program Purpose.** The purpose of CSBG is “To provide assistance to States and local communities, working through a network of community action agencies and other neighborhood-based organizations, for the reduction of poverty, the revitalization of low-income communities, and the empowerment of low-income families and individuals in rural and urban areas to become fully self-sufficient.” The CSBG Act mandates certain aspects of how state CSBG offices will operate in carrying out their defined roles as administrators of CSBG but leaves significant authority and flexibility in the hands of the states. This responsibility, which is fulfilled by each state individually, can more easily be met when the state establishes clear policies and procedures for implementation of the Act.

- A. CSBG is offered in each of the 82 counties in Mississippi, pending the availability of funds. Income eligibility is set at or below 125% of the federal poverty guidelines. Client income eligibility will be updated annually as the federal poverty guidelines are revised and released.
- B. Subgrantees are required to refer households to internal agency programs and other local/state programs to meet the needs of the household.
- C. Program Operation Dates:  
January – December
- D. The State allocates ninety (90) percent of the total state allocation for program cost. Five (5) percent is allocated for discretionary funding which includes training and

technical assistance. The remaining five (5) percent is used for state administrative cost. Administrative cost refers to the cost of central executive functions that do not directly support a specific project or service. They are incurred for common objectives that benefit multiple programs administered by the organization and are not readily assignable to a particular funding stream.

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

**Rule 1.3 Manual Purpose.** The purpose of this manual is to provide program policy to clients, subgrantees and the public, in order to implement a range of services and activities having a measurable and potentially major impact on the causes of poverty in the State of Mississippi. This manual provides clear policies for implementing CSBG. Subgrantees must comply with the rules and guidelines set forth in this manual, and all applicable Federal and State laws, policies and procedures.

MDHS reserves the right to alter any policy during emergencies such as: natural disasters, pandemics, or other circumstances deemed appropriate by the DCS Director or the MDHS Executive Director.

Any questions regarding this policy should be submitted in writing to:

Mississippi Department of Human Services  
Director, Division of Community Services  
200 South Lamar Street  
Jackson, Mississippi 39201

Source: *45 CFR 98.10; Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-2(4); Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-4* Revised: May 2022

**Rule 1.4 Non-Discrimination Statement.** As a recipient of Federal financial assistance, MDHS and its subgrantees do not exclude, deny benefits to, or otherwise discriminate against any person on the basis of: race, color, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, religion, political beliefs, or age; in admission to participation in, or receipt of the services and benefits under any of its programs and activities, whether carried out by MDHS and/or its subgrantees directly or through a contractor or any other entity with which MDHS and/or its subgrantees arranges to carry out its programs and activities. This statement is in accordance with the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and Regulations of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services issued pursuant to these statutes at Title 45 Code of Federal Regulations Parts 80, 84, and 91.

Source: *45 CFR 98.10; Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-2(4); Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-4* Revised: May 2022

**Rule 1.5 Hatch Act.** The Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981 specifically makes grantees subject to certain provisions of the Federal Hatch Act. CSBG funds may not be used in a manner involving the use of program funds, the provision of services, or the employment or assignment of personnel, in a manner supporting or resulting in the identification of such programs with:

1. Any partisan or nonpartisan political activity or any political activity associated with a candidate, or contending faction or group, in an election for public or party office;
2. Any activity to provide voters or prospective voters with transportation to the polls or similar assistance in connection with any such election; or
3. Any voter registration activity.

*Source: 45 CFR 98.10; Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-2(4); Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-4 Revised: May 2022*

**Rule 1.6 Organizational Structure of CSBG.** The following summarizes the Organizational Structure for CSBG:

A. MDHS as Lead Agency:

MDHS is the designated State agency to receive funds and administer the program covered in this manual. MDHS assists the Division of Community Services (DCS) by providing support services in a timely manner that is consistent with program goals, objectives and guidelines. MDHS awards CSBG subgrants based on the receipt of the Federal Notice of Award for CSBG, and the timely receipt and approval of subgrants for funding. MDHS is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the program performance of subgrants.

B. Division of Community Services (DCS):

The Division of Community Services provides the necessary interface between the subgrantee and other divisions of MDHS. Responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- 1) Administering the program in accordance with all applicable federal and state rules, regulations and guidelines;
- 2) Informing the public of program rules, regulations, and guidelines through public hearings, announcements and publications;
- 3) Establishing criteria and processing applications for funding from subgrantees to implement programs;
- 4) Monitoring subgrantees' spending levels and processing claims requests to ensure compliance with Federal, State, and MDHS guidelines;

- 5) Reviewing subgrantees' applications for funding to ensure compliance with federal, state and MDHS guidelines;
- 6) Providing training and technical assistance to subgrantees;
- 7) Keeping subgrantees informed of changes in Federal, State and MDHS regulations and guidelines;
- 8) Providing responses to clients regarding inquiries concerning programs;
- 9) Preparing annual State Plan applications to receive the federal funds;
- 10) Collecting and disseminating information to appropriate funding sources and others as deemed necessary; and
- 11) Serving as a liaison between county, state, and federal agencies in regard to program implementation.

*Source: 45 CFR 98.10; Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-2(4); Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-4 Revised: May 2022*

**Rule 1.7 Partner Roles in Administration of Program.** CSBG must perform numerous federally mandated functions in order to remain compliant. MDHS enlists several partners through formal agreements to perform some of those functions. The following summarizes those roles:

**A. Subgrantees/ Community Action Agencies (CAA):**

The community action agencies are the subgrantees in the program. Each subgrantee is responsible for performing program activities in accordance with the terms and provisions of the grant. The responsibilities of the subgrantee include, but are not limited to:

- 1) Operate the program in accordance with the terms and provisions of the grant and all applicable federal and state rules, regulations and guidelines;
- 2) Process applications, determine eligibility and provide appropriate/timely service(s) with measurable outcomes;
- 3) Make referrals to and accept referrals from, and coordinate program information with other social service agencies;
- 4) Maintain all financial and program records;
- 5) Submit required reports to DCS in a timely manner;
- 6) Maintain administrative and internal controls;
- 7) Monitor its financial and programmatic activities;



- 8) Implement a fair hearing process for clients;
- 9) Cooperate with Federal/State investigating teams;
- 10) Establish emergency and disaster procedures;
- 11) Train and certify staff;
- 12) Use the Virtual ROMA system;
- 13) Have at least one intake site in each county of its service area with posted hours of operation;
- 14) Adhere to the terms of the “MDHS Subgrant/Agreement Manual.”  
([www.mdhs.ms.gov/subgrantee-manual/](http://www.mdhs.ms.gov/subgrantee-manual/))
- 15) Establish partnerships with local entities and organizations to assist in the provision of services to meet the needs of the clients they serve. These partnerships should cover monetary or non-monetary services. Intra-office referrals should be made as most subgrantees have additional programs not funded by DCS (e.g., Head Start, Congregate Meals, Rural Housing Services and Transportation Program).
- 16) Make referrals to the WX agency that covers its service area on behalf of clients seeking WX services or have high energy bills.
- 17) Certify that all entities that they are in partnership with are not on the list for debarment. This information can be found in the Excluded Parties List System (EPLS), now known as System for Award Management (SAM). Proof of documentation of partnership verification with SAM shall be kept on file and the debarment status shall be checked prior to submission of every subgrant and modification to DCS. The subgrantee must also understand that if an entity they are in partnership with is on SAM, the agreement should be terminated immediately.
- 18) Conduct local public hearings regarding the CSBG program. Information such as CSBG funding for the county, services provided, income guidelines, etc.  
must be presented in efforts to reach low-income communities.
- 19) Conducting outreach activities to reach eligible persons or households in need of services. Subgrantees may utilize the media (newspaper, TV, radio, flyers, internet, community meetings, etc.) to inform individuals of services available and eligibility requirements. Outreach materials should include the

local and toll-free telephone numbers for subgrantee offices. Subgrantees should rely on their existing network of volunteers, community leaders, and faith-based groups to provide outreach to eligible persons in the greatest need of assistance.

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

## **Part 28 Chapter 2: Definitions**

**Rule 2.1 Definitions.** The Definitions below will assist both clients and subgrantees on the various terms used for LIHEAP:

- A. 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.
- B. Administration Cost - Cost to support administrative operations, planning and development to include but not limited to: Fiscal operations (payroll, procurement, software, etc.), program and fiscal reporting, audit, personnel, registration and dues, training for executive and administrative staff, cost of executive and administrative staff (salaries, fringes, travel, supplies, equipment), consultants, staff meeting cost, etc.
- C. Countable Income - Income that must be included when determining eligibility for CSBG.
- D. Emergency - A natural disaster; a significant home energy supply shortage or disruption; a significant increase in the cost of home energy, as determined by the Secretary; a significant increase in home energy disconnections reported by a utility, a State regulatory agency, or another agency with necessary data; a significant increase in participation in a public benefit program such as the supplemental nutrition assistance program carried out under the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2011 et seq.), the national program to provide supplemental security income carried out under title XVI of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1381 et seq.), or the State temporary assistance for needy families program carried out under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.), as determined by the head of the appropriate Federal agency; a significant increase in unemployment, layoffs, or the number of households with an individual applying for unemployment benefits, as determined by the Secretary of Labor; or an event meeting such criteria as the Secretary, in the discretion of the Secretary, may determine to be appropriate.
- E. Exempt income - Income that should not be included when determining eligibility for CSBG.
- F. Expenditures - Funds spent by subgrantees; Funds paid for services or contracts; and Funds paid at the State level to contracts and salaries.
- G. Fraud - A type of illegal act involving the obtaining of something of value through willful misrepresentation. 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.
- H. Unobligated funds- Funds that are not considered obligated or expended include: State administrative dollars that do not fall within the definition stated above;

Vendor refunds are considered unobligated; and Funds transferred from one subgrantee to another are considered unobligated until funds are awarded in another subgrant.

I. Household - Any individual or group of individuals who are living together as one economic unit for whom residential energy is customarily purchased.

J. Income - Income is money received on a regular and recurring basis by any household member. Income may be earned or unearned.

K. Line Items - Line Items for CSBG as specified in the MDHS Subgrantee Manual are: Salaries, Fringes, Travel, Equipment, Contractual Services, Supplies, & Subsidies, Loans & Grants.

L. Natural disaster - A weather event (relating to cold or hot weather), flood, earthquake, tornado, hurricane, or ice storm, or an event meeting such other criteria as the Secretary may determine to be appropriate.

M. Obligations - Amounts which may be legally required to pay out of its resources, including encumbrances, as well as accounts payable and accrued liabilities. Obligations may include: any funds issued in the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA); any funds encumbered in a contract; and any funds committed to State Office FTEs. This does not include vacant positions.

N. Poverty level - With respect to a household in any State, the income poverty line as prescribed and revised at least annually pursuant to section 9902(2) of this title, as applicable to such State.

O. Secretary - The Secretary of Health and Human Services.

P. State - Each of the several States and the District of Columbia.

Q. State median income - The State median income promulgated by the Secretary in accordance with procedures established under section 1397a(a)(6) of this title (as such procedures were in effect on August 12, 1981) and adjusted, in accordance with regulations prescribed by the Secretary, to take into account the number of individuals in the household.

R. 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.

*Source: 45 CFR 98; Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-2(4); Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-4 Revised: May 2022*

## **Part 28 Chapter 3: Priority Populations**

**Rule 3.1 Priority Populations.** Priority Population is a designated population treated differently than the general population for eligibility and access purposes, in order to address a particular need of that population. Priority Populations include:

- A. Elderly- Individuals age 60 and over
- B. Disabled- Individuals who have been determined disabled by authority- SS/SSI
- C. Children five (5) years of age and under

*Source: 45 CFR 98.46; Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-2(4); Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-4 Revised: March 2024*

## Part 28 Chapter 4: Client Application Process

The State has one application for four programs- CSBG, LIHEAP, LIHWAP, and Weatherization. Therefore, an applicant may apply for all programs during the intake process. If the weatherization agency is different from the CSBG agency, the CSBG 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, and families with children. Local agencies refer applicants to other local programs such as SNAP and TANF, if the applicant is not currently receiving these services.

**Rule 4.1 Client Application Process.** The Subgrantees/ Community Action Agencies (CAAs) accept applications throughout the year. When funding is available, eligible families shall be served on a first-come, first-serve basis by the date of application. When funding is not available, eligible families shall be added to the waitlist.

