

LOW INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Fiscal Year 2015



**State of Alaska
Heating Assistance Program
Division of Public Assistance
Department of Health & Social Services**

FY 2015 Plan

**William J. Streur
Commissioner**

**Sean Parnell
Governor**

Introduction

This document is the State of Alaska's proposed grant application and plan for the fiscal year (FY) 2015 Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). The plan covers the period of October 1, 2014 through September 30, 2015.

The purpose of the LIHEAP program is to provide assistance to low income households to offset the high cost of home heating. The State's LIHEAP block grant is administered by the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), Division of Public Assistance, and is known as the Heating Assistance Program (HAP).

This plan addresses the procedures used by the DHSS Heating Assistance Program. The LIHEAP funded heating assistance programs operated by tribal organizations are independent, and not subject to the provisions of this plan.

Beginning with Federal Fiscal Year 2015, LIHEAP grantees must submit their plan electronically through the federal On-Line Data Collection System. The following is a completed paper copy of the new reporting form for review and public comments.

For more information contact the Heating Assistance Program, P.O. Box 110640, Juneau, Alaska 99811-0640; voice/TDD (907) 465-3099; In Juneau Fax (907) 465-5254. In all other areas Fax toll free 1-888-282-3319; or email: liweap@alaska.gov.

The Commissioner of the Department of Health and Social Services, William H. Streur, has signed the assurances required under the current LIHEAP statute. A copy of the Governor's delegation of LIHEAP signatory authority to the Commissioner will be included with this application.

LOW INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LIHEAP)

DETAILED MODEL PLAN

PUBLIC LAW 97-35, AS AMENDED

FY 2015

State of Alaska

EIN: 926001185

Heating Assistance Program

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PLEASE CHECK ONE: TRIBE _____ STATE X INSULAR AREA _____

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

**August 1987, revised 05/92, 02/95, 03/96, 12/98, 11/01
OMB Approval No. 0970-0075
Expiration Date: 4/30/2014**

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

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

Section 1

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

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

Dates of Operation

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Heating assistance | Start date: 10/1/14 | End date: 4/30/15 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Cooling assistance | Start date: | End date: |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Crisis assistance | Start date: 11/1/14 | End date: 4/30/15 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Weatherization assistance | Start date: 4/1/15 | End date: 9/30/15 |

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

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

67 % heating assistance

0 % cooling assistance

9 % crisis assistance

3 % weatherization assistance

10 % carryover to the following Federal fiscal year

10 % administrative and planning costs

1 % services to reduce home energy needs including needs assessment (Assurance 16)

0 % used to develop and implement leveraging activities

100 % **TOTAL**

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

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

- Heating assistance
- Weatherization assistance
- Cooling assistance
- Other (specify): _____

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

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

	Heating	Cooling	Crisis	Weatherization
SNAP	x		x	
TANF	x		x	
SSI	x		x	
Means-tested veteran's program				
Other (Specify): <u>LIHEAP Grant</u>				x

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

- Yes No -- If yes, explain:

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

- Categorical eligibility is only use for the income verification portion of our calculation. All households, regardless of whether they are categorically eligible, must complete an application, provide proof of out-of-pocket heating costs greater than \$200 a year, and meet the other eligibility criteria. The same calculation is used for all households.

SNAP Nominal Payments

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

- Yes No

Amount of Minimal Assistance: \$ 0

Frequency of Assistance:

- Once per year

- Once every five years
 Other (describe): N/A

Determination of Eligibility – Countable Income

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

- Gross Income
 Net Income

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

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

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

Section 2 - HEATING ASSISTANCE

Eligibility, 2605(b)(2) – Assurance 2

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

2014 HHS poverty income level 150 %

OR

FY 2015 state's median income %

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

Yes No

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

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

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

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

- Applications are premailed to previously assisted vulnerable applicants/households one month before the season opens to the general public. They are allowed to apply early so that their benefit is on our first payment run in November.
- After the season opens, applications received from vulnerable households are prioritized by putting a green dot on the file folder containing their application. Applications are filed (to be worked) by date received. When workers go to pull applications from each date, they take all the folders with green dots first and work those before others received on the same day.

