

# **LIHEAP Data Case Study: Changes in Targeting Vulnerable Populations Over Time**

This case study was prepared by the PMIWG Data Case Studies Team with the support of  
APPRISE.

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## Executive Summary

The LIHEAP statute prioritizes households with vulnerable members (adults 60 years old and over, members with disabilities, or children 5 years old and younger) and requires that grantees design outreach procedures that target LIHEAP assistance to low-income vulnerable households. This case study shows LIHEAP grantees how to assess whether their low-income vulnerable households have been targeted with LIHEAP assistance by using the Indiana program as an example.

Between 2012 and 2016 in Indiana, the number of low-income households decreased by 5 percent, but was outpaced by a 23 percent decrease in the number of low-income households served with LIHEAP heating assistance.<sup>1</sup> As a result, the share of low-income households served by LIHEAP decreased from 17 percent of income-eligible households to 14 percent of income-eligible households. Since the number of households served declined, Indiana was able to issue supplemental benefits that increased the amount received by each household and potentially increase the program impact. However, they were only able to do this because they served a smaller share of the income-eligible population.

The following are important findings from the analysis for Indiana:

- **Elderly Income-Eligible vs. Elderly Recipients:** The number of income-eligible elderly households remained about the same between 2012 and 2016. However, the number of elderly LIHEAP recipients decreased by 6 percent.
- **Disable Income-Eligible vs. Disabled Recipients:** The number of income-eligible disabled households remained about the same between 2012 and 2016. However, the number of disabled LIHEAP recipients decreased by 13 percent.
- **Young Child Income-Eligible vs. Young Child Recipients:** The number of income-eligible young child households decreased by 12 percent between 2012 and 2016. The number of young child LIHEAP recipients decreased even more by 39 percent.

Overall, Indiana found that it is serving a smaller share of their income-eligible households and that they see the largest decline in the share of young child households. That gives them a starting point for thinking about what types of outreach they might want to conduct to improve their targeting of those vulnerable families.

States are encouraged to examine this case study topic using their own data, which are available in the LIHEAP Performance Management Website [Data Warehouse](#).

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<sup>1</sup> Data for fiscal years 2015 and 2016 should be considered preliminary pending final data.

## **Introduction**

The LIHEAP statute prioritizes households with vulnerable members (adults 60 years old and over, members with disabilities, or children 5 years old and younger) and requires that grantees design outreach procedures that target LIHEAP assistance to low-income vulnerable households. One of the main goals of LIHEAP is to target these vulnerable households because inadequate home heating and/or cooling can result in serious health risks, and HHS has identified households with members that are elderly, young children, or disabled as more susceptible to these risks.

Successfully targeting vulnerable low-income households with LIHEAP assistance is the result of a combination of factors, including how well the program serves the overall low-income population, funding levels, program outreach and marketing, and external factors. For example, during the Great Recession, there was a substantial increase in the overall low-income population and the need for program services, nationwide, which led to an increase in the number of applications and program funding. Program outreach and marketing were not prioritized but states were able to serve a greater share of the low-income population because the need for program services was so high.

More recently, as the country has rebounded economically from the recession, there have been reported decreases in applications and program funding has decreased. During this more “normal” program period, program outreach and marketing may be more important for reaching hard-to-serve vulnerable populations. As such, the focus of this case study is on the last five years (2012 to 2016) for which program data are available. The case study will examine how one state (Indiana) has served its income-eligible population and vulnerable low-income households over time.

## **Case Study: Indiana**

### *Overall Program*

Table 1 below shows changes in the LIHEAP program in Indiana between 2012 and 2016, including the overall low-income population, number of households served, and funding levels for heating assistance.

- The overall low-income population decreased from 769,995 households in 2012 to 733,638 households in 2016 (5 percent decrease).
- The number of low-income households that received heating assistance decreased from 134,165 households in 2012 to 103,159 households in 2016 (23 percent decrease).
- The share of the low-income population served decreased from about 17.4 percent served in 2012 to 14.1 percent served in 2016 (19 percent decrease).
- However, while the share of low-income households served has decreased over the years, the program funding obligated to heating assistance has generally increased (from \$31.5 million in 2012 to \$45.6 million in 2016). As a result, the level of heating assistance

provided to recipient households has increased (from \$233 per heating assistance recipient in 2012 to \$439 per heating assistance recipient in 2016).