- A. As a general rule, only the applicant, spouse of the applicant, or authorized representative of a disabled or elderly applicant are the adults who can be present during the application. The Subgrantee reserves the right to require other adults to remain in waiting room, especially if they are causing disruption during the application process.
- B. If the applicant cannot read, the caseworker must read all forms/declarations to the applicant to ensure the applicant understands what is being signed.
- C. The signature of the applicant must be on all applicable documents. A spouse may sign if the head of household is absent. Caseworker should document the reason the head of household cannot come in for appointment. If the applicant cannot write, they may sign by making an “X” on the signature line. The name must be printed or typed under the “X” by the caseworker, and a witness should sign under the “X”.

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

### **Rule 4.2 Before Initiating Application.**

- A. Applications are initiated through the Common Web Portal (CWP) for all first-time applicants. If an applicant was a previous household member in another case, but is now head of household, a new pre-application must be done. Pre-applications are web-based and may be submitted on behalf of Mississippi residents only. Applicants may apply for services through the CWP at: **www.access.ms.gov**
- B. Pre-applications are required for applicants requesting service for the first time or if the applicant is no longer in the household of another client.

- C. Applicants submitting pre-applications must receive notification of an appointment for services within fifteen (15) business days of submission of the application.
- 1) If the applicant is elderly, disabled, or a family with a child five (5) and under, the appointment date must be within thirty (30) calendar days. Non-elderly or non-disabled clients must be given an appointment date within forty-five (45) business days.
  - 2) For emergency situations, if the applicant's application status is life-threatening (LTE), the appointment date must be within 18 hours. If the applicant's application status is non-life threatening (NON-LTE), the appointment date must be within 48 hours. Verification of emergency must be provided, or the application will be treated as a "Normal" application. (see section 6.10 regarding explanations of LTE and NON-LTE cases)
- D. If an applicant does not have access to a computer to submit a pre-application, the subgrantee must complete the pre-application by phone or at the intake appointment. The subgrantee must provide the applicant with an intake appointment based on application status (LTE, NON-LTE, Normal).

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-2(4); Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-4* Revised: March 2024

**Rule 4.3 Initiating Application.**

- A. Subgrantees must receive the pre-application from Virtual ROMA and schedule the applicant an appointment. (Please view the Virtual ROMA policy manual on scheduling appointments)
- B. If an applicant does not complete a pre-application (regardless of reason), the subgrantee must complete the pre-application during the application process. A manual appointment must be made for the applicant by the subgrantee and the appointment should be documented in Virtual ROMA after the pre-application has been completed.
- C. Under no circumstance should an applicant be denied services because they have not completed a pre-application. The subgrantee must assist the applicant with completing a pre-application.
- D. Paper Applications are prohibited, unless in case of a computer system failure or natural/manmade disasters. The subgrantee's Executive Director or appointee must submit a request in writing to the Director of the Division of Community Services for approval to take paper applications. Once the emergency situation is over, the paper applications must be entered into Virtual ROMA within two (2) business days, unless additional time is requested and approved. The subgrantee's Executive Director must submit a letter to confirm all paper applications have been

entered. Otherwise, any paper applications taken may result in questioned or disallowed cost.

E. The caseworker must complete the application in the Virtual ROMA system. If the applicant submits the requested information, the caseworker must give the applicant a Pending Notification of Services form (PNOS) which states the status of the application and amount of benefits the applicant may receive upon supervisory approval. This form must be generated through Virtual ROMA and signed and dated by both the applicant and caseworker. Subgrantees must provide the PNOS notice (written or email) to applicants regarding the status of their application within seventy-two (72) hours of the appointment date. In emergency cases, notification must occur within 18 hours (life threatening) or 48 hours (non-life threatening) of the appointment date.

F. If the applicant does not have all the required documentation, the caseworker must complete as many screens as possible up to the allocation screen in Virtual ROMA. The caseworker will not allocate after this point. A Request for Additional Information (RAFI) form must be generated through Virtual ROMA and signed and dated by both the applicant and the case worker. A copy must be given to the applicant, and a follow-up appointment must be given to complete the application process if necessary. Applicants may submit their information electronically; therefore, the subgrantee must provide an email address to the applicant. If the applicant does not return the information timely, the application must be denied, and the denial notice and NOS form sent by mail or email by the case worker and uploaded to Virtual ROMA. Caseworker must explain the documentation needed and the 10-calendar day timeframe to return the information.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-2(4); Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-4* Revised: March 2024

#### **Rule 4.4 After Submitting Application.**

- A. Once application is initiated, the client's application status must change to 'Waiting on Approval' within ten (10) business days. Then the application must be acted upon and changed to 'Approved' or 'Denied' within two (2) business days.
- B. If the supervisor sends a case back to the caseworker for Return for Correction (RFC), the caseworker will have two (2) business days to correct case and put back in "Waiting on Approval" status.
- C. Subgrantee's cancellation of applications approved in error, must occur within twenty-four (24) hours after application has been approved. The subgrantee must contact the vendor to notify them of non-approval status to prevent an inaccurate payment.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-2(4); Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-4* Revised: March 2024

#### **Rule 4.5 Notices from Subgrantee to Applicant**



- A. Notification of an appointment for services must be generated through Virtual ROMA and either mailed, emailed, or given to applicant in the office within fifteen (15) business days of the submission of a pre-application. A copy of the notification of an appointment for services must be scanned into Virtual ROMA

1) The notification must include the following:

- i Name, address, phone number, and email address of Subgrantee office
- ii Date and time of appointment
- iii Eligibility information needed, as listed in Chapter 5.

- B. The Notification of Services form must be provided to the applicant either by letter or email within seventy-two (72) hours of the approval or denial of the application. This form must be scanned into Virtual ROMA and a copy placed in the applicant's file. In emergency cases, the form must be sent within 18 hours (life threatening) or 48 hours (non-life threatening).

- C. A copy of the fair hearing process must be given to all applicants at each appointment, regardless of the approval or denial status. The fair hearing process must be posted in the lobby so the process can be seen by the public.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-2(4); Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-4* Revised: March 2024

**Rule 4.6 Non-Availability of Funds/ Waitlist**

- A. If the Subgrantee has run out of CSBG funds, the application must still be taken and denied. When denying the case, the case worker must select "Funds expended" as the denial code. This will add the applicant's name to an internal report in Virtual ROMA and this report will be known as the agency's Waiting list. As soon as funding is available, the applicants on the waiting list must be given an appointment before any other appointments are given. If denied, the applicant should be referred to other local organizations that may be able to assist. All referrals must be documented in Virtual ROMA.
- B. An applicant should not be added to a waiting list if CSBG funds are available from the agency.
- C. Under no circumstance should an applicant not be allowed to apply because CSBG funds are not available.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-2(4); Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-4* Revised: March 2024

## **Part 28 Chapter 5: Client Eligibility Requirements.**

Households that meet the requirements of the program will be eligible for assistance.

### **Rule 5.1 Eligibility Requirements.**

An applicant must meet the following requirements to receive a CSBG benefit:

- A. Have an obligation to pay a bill directly to a vendor;
- B. Be a U.S. citizen or have legal permanent resident status;
- C. Have income at or below the 125% of the federal poverty guidelines; and
- D. Be eighteen (18) years of age or older or an emancipated minor (through court action) who is considered head of household.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-2(4); Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-4* Revised: March 2024

### **Rule 5.2 Residency.**

An applicant must be a resident of the State of Mississippi and reside in the CSBG service area at the time the costs were incurred. The applicant must apply for services in the county in which they live. Homeless households may apply for services if they are trying to establish a residence.

- A. An applicant must give a street address to include a house/route number and street name, city, state, and zip code.
- B. CSBG services cannot be provided to temporary residents defined as:
  - 1) Household traveling through the state;
  - 2) Household on vacation;
  - 3) Household visiting someone; or
  - 4) Residents of institutions, dormitories, fraternity or sorority houses, or boarding homes.
- C. A household with an address that straddles county lines may provide proof of Homestead Exemption, which verifies the county of residency. Other methods of verifying county residence for an applicant who is not eligible for Homestead Exemption, is Voter Registration I.D. or documentation of the county in which the applicant receives other social services benefits. The subgrantee can also verify by using the internet in determining what county the applicant lives.

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

### **Rule 5.3 Immigration Status.**

- A. If the head of household is undocumented and is a single member of the household, the application must be denied.
- B. If the head of household is undocumented and has documented member(s) in their household, the application shall not be denied for the entire household. The application must be determined eligible by using the household size of the documented household members and the income for all household members eighteen (18) years of age and older.
- C. If an individual within the household is undocumented and does not disclose citizenship or establish satisfactory immigration status, ineligibility exists only for the individual, but not the entire household. This individual is considered a “non-applicant” and should not be questioned about his/her citizenship/alien status. However, this individual must disclose and verify income and other information needed to establish the eligibility of the household. The income of this individual must be included in determining the household’s total income; however, this individual will not be counted in determining the household size.
- D. Eligibility cannot be determined when a “non-applicant” fails to disclose income; therefore, the application should be denied for the entire household.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-2(4)*; *Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-4* Revised: March 2024

### **Rule 5.4 Renters.**

The State of Mississippi treats homeowners and renters equitably under the CSBG program. Eligibility requirements are the same for a renter as with a homeowner.

- A. The renter must provide either a current copy of their lease agreement or the Landlord Verification Form from the landlord.
- B. CSBG funds should be used to pay the current month’s rent and past due rent to prevent the applicant from facing eviction or foreclosure, pending availability of funds. The applicant must provide an itemized statement from their apartment complex or mortgage company confirming the charges owed. This statement must be on their letterhead with the applicant’s name, address, account number (if applicable), and date. Copies must be scanned into Virtual ROMA and a copy placed in their hard copy file. Applicants requesting CSBG assistance for future months must comply with case management.
- C. If the renter’s lease agreement is expired, the Landlord Verification Form must be completed by the landlord.
- D. The subgrantee can work with the landlord with creating a payment arrangement for the renter if the renter is at risk of eviction.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-2(4); Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-4* Revised: March 2024

### **Rule 5.5 Roomers/Boarders**

A roomer/boarder is an individual who is not a related household member and is paying an unrelated landlord to reside in their residence.

- A. The roomer/boarder must obtain written verification from the landlord or the Landlord Verification Form to verify rent amount.
- B. If the landlord is an individual who rents the single home or property from a vendor, the payment must be sent to the vendor of whom the landlord pays their rent.
- C. If the landlord is an individual who owns the single home or property, the payment must be sent to the landlord listed in the lease agreement or Landlord Verification Form.
- D. If the applicant has a roommate listed on the lease and is responsible for a certain portion of the rent, written verification can be obtained from the roommate to confirm the amount of the applicant's rent.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-2(4); Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-4* Revised: March 2024

### **Rule 5.6 College Students**

- A. CSBG funds can be used to assist an applicant with tuition costs at a college/university. To be eligible the applicant must complete the following:
  - The applicant must be enrolled at least part-time (minimum of 6 hours) in a Mississippi college/university.
  - The applicant must be enrolled in an undergraduate/vocational program.
  - The applicant must agree to report their grades twice per semester (mid-terms and finals).
  - Maintain a "C average" overall grade point average.
  - Comply with case management goals given by the Subgrantee.
- B. Before CSBG assistance is provided, the agency must confirm that all applicable resources (Grants, Scholarships, etc.) have been denied, used, or exhausted before assistance is provided. Documentation of denied or exhausted resources must be uploaded into Virtual ROMA and a copy placed in their hard copy file.
- C. If an applicant is ineligible for any federal tuition assistance, the agency can approve the applicant up to \$2,500 maximum per semester year (Fall, Spring, Summer) for tuition, books, and miscellaneous fees.

- D. The subgrantee should reach out to the college/university to make payment arrangements for tuition assistance. To prevent misuse of funds, the subgrantee will pay ½ of the applicant's tuition at the beginning of the first nine (9) weeks and the other ½ at the beginning of the second nine (9) weeks if all qualifications are met. For example, up to \$1,250 may be paid at the beginning of the Fall semester. After determining all qualifications are being met by the applicant, the second payment up to \$1,250 may be paid at the beginning of the next nine (9) week period.
- E. If college/university is unable to make payment arrangements, the subgrantee can still pay up to \$2,500 maximum at the beginning of the semester, but the applicant must still comply with their case plan and minimum requirements to receive further assistance.
- F. The subgrantee should make applicants aware that if they do not comply with case management or fail to meet the requirements for assistance, further assistance cannot be provided, and they will be financially responsible for the balance owed.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-2(4); Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-4* Revised: March 2024

### **Rule 5.7 Hardships**

If an applicant states that they are facing a **temporary** hardship (i.e. maternity leave, worker's comp, medical leave due to an ongoing illness, etc.), the applicant may receive assistance if qualified; however, there will be stipulations.

