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**IDAPA 16
TITLE 04
Chapter 14**

16.04.14 - RULES GOVERNING THE LOW INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

000. LEGAL AUTHORITY.

This program is authorized by Section 2602, Title XXVI, Pub. L. No. 97-203, also known as the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Act of 1981, and by provisions of Sections 56-202 and 56-203, Idaho Code, which authorize the Department of Health and Welfare to assist low-income people of the state with financial assistance and to enter into contracts with the federal government to provide assistance. (7-1-99)

001. TITLE AND SCOPE.

01. Title. These rules are to be cited in full as Idaho Department of Health and Welfare Rules, IDAPA 16.04.14, "Rules Governing the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program". (7-1-99)

02. Scope. The intent of the program is to provide assistance to eligible low income households particularly those with the lowest incomes, that pay the highest proportion of their income for home energy, primarily in meeting their immediate home energy needs. (7-1-99)

03. Program Limitation. This federally funded program does not entitle any household to a certain amount or form of assistance. (7-1-99)

002. POLICY.

It is the policy of the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, to serve the citizens of Idaho and to distribute the Low Income Home Energy Assistance benefits in accordance with acceptable standards. An eligible participant household will receive one (1) benefit payment from the regular program assistance and may be eligible to receive an additional benefit payment when an energy crisis situation exists which may be health threatening to the household members. (7-1-99)

003. DEFINITIONS.

Definitions applicable to IDAPA 16.04.14 are listed in Subsections 003.01 through 003.23. (7-1-99)

01. Application. The action by which a participant indicates in writing to the Department a desire to receive Low Income Home Energy Assistance. The participant will be designated as the head of household on the application; and will be the recipient of benefits for the household. (7-1-99)

02. Community Action Agency. A private non-profit organization serving the low income population in specified counties of the state with which DHW has entered into a contract for the provision of services for purposes of LIHEAP. (7-1-99)

03. Crisis Intervention. Energy assistance provided to an eligible participant household to reduce/eliminate an energy related health threatening situation to the household. (7-1-99)

04. Department. The Department of Health and Welfare. (7-1-99)

05. Eligible Participant Household. A participant household which meets the standard of eligibility set forth in these rules. (7-1-99)

06. Eligible Subsidized Housing. Public subsidized rental housing in which the tenant is responsible for all or a portion of their home energy costs. (7-1-99)

07. Energy Burden. The expenditures of the participant household for home energy when compared to the household's income. (7-1-99)

08. Energy Supplier. A vendor supplying home heating energy who is not a member of an eligible participant household. (7-1-99)

09. Fraud. Recipient fraud is indicated where there appears to be a deliberate attempt to conceal or misrepresent pertinent information which could affect eligibility or grant amounts. (7-1-99)
10. Fuel. A latent form of energy used to produce residential heat. (7-1-99)
11. Head of Participant Household. The person designated by the household members to receive energy assistance benefit in behalf of the household and in whose favor the energy assistance warrant is written.(7-1-99)
12. Highest Home Energy Needs. The home energy requirements of participant household determined by taking into account both their energy burden and unique situation that results from having members of vulnerable populations, including very young children, individuals with disabilities and frail older individuals. (7-1-99)
13. Income. Income is the gross amount of moneys actually received in the participant household from all sources outlined in the Department WEB Operational Manual. (7-1-99)
14. Ineligible Subsidized Housing. Public housing in which tenants' rental payments include all home energy costs. (7-1-99)
15. Overpayment. An incorrect energy assistance payment. (7-1-99)
16. Participant. An individual or group of individuals which has made application for the Low Income Home Energy Program from the state of Idaho. (7-1-99)
17. Participant Household. A household is one of the following: (7-1-99)
- a. An individual living alone; or (7-1-99)
 - b. A group of individuals who are living together as one (1) economic unit where residential energy is customarily purchased in common or who make undesignated payments for energy in the form of rent. (7-1-99)
18. Primary Fuel. The type of fuel declared by the participant household to be the major source of their home heating. (7-1-99)
19. Proof of Income. Documentary proof to establish the participant household's financial eligibility for assistance. (7-1-99)
20. Vendor. An energy supplier or utility supplying home energy and who is not a member of an eligible participant household. (7-1-99)
21. Warrant. The document issued by the Department through the State Controller's Office as the benefit payment to LIHEAP eligible participant households. (7-1-99)
22. Wood User. An individual who cuts or buys wood for use as the primary source of home heat. Such participant households will receive a one (1) party warrant. (7-1-99)
23. Utility. A vendor of energy regulated by the Idaho Public Utilities Commission. (7-1-99)