**Table 1 – LIHEAP Program in Indiana**

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Federally Income-Eligible Households<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Households Receiving Heating Assistance</b>	<b>Percent of Income-Eligible Households Served</b>	<b>Total Funding for Heating Assistance</b>	<b>Reported Average Heating Assistance Benefit</b>
2012	769,995	134,165	17.42%	\$31,532,289	\$233
2013	752,121	133,484	17.75%	\$39,246,187	\$292
2014	749,412	130,404	17.40%	\$42,960,819	\$330
2015*	741,875	117,758	15.87%	\$34,064,608	\$287
2016*	733,638	103,159	14.06%	\$45,623,721	\$439

\*Data for fiscal years 2015 and 2016 should be considered preliminary pending final data.

In order to examine how Indiana has served its vulnerable population over time, the case study will look at three reports available in the LIHEAP Performance Management Website [Data Warehouse](#), and compare these to the overall program statistics in Table 1:

1. The number of low-income vulnerable households (Census data).
2. The number of low-income vulnerable households who received LIHEAP assistance (program data).
3. The percent of low-income vulnerable households who received LIHEAP assistance (Census and program data).

#### *Income-Eligible Population by Vulnerability*

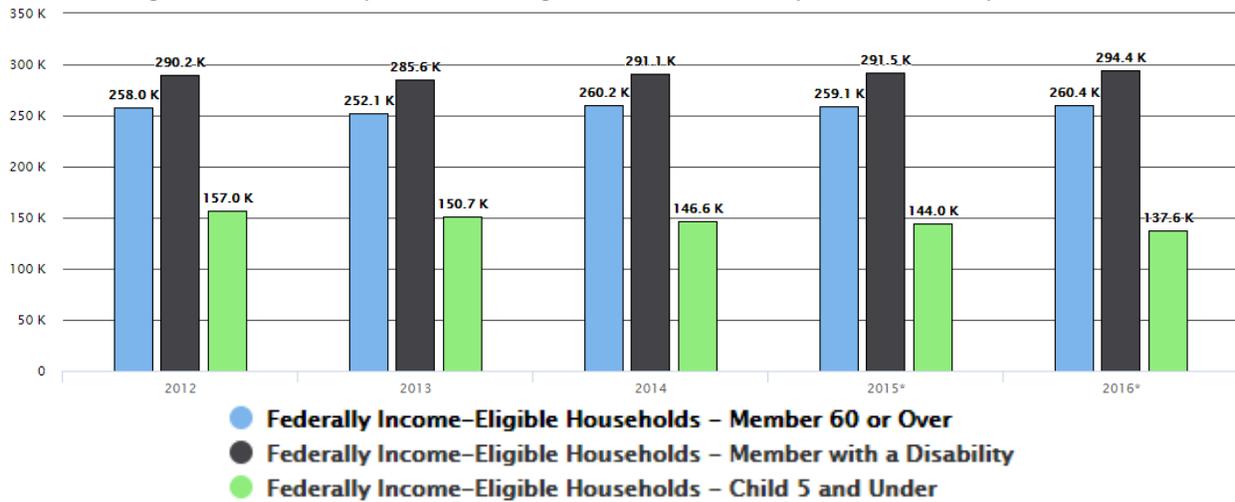
As shown previously in Table 1, the overall number of low-income households in Indiana decreased by about 5 percent as the economy improved. Figure 1 shows the number of low-income households with vulnerable members in Indiana, separated by the three vulnerable population groups.

- The number of low-income households with a member 60 years old or over has remained about the same over the period (about 260,000 elderly low-income households).
- The number of low-income households with a disabled member has remained about the same over the period (about 290,000 disabled low-income households).
- The number of low-income households with children 5 and under has decreased over the time period, from 156,972 in 2012 to about 137,620 in 2016 (12 percent decrease).

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<sup>2</sup> Federally income-eligible households are those with income at or below the federal maximum income guidelines for LIHEAP, i.e. the greater of 150 percent of the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Poverty Guidelines or 60 percent of State Median Income, based on household size. Throughout the case study, “income-eligible” and “low-income” are used interchangeably and refer to households that are federally income-eligible.

**Figure 1: Federally Income-Eligible Households by Vulnerability - Indiana**



Fiscal Year	Federally Income-Eligible Households - Member 60 or Over	Federally Income-Eligible Households - Member with a Disability	Federally Income-Eligible Households - Child 5 and Under
2012	258,016	290,192	156,972
2013	252,067	285,556	150,713
2014	260,248	291,052	146,552
2015*	259,118	291,500	144,009
2016*	260,446	294,421	137,620

\*Data for fiscal years 2015 and 2016 should be considered preliminary pending final data.