- The subgrantee must obtain a statement on official letterhead that confirms the timeframe of how long the hardship will last and the subgrantee must contact the company to confirm accuracy for further clarification.
- The subgrantee will pay the amount of the bill, including any late or miscellaneous fees, for that month and schedule the applicant an appointment for the next month if further assistance is needed.
- Appointments must be completed in-person, and it is the agency's responsibility to make sure all required documents are signed and dated. If an illness prevents the applicant from coming to the office, a representative can come in on the applicant's behalf if the applicant has signed an Authorized Representative Form.
- Case management will still be required for these applicants and if case management is declined, further CSBG assistance **cannot** be provided during the time of their hardship.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-2(4); Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-4* Revised: March 2024

### **Rule 5.8 Employee Familial and/or Personal Interest Applicants**

Any employee, relative, or personal interest cases of employees or board members may apply for and receive assistance; however, there are policies and procedures for taking and processing these applications. No preferential treatment shall be granted to these applicants.

- A. An employee of a Subgrantee cannot complete the intake or be involved in the approval process of a relative. In this occurrence, the caseworker should immediately recuse oneself from any involvement with the case.
- B. The Program Director/Supervisor is responsible for delegating the processing of applications for employees, relatives of employees, or personal interest cases and for submitting the case to the Executive Director for review and authorization of the approval or denial. The Executive Director is responsible for delegating the processing of Program Directors/Supervisors, Board Members, and/or their relatives requesting assistance. The Executive Director is responsible for approving the application of the Program Directors/Supervisors, Board Members, and their relatives.
- C. The relatives for whom the special procedures must be used include: employee's spouse, ex-spouse, parent(s), stepparent(s), grandparent(s), great and great-great grandparent(s), brother(s) and sister(s), stepbrother(s) and stepsister(s), half-brother(s) and half-sister(s), children, stepchildren, grandchildren, great and great-great grandchildren, aunt(s), uncles(s), nieces(s), nephew(s), first and second cousin(s), or these relatives of an employee's spouse who are related to this degree of marriage.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-2(4)*; *Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-4* Revised: March 2024

#### **Rule 5.9 CSBG Eligibility Criteria**

In addition to the poverty income eligibility, citizens whose income is within 125 percent of the poverty threshold are determined to be "low-income" and are also eligible for CSBG services. Additional criteria include:

- 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 the date the subgrantee was contacted) due to layoff or termination of benefits;
- C. Head of Household and/or household member seeking employment, living wage or higher and seeking career advancement;
- D. Head of Household and/or household member seeking educational assistance;
- E. Facing homelessness, eviction or home foreclosure. (Rental or mortgage statement must be in head of household or spouse);
- F. Services are disconnected or threatened to be turned off;
- G. Theft;

- H. Displacement of a minor child (under the age of 18) due to the client's inability to pay utilities, rent, etc.; and/or
- I. Other documented emergencies within the last thirty (30) days, as deemed acceptable by the subgrantee.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-2(4); Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-4* Revised: March 2024

**Rule 5.10 Eligibility Documentation.**

Applicants must verify eligibility through the submission of documents. When possible, MDHS and/or the subgrantee will access other documentary evidence in available databases. However, proof of eligibility requirements is the applicant's responsibility. A document may serve to prove more than one requirement and should not be submitted more than once. The following is a list of acceptable proof for each requirement:

- A. Social Security Cards are required for all household members.
  - 1) If the applicant is applying for assistance for the first time and cannot provide their Social Security Card, the Social Security Number can be taken. To receive further assistance, the applicant must provide their Social Security Card or supporting documentation. The subgrantee should work with the applicant to obtain this documentation.
  - 2) The requirement to present a social security card is waived for foster children. The applicant must provide a social security number to apply for services. A letter or some documentation from Child Protective Services (CPS) is needed to verify the social security number.
  - 3) For newborns (less than 8 weeks old) who do not have a Social Security Card, the application can be processed without adding the child, but any income for the child must be counted when determining household income.
  - 4) **Effective January 1, 2019, subgrantees shall no longer keep copies of Social Security cards and Personal Identifiable Information (PII) documentation in clients' files. These documents must be scanned into the Virtual ROMA system only and given back to the client.**

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-2(4); Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-4* Revised: March 2024

B. Photo Identification Documentation

- 1) A photo I.D. is required for all household members eighteen (18) years of age and over. Acceptable documents include, but are not limited to:

- i. Driver's license
  - ii. State-issued I.D.
  - iii. U.S. Passport
  - iv. U.S. Military I.D.
  - v. Employment I.D.
  - vi. College/School I.D.
  - vii. Tribal I.D.
  - viii. Alien: Photo I.D. plus Alien Registration/Permanent Resident Card
  - ix. Temporary Resident Card
  - x. Voter Registration I.D. with photo
- 2) An applicant shall receive services if they have an expired photo I.D. where the picture is clear. Subgrantee should work with the applicant through case management or referral to obtain a valid I.D.
  - 3) For elderly/disabled homebound clients, the photo I.D. can be expired. Please do not take pictures and do not deny the client if the photo I.D. is not available. Caseworkers should update notes to include the visit and state that some form of I.D. was secured. This can be used as a substitute for the required document scan of the photo I.D.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-2(4); Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-4* Revised: March 2024

#### C. Bill to be Paid

- 1) Applicant must present the current or past due bill to be paid.
- 2) The bill must be in the name of the head of household or spouse. In certain domains, as in employment & education, the bill can be in the name of a child.
- 3) If the bill is in the name of a deceased, incarcerated, divorced, or estranged spouse, the subgrantee can pay the bill if official documentation has been provided by the applicant to prove living and/or marital status. Written statements may be provided for confirmation; however, any documentation provided must be notarized and verified by the Subgrantee.
- 4) If the bill is in the landlord's name and the applicant is responsible for paying the bill directly to a vendor, documentation is needed to verify the tenant's living status. This documentation can be a notarized statement from the landlord, a copy of the lease agreement stating the arrangement, or a Landlord Verification form can be completed by the landlord. The landlord cannot request services on behalf of the tenant/client.
- 5) Other miscellaneous charges on the bill cannot be paid, such as tampering fees. Any fees resulting from damage to property or illegal fees cannot be paid with CSBG funds.



Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-2(4); Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-4* Revised: March 2024

**Rule 5.11 Authorization of Release of Information**

Applicant should sign the “Authorization of Release of Information Form” (Form ARF-001) annually to authorize the Subgrantee agency to obtain eligibility information on behalf of the household. The subgrantee shall advise applicants that if they refuse to sign this form, the subgrantee will be unable to retrieve their bills from the vendor. CSBG benefits cannot be denied to the applicant for refusal to sign this form.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-2(4); Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-4* Revised: March 2024

**Rule 5.12 Affidavits**

Affidavits are written declarations made under oath before a notary public or other authorized officer. They are valid for thirty (30) days. Affidavits are to be obtained for the following reasons:

- A. Authorized Representative applying for services on behalf of an applicant: The representative must have an affidavit giving authority to act on behalf of the applicant. Original copies of documents required for eligibility must be presented. If the representative has a Power of Attorney, an affidavit is not required. The Power of Attorney must be scanned into Virtual ROMA.
- B. Separation: The State of Mississippi does not recognize legal separation. Applicant must obtain an affidavit which declares separation from the spouse.
- C. Zero income household: Applicant must obtain an affidavit when they declare zero income for the entire household.
- D. Unemployed: For each adult (18 years of age and older) that lives in the household, has no income and is not a student, an affidavit must be obtained confirming unemployment status for thirty (30) days.
- E. Guardianship: If the applicant reports they have guardianship over any minors (grandchildren, nieces, nephews, etc.) in their home, an affidavit MUST be completed AND the applicant must obtain official documentation from a verifiable agency/source (CPS, attorney offices, school records, etc.) to confirm residency status of the child.
- F. Other: This option shall be used if there are any circumstances where the subgrantee feels an affidavit is required. This must be utilized only in Emergency Situations.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-2(4); Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-4* Revised: March 2024

**Rule 5.13 Income Eligibility and Calculations.**

A. Income is money received on a regular and recurring basis by any household member. Income may be earned or unearned.

B. A household's total gross income shall be used to determine eligibility. The total gross income received for the thirty (30) days prior to application date must be verified.

C. Countable Income is income (earned or unearned) that must be included when determining eligibility. The following types of income shall be used:

- 1) Salaries and wages, including overtime, tips, bonuses, commission, and 13<sup>th</sup> check;
- 2) Self-employment income;
- 3) Contract income;
- 4) Unemployment insurance;
- 5) Social Security benefits (including Medicare deduction);
- 6) SSI;
- 7) SSDI;
- 8) Retirement benefits;
- 9) Alimony;
- 10) VA benefits;
- 11) Workers Compensation;
- 12) Private Disability (Short/Long Term Disability);
- 13) Money given to household; and
- 14) Any income whereas a W2 or 1099 is not received or otherwise documented.

D. Exempt income is income that should not be included when determining eligibility. The following types of income shall not be considered:

- 1) Loans/Grants;
- 2) In-kind income;
- 3) Earnings from employment of a child under the age of 18, unless emancipated;
- 4) Infrequent income- if an individual receives it only once during a calendar year from a single source and the individual did not receive that type of income in the month immediately before that month or in the month immediately

following that month (Examples of this would also be repayment of personal loans, etc.);

- 5) Reimbursement for business or medical expenses;
- 6) Payments made by others on behalf of household, unless payments were directly received by household;
- 7) Benefits received that must be excluded by federal law or incentives paid by TANF or Workforce Investment, earnings and allowances paid under Title IV-A, benefits received under Title VII, HUD, and educational grants;
- 8) Child support;
- 9) Payments made to household for the care of a foster child; and
- 10) Refunds such as energy refunds, income tax refunds and EITC, insurance refunds, etc.

E. Earned income is income that is received from wages or self-employment income and shall be used in determining eligibility. Computation of the monthly income shall be done by one (1) of the following methods, depending upon the frequency:

- 1) Regular Income- Frequency does not change from week to week, or month to month.

a. Weekly: The four most recent consecutive paycheck stubs covering the four-week period prior to application, or the signed/dated statement from the employer.

- i. To calculate: Sum the weekly gross earnings; Divide by 4, then multiply by 4.3333 to determine the monthly amount. Multiply the monthly amount by 12 to get the annual income.

- ii. Example: WK1 through WK4:  $(\$412 + 436 + 485 + 520)/4 * 4.333 * 12$  Monthly:  $\$2,007.26 * 12 =$  Annual income:  $\$24,087.15$

b. Semi-Monthly (Twice a month): The two most recent consecutive paycheck stubs covering the month prior to application. Individuals receive checks 24 times a year.

- i. To calculate: Sum the gross amounts of two checks, multiply by 12 to get the annual income.

ii. Example: Check for first 2 weeks- \$1,500 and Check for second 2 weeks- \$1,700.  $(1,500 + 1,700) = 3,200$  monthly.  $\$3,200 * 12 =$  Annual income: \$38,400

c. Bi-Weekly (Paid every other week): The two most recent paycheck stubs covering a month prior to application. Individuals receive checks 26 times a year.

i. To calculate: Sum the gross amounts of two (2) checks and divide by 2 to get an average. Multiply by 2.1667 to get the monthly income. Multiply by 12 to get the annual income.

ii. Example: Check for first 2 weeks- \$1,000 and Check for second 2 weeks- \$1,200.  $(1,000 + 1,200) / 2 = 1,100$ . Next-  $1,000 * 2.1667 = 2,383.37$  month. Next-  $2,383.37 * 12 =$  Annual income: \$28,600.44

d. Monthly: The most recent paycheck stub.

i. To calculate: Multiply the gross amount by 12 to get annual income.

ii. Example:  $\$900 * 12 =$  Annual income: \$10,800

F. Unearned Income - is all income that is not earned. Unearned income shall be used in determining eligibility. Some common examples are:

- 1) In-kind support and maintenance (food or shelter) given to an individual or received by an individual because someone else paid for it,
- 2) Private pensions and annuities,
- 3) Payments such as Social Security benefits, Railroad Retirement benefits, Department of Veterans Affairs benefits, civil service annuities, workers' compensation, unemployment insurance, retirement benefits, and payments based on need involving federal funds,
- 4) Life insurance proceeds and other death benefits, to the extent that the total amount is more than the expenses of the deceased person's last illness and burial, and other debts paid by the individual,
- 5) Gifts and inheritances,
- 6) Support (not child support) and alimony payments in cash,
- 7) Prizes, awards and winnings,

- 8) Dividends and interest,
- 9) Rents and royalties (except those defined as earned income),
- 10) Certain payments not considered wages for Social Security purposes,
- 11) In-kind payments to certain agricultural workers,
- 12) Jury fees, and/or
- 13) Money paid to individuals who are residents, but not employees of institutions.