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

- Income
- Family (household) size
- Home energy cost or need:
 - Fuel type
 - Climate/region
 - Individual bill
 - Dwelling type
 - Energy burden (% of income spent on home energy)
 - Energy need
 - Other (Describe) [Please see Attachment B for more specifics](#)

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

2.6 Describe benefit levels:

\$ 300 Minimum benefit

\$ 5,250 Maximum benefit

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

Yes No -- If yes, describe.

Section 3: COOLING ASSISTANCE -- *Not Applicable The State of Alaska does not provide cooling assistance*

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

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

2014 HHS poverty income level n/a %

OR

FY 2015 median income _____%

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

Yes No

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

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

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

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

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

- Income
 Family (household) size

- Home energy cost or need
 - Fuel type
 - Climate/region
 - Individual bill
 - Dwelling type
 - Energy burden (% of income spent on home energy)
 - Energy need
 - Other (describe)

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

3.6 Describe benefit levels:

\$ _____ Minimum benefit \$ _____ Maximum benefit

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

Yes No -- If yes, describe.

Section 4: CRISIS ASSISTANCE,

Eligibility - 2604(c), 2605(c)(1)(A)

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

2014 HHS poverty income level 150 %

OR

FY 2015 state median income _____ %

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

- The household must be within 48 hours of shutoff, out of fuel, or within a day of running out of fuel.
- Their income for the month prior to the date they signed their application must be less than their shelter costs (mortgage/rent, electric and heat) for the same time period.

4.3 What constitutes a life-threatening crisis?

- Same as 4.2. In Alaska any home without heat is in a life threatening situation because of the severe cold temperatures we have.

Crisis Requirements, 2604(c)

4.4 Within how many hours do you provide crisis assistance that will resolve the energy crisis for eligible households? 18 Hours

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

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

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

Yes No

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

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

- Households with high energy burdens?
- Other?

● In order to receive crisis assistance:

- Must the household have received a shut-off notice or have a near empty tank?
- Must the household have been shut off or have an empty tank?
- Must the household have exhausted their regular heating benefit?
- Must renters with heating costs included in their rent have received an eviction notice?
- Must heating/cooling be medically necessary?
- Must the household have non-working heating or cooling equipment?
- Other?

● Do you have additional/differing eligibility policies for:

- Renters?
- Renters living in subsidized housing?
- Renters with utilities included in the rent?

Determination of Benefits

4.8 How do you handle crisis situations?

- Separate component
- Fast Track
- Other

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

- Amount to resolve crisis, up to a maximum of \$ n/a
- Other

Crisis Requirements, 2604(c)

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

Yes No

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

■ Submit applications for crisis benefits without leaving their homes?

Yes No If yes, explain.

- In these situations we will accept an application over the phone and expedite it with the understanding that if the household doesn't qualify after we receive their application back (signed and with required documentation) they will need to repay the benefit. The application is sent to the client after we expedite it so that they may sign it and provide the necessary proof and return it to us.

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

Yes No o If yes, explain.

- We use fee agents to assist clients in our rural communities.

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

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

Winter Crisis \$ 5250 maximum benefit

Summer Crisis \$ 0 maximum benefit

Year-round Crisis \$ 0 maximum benefit

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

Yes No If yes, describe.

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

Yes No [We use weatherization funds](#)

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

NOT APPLICABLE	Winter Crisis	Summer Crisis	Year- round Crisis
--------------------------------	------------------	------------------	--------------------------

Heating system repair			
Heating system replacement			
Cooling system repair			
Cooling system replacement			
Wood stove purchase			
Pellet stove purchase			
Solar panel(s)			
Windmill(s)			
Utility poles / Gas line hook-ups			
Other (Specify): _____			

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

Yes No _____

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

- Not applicable

Section 5: WEATHERIZATION ASSISTANCE

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

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

2014 HHS poverty income level _____%

OR

FY 2015 state median income 60 %

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

5.3 Name the agency. Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC)

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

- The State did not transfer any money to weatherization in FFY 2014. In FFY 2015 we plan on transferring a small amount of block grant funding. A monitoring schedule will be put in place after the funds have been transferred to AHFC.