To access these data for your own state, log onto the [LIHEAP Performance Management Website](#) and access the [Guided Search single state reports](#). For details on how to use the Guided Search reports, refer to [Appendix A](#).

### *Households Served by Vulnerability*

As shown previously in Table 1, the overall number of households that received LIHEAP heating assistance in Indiana decreased by about 23 percent from 2012 to 2016. Figure 2 shows the number of low-income vulnerable households in each population group that received LIHEAP heating assistance in Indiana between 2012 and 2016.<sup>3</sup> The number of vulnerable low-income households served in each group decreased over the period, but at different rates.

- The number of elderly low-income households served decreased from 38,100 in 2012 to 35,640 in 2016 (6 percent decrease).
- The number of disabled low-income households served decreased from 49,962 in 2012 to 43,562 in 2016 (13 percent decrease).

<sup>3</sup> Heating assistance is shown because the total number households receiving LIHEAP heating assistance is unavailable prior to 2011. Grantees who mainly provide cooling assistance through LIHEAP may want to examine their count of cooling assistance recipients by vulnerability when examining this case study topic.

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- The number of young child low-income households served decreased from 30,203 in 2012 to 18,307 in 2016 (39 percent decrease).

**Figure 2: Households Receiving Heating Assistance by Vulnerability - Indiana**



Fiscal Year	Households Receiving Heating Assistance - Member 60 or Over	Households Receiving Heating Assistance - Member with a Disability	Households Receiving Heating Assistance - Child 5 and Under
2012	38,100	49,962	30,203
2013	37,829	49,377	29,051
2014	38,019	49,050	26,979
2015*	37,195	47,161	22,795
2016*	35,640	43,562	18,307

\*Data for fiscal years 2015 and 2016 should be considered preliminary pending final data.

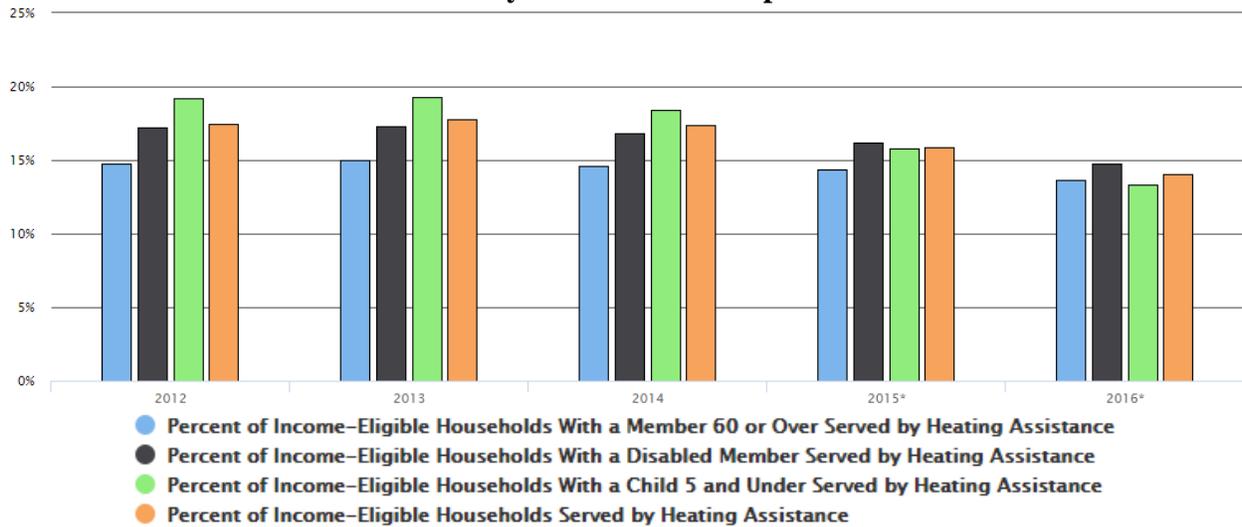
To access these data for your own state, log onto the [LIHEAP Performance Management Website](#) and access the [Guided Search single state reports](#). For details on how to use the Guided Search reports, refer to [Appendix A](#).