G. Inconsistent Income - frequency varies from week to week, or from month to month due to hours worked. It is considered to be received regularly if an individual can reasonably expect to receive it. Calculation of this income should follow the policy of regular income. Occupations that may fit this description are horticulturist, woodcutter, or substitute teacher.

H. Seasonal Income – income that is regularly received for only part of the year. Calculation of this income should follow the policy of regular income.

I. Self-Employment Income – If an applicant is self-employed, a copy of the past year's federal income tax return (to include Schedule C), purchase and sales receipt, or accounting books must be used to establish the source and amount of income.

- 1) The amount to be used in determining eligibility will be the net income available after deduction of business expenses. Subgrantee should include the amount on the Net Profit or (Loss) line from the Schedule C (Form 1040) Profit or Loss from Business (sole proprietorship), divided by 12.
- 2) If it is proven that a self-employed applicant's current situation has substantially changed in either size or type of operation from the previous year, the current income should be used. Example: A farmer farmed 40 acres in 2017, but because of ill health did not plant a crop in 2018. The income earned in 2017 should not be considered. The farmer should be considered to have zero income.
- 3) If the applicant cannot provide the above items, they must provide a notarized statement of income.

J. Income of Minors

- 1) Earned Income – A minor's (under 18 years of age) income is excluded in the determination of income eligibility.

- 2) Unearned Income - A minor who receives unearned income such as Social Security or SSI must be included and is listed under the parent or legal guardian in the household.

K. In a **zero-income household**, is one in which the applicant reports no income is being received by any household members. the subgrantee must confirm additional information from the applicant:

- 1) The applicant must verify how household bills and personal expenses are being paid for. If they are receiving money or in-kind assistance from someone, an affidavit must be obtained from the person providing the assistance. The statement must include the name of the applicant, their phone number, amount of money received, frequency, and signed by the person providing the assistance. Money given to the household must be counted as unearned income. If the person pays the bills directly to the vendor, this is not included as unearned income.
- 2) Households may report zero income as a result of a recent layoff, medical issues, or other events that have occurred within the last 30 days. Documentation shall be submitted to verify the event, and an affidavit signed by the applicant to declare unemployment or zero-income status. Layoff documentation must be on the employer's letterhead and state the date of the layoff.
- 3) If a household has an open case with Social Security for disability determination, the applicant must show evidence of disability case pending, and present documentation from a medical physician stating the applicant is unable to work. The applicant may be referred to the local Ability to Work office to get an assessment if the applicant has been waiting on a disability determination from Social Security for more than one (1) year. The applicant should return the Residual Functional Capacity Assessment from the Ability to Work office to the subgrantee.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-2(4); Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-4* Revised: March 2024

**Rule 5.14 Threatening Behavior.**

- A. Any applicant who engages in the use of aggressive or disruptive language, threats, or behavior against a subgrantee agency, subgrantee staff, subgrantee contractor, or state/federal staff shall be prohibited from receiving services for one year from the date of the incident, for the first offense. Any subsequent threats or disruptive behavior will permanently disqualify the client from receiving services.
- B. When a threat or occurrence of physical contact is made against a subgrantee agency, subgrantee staff, subgrantee contractor, or state/federal staff, that staff person must complete an incident report and submit it to the subgrantee's Executive Director.

Any kind of physical contact or physical threats with firearms or weapons will disqualify an applicant or household from services permanently. During such an incident, the subgrantee's Executive Director must contact local authorities and file a police report. A copy of the report and detailed account of the incident must be kept in the client's file, scanned into Virtual ROMA, and a copy must be submitted to the Director of the Division of Community Services.

Source: 45 CFR 98.20; Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-2(4); Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-4 Revised: March 2024

## **Part 28 Chapter 6: Program Process and Procedures**

### **Rule 6.1 Appointments.**

- A. Applicants should be seen by appointment. Appointments must be given on a first-come, first-served basis.
- B. Applicants arriving within 15 minutes of appointment time shall be seen according to their scheduled appointment. Applicants who arrive later than 15 minutes for a scheduled appointment may have to wait to be seen depending on the time of next scheduled appointment; or be rescheduled for the next available appointment if they cannot be worked into schedule for that day. Subgrantee should make every effort to see the applicant that day if possible.
- C. If the subgrantee has a no-show or a cancellation after the 15-minute grace period, applicants waiting for their appointments shall be seen immediately. Subgrantee may then re-arrange schedule to accommodate other applicants.

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

### **Rule 6.2 Walk-ins.**

- A. Applicants should schedule an appointment for services. Walk-ins are discouraged unless in the case of emergencies that must be verified by the applicant. (Applicants must have documentation to verify emergency in accordance with Rule 6.10.)
- B. If there is a verifiable emergency and the applicant is unable to complete a preapplication, the subgrantee shall assist the applicant with submitting a preapplication and schedule an intake appointment within the 18–48 hour timeframe.
- C. An applicant shall not be denied an appointment because of inappropriate attire.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-2(4); Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-4* Revised: March 2024

### **Rule 6.3 Transfers.**

- A. There are two types of client transfers:
  - 1) Intra-agency transfers occur when a client's file is reassigned within an agency. The person with Virtual ROMA agency administration rights is able to make the reassignment internally without DCS intervention.



- 2) Inter-agency transfers occur when clients require services but the agency that last provided services does not provide the requested service. For instance, a client may seek weatherization services from an agency that only administers CSBG/LIHEAP. The requesting agency must contact the point of contact of the agency that has ownership to release the file. The agency that has ownership of the client's record must authorize release of the client to the requesting agency via "Concerns" in Virtual ROMA.

B. Timely transfers are required to avoid any disruptions in client services. If there is an outstanding request for approval, it must be resolved before a transfer can be done. Transfers **must** occur with twenty-four (24) hours of the request. If this is an emergency, it must follow the 18/48 hour rule.

C. No household members shall be approved as part of another household during a 30 day period. Emergency situations should be supported with appropriate documentation.

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

**Rule 6.4 Virtual ROMA.** CSBG subgrantees shall be Virtual ROMA compliant. This compliance includes, but is not limited to:

- A. Every user of the Virtual ROMA system must be registered upon authorization by the subgrantee Executive Director.
- B. Users must agree to the terms and conditions of the use of Virtual ROMA by signing the 'Confidentiality Statement' and returning to DCS.
- C. Users are prohibited from sharing user IDs and passwords.
- D. Users are prohibited from scheduling client appointments outside of Virtual ROMA, except in the case of disasters. The subgrantee's Executive Director shall request in writing and receive approval from DCS in this case.
- E. Subgrantees must ensure that every application for service originates through Virtual ROMA. In the event Virtual ROMA is not available, such as natural disaster, system outage, etc., upon approval by DCS Director, paper applications may be taken. The paper applications shall be entered in Virtual ROMA within two (2) business days of system availability.
- F. Subgrantees generate the electronic GET/PUT files weekly to submit claim forms.

- G. Subgrantees reconcile the payment reports between the fiscal and program units prior to payment. The reconciliation process between outstanding applications in 'Approved' and 'Pending Payment' statuses must be done after the GET and PUT files have been created.
- H. Subgrantees must adhere to equipment and software specifications to operate Virtual ROMA effectively.
- I. Subgrantees must ensure that personnel with application approval rights thoroughly review applications prior to approval to minimize errors.
- J. Subgrantees must inactivate, within 24 hours, any user(s) who through termination, resignation, job reassignment, or other reasons user is no longer with agency.

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

**Rule 6.5 Household Benefit.**

The CSBG program is designed to provide a range of services which assist low-income people to attain skills, knowledge and motivation necessary to achieve self-sufficiency. Some of the services that can be provided are:

- Employment- job training services/assistance, employment services/assistance, work support services/assistance and vocational training
- Education- Adult Basic Education (ABE), General Equivalency (GED) preparation, and tuition assistance
- Housing- Mortgage or rental payment, transitional shelter, homeownership counseling, and other housing financial assistance
- Income & Asset Building- Money management education, budget preparation, income management assistance, consumer credit counseling, and tax preparation
- Health & Social/Behavioral Development- Health education training, medical/dental assistance, social security benefit claims
- Emergency Services- Temporary housing assistance, energy crisis assistance, emergency food and clothing, spousal/child crisis intervention
- Nutrition- Nutritional education training, and meal assistance.

As a reminder, make your dollars stretch further. Partner with other local organizations who may provide services that you do not offer. This practice can avoid duplication of services and ensure the client is provided with all the necessary benefits to achieve self-sufficiency.

- A. Subgrantees should pay the amount of the bill. Past due amounts, late fees, transfer fees, and reconnect fees may be paid.
- B. Subgrantees may use vendor portals, when possible, to verify the amount of the bill(s).

**Rule 6.6 Fees and Deposits.**

- A. Reconnect fees or late fees resulting from a client's inability to pay can be paid from CSBG funds. The Subgrantee should advocate with vendors to ask for waivers of these fees.
- B. As part of the client's consumer education/energy conservation sessions, the case worker should communicate the importance of making timely payments or requesting extensions with vendors to avoid such fees.
- C. If reconnect fees or late fees are incurred because of the subgrantee's negligence or failure to make timely payments, these fees cannot be paid from CSBG funds. They must be paid from non-federal funds.
- D. Deposits may be paid more than once, depending on the household situation, such as emergency or life-threatening situations, as described in section 6.10. If a household has requested more than four (4) deposits, Subgrantee should refer household for case management to stabilize the household.

**Rule 6.7 Client Confidentiality.**

- A. MDHS and its subgrantees are responsible for protecting the confidentiality of client information. All client's personal information received must be processed within five (5) business days.
- B. Subgrantees must maintain client files under lock and key.
- C. Client appointments should be conducted in areas where the conversation cannot be overheard by others.
- D. Subgrantee staff should not discuss client confidential information with other staff unless to coordinate or proceed with client services.
- E. Even though the Virtual ROMA system has a screen for all users to agree to confidentiality before entering client data, each subgrantee staff member is required to sign a 'Confidentiality Statement' and submit to DCS prior to being granted access to the Virtual ROMA system.

F. Client information should only be discussed with other service organizations/partners when referring households for additional services.

G. The client must sign the 'Authorization of Release of Information Form' (Form ARF 001) in order for the subgrantee to refer the household for other services.

The only exception to the confidentiality requirement is if a client or household member discloses potential domestic abuse, child abuse/neglect, elderly abuse/neglect, or disabled abuse/neglect; the information must be reported to the proper authorities, regardless of the consent of the client.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-2(4); Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-4* Revised: March 2024

### **Rule 6.8 Case Management.**

A. Case management is defined as a process to plan, seek, advocate for, and monitor services on behalf of a client. This process enables case managers of the eligible entities to coordinate efforts to serve a client through professional teamwork and referrals to expand the range of services offered. The goal of case management is to optimize client functioning and well-being by coordinating and providing quality services, in the most effective and efficient manner to enable clients to become self-sufficient. The core functions of case management are as follows:

- 1) Engagement with clients;
- 2) Assessment of client priorities, strengths, and challenges;
- 3) Development and implementation of a service delivery plan with the client;
- 4) Monitoring of the service delivery plan;
- 5) Evaluation of outcomes, and
- 6) Closure (termination of service delivery plan or transition follow-up).

