

Dear Agency,

Beginning in FY 2016, the Federal Government required states to report LIHEAP Performance Measure data. Over the last few years, in preparation for this new requirement, we asked you (our local partners) to begin collecting additional household data during LIHEAP application and intake processes.

[STATE OR AGENCY] wants to take this opportunity to thank you for your cooperation and assistance with this additional LIHEAP data collection. Your hard work allows us to demonstrate results of LIHEAP to the federal government, and to provide solid statistics to those advocating for continued program funding at current and increased levels.

For years, [STATE OR AGENCY] has collected data related to LIHEAP household income, age, vulnerability status, and benefit levels. However, the recently expanded data collection also allows us to demonstrate:

- The energy burden of all households who apply, and how LIHEAP benefits lower that burden.
- Whether or not high energy burden households (those with lower income and higher energy bills) are receiving greater benefits, and whether those benefit are reducing their energy burden as much as (or more than) all households.
- The number of occurrences where a LIHEAP benefit restored energy service (heat or electric).
- The number of occurrences where a LIHEAP benefit prevented loss of home energy service (e.g., disconnection, running out of fuel, or inoperable equipment).

[STATE OR AGENCY] would like to take this opportunity to share the [REPORTING PERIOD] results of our LIHEAP data collection.

### What We Learned

- Last year [STATE OR AGENCY] assisted [#] [Line A, Column I, Part V of LIHEAP Performance Data Form \(PDF\)](#) households with LIHEAP bill payment assistance, helping to defray their heating and cooling costs.
- Out of these [#] [Line A, Column I, Part V of LIHEAP PDF](#) of households receiving bill payment assistance, [STATE OR AGENCY] was able to collect billing data and determine the energy burden for [#] [Line B1, Column I, Part V of LIHEAP PDF](#) of households.
- The average income for all bill payment assisted households was [\$\$] [Line B2, Column I, Part V of LIHEAP PDF](#). The average energy bill (main heating + electric) was [\$\$] [Line B6, Column I, Part V of LIHEAP PDF](#). **This means that before receiving LIHEAP, households are paying an average of [%] [Line B7, Column I, Part V of LIHEAP PDF](#) of their annual income on home energy costs (energy burden).**
- In [REPORTING PERIOD], the average annual total LIHEAP bill payment assistance benefit per household was [\$\$] [Line B3, Column I, Part V of LIHEAP PDF](#)— paying [%] [Line B10, Column I, Part V of LIHEAP PDF](#) of the average household's energy bill.

The LIHEAP Statute requires states to assure “that the highest level of energy assistance will be furnished to those households that have the lowest incomes and the highest energy costs or needs in relation to income, taking into account family size” (42 U.S. C. §8624(b)(5)). Therefore, using the data provided by vendors, [STATE OR AGENCY] identified the 25% of households with the greatest energy burden, and compared these with all LIHEAP households.

- LIHEAP bill payment assisted households with the highest energy burden had income [%] lower than all households. The average annual income for all households was [\$\$] *Line B2, Column I, Part V of LIHEAP PDF* while the income for high burden households was [\$\$] *Line C2, Column I, Part V of LIHEAP PDF*.
- On the other hand, the annual energy bills of high burden households was greater than for all households. The average energy bill for all households was [\$\$] *Line B6, Column I, Part V of LIHEAP PDF* while the energy bill for high burden households was [\$\$] *Line C6, Column I, Part V of LIHEAP PDF*.
- Lower incomes and higher costs translates into more significant energy burden, with high burden households paying an average [%] *Line C7, Column I, Part V of LIHEAP PDF* of their annual income toward energy costs (versus [%] *Line B7, Column I, Part V of LIHEAP PDF* for all households).
- In [REPORTING PERIOD], the average annual total LIHEAP bill payment assistance benefit per high burden household was [\$\$] *Line C3, Column I, Part V of LIHEAP PDF*, compared to [\$\$] *Line B3, Column I, Part V of LIHEAP PDF* for all households.
- During [REPORTING PERIOD], LIHEAP bill payment assistance benefits paid [%] *Line C10, Column I, Part V of LIHEAP PDF* of high burden household annual home energy costs, compared to [%] *Line B10, Column I, Part V of LIHEAP PDF* for all households.

One of the goals of LIHEAP is to address home energy crises (including home energy loss). Households who become disconnected or run out of fuel face increased health and safety risks, as well as costly reconnection fees and deposits. During [REPORTING PERIOD]:

- LIHEAP benefits prevented [#] *Line A1, Column I, Part VII of LIHEAP PDF* occurrences of households having their main heat and/or electric service disconnected, and [#] *Line A2, Column I, Part VII of LIHEAP PDF* occurrences of households running out of deliverable fuels (oil, propane, wood). Additionally, in [#] *Line A3, Column I, Part VII of LIHEAP PDF* cases, the program repaired or replaced energy equipment at imminent risk of failure—thereby preventing home energy loss.
- LIHEAP benefits restored home energy [#] *Line A1, Column I, Part VI of LIHEAP PDF* times for households who were already disconnected by their utility provider and [#] *Line A2, Column I, Part VI of LIHEAP PDF* times for households who were already out of deliverable fuel (oil, propane, wood, etc). Additionally, in [#] *Line A3, Column I, Part VI of LIHEAP PDF* cases, the program restored home energy through repair or replacement of inoperable energy equipment.

Many of the statistics noted above are available by specific fuel type in the attached “LIHEAP Performance Management Snapshot.” Additionally, the LIHEAP Performance Management Website and Data

Warehouse (<https://liheappm.acf.hhs.gov/>) allows open access to several years of state and national LIHEAP data related to available funding, allocations, households served, eligible populations, and more.

### **Moving Forward**

Performance Measures allow us to continually evaluate the impact of our program and make improvements wherever feasible. For example, are there ways we can be reaching households before they become disconnected or run out of fuel? Are there ways we could adjust our benefit matrix to address disparities in benefits by fuel type? Our **[office, agency, staff]** welcome your observations, questions, and ideas as you look through the attached LIHEAP Performance Management Snapshot and visit the LIHEAP Performance Management website. **[I, We]** encourage you to think of ways that the impacts of LIHEAP could be maximized at both the local and state level.

As we use these statistics to evaluate and demonstrate the need for LIHEAP, it is important to obtain data which is representative and accurate. During the past year, [STATE OR AGENCY] has identified the following data collection challenges:

- **Example:** The “disconnected” and “out of fuel” checkboxes in the data system were not required fields, and therefore, local agencies are not providing data. This poses a challenge when reporting on prevention or restoration measures.
- **Example:** Local agencies are consistently failing to enter the account holder name into the data system (when the applicant is not the account holder). This poses a challenge when requesting data from home energy vendors at the end of the year.
- **Example:** There is no field in the data system to identify when a household is nearly out of delivered fuel. This poses a challenge when reporting on prevention or restoration measures.

In some cases, the above challenges will require changes in our data system (for example, adding new fields and making others required). In other cases, (e.g., accurate data entry), there may be a need for additional training or clarification. We invite you to share your thoughts and ideas as we work to improve the quality of our state data.

Thank you, again, for partnering with us. Working together we can help our most vulnerable residents remain safe and **[warm/cool]** in their homes. Thanks, too, for helping us demonstrate the importance of LIHEAP and the need for continued funding of this valuable assistance program.

Sincerely,

LIHEAP Coordinator