### *Percent of Income-Eligible Population Served by Vulnerability*

As shown previously in Table 1, the overall percent of low-income households that received LIHEAP heating assistance decreased by about 19 percent from 2012 to 2016. Figure 3 shows the percentage of vulnerable low-income households that received LIHEAP heating assistance in Indiana between 2012 and 2016.

- About 14.8 percent of low-income households with elderly members were served in 2012 compared to 13.7 percent in 2016 (7 percent decrease).
- About 17.2 percent of low-income households with disabled members were served in 2012 compared to 14.8 percent in 2016 (14 percent decrease).
- About 19.2 percent of low-income households with young children were served in 2012 compared to 13.3 percent in 2016 (31 percent decrease).

**Figure 3: Percent of Federally Income-Eligible Households Receiving LIHEAP Heating Assistance by Vulnerable Group - Indiana**



Fiscal Year	Percent of Income-Eligible Households Served by Heating Assistance - Member 60 or Over	Percent of Income-Eligible Households Served by Heating Assistance - Disabled Member	Percent of Income-Eligible Households Served by Heating Assistance - Child 5 and Under	Percent of Income-Eligible Households Served by Heating Assistance
2012	14.77%	17.22%	19.24%	17.42%
2013	15.01%	17.29%	19.28%	17.75%
2014	14.61%	16.85%	18.41%	17.40%
2015*	14.35%	16.18%	15.83%	15.87%
2016*	13.68%	14.80%	13.30%	14.06%

\*Data for fiscal years 2015 and 2016 should be considered preliminary pending final data.

To access these data for your own state, log onto the [LIHEAP Performance Management Website](#) and access the [Guided Search single state reports](#). For details on how to use the Guided Search reports, refer to [Appendix A](#).

In addition, Figure 3 shows the percent of all low-income households served by heating assistance to enable a direct comparison with the vulnerable low-income population groups. The data shown in Figure 3 can be interpreted in the following way:

- If the percentage of vulnerable low-income households served is greater than the percentage of all low-income households served, then the vulnerable population is being better targeted by the program relative to the overall population of low-income households.
- If the percentage of vulnerable low-income households served is less than that of all low-income households served, then the vulnerable population is not being targeted by the program relative to the overall population of low-income households.

When the share of the vulnerable low-income population served is compared with the share of the overall low-income population served between 2012 and 2016, the following trends are observed:

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- Elderly low-income households have been less targeted by the program compared to the overall low-income population – in each year, less share of the elderly low-income population was served than the overall low-income population.
- Disabled low-income households have been targeted about equally by the program compared to the overall low-income population, with a slightly higher share of the disabled low-income population served in 2016 compared to the overall low-income population.
- Initially, low-income households with young children were better targeted by the program compared to the overall low-income population, but more recently, less share of the low-income population with young children has been served than the overall low-income population.

### Summary of Findings

The following is a summary of how Indiana’s LIHEAP program has served the overall low-income population and each vulnerable group between 2012 and 2016:

- Overall, the number of low-income households decreased by about 5 percent, and the number of low-income households served with heating assistance decreased by about 23 percent. The percent of low-income households served decreased by about 19 percent. However, the households that were served received higher average benefits because funding obligated by Indiana for heating assistance increased over this period.
- The number of low-income households with an elderly member remained about the same, but the number of elderly low-income households that received heating assistance decreased by about 6 percent. The percent of elderly low-income households served decreased by about 7 percent. Relative to the overall low-income population, elderly low-income households were targeted less, but the gap has shrunk.
- The number of low-income households with a disabled member remained about the same, but the number of disabled low-income households that received heating assistance decreased by about 13 percent. The percent of disabled low-income households served decreased by about 14 percent. Relative to the overall low-income population, disabled low-income households were targeted less between 2012 and 2014, but targeted slightly better in 2015 and 2016.
- The number of low-income households with a young child member decreased by about 12 percent, and the number of young child low-income households that received heating assistance decreased by about 39 percent. The percent of young child low-income households served decreased by about 31 percent. Relative to the overall low-income population, young child low-income households were targeted better between 2012 and 2014 but targeted less in 2015 and 2016.

States are encouraged to examine this case study topic using their own data (see [Appendix A](#) for instructions to access the data using Data Warehouse Guided Search on the LIHEAP Performance

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Management Website.) When answering the case study topic, additional questions or areas for analysis may arise, many of which can be answered using the Data Warehouse. If you need assistance in examining this case study for your state, or have additional questions you would like to examine, please contact Kevin McGrath ([kevin-mcgrath@appraiseinc.org](mailto:kevin-mcgrath@appraiseinc.org)) and Dan Bausch ([daniel-bausch@appraiseinc.org](mailto:daniel-bausch@appraiseinc.org)) at APPRISE.