B. Logic models are the process by which case management is reported. These models assist entities with program evaluation by providing a visual statement of the activities planned to produce positive outcomes for the family, agency, and community by assessing the priority needs and creating programs to alleviate the identified needs. Eligible entities should complete logic models based on the top three needs identified in the Community Strengths and Needs Assessment. Logic models provide a plan to address those needs by stating goals and outcome objectives. The projected outcomes should align with the NPIs submitted by the entity.

- 1) Referrals are crucial to the success of a service delivery plan of a client facing multiple complex issues. If a client requires support beyond the services offered by CSBG, the entity must refer the client to other programs within the entity, and/or to other local/state programs. Entities must conduct follow-up and document the progress of the referral services in Virtual ROMA.
- 2) **All contact with the client must be documented in Virtual ROMA.**

C. Earned Income Tax Credit assistance is offered to clients through the partnership between the MDHS-DCS, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), and eligible entities. The IRS provides training and support to eligible entities that sponsor free tax preparation sites. Entities are encouraged to have at least one site in its service area. If there is not a site in a county, the case worker must refer clients to a VITA site in that county. This service is provided to clients to further assist with additional income to enhance the case management process.

D. To receive CSBG assistance, the client is required to comply with case management. The subgrantee will determine if the applicant is a good candidate for case management based on their assessment and interview.

- 1) If the client is a good candidate, the subgrantee will proceed with creating the case plan. The applicant will then have two options:
  - a. Opt-in – If the client chooses to comply with case management, the subgrantee will continue creating the applicant’s case plan.
  - b. Opt-out – If the client chooses to opt-out of case management for either of the following reasons, (Refusals [Barriers], Employment Schedule Restraints, Cannot Commit [With Reason], or Care for Vulnerable Family Members), the applicant may receive a one-time initial payment. If the applicant refuses to participate with no barriers, then services cannot be provided. A list of referrals should be provided by the subgrantee.
  - c. If the client is elderly and/or disabled, case management is required with restrictions. The domains that a vulnerable household can receive assistance in, per Virtual ROMA policy pg. 150 Section Assessment, are Budget, Transportation, Housing, Nutrition, Emergency, or referrals to additional programs.
- 2) If the client is not a good candidate for case management, the subgrantee will list the reason why they are not a good fit and continue to make the initial payment. Subgrantee must explain to the applicant that case management is a requirement to request additional assistance.

E. The subgrantee must make the client aware that they must comply with their case plan to continue receiving CSBG assistance.

F. Subgrantees must work with clients when creating their case plan to determine the amount of CSBG assistance that will be needed to assist the client and create a plan of action on how to distribute the funds to the vendor(s).

G. Subgrantee should be aware that it is at their discretion on how to use and distribute CSBG funds to applicants.

H. Subgrantees have the right to terminate a client’s case plan if changes need to be made or if the applicant is refusing to comply with their case plan without a valid reason.

I. If the subgrantee becomes aware of a client who may be abusing the choice to comply with case management, the applicant can be penalized by either of the following:

- 1) First offense: The client will be disqualified from reapplying for assistance for CSBG for one (1) month from the date the applicant decides to opt-out.
- 2) Second offense: The client will be disqualified from reapplying for assistance for CSBG for three (3) months from the date the applicant decides to opt-out.
- 3) Third offense: The client will be disqualified from reapplying for assistance for CSBG for six (6) months from the date the applicant decides to opt-out.
- 4) Fourth offense: The client will be disqualified from reapplying for assistance for CSBG permanently.

J. Follow-up appointments for additional CSBG assistance must be in-person. Follow-up appointments for case management should be either in-person or by phone.

K. Success stories are suggested when a case plan is completed, especially in areas of education and employment.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-2(4); Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-4* Revised: March 2024

**Rule 6.9 Priority Population Procedures.**

- A. The process by which appointments are given shall be determined by the subgrantee (i.e. mornings, days of the week, case worker to be assigned to this population, etc). If a client is physically disabled and cannot come to the subgrantee, a caseworker can conduct a home visit to take the application, or the client can authorize someone to make an application on their behalf.
- B. If the client misses the appointment, no further benefits can be given until the client comes in for another appointment to have eligibility determined.
- C. The client should be advised at the time of appointment of the responsibility to report household changes within ten (10) days. Changes can be reported by mail, phone call, email, or office visit.
- D. All contact with the client must be documented in Virtual ROMA. Changes may include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Increase or decrease in household members,
  - b. Increase or decrease in household income, or
  - c. Household moved.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-2(4); Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-4* Revised: March 2024

**Rule 6.10 Crisis and Emergency Services.**

Mississippi offers year-round crisis assistance which provides assistance to households who have encountered a crisis situation within the last 30 days. Energy-related assistance must be referred to the LIHEAP program.

- A. Life Threatening Crisis (LTE) – 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 the bill to prevent shutoff, or to restore service, purchase of heating/cooling equipment, etc. The following are considered life threatening.
  - a. Disaster (fire, gas, leak, etc.)
  - b. Person(s) on life support or medical devices that require electricity
  - c. Domestic violence, and/or
  - d. Elderly, disabled, or child abuse/neglect
- B. Non-Life-Threatening Crisis (NON-LTE) – Eligible households with a non-life-threatening energy crisis must have the crisis relieved within **48 hours** of an approved application. Resolution of a non-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 the bill to prevent shutoff, or to restore service, purchase of heating/cooling equipment, etc. The following 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 the 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 the client's inability to pay utilities, rent, etc.; and/or
  - f. Other documented emergencies within the last thirty (30) days, as deemed acceptable by the subgrantee.
- C. CSBG 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 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, etc.) 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 needed (contact DCS for approval).
- l. The costs related to utility cost such as 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 matrix benefit amount per household.

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 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(s) on the applicant's behalf to see if a 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.

## Part 28 Chapter 7: Vendor Requirements

### **Rule 7.1 Vendor Agreements.**

- A. W-9 forms from each vendor must be sent to DCS for vendor to be added to the Virtual ROMA system.
- B. Subgrantees must maintain original vendor agreements indefinitely.

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

### **Rule 7.2 Vendor Refunds.**

- A. Vendor payments refunded to a subgrantee may occur as a result of a household moving, closing an account, other household circumstances, or instances of error or fraud.
- B. Subgrantees must inform vendors to send the refund checks to the agency that submitted the payment on behalf of the household.
- C. If the refund is for a deposit, the vendor can utilize the funds to offset the final bill. However, if there is an overage, the funds must be returned to the subgrantee.
- D. The following information must be submitted with each refund check, even if the refund check is for more than one household:
  - 1) Household's name (name on the account)
  - 2) Address
  - 3) Account number
  - 4) Amount of household refund
  - 5) Year credit occurred
  - 6) Date of payment on account
  - 7) Reason for refund
- E. Subgrantees should account for these refunds separately in their accounting system. It is very important that each refund be identified by the CSBG program year.
- F. Subgrantees must submit the following information with each subgrantee refund check:
  - 1) Vendor Name and Vendor check #

- 2) Household name for each refund
- 3) Address
- 4) Account number
- 5) Client ID number
- 6) Amount of household refund
- 7) Reason for refund
- 8) CSBG grant year
- 9) Date of benefit
- 10) Date refund received by Subgrantee

G. Subgrantee checks should be made payable to: Treasurer, State of Mississippi and mailed to:

Director, Division of Community Services  
200 South Lamar Street  
Jackson, Mississippi 39201

H. Current year vendor refunds will be awarded to subgrantees in their modifications. MDHS-DCS will return any prior year refunds to the Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Community Services.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-2(4); Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-4* Revised: March 2024

**Rule 7.3 Vendor Payments.** Subgrantees must make payments on client accounts to vendors within twenty (20) business days of application approval. Failure to comply will result in a DCS request for Program Integrity to conduct an additional monitoring visit which may result in questioned cost.

## **Part 28 Chapter 8: Program Compliance**

### **Rule 8.1 Reporting and Accountability.**

A. CSBG Annual Report-The State must submit an annual report to OCS in the form of the CSBG Annual Report by March 31<sup>st</sup> of every year. Eligible entities are required to submit information regarding this report upon request from DCS. The National Association for State Community Services Programs (NASCSPP) will email a database to the State. This database will be emailed to eligible entities for input. The State will compile information from each entity to complete the statewide report and return database to NASCSPP.

B. CSBG Informational Memorandum (IM) 138 provides guidance to states for the establishment of Organizational Standards as part of a performance management and accountability system for the CSBG national network. The Office of Community Services (OCS) requires states to report on the standards for eligible entities through the online state plan and annual report.

The purpose of the Organizational Standards is to ensure that eligible entities have appropriate organizational capacity in all areas covered by the standards. States are required to provide the oversight and technical assistance necessary to assure compliance with the standards.

The Center of Excellence (COE)-developed standards are organized into three thematic groups consisting of nine categories and a total of 58 standards for private eligible entities and 50 standards for public eligible entities.

1. Maximum Feasible Participation
  - Consumer Input and Involvement
  - Community Engagement
  - Community Assessment
2. Vision and Direction
  - Organizational Leadership
  - Board Governance
  - Strategic Planning
3. Operations and Accountability
  - Human Resource Management
  - Financial Operations and Oversight
  - Data and Analysis

DCS requires eligible entities to annually submit documentation to verify compliance to all standards through the use of Smartsheet. Documentation is reviewed by DCS and a letter sent to eligible entity executive director which gives the results of the review and the percentage of

standards attained. Technical assistance will be provided as needed to help entities achieve compliance.

C. Board Minutes- Copies of the minutes of each entity's board meeting shall be submitted to DCS no later than 10 calendar days after the date of the meeting at which those minutes were ratified. If the meeting was not a quorum, the official minutes must be submitted within 3 calendar days of the scheduled meeting.

D. Success stories shall be submitted to the CSBG/LIHEAP Program Director of DCS by the first Tuesday of each month.

E. Outcome Measurement Report is due by the 5<sup>th</sup> of each month to report performance of NPIs.

F. Monthly Cost Sheets are required to be submitted monthly by Subgrantees to show expenditures by cost category and line items. These forms should be submitted to the Division of Budgets and Accounting, Office of Procurement Services and a copy to DCS.

G. Closeouts - Please see the 'MDHS Subgrant/ Agreement Manual' found at [www.mdhs.ms.gov/subgrantee-manual/](http://www.mdhs.ms.gov/subgrantee-manual/) for closeout policy. A copy of the closeout must also be sent to DCS.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-2(4); Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-4* Revised: March 2024

**Rule 8.2 Client Complaints/Concerns.** DCS receives client complaints and concerns from the MDHS Constituent Services unit, and phone calls from clients or other individuals. Subgrantees should follow these steps when responding to DCS:

- A. DCS will submit the client complaint/concern in the DCS Client Tracker.
- B. The subgrantee must contact client and provide a response and/or resolution in the client tracker within one (1) to three (3) business days depending on the severity of the case.
- C. If additional time is required to completely resolve the issue, the subgrantee must notify note in the tracker that additional time is needed.
- D. If the concern is not handled within three days, an email will be sent to Executive Director to notify them of concern and to provide a response within twenty-four (24) hours.
- E. If a client makes a complaint at the subgrantee's office, the subgrantee should attempt to resolve issues before giving the DCS number to the client.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-2(4); Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-4* Revised: March 2024

**Rule 8.3 CSBG Performance Management.** Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) is a complete management practice that integrates outcomes and results into a community action agency's administration, management, operations, and evaluation of programs and services.

The core components of ROMA are:

1. Reviewing agency mission
2. Assessing Community Needs
3. Developing results-oriented plans
4. Implementing the plan
5. Evaluating performance using outcomes and indicators
6. Managing performance using logic models

The CSBG Act Section 676(b)(12) states-

The State and all eligible entities in the State will, not later than fiscal year 2001, participate in the Results Oriented Management and Accountability System, another performance measure system for which the Secretary facilitated development pursuant to section 678E(b), or an alternative system for measuring performance and results that meets the requirements of that section, and a description of outcome measures to be used to measure eligible entity performance in promoting self-sufficiency, family stability, and community revitalization.

The State of Mississippi commits its CSBG resources and activities toward achieving measurable outcomes in the six ROMA national goals:

1. Low-income people become more self-sufficient.
2. The conditions in which low-income people lives are improved.
3. Low-income people own a stake in their community.
4. Partnerships among supporters and providers of services to low-income people are achieved.
5. Entities increase their capacity to achieve results.
6. Low-income people, especially vulnerable populations, achieve their potential by strengthening family and other supportive systems.