WEATHERIZATION - Types of Rules

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

Entirely under LIHEAP (not DOE) rules

Entirely under DOE WAP (not LIHEAP) rules

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

Income Threshold

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

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

Other (describe)

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

Income Threshold

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

- Weatherization measures are not subject to DOE Savings to Investment Ratio (SIR) standards.
- Other (describe)

Eligibility, 2605(b)(5) – Assurance 5

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

Benefit Levels

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

- Yes No

S

5.10 What is the maximum amount? \$ n/a

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

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

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Weatherization needs assessments/audits | <input type="checkbox"/> Cooling system replacement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Caulking and insulation | <input type="checkbox"/> Energy related roof repair |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Install storm windows | <input type="checkbox"/> Major appliance repairs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> heating system repairs | <input type="checkbox"/> Major appliance replacement |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Heating system replacement | <input type="checkbox"/> Install windows/sliding glass doors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cooling system repairs | <input type="checkbox"/> Install doors (interior/exterior) |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Install water heater |

Water conservation measures

Other (describe)

Compact florescent light bulbs

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

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

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

Publish articles in local newspapers or broadcast media announcements.

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

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

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

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

Other (specify):

- Display ad in Senior Voice – a monthly newspaper for seniors
- We send out pre-season start-up packets with posters, flyers, staff contact information, crisis information, etc. to over 400 agencies in early September.
- Participate in Homer Electric’s two energy fairs
- The Regulatory Commission of Alaska takes our applications to their Alaska State Fair booth.
- Other opportunities to make presentations or attend fairs as they arise.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Fee agents are used in communities throughout Alaska.

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

N/A – do not provide cooling assistance

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

Fee agents are used in communities throughout Alaska.

	<u>Heating</u>	<u>Cooling</u>	<u>Crisis</u>	<u>Weatherization</u>
Who determines client eligibility?	<u>State</u>	<u>n/a</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>AHFC</u>
Who processes benefit payments to gas and electric vendors?	State	n/a	State	N/A
Who processes benefit payments to bulk fuel vendors? Deliverables	State	n/a	State	N/A
Who performs installation of weatherization measures?	N/A	N/A	N/A	AHFC subcontractors*

*RurALCap, Interior Weatherization, Alaska Community Development Corporation (ACDC)

8.5 What is your process for selecting local administering agencies?

- We do not use local agencies for processing and intake.
- AHFC is the state's weatherization agency

8.6 How many local administering agencies do you use? 0

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

Yes No

8.8 Why? N/A

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

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

9.1 Do you make payments directly to home energy suppliers?

Heating Yes No

Cooling Yes No

Crisis Yes No

Are there exceptions? Yes No

- Direct payments are made to applicants' whose heat is included in their rent and our wood or self-harvest wood heat clients. We are in the process now of conducting outreach to wood cutters to become wood vendors so that we may reduce the number of direct pays we issue.

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

- They are mailed a Notice of Action in the mail that details how much assistance is being paid to each vendor (some clients chose to have part of their benefit go towards their electric account).

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

- It is covered in their vendor agreement

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

- It is covered in their vendor agreement

9.5 Do you make payments contingent on unregulated vendors taking appropriate measures to alleviate the energy burdens of eligible households? Yes No. If so, how?

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

- 10.1. How do you ensure good fiscal accounting and tracking of LIHEAP funds?
- Case workers are not allowed to process payments; they work the case and the account technician processes payments.
 - The Program Coordinator runs reports from the state’s accounting system and monitors spending.
 - Leg audit audits the program to ensure we are doing things accurately and correctly.
 - We work with our chief admin officer who also reviews spending to be sure we are on track and in compliance.

Audit Process

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

Yes

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

Finding	Type	Brief Summary	Resolved?	Action Taken
1	Incorrect Payment	1 client approved who was over income due to incorrect threshold used	Yes	Corrected threshold amount and additional staff training
2	State Plan	10 applicants did not live in a dwelling type included in the plan	Partially	The dwelling type left out of the plan was added; the second issue requires a regulation change which has not happened
3	Allowable Costs	Utility bills not in some files; others showed credit balances	Yes	We are requiring bills from all applicants; we will only issue a new payment if a credit on an account is less than one year’s worth of usage.

10.4. Audits of Local Administering Agencies -- **Not Applicable – do not use local agencies or district offices. All applications come to the HAP unit for processing.**

- o What types of annual audit requirements do you have in place for local administering agencies/district offices?
 - Local agencies/district offices are required to have an annual audit in compliance with the Single Audit Act and OMB Circular A-133.
 - Local agencies/district offices are required to have an annual audit (other than A-133).
 - Local agencies/district offices' A-133 or other independent audits are reviewed by Grantee as part of compliance process.
 - Grantee conducts fiscal and program monitoring of local agencies/district offices.