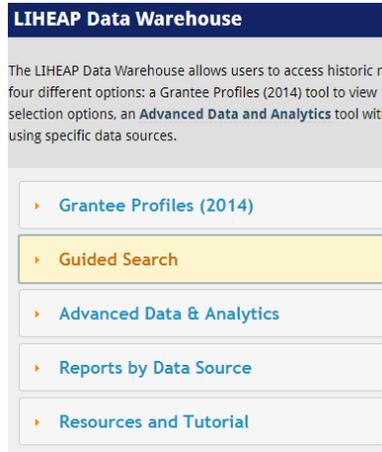
# **Appendix A: Tutorial for Accessing the Data**

**Access the Single State Program Reports in the Data Warehouse/Guided Search**

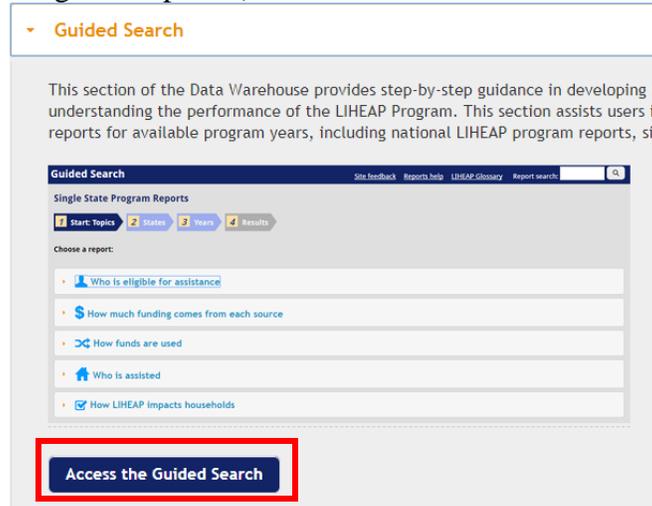
1. From the [LIHEAP Performance Management Website](#), click the [Data Warehouse](#) tab on the blue main menu bar near the top of the page.



2. Go to the [Guided Search](#). This section of the Data Warehouse allows users to create predefined reports and tables that can help them better understand the performance of their LIHEAP programs, including reports to understand how vulnerable populations are being targeted with LIHEAP assistance.



3. Under [Guided Search](#), click “Access the Guided Search”. The Guided Search allows you to examine Single State Reports (information for a specific state), State Comparison Reports (information to compare multiple states), and National LIHEAP Program Reports (national statistics for the LIHEAP program).



4. Under [Single State Program Reports](#), click “Access reports” to get to the Single State Program Reports page.

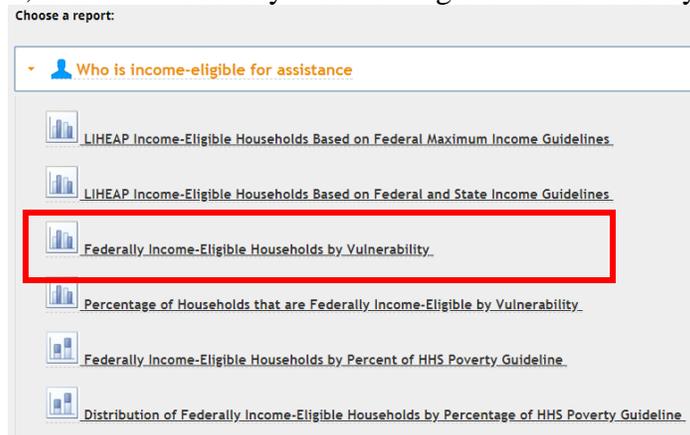


### Examine Data on the Vulnerable Population (Census Data)

1. The [Single State Program Reports](#) page has multiple categories of reports. To examine the income-eligible population by vulnerability, click on “Who is income-eligible for assistance”.



2. A dropdown menu will appear. To view the number of income-eligible households with elderly, young children, or disabled members, click on “Federally Income-Eligible Households by Vulnerability”.



3. Choose the state you want to examine and then click “Next”. [If you are logged into your user account, your state will be listed as the default state.]