Entities will utilize the ROMA cycle as part of a strengthened performance system:

1. Assessment- Community needs and resources; agency data
2. Planning- Using agency mission and assessment data to identity results and strategies
3. Implementation- Services and strategies produce results
4. Achievement of Results- Observe and report progress

## 5. Evaluation- Analyze data and compare with benchmarks

Entities will utilize the National Performance Indicators (NPIs) to monitor performance of services to low-income families and communities. The State of Mississippi requires all eligible entities to use the statewide client tracking and eligibility system, Virtual ROMA, to capture this data.

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

**Rule 8.4 State Performance Management.** The Office of Community Services (OCS), in collaboration with the CSBG network, created State Accountability Measures to track organizational performance by State CSBG Lead Agencies. The State Accountability Standards capture data about the activities and functions carried out on the state level. They capture the effectiveness and efficiency of the State in its implementation of the state plan and the impact the State has on the performance of its eligible entities.

MDHS-DCS reports on the State Accountability Standards through its annual State Plan and Annual Report.

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

### **Rule 8.5 Case Files.**

A. Applications and supporting documentation for applicants must be kept in individual case files. Case files must be filed in alphabetical order according to last name. They should always be maintained under lock and key, and housed in the local county of residence of the client. Active case files and inactive case files should be maintained separately.

B. Case files must not contain copies of client personal identity information (PII) such as social security cards, birth certificates, photo id, etc. These documents must be scanned into Virtual ROMA only and given back to the client.

C. Please refer to the MDHS Subgrantee Agreement Manual for file retention requirements. However, as a general rule, case files must be maintained for three (3) years. If there is a documented case of waste, fraud, and abuse, audit findings, or a fair hearing was conducted, the file must be maintained for ten (10) years.

D. The following documents must be in a case file and scanned into Virtual ROMA:

- 1) Proof of income for all household members;
- 2) Copy of bill(s) to be paid from vendor;

- 3) Intake form (signed and dated);
- 4) Authorization of Release of Information form (signed and dated);
- 5) RFAI form (signed and dated, if applicable);
- 6) Notification of Services form; and
- 7) Notification of Pending Services form.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-2(4)*; *Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-4* Revised: March 2024

**Rule 8.6 Waste, Fraud, and 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/Board Member- Omitting client information, ghost clients, charging application fees, former employee having access to software, receiving kickback from vendor, misrepresenting household size or income, falsifying application, forging documents needed to complete intake, 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/Board Member (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 1-800-2996905.

- 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/Board Member - Employees of MDHS or Subgrantee/Board Member 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 must be terminated or removed from the board. If the Employee/Board Member applies for assistance, they must serve a one (1) year disqualification period from the date of the offense. If other household members exist in the home, the Employee/Board Member may apply for services and the household size of the eligible household members, excluding the head of household, may be used to determine eligibility.
- 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: March 2024

**Rule 8.7 Whistleblower Protection.** According to Mississippi Code Section 25-9-173, et seq. an employer can not dismiss or otherwise adversely affect the compensation or employment status of an employee who testifies or provides information to an investigative body.

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

### **Rule 8.8 Criminal/Illegal Activities.**

A. CSBG funds may not be used to pay for any criminal acts punishable with fines, fees, penalties, and/or imprisonment. An application that is submitted for a bill which explicitly states that part of the bill is inclusive of an illegal activity such as tampering and other theft for services shall not be approved until the tampering fees/penalties are paid.

B. The vendor may adjust the bill to remove the illegal fees and the Subgrantee can pay the portion that does not include such fees and penalties. Further, fees and penalties must be paid prior to any CSBG funds being obligated on behalf of the client's bill.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-2(4)*; *Miss. Code Ann. § 43-1-4* Revised: March 2024

### **Rule 8.9 Monitoring and Audit**

The Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS) is required to monitor the activities of its subgrantees by following the Single Audit Act Amendments of 1996, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-133, Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations, and the OMB Circular A-133 Compliance Supplement. MDHS shall monitor each project, program, subgrant, function, or activity supported by a Federal award to assure compliance with applicable Federal regulations and that performance goals are achieved.

#### **A. Monitoring**

1) The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) requires States to conduct on-site monitoring of LIHEAP subgrantee's once every three (3) years. MDHS elects to conduct an annual monitoring visit to ensure compliance with applicable Federal and State regulations, policies, and procedures.

2) MDHS has established uniform monitoring policies designed to ensure that all subgrants under the jurisdiction of MDHS are administered in compliance with Federal requirements and with the terms of the subgrant agreements. Monitoring subgrants, for compliance with the applicable Federal regulations, State laws, Agency policies, and the terms of the subgrant agreements, is the responsibility of the MDHS Division of Monitoring. Please see the 'MDHS Subgrant/ Agreement Manual' found at [www.mdhs.ms.gov/subgrantee-manual/](http://www.mdhs.ms.gov/subgrantee-manual/) for the complete monitoring policy.

3) Subgrant monitoring procedures may include several of the various options available. These options include: reviewing reports submitted by the subgrantee; reviewing documentation supporting expenses reported under MDHS subgrants; reviewing the subgrantee's single audit or program-specific audit

results and evaluating audit findings and the subgrantee's corrective action plan; performing on-site reviews of fiscal and programmatic records and observing subgrantee operations; and/or, arranging for limited scope audits of specific compliance areas.

B. Single Audit

- 1) The Director of the Division of Monitoring reviews the subgrantee's audit finding(s), and forwards to the Division of Community Services and the Monitoring Supervisor.
- 2) The audit finding(s) is then placed on a spreadsheet, discussed during monitoring visits with the said subgrantee, and addressed on the monitoring report performed by the Division of Monitoring.
- 3) Please see the 'MDHS Subgrant/ Agreement Manual' found at <https://www.mdhs.ms.gov/administrative-codes/> for specific Single Audit requirements.

C. Federal Program Compliance Review

- 1) At any time the Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Community Services, Division of Energy Assistance may conduct a program compliance review of the State.
- 2) During this review, subgrantees are selected to be monitored on program compliance. Subgrantees must cooperate fully with federal reviewers and provide any requested documentation.

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

**Rule 8.10 Fair Hearing Process**

A. A fair hearing is available for any applicant or recipient upon 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. 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 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 affects 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-toface 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

## APPENDIX

### Board Policy

## MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES DIVISION OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

### BOARD POLICY FOR COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT ELIGIBLE ENTITIES

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The Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Reauthorization Act of 1998 requires that, as a condition of designation and to receive CSBG funding, private non-profit entities and public organizations administer the CSBG program through tripartite boards that “fully participate in the development, planning, implementation, and evaluation of the program to serve low-income communities.” In order for the State to promote the continued viability and effectiveness of eligible entities through appropriately constituted and well-functioning boards, this policy is issued to provide guidance on the composition, role, and responsibilities of the tripartite board.

#### Board Composition

The eligible entity’s board of directors should consist of a minimum of six (6) members and a maximum of three times the number of counties an entity has in its service area (with the exception of agencies with one county). Each county must be equally represented with members from each sector as described below.

#### **Representatives of Low-Income Individuals and Families (Low-Income Sector)**

The CSBG statute requires that a minimum of one-third of tripartite board membership be:

1. Comprised of representatives of low-income individuals and families who currently reside in the areas served. The implicit intent is to ensure those who are served by the



eligible entity have a strong voice in agency governance and communicating the needs of the community.

2. “Chosen in accordance with democratic selection procedures.” Representatives of this sector may be nominated or elected either within a neighborhood or within the community as a whole; at a community meeting, a community organization meeting, or meeting of another low-income service provider; and the meeting was publicized using at least one of various kinds of media. No more than two members of Head Start Policy Councils may serve on the board.

### **Elected Public Officials or their Representatives (Public Sector)**

The CSBG statute requires one-third of tripartite membership be elected officials. If a sufficient number of elected officials is not available, an appointed public official may be chosen. The elected official may choose a designee to act on his/her behalf. The designee would then be the board member and have full authority to exercise voting rights.

Entities are not restricted to choosing certain elected officials to serve on the board. These members should support the goal of the agency to address the poverty needs of the community and coordinate action by local governments. If an entity's bylaws state only certain elected officials can serve, the State strongly suggests a revision of the bylaws.

Public officials must be “holding office on the date of selection.” Also, the public official or designee may serve on the board only while the public official is in office. The public official may change a designee at any time by submitting a letter to the board. Entities are responsible for ensuring this sector remains current such as prompt notification of newly elected officials or currently elected officials of the opportunity to serve on the board should the entity still choose. The entity must ensure timely replacement of board members who no longer hold office and ensure the last day of office for the public official is the last day of service on the board.

### **Representatives of Major Groups and Interests in the Community (Private Sector)**

The remaining board members must be selected from “business, industry, labor, religious, law enforcement, education, or other major groups and interests in the community served.” Members of this sector are included because they represent the balance of the community, and the entity cannot succeed without the support, resources, and participation of this group.

Eligible entities must ensure that no organization, business, or group has an indefinite seat on the board, meaning the selection of board members shall allow the opportunity for other

interested organizations to serve on the board. Anyone chosen in this sector must be a member of the organization or an employee and live in that county.

### **Background Checks**

Background checks must be conducted on all Board Members. If the background check identifies a past or present conviction for a felony or crime (either federal or state) the individual may not be seated on the board.

### **Duration of Service**

The state requires a board member to serve no more than a maximum of three (3) four-year terms. **This requirement is not retroactive, meaning, board members whose terms expired prior to this policy revision cannot serve the additional term granted by this policy revision.**

The board member must be re-elected or re-appointed at least one month before the end of each four-year term. The terms may be continuous or there may be a break in service. Eligible entities are encouraged to stagger the term expirations, whereas not to create an issue of too many board members leaving the board at the same time thus jeopardizing the governance of the board.

Should a board seat become vacant, it must be filled within a sixty (60) day period, unless a written request for waiver has been granted by DCS Director, within the sixty day period. Further, it is the responsibility of the board to notify DCS in writing within ten (10) days of any board changes, and an updated board roster submitted.

The entity shall provide DCS with a current board roster with supporting documentation of each member's election or appointment. This information must also be kept on file at the entity's main office for review during monitoring visits.

Entities may not seat a former employee as a board member for a period of two (2) years after leaving employment at the agency. Agencies may prohibit a former employee who has been terminated from serving on the board. Entities should prohibit federal/state employees from serving on the board if there is the potential for a conflict of interest between the federal/state office and the entity's business transactions, such as a potential funding source.

Entities may not employ a board member during the time of service on the board, nor for a period of two (2) years after leaving the board. This waiting period is to avoid the appearance of a board member having an undue employment advantage.

### **Training Requirements**

New board members or members who had a one (1) year or more break in service shall participate in an orientation within two (2) months of being seated. The orientation shall include at a minimum: federal, state, local policies and procedures as it relates to the entity and its programs; board bylaws; articles of incorporation; entity mission; entity strategic plan; entity financial and programmatic reports; program overview to include sources of funding; audit report; board responsibilities and liability; conflict of interest; and ROMA.

Board members shall participate in training at least every two (2) years on board responsibilities and governance as specified in the CSBG Organizational Standards.

Training and/or orientation may be done at board meetings, special sessions, and may be done in person, electronic media, or other methods as determined by the board.

Should an entity fail to comply with training requirements, DCS will declare entity at-risk, and issue a request for a corrective action plan, which may result in a notice to terminate funding.

### **Board Member Responsibilities**

The following list of responsibilities is necessary for the success of the entity, however, it is not all inclusive of what is expected of a board member:

Fully participate in the development, planning, implementation, and evaluation of the entity's programs.

Plan and participate in the entity's fund-raising events.

Develop entity mission statement and ensure activities and programs support it.

Develop entity strategic plan and receive periodic reports regarding the progress of it.

Establish policy for the entity.

Supervise and evaluate one employee, the entity's executive director. Attend and participate in all scheduled board meetings.

Empower the entity by working with the community and being an ambassador for the entity and its programs.

Participate in scheduled trainings and entity events.

### **Board Committees**

Entities are required to appoint at least five (5) standing committees: (1) Executive; (2) Planning and Evaluation; (3) Finance; (4) Personnel and; (5) Human Rights Committees. The entity may change the description of the activities of the standing committees as needed to conform to the diverse dynamics of the entity.