004. ABBREVIATIONS.

Abbreviations applicable to IDAPA 16.04.14 are listed in Subsections 004.01 through 004.08.

01. AABD. Aid to the Aged, Blind, and Disabled. (7-1-99)
02. CAA. The Community Action Agency. (7-1-99)

- 03. Department. The Department of Health and Welfare. (7-1-99)
- 04. FS. The Food Stamp program. (7-1-99)
- 05. LIHEAP. The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program. (7-1-99)
- 06. OMB. The Federal Office of Management and Budget. (7-1-99)
- 07. SSI. The Supplemental Security Income Program. (7-1-99)
- 08. TAFI. Temporary Assistance to Families in Idaho. (7-1-99)

005. FORMS - BY NUMBER AND A NAME.

For the purposes of determining participant LIHEAP eligibility, Department prescribed forms will be used. (7-1-99)

006. -- 099. (RESERVED).

100. PARTICIPANT CASE RECORD.

The participant case record is the documentary basis justifying the expenditure of LIHEAP funds. All material pertinent to a participant household will be retained for a permanent record. Each decision justifying a participant household is eligible or ineligible for LIHEAP benefits, must be supported by information in the permanent record showing that each eligibility requirement is met or that one (1) or more eligibility requirements are not met. (7-1-99)

101. ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES.

Funds made available through the LIHEAP grant will be used as follows: (7-1-99)

01. Home Utility and Bulk Fuel Costs. These costs include those incurred by the eligible participant household for electricity, natural gas and bulk fuel for home energy needs, but does not include costs incurred for telephone, water, trash or sewer. (7-1-99)

02. Emergency Crisis Intervention Costs. A portion of the LIHEAP grant funds are reserved for home heating supply shortages experienced by the participant household or a weather-related emergency which threatens the health or lives of an area's inhabitants such that the Governor declares a state of emergency. (7-1-99)

03. Low-cost Residential Weatherization. Funds reserved for weatherization services to low-income households pursuant to Department of Energy, Weatherization Assistance Program Regulations, when in accordance with federal LIHEAP Regulations. (7-1-99)

102. PARTICIPANT RIGHTS.

The participant has rights protected by federal and state laws and Department rules. The Department or their designee must inform the participant of their rights during the application process and eligibility determination, as follows: (7-1-99)

01. Right to Apply. Any participant household wishing to apply must be given the opportunity, without delay, to apply for LIHEAP benefits. All participants must apply in writing. (7-1-99)

02. Right to a Hearing. Rules governing hearing rights are contained in Idaho Department of Health and Welfare Rules, IDAPA 16.05.03, Sections 300, et seq., and Section 503, "Rules Governing Contested Cases and Declaratory Rulings". (7-1-99)

03. Civil Rights. The rights of participant households must be respected under the U.S. and Idaho Constitutions, the Social Security Act, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and all other relevant provisions of federal and state law, including the avoidance of practices which violate a person's privacy or subjection to harassment. (7-1-99)

103. PARTICIPANT RESPONSIBILITIES.

Each participant applying for LIHEAP benefits must, to the extent permitted by their physical and mental condition, provide all necessary and reasonable verification to establish eligibility, and must otherwise cooperate in the eligibility determination process. (7-1-99)

104. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PROGRAMS.

LIHEAP benefits paid to eligible participant households must not be counted as income or resources for any purpose under any federal or state law, including any law relating to taxation, public assistance, or welfare programs. (7-1-99)

105. -- 149. (RESERVED).

150. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS AND COLLATERAL CONTACTS.

All participant households assisted through LIHEAP must provide proof of both financial eligibility requirements and non-financial eligibility requirements. (7-1-99)

01. Failing to Meet the Financial and Non-Financial Eligibility. Participant households failing to meet the financial and non-financial eligibility requirements will be denied LIHEAP assistance. (7-1-99)

02. Participant's Signature. A participant's signature on the application is their consent for the Department to contact collateral sources for verification of the eligibility requirement(s). (7-1-99)

151. INCOME ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS.

Assistance under this program is limited to participant households with gross income at or below one hundred and thirty percent (130%) of the current OMB Poverty Guidelines, which are in affect at the start of the program year. Participant households must provide proof of income for all members during the application process. (7-1-99)

01. When Income Considered. For the purpose of determining LIHEAP eligibility and benefit amount, participant household income which is received at least monthly, income received in the three (3) month period prior to the date of their application, will be used. (7-1-99)

02. Income Which Is Received Less Frequently Than Monthly. For household income which is received less frequently than monthly, including seasonal and self-employment income, their annual income amount will be converted by dividing the total amount by four (4) to get an average three (3) month amount to be used. (7-1-99)

03. Treatment of Alien Resident Income. If a household includes both eligible and persons ineligible by virtue of their resident alien status, and one (1) or more of the ineligible participants had income during the period being reported, the ineligible participants' income will be included to determine the household's eligibility. (7-1-99)

152. NONFINANCIAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS.

For the purpose of assistance under LIHEAP, the participant household must meet the following non-financial eligibility requirements. (7-1-99)

01. Residence. At the time the application is completed, the participant must reside in the state of Idaho. There is no durational residence requirement. LIHEAP benefits are not transferable to an out-of-state residence. (7-1-99)

02. Living Situation. The participant household must reside in housing where they are vulnerable to a home energy cost and incur the costs either directly or as an undesignated portion of their rent. Living situation not vulnerable to energy costs include, hospitals; nursing homes; shelter homes, commercial boarding homes, and rehabilitation center. (7-1-99)

03. Native Americans. Native American households whose tribe has entered into a separate agreement with the federal funding agency and the Department to receive LIHEAP grant funds, are not entitled to benefits under this program unless: (7-1-99)

- a. Tribal funds are not available. (7-1-99)
- b. Funds are depleted and an emergency exists. (7-1-99)
- 04. Resident Status. Participants must be citizens of the United States. As part of the application process, participants must sign a declaration, under penalty of perjury, attesting to citizenship status of all household members. (7-1-99)
- 05. Energy Conservation Education. As part of the application for LIHEAP assistance, the participant must participate in an energy conservation education session. (7-1-99)
- 06. Residential Weatherization Energy Audit. Participant households must agree to have an energy audit performed on their residence to determine weatherization needs of the dwelling. When one (1) or more of the following conditions exist, a waiver to the energy audit will be granted to the household: (7-1-99)
 - a. The participant household residence has previously been weatherized by the CAA. (7-1-99)
 - b. The participant household does not own their residence and is unable to obtain an agreement from the property owner. (7-1-99)
 - c. The participant household can document the existence of a medical or other condition which prohibits the CAA from performing the energy audit on their residence. (7-1-99)

153. -- 199. (RESERVED).

200. INTAKE PROCESS.

Low-income participants may complete an application for LIHEAP benefits at a CAA. The CAA will submit the participant household information contained on the application to the Department on-line computer system for issuance of eligibility notification. (7-1-99)

201. APPLICATION PROCESS.

A participant must be provided a prompt opportunity to complete an application for assistance. Application forms must contain a statement which clearly explains participant's civil and criminal liability for the truthfulness of the information included on the forms; and their right to a hearing according to Idaho Department of Health and Welfare Rules, IDAPA 16.05.03, "Rules Governing Contested Cases Proceedings and Declaratory Rulings". (7-1-99)