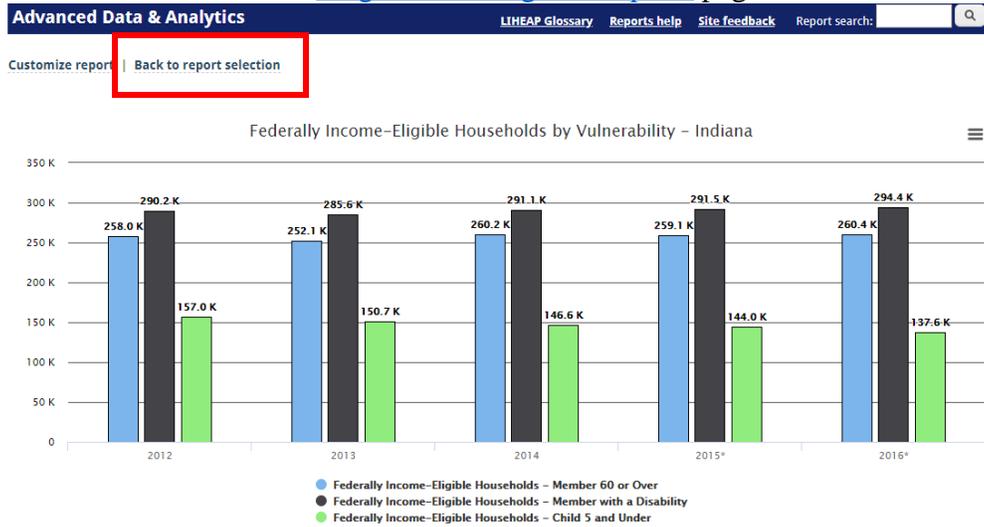


4. Choose the fiscal years to examine. The report will default to the last 10 years. [If you are logged into your user account, you will be able to view the most recent data for your state, including data that are not publicly available at this time.] Adjust the slider to select more or less years. Then click on “View report”.



## Appendix A: Tutorial for Accessing the Data to Examine Case Study Topic

5. The report will now be displayed as a chart and table. The data can also be exported into Excel. Click on “Back to report selection” to return to the [Single State Program Reports](#) page.