- The Executive Committee is responsible for the general conduct of the board's business on a day-to-day basis. The major functions of this committee are: to act upon matters in a timely manner; establish standing and subcommittees, and assign members to each; review the major administrative policies and recommend modifications to the full Board; secure adequate legal counsel for the entity; and to evaluate the entity's executive director.
- The Planning and Evaluation Committee is responsible for the development of the strategic plan and the evaluation of the entity's performance on meeting the goals in the strategic plan. The duties of this committee include: ensure the community strengths and needs assessment is completed; review and approve programs to be operated by the entity; develop internal reporting standards for programs; recommend funding of specific programs to the full board; evaluate each program or project on a timely basis; and coordinate efforts of the public and private sectors and other committees to meet the needs of the families served.
- The Finance Committee oversees the fiscal functions of the agency. This committee reviews budget proposals prepared by the entity staff; reviews financial reports on a monthly basis; ensures an adequate fiscal management system is in place; assists in securing additional sources of funding; and review and make recommendations to the full Board on all fiscal matters.
- The Personnel Committee is responsible for overseeing personnel functions and certain administrative functions of the entity. The duties of this committee include the review of personnel policies; promotions; salary ranges; hiring of employees recommended by the Executive Director; assist in the selection process when employing an Executive Director; and promote staff and career development programs for entity staff.
- The Human Rights Committee acts on matters regarding the rights of employees. Listening, hearing, fact-finding and providing objective judgements are the core functions of this committee. Other functions include ensuring protection of the entity and the rights of employees as established in the agency's Equal Opportunity Plan and recommending approval or denial of it to the Board; hearing equal opportunity complaints and recommending possible solutions to the Board; and ensuring due process prior to the termination of an employee.

Entities may appoint as many committees as needed to carry out the responsibilities of the board effectively. Committee membership should reflect the composition of the Board, i.e. a committee should be comprised of members from different sectors, counties, etc. Committees should divide the workload of the board, develop and promote the expertise of members, and permit decision-making between meetings. Entities should have a board development plan to ensure quality membership selection.

**Voting by proxy is not permitted at board or committee meetings.**

### **Removal of Board Members and Officers**

Entities must develop removal provisions in its bylaws, consistent with state nonprofit corporation law, which specifies special notice and other procedural requirements for removal. The board may remove any director or officer for cause, including but not limited to: false certifications on the application, unexcused absences for a certain number of consecutive board meetings, failure to comply with the entity's conflict of interest policy, taking actions not in the best interest of the entity, incapacity, inappropriate conduct.

In instances of waste, fraud, or abuse, a board member **must** be removed immediately after it is discovered.

If any Board Member has been removed from the private or public sector or was not re-elected for the poor sector, they cannot serve in a different sector (i.e. no moving from one sector to another is allowed.)

### **By-Laws Requirements**

Board by-laws shall list the total number of seats on the board per sector. They must include procedures for the selection of new board members in case of a vacancy for any reason. All vacancies shall be filled within 60 calendar days. The democratic selection procedure for the low-income sector must be described in detail.

Board by-laws must describe any performance standards (such as attendance, etc.). These standards must include a standard of conduct which specify expectations and conditions under which board members may be sanctioned or removed.

Board by-laws must describe quorum requirements, which shall be at least 50 percent plus one of the seats on the board.

Board by-laws must describe meeting requirements. Board meetings are subject to the State Open Meetings Act. The board shall meet monthly. Board meetings must be scheduled for the convenience of its members and the general public. Eligible entities shall provide notice in writing of any board meetings and agenda to all members at least 5 calendar days in advance. Electronic notices are acceptable, if members receiving the notices have agreed to accept this form of notification. Meeting notices and agendas shall be made available to the general public and MDHS/DCS at the time they are submitted to the board members.

By-laws must not conflict with any federal or MDHS policies or procedures.

### **Board Minutes**

The board shall conduct meetings and keep written minutes in accordance with Robert's Rule of Order. Board minutes shall be made available to the public upon request. Minutes shall also be made available upon request in a translation of the appropriate language where a significant portion of the low-income population does not speak English.

Copies of the minutes of each meeting shall be submitted to MDHS/DCS no later than 10 calendar days after the date of the meeting in which the minutes were ratified. If the meeting did not have a quorum, the minutes shall be submitted within 3 calendar days of the meeting.

Board minutes must include a public notice of the meeting (newspaper notice, etc.), an agenda, sign-in sheets, and supporting documentation of newly seated board members. In case of any virtual or phone meetings, a virtual attendance document shall be sent to each individual who participated in the meeting and sent back signed and dated. Board minutes must be submitted on agency letterhead.

Policy Effective March 2024

### **Subgrantee List**

<b>AJFC Community Action Agency, Inc.</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Phone Number</b>
Zadier Thomas, Chief Executive Officer <a href="mailto:z.thomas@ajfca.org">z.thomas@ajfca.org</a> 601-442-8681 ext. 200  P.O. Box 3011 (39121) 8A Feltus St. Natchez, MS 39120  Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.	Adams	601-442-8681
	Claiborne	601-437-5419
	Copiah	601-894-4745
	Franklin	601-384-5587
	Jefferson	601-786-3711
	Lawrence	601-587-4370
	Lincoln	601-833-6349
<b>Bolivar County Community Action Agency Inc.</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Phone Number</b>
Elnora Littleton, Executive Director <a href="mailto:capdir@bolivarcaa.org">capdir@bolivarcaa.org</a>  810 E. Sunflower Road, Suite 120 Cleveland, MS 38732  Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.	Bolivar	662-846-1491
<b>Central Mississippi Inc.</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Phone Number</b>
Pamela Gary, Executive Director <a href="mailto:pgary@cmicsp.org">pgary@cmicsp.org</a>  108 South Front Street Winona, MS 38967  Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.	Attala	662-792-4033
	Carroll	662-283-4781
	Grenada	662-226-7953
	Holmes	662-834-2437
	Leflore	662-283-1988
	Montgomery	662-283-4781
	Yalobusha	662-226-7953
<b>Coahoma Opportunities, Inc.</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Phone Number</b>
Edward L. Seals, Executive Director <a href="mailto:eseals@coahomacaa.org">eseals@coahomacaa.org</a>  P.O. Box 1445 115 Issaquena Avenue Clarksdale, MS 38614  Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.	Coahoma	662-624-4887
<b>Community Action of South Mississippi</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Phone</b>
Vanessa Gibson, Executive Director <a href="mailto:vgibson@casoms.org">vgibson@casoms.org</a>  P.O. Box 8723 5343 Jefferson Street Moss Point, MS 39563  Office Hours: 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.	George	601-947- 7454
	Harrison	228-284-6772
	Jackson	228-769-3156

<b>Hinds County Human Resource Agency</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Phone</b>
Kenn Cockrell, President & CEO <a href="mailto:kennco@hchra.org">kennco@hchra.org</a>  P.O. Box 22657 (39211) 258 Maddox Road Jackson, MS 39212  Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.	Hinds	<b>Number</b> 601-923-3950
<b>LIFT, Inc.</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Phone</b>
Dorothy Leasy, Executive Director <a href="mailto:dleasy@liftcaa.org">dleasy@liftcaa.org</a>  P.O. Box 2399, Tupelo, MS 38803 1879 North Coley Road., Tupelo MS 38801  Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.	Calhoun	662-412-2222
	Chickasaw	662-447-2089
	Itawamba	662-862-4894
	Lafayette	662-238-6222
	Lee	662-842-9511
	Monroe	662-369-4695
	Pontotoc	662-489-7329
	Union	662-534-8104
<b>Madison County Citizens Service Agency</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Phone</b>
Dr. Mary Sims-Johnson, Executive Director <a href="mailto:MSJohnson@mccsaweb.org">MSJohnson@mccsaweb.org</a>  P.O. Box 1358 1883 Hwy 43 South Suite M (Main Office) Canton, MS 39046  Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.	Madison	<b>N umber</b>  601-855-5710
<b>Mid-State Opportunity, Inc.</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Phone Number</b>
Lynda Bradford, Executive Director <a href="mailto:midstateopp@bellsouth.net">midstateopp@bellsouth.net</a>  204 North Church Street Charleston, MS 38921  Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. – 4:45 p.m.	DeSoto	662-895-4153
	Panola	662-487-3076
	Quitman	662-326-8131
	Tallahatchie	662-647-2463
	Tate	662-562-7733
	Tunica	662-363-2751
<b>Multi-County Community Service Agency</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Phone Number</b>
Ronald Collier, Executive Director <a href="mailto:rcollier@multicountycsa.org">rcollier@multicountycsa.org</a>  P.O. Box 905 (39302) 2906 St. Paul Street Meridian, MS 39302	Clarke	601-776-3461
	Jasper	601-787-4844
	Kemper	601-743-5752
	Lauderdale	601-483-4838
	Neshoba	601-656-7261
	Newton	601-683-2733



Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.	Scott	601-469-3061
	Smith	601-782-9578
	Wayne	601-735-3470

<b>Northeast MS Community Services</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Phone Number</b>
Steve Gaines, Executive Director <a href="mailto:sgaines@maxxsouth.net">sgaines@maxxsouth.net</a>  P.O. Box 930 801 Hatchie Street Booneville, MS 38829  Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.	Alcorn	662-286-9263
	Benton	662-224-8912
	Marshall	662-252-2713
	Prentiss	662-728-8141
	Tippah	662-837-9812
	Tishomingo	662-423-7013

<b>Pearl River Valley Opportunity, Inc.</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Phone Number</b>
Thomas Morris, Executive Director <a href="mailto:tmorris@prvoinc.org">tmorris@prvoinc.org</a>  P.O. Box 188 756 U.S. Highway 98 Columbia, MS 39429  Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.	Covington	601-765-4871
	Forrest	601-545-8110
	Jefferson Davis	601-792-5356
	Jones	601-428-3171
	Lamar	601-794-1093
	Marion	601-736-9564
	Pearl River	601-798-4944
		(601) Picayune-403-2203
	Perry	601-964-8231
	Greene	601-394-2239
	Hancock	228-231-1314
	Stone	601-928-5540

<b>Prairie Opportunity Inc.</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Phone Number</b>
Laura A. Marshall, Executive Director <a href="mailto:lamarshall@bellsouth.net">lamarshall@bellsouth.net</a> <a href="mailto:lauramarshall@prairieopportunity.org">lauramarshall@prairieopportunity.org</a>  P.O. Box 1526 501 Hwy. 12 West, Suite 110 Starkville, MS 39759  Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.	Choctaw/Webster	662-258-8233
	Clay	662-494-4862
	Leake	601-267-4510
	Lowndes	662-328-1669
	Noxubee	662-726-4861
	Oktibbeha	662-323-3397
	Winston	662-773-3465

<b>South Central Community Action Agency</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Phone Number</b>
Sheletta Buckley, Executive Director <a href="mailto:sbuckley@yoursccaa.com">sbuckley@yoursccaa.com</a>  P.O. Box 6590 (39282) 3891 I-55 South Frontage Road Jackson, MS 39212		
	Madison CSBG/WX	601-407-5473
	Rankin LIHEAP CSBG/WX	601-825-1309
	Simpson LIHEAP	601-439-7208

Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.	CSBG/WX	
	Walthall (WX only)	601-876-6363
<b>Southwest Mississippi Opportunity, Inc.      County      Phone Number</b>		
Keisha Butler, Executive Director <a href="mailto:kbutler@swmocaa.org">kbutler@swmocaa.org</a>  P.O. Box 1667 99649) 4116 Hwy. 51 South McComb, MS 39648  Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.	Amite	601-225-7878
	Pike	601-684-5593
	Pike	601-249-3034
	Walthall	601-876-4511
	Wilkinson	601-888-4211
<b>Sunflower-Humphreys Counties Progress Inc.      County      Phone Number</b>		
Monica Hope, Chief Executive Officer <a href="mailto:mhope@shcpindianola.com">mhope@shcpindianola.com</a>  P.O. Box 908 414 Martin Luther King Drive Indianola, MS 38751  Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.	Humphreys	662-247-1961
	Sunflower	662-887-1431
<b>Warren-Washington-Issaquena-Sharkey CAA      County      Phone Number</b>		
Jannis Williams, Executive Director <a href="mailto:jcwilli@wwisca.org">jcwilli@wwisca.org</a>  P.O. Box 1813 1538 Old Leland Road Greenville, MS 38701  Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.	Issaquena	662-873-2595
	Sharkey	662-873-2595
	Warren	601-638-2474
	Washington	662-378-8663
	Yazoo	662-746-1517

**Authorization of Release of Information Form**

## Authorization of Release of Information Form

By signing below, I, \_\_\_\_\_, acknowledge that additional  
(Client name)  
information or documentation may be needed to determine my household's eligibility for assistance. This  
authorization gives permission and authorizes \_\_\_\_\_  
(Agency Name)  
to release or request information on my behalf to the agencies listed below:

- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_

I understand any information obtained will be kept confidential and will only be used for the purposes of determining eligibility or referral services. This authorization will remain effective for one year from the date of my signature or if I withdraw my consent, whichever comes first.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

### ENERGY VENDOR (Electric/Gas/Water/Wood)

This authorization gives permission to my electric company, \_\_\_\_\_ and/or gas company, \_\_\_\_\_ and/or wood vendor, \_\_\_\_\_ and/or water vendor, \_\_\_\_\_ to provide information about my account to the Mississippi Department of Human Services, Division of Community Services for the purposes of reporting data to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in the LIHEAP Performance Measures Report, and/or eligibility determination, program evaluation, and analysis, including before and after receiving LIHEAP, LIHWAP or Weatherization Services. Information to be provided may include, but not be limited to: my annual energy consumption, cost, billing information, payment history, disconnection, past-due amounts and life support status. This authorization will remain effective for one year from the date of my signature. I also understand that this authorization does not guarantee that my household will receive assistance.