- 01. Date of Application. The participant application process begins the date the completed and signed application and all supporting forms are received by the CAA. (7-1-99)
- 02. Participant Representation. A participant household may be assisted by a person or persons of their choice and, when accompanied by such persons, may be represented by them. (7-1-99)
- 03. Signature. The application must be signed by the participant designated at the head of household, or their designee. (7-1-99)
 - a. The designee's signature must be followed by his address, if different from that of the participant household, and by the word "designee". (7-1-99)
 - b. Employees of the CAA or the Department must not be designated to sign the application. (7-1-99)
- 04. Signature by Mark. A signature by mark requires two (2) witnesses. The signatures and addresses of the witnesses must appear on the application, followed by the word "witness". (7-1-99)
- 05. Assistance with Application. When completing the application forms or obtaining required documentation, each participant must be provided assistance from the CAA, including the provision for interpreters

for participant households with limited or non-English speaking skills. (7-1-99)

202. APPLICATION TIME LIMITS AND DISPOSAL ACTIONS.

Unless circumstances beyond the control of the Department prohibit it, each application is to be acted upon within thirty (30) days from the date the application is completed and signed by the participant. An application for LIHEAP assistance must be disposed of by one (1) of the following three (3) methods: (7-1-99)

01. Approval. A determination the participant household is eligible for LIHEAP benefits. (7-1-99)
02. Denial. A determination the participant household is ineligible for LIHEAP benefits or that eligibility could not be determined due to lack of necessary information or verification. (7-1-99)
03. Withdrawal. The participant household voluntarily requests that no further consideration be given to their application or the participant becomes deceased. (7-1-99)

203. NOTIFICATION OF DECISION.

Each participant household must be notified, in writing, of the decision made with regard to their LIHEAP application for assistance. (7-1-99)

01. Approvals. At the time the application is completed, the participant household will receive a copy of their preliminary approval notification. The Department issuance of the benefit payment or denial notice will be the participant household's formal eligibility notification. (7-1-99)
02. Denials or Withdrawals. The LIHEAP Notice of Denial will be provided to participant households denied assistance and include the reason for the denial and an explanation of the participant household's right to appeal the eligibility decision. (7-1-99)

204. BENEFIT DETERMINATION.

Eligible participant households will have their benefit amount determined according to their income, county of residence, source of home energy, energy burden, and energy needs based upon the household's unique situation i.e. children under six (6) years of age, individuals with disabilities and frail individuals sixty (60) years of age or older. (7-1-99)

205. METHOD OF PAYMENT.

There are three (3) methods for paying LIHEAP benefits to eligible participant households. Each payment is based on the source of the home energy and whether the energy cost is paid by the participant directly or indirectly. (7-1-99)

01. Direct Payment to Energy Supplier. (7-1-99)
02. Two-Party Payment. (7-1-99)
03. One-Party Payment. (7-1-99)

206. -- 299. (RESERVED).

300. CONDITION OF PAYMENT ENDORSEMENT.

When an eligible participant household receives a LIHEAP benefit payment directly, they must endorse it and take it to their designated energy supplier. Two-party payments will have the name of the energy supplier imprinted on the face of the warrant. When an eligible participant and their energy supplier endorse the LIHEAP benefit payment, they certify that to the best of their knowledge, the funds are being used to provide home energy for the eligible participant household. (7-1-99)

301. VENDOR AGREEMENTS.

All participating energy suppliers must enter into a vendor agreement with the Department to provide home energy assistance to eligible participant households. (7-1-99)

302. OVERPAYMENTS.

All overpayments a participant household is not eligible to receive must be repaid to the Department. (7-1-99)

303. -- 994. (RESERVED).

995. PROVISIONS CONTINGENT UPON FEDERAL FUNDING.

The provisions in Sections 000 through 999 inclusive, are contingent upon availability and receipt of funds appropriated through federal legislation. When federal funds are not available to the state of Idaho, these provisions or any part therein shall be considered dormant and there may be no advance notice of termination or reduction of benefits may be disposed. In the event that additional funds are available a supplemental payment can be made, in an equitable manner, to each eligible household at the discretion of the Director. (7-1-99)

996. -- 999. (RESERVED).