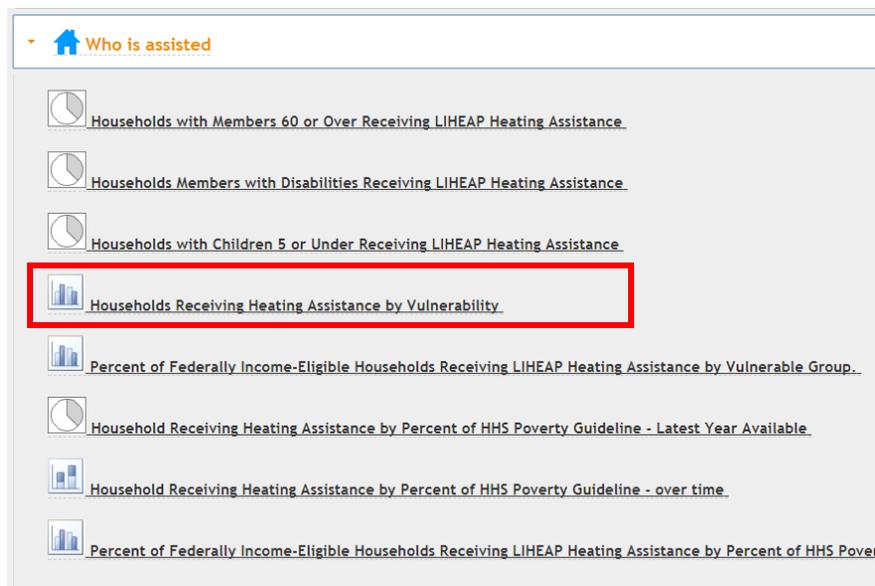


### Examine Data on Vulnerable Recipients (Program Data)

6. From the [Single State Program Reports](#) page, click on “Who is assisted”.

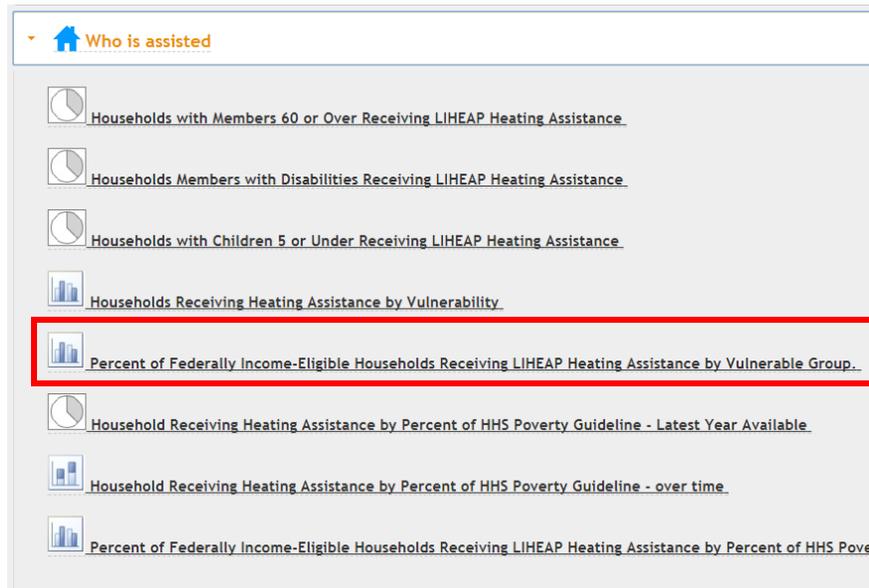


7. A dropdown menu will appear. To view the number of households that received LIHEAP heating assistance and had vulnerable household members, click on “Households Receiving Heating Assistance by Vulnerability”. Repeat steps 3-5 to generate the report.

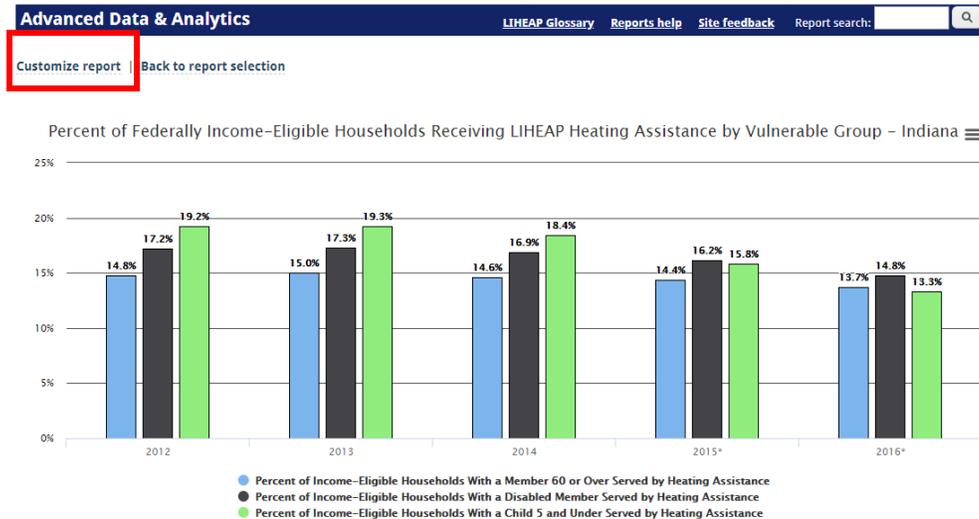


**Examine Data on Percent of Vulnerable Population Served (Program and Census Data)**

8. Return to the Single State Program Reports page and click on “Who is assisted” (step 6). To view the percentage of eligible vulnerable households receiving assistance, click on “Percent of Federally Income-Eligible Households Receiving LIHEAP Heating Assistance by Vulnerable Group”. Repeat steps 3-5 to generate the report.



9. The report will show the percent of the income-eligible vulnerable population that received LIHEAP heating assistance. In the case study report, a fourth column was added to the analysis showing the percent of all income-eligible households that received LIHEAP heating assistance, in order to determine whether vulnerable households were targeted to a greater, lesser, or the same extent as all households. To add the percent of all income-eligible households that received LIHEAP heating assistance to the report, click on “Customize report”.