Account Name:	Service Address:
Account Number:	SSN (last 4 digits):

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number

Form ARF-001

**Request for Additional Information**

COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT (CSBG)  
LOW INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LIHEAP)  
LOW INCOME HOUSEHOLDS WATER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LIHWAP)  
WEATHERIZATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (WX)

**REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Completed: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Last four digits)

Date Returned to Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

**Program:**    ☐ CSBG    ☐ LIHEAP    ☐ LIHWAP    ☐ Weatherization

Your application for assistance is pending until the following information is missing:

\_\_\_\_\_ Proof of home energy bill. You may submit a bill from your energy vendor (light bill, gas bill, wood bill, etc.) which shows your name and/or account number OR a statement from your landlord showing that utilities are included in your rent OR a notarized wood vendor verification (Form LI-16) if your primary source of heat is wood.

\_\_\_\_\_ Proof of income

- \_\_\_\_\_ a. Pay stubs or a statement from your employer for last four weeks of employment. The amount you earned BEFORE deductions (gross income) must be shown.
- \_\_\_\_\_ b. Supplemental Security Income (SSI) award letter.
- \_\_\_\_\_ c. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) award letter. (excluding LIHWAP)
- \_\_\_\_\_ d. Social Security award letter
- \_\_\_\_\_ e. Veteran's Benefits award letter.
- \_\_\_\_\_ f. Unemployment income determination letter.
- \_\_\_\_\_ g. Most recent Federal Income tax return with schedule C (self-employed persons only).
- \_\_\_\_\_ h. Unemployment registration printout/verification.
- \_\_\_\_\_ i. Letter from employer stating layoff or termination.

\_\_\_\_\_ Social Security Cards for \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Affidavit

- a. \_\_\_\_\_ Separated Persons
- b. \_\_\_\_\_ Zero Income

\_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

If the requested information is not received within ten (10) days from this date, your application will be denied.

Please return to:

**Phone**  
**Fax**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Client's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Case Worker's Signature

Revised: 05/11/2021

**Notification of Services Form**

COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT (CSBG)  
LOW INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LIHEAP)  
LOW INCOME HOUSEHOLD WATER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LIHWAP)

**NOTIFICATION OF SERVICES**

Household ID: \_\_\_\_\_ Member ID: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Client Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Caseworker: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Grant: ☐ CSBG ☐ LIHEAP ☐ LIHWAP

☐ **LIHEAP Approved**

You have been approved for payment in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
with \_\_\_\_\_.

You have been approved for payment in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
with \_\_\_\_\_.

☐ **CSBG Approved**

You have been approved for payment in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ (domain)  
assistance with your \_\_\_\_\_.

☐ **LIHWAP Approved**

You have been approved for payment in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
with \_\_\_\_\_.

☐ **Denied**

Regretfully, your application can not be approved at this time. The denial of your application was based on the following reason(s):

- ☐ Your income exceeds the eligibility guidelines;
- ☐ You have reached the maximum LIHEAP benefit within your available Energy Type;
- ☐ Information obtained from you and /or other sources is insufficient to determine eligibility
- ☐ You did not return requested additional information within ten days;
- ☐ No agency funds available;
- ☐ Out of compliance with Case Management Service Plan. *(CSBG Only)*
- ☐ Other explanation, if applicable. \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*If you were approved, payment may take up to six (6) weeks. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact your local office. You can appeal denial for assistance by completing and returning the attached Fair Hearing Request form within thirty (30) days of the date of a denial notice.

Revised: 05/11/2021

**Pending Notification of Services**

**COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT (CSBG)  
LOW INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LIHEAP)  
LOW INCOME HOUSEHOLD WATER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LIHWAP)**

**PENDING NOTIFICATION OF SERVICES**

Household ID: \_\_\_\_\_ Member ID: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Client Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Caseworker: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Grant: ☐ CSBG ☐ LIHEAP ☐ LIHWAP

Based on the information provided, you may qualify for service. Your application for assistance has been submitted and is pending approval.

☐ **Pending Approval (LIHEAP)**

You have a pending payment in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for assistance with \_\_\_\_\_

☐ **Pending Approval (CSBG)**

You have a pending payment in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for assistance with \_\_\_\_\_

☐ **Pending Approval (LIHWAP)**

You have a pending payment in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for assistance with \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Client's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Caseworker's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**\*\*If you are approved, payment may take up to six weeks to post as credit on your account. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact your local office. You may appeal denial for assistance by completing and returning the attached Fair Hearing Request form within thirty (30) days of the date of a denial notice.**

Revised: 05/11/2021

**Landlord Verification Form**

**Mississippi Department of Human Services**  
**Division of Community Services**  
**Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)**  
**Landlord Verification Form**

The *Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)* provides appropriate and timely assistance/referrals to eligible households to promote self-sufficiency. Payment will be made directly to the vendor on behalf of the household.

Applicant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Household Members: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Landlord/Manager's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Landlord/Manager's Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Landlord/Manager's Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant's Account Number: \_\_\_\_\_

What is the applicant's monthly rent amount: \_\_\_\_\_

Are there any energy costs (electric or gas) included in the rent?    Yes            No

    If yes, how much is the monthly charge? \_\_\_\_\_

Is the rent past due?    Yes    No    If yes, what is the past due amount? \_\_\_\_\_

Is the applicant at risk of eviction?    Yes            No

Landlord/Manager Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

CSBG Agency Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Paper Intake Application

MS Department of Human Services  
Division of Community Services  
Paper Application Intake

*For Agency Use Only:*  
Date Paper Application Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date Allocation PAID: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date Paper Application Entered in VR: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>HOUSEHOLD</b>									
DATE		AGENCY							
SSN		LAST NAME		FIRST NAME		MI			
ADDRESS						<b>HOME STATUS</b> <input type="radio"/> Own <input type="radio"/> Rent <input type="radio"/> Homeless <input type="radio"/> Shelter <input type="radio"/> Other			
CITY		STATE		ZIP CODE		PHONE NUMBER		EMAIL ADDRESS	
DWELLING TYPE <input type="radio"/> Site Built <input type="radio"/> Mobile				NOTES					
<b>HOME ENERGY INFORMATION</b>									
<b>Select Main Heating Fuel</b> <input type="radio"/> Electric <input type="radio"/> Gas (Natural Gas) <input type="radio"/> Propane <input type="radio"/> Wood <input type="radio"/> Fuel Oil				<b>Select Supplemental Energy Source</b>		<input type="radio"/> Electric as supplemental heating fuel <input type="radio"/> Gas(Natural Gas) as supplemental heating fuel <input type="radio"/> Propane as supplemental heating fuel <input type="radio"/> Fuel Oil (Kerosene) as supplemental heating fuel <input type="radio"/> Other supplemental heating fuel (Wood)			
Energy Provider	Electricity Account #:	Natural Gas Provider:	Natural Gas Account #:	Propane Provider	Propane Account #:	Fuel Oil Provider:	Fuel Oil Account #:	Wood Provider:	Wood Account #:

DCS Revised: 08/2021

MS Department of Human Services  
Division of Community Services  
Paper Application Intake

### HOUSEHOLD INFORMATION WORKSHEET

	Last Name	First Name	MI	SSN	Income Source 1	Income Source 2	Income Source 3	Total
HH								
1.								
2.								
3.								
4.								
5.								
6.								
7.								

### HOUSEHOLD INFORMATION CONTINUED

	Relationship to HH	Birth Date	Gender	Ethnicity	Education Status	Last Grade Completed	Marital Status	Type of Insurance	Elderly	Disabled	Veteran
HH											
1.											
2.											
3.											
4.											
5.											
6.											
7.											

\*Add extra pages as needed for additional members

DCS Revised: 08/2021



MS Department of Human Services  
**Division of Community Services**  
*Paper Application Intake*

ROMA	
Presenting Problem	
Previous Contact	
Social History	
Notes	

DCS Revised: 08/2021

MS Department of Human Services  
**Division of Community Services**  
*Paper Application Intake*

Problem (Area)		Initiation Date:		Target Date:
Problem (Situation)			Condition:	
Goal:			Achieve:	
Outcome:				
Comments/Notes:				

CASE MANAGEMENT SERVICE PLAN				
Service Objective:	Responsibility:	Target Date:	Accomplished Date:	Notes:

DCS Revised: 08/2021

MS Department of Human Services  
Division of Community Services  
*Paper Application Intake*

<b>SERVICES</b>								
SERVICE	DOLLAR UNIT	TIME UNIT	GRANT	VENDOR NAME	ELEMENT CODE	GL CODE	CLIENT ACCOUNT #	DOLLAR AMOUNT

Service Notes	
------------------	--

Applicant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Worker's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

*DCS Revised: 08/2021*

MS Department of Human Services  
Division of Community Services  
*Paper Application Intake*

<b>LIHEAP Matrix</b>	<b>Propane</b>	<b>Electric</b>	<b>Natural Gas</b>	<b>Wood/Other</b>	<b>Total Electric</b>
<b>Allowed</b>					
<b>Used</b>					
<b>Waiting on Approval</b>					
<b>Remaining</b>					

*DCS Revised: 08/2021*

Affidavit

## Affidavit

To be completed and signed by the applicant and/or household member.

1. Date of Application \_\_\_\_\_

2. Applicant's Name \_\_\_\_\_

3. Name of Household Member \_\_\_\_\_

4. Relationship to Applicant ☐ Self ☐ Spouse ☐ Authorized Representative  
☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

5. Household Member Social Security Number \_\_\_\_\_

6. Household Member Birthdate \_\_\_\_\_

Please check one: ☐ Authorized Representative applying for services on behalf of the applicant.

☐ Separation

☐ Zero-Income Household

☐ Unemployed

☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_, STATE THAT I \_\_\_\_\_  
FOR THE PERIOD OF \_\_\_\_\_ TO \_\_\_\_\_.

**I UNDERSTAND THAT I CAN BE PENALIZED BY FINES, IMPRISONMENT, AND/OR REIMBURSEMENT OF SERVICES FOR MAKING FALSE STATEMENTS.**

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Authorized Rep. \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Notary Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Revised 05/08/2023

**Federal Poverty Guidelines**

<b><u>FEDERAL POVERTY GUIDELINES EFFECTIVE</u></b>			
<b><u>Effective Dates</u></b>		<b><u>10/1/2023</u></b>	<b><u>10/1/2023</u></b>
<b><u>CSBG, LIHEAP,</u></b>		<b>CSBG</b>	<b>LIHEAP</b>
<b>Number in Household</b>	<b>100 % Category</b>	<b>125% Category</b>	<b>60% State Median Income</b>
<b>unit</b>	<b>Percent of Poverty</b>	<b>Percent of Poverty</b>	<b>Percent of Poverty</b>
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	Contact MDHS/DCS@20 members for LIHEAP