10. On the next page, under “Step 1: Select the data fields you want to use”, make the following selections:

- Select the kind of data you want (left column): “Percent Served by LIHEAP”
- Select a data category (middle column): “Heating Assistance”
- Select data fields (right column): “Percent of Income-Eligible Households Served by Heating Assistance”

## Appendix A: Tutorial for Accessing the Data to Examine Case Study Topic

**Step 1: Select the data fields you want to use:**

**Select the kind of data you want:**

- LIHEAP Funding
- LIHEAP Recipients
- LIHEAP Average Benefits
- LIHEAP Income-Eligible Population
- Percent Served by LIHEAP**

**Select a data category:**

- Heating Assistance**
- Cooling Assistance
- Crisis Assistance
- Weatherization
- Total (Any Type of Assistance)

**Select data fields (hover for help):**

- Percent of Income-Eligible Households Served by Heating Assistance
- Percent of Income-Eligible Households <100% Served by Heating Assistance
- Percent of Income-Eligible Households 101%-125% Served by Heating Assistance
- Percent of Income-Eligible Households 126%-150% Served by Heating Assistance

11. The new data field will be added to the selections under “Step 2: Filter your data for analysis”. Go to “Step 3: Build and customize your data report” and click on “Multiple bars”. Then click on “Create Your Data Report”.

**Step 3: Build and customize your data report:**

**Select how to display your data: [?]**

- Multiple bars

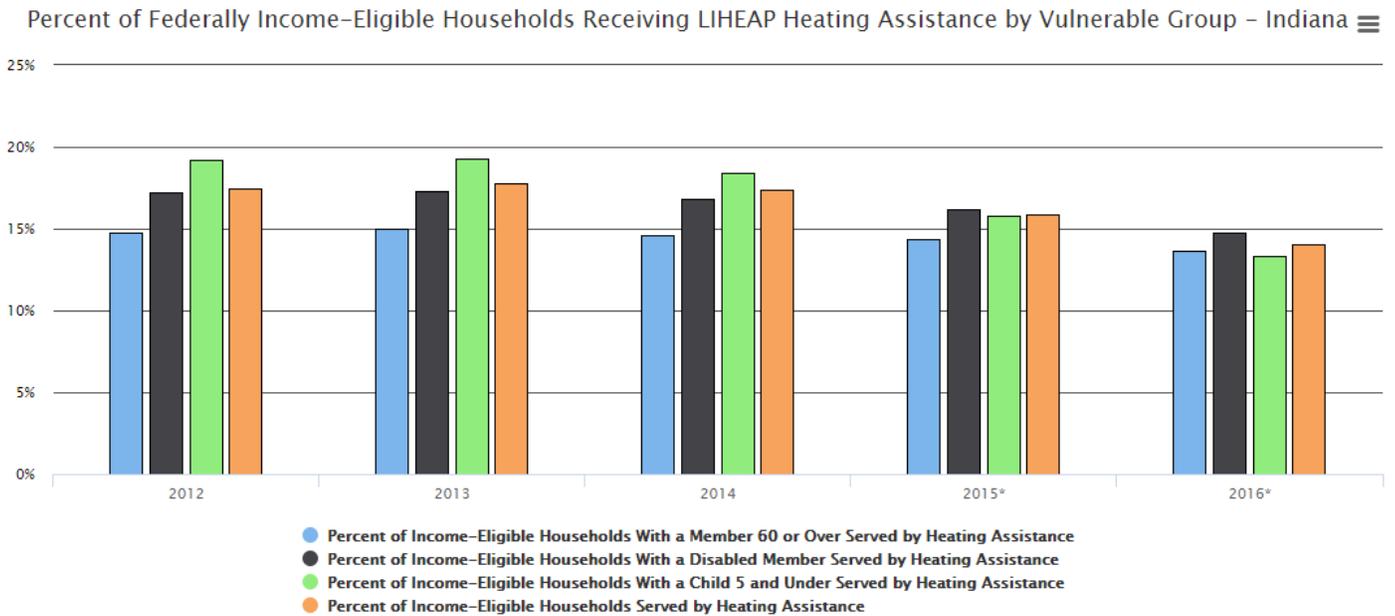
**Add a title, subtitle, and description: Clear**

Percent of Federally Income-Eligible Households Receiving LIHEAP Heating Assistance by Report Sub-title

Source: Reports submitted by grantees and U.S. Census data. [More information on the me](#)

**Create Your Data Report**

12. The chart now includes the “Percent of Income-Eligible Households Served by Heating Assistance”.



13. **Helpful Tip:** The charts generated in the Data Warehouse are dynamic, meaning users can choose which data fields they would like to see or remove from the chart by clicking on the data labels in the legend (without having to remove the data fields from the report selection). This functionality can give users a better comparison view across the groups they are interested in looking at. The example below shows the chart with two of the vulnerable groups (elderly and young children) removed from the chart so that a direct comparison can be made between the percent of all income-eligible households served and the percent of income-eligible households with disabled members served.

## Appendix A: Tutorial for Accessing the Data to Examine Case Study Topic