Compliance Monitoring

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

Grantee employees:

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

Local Administering Agencies/District Offices: **Not Applicable**

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

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

10.7. Describe how you select local agencies for monitoring reviews?
Site Visits: **N/A**
Desk Reviews: **N/A**

10.8. How often is each local agency monitored? **N/A**

10.9. What is the combined error rate for eligibility determinations?
N/A

10.10. What is the combined error rate for benefit determinations? **N/A**

10.11. How many local agencies are currently on corrective action plans for eligibility and/or benefit determination issues? **None – N/A**

10.12. How many local agencies are currently on corrective action plans for financial accounting or administrative issues? **None – N/A**

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

11.1 How did you obtain input from the public in the development of your LIHEAP plan?

Check all that apply:

- Tribal Council meeting(s)
- Public Hearing(s)
- Draft Plan posted to website and available for comment
- Hard copy of plan is available for public view and comment
- Comments from applicants are recorded
- Request for comments on draft Plan is advertised
- Stakeholder consultation meeting(s)
- Comments are solicited during outreach activities
- Other, describe:
 - The hearing and plan comment requests were advertised through our legislative information offices
 - Conducted a meeting of the Heating Assistance Policy Advisory Committee on July 22 after the public hearing to discuss the plan, changes, and review the previous year’s successes and challenges.

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

- Will complete after hearing/comment period.

Public Hearings, 2605(a)(2)

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

Date	Event Description
July 22, 2014	Public hearing at the legislative information office in Anchorage with calls coming in from legislative information offices across the state. Folks could attend in person or call in.

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

- Will complete after hearing/comment period.

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

- Will complete after hearing/comment period.

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

- Will complete after hearing/comment period.

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

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

Seven

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

None

12.3 Describe any policy and/or procedural changes made in the last Federal fiscal year as a result of fair hearings? None

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

- Applicant requests hearing in writing within 30 days of denial.
- Case is reviewed by a supervisor and/or the Eligibility Office Manager
- If not resolved at the local level the case is escalated to a Public Assistance Field Services Analyst to review and make a determination on.

12.5 When and how are applicants informed of these rights?

- The rights are printed on their Notice of Action.
- The information is in our program application booklet under “Your Rights and Responsibilities.”
- When applicant calls to dispute the denial, advised by caseworker or supervisor.

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

- If an applicant calls to complain about their application not being worked in a timely manner, and it is longer than 45 days since we received their application, we pull the application and work it immediately.

12.7 When and how are applicants informed of these rights?

- The information is in our program application booklet under “Your Rights and Responsibilities”

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

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

- We have not had a formal program in the past. This service has been provided as part of the weatherization program through AHFC. For our FY 2015 budget we include some money to purchase information and energy saving items to be distributed at energy fairs and presentations.

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

- We will estimate our expected LIHEAP funding and then track our expenditures to make sure we do not exceed 5%.

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

- This was not provided by our program in the previous fiscal year.

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

- N/A. This was not provided by our program in the previous fiscal year.

13.5 How many households applied for these services?

- N/A

13.6 How many households received these services?

- N/A

Section 14: Leveraging Incentive Program, 2607A

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

Yes No

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

- We obtain records from the State’s Power Cost Equalization Program, AHFC, and our tribal partners.
 - We ask the PCE Unit to provide us with a report showing which utilities participated, how much of a discount they received each month, and what the average annual electric bill was (kWh usage) for each community.
 - We ask AHFC to provide us with information on the non-federal money they used to install weatherization in homes. The amount they provide to us is from state funds and income through AHFC’s mortgages that is used for weatherization.
 - For Citgo information we ask the tribes to provide us with the dollar amount representing Citgo benefits paid to LIHEAP eligible households.

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

What is the type of resource or benefit?	What is the source(s) of the resource?	How will the resource be integrated and coordinated with the LIHEAP program?
Power Cost Equalization-reduces the cost of power in rural AK	State GF	Coordinated efforts to reduce home energy costs
CITGO Heating Oil Payments	CITGO/Petroleos de Venezuela	Available to prequalified tribal LIHEAP clients; administered by tribes who also administer LIHEAP
Non Federal-Funded Weatherization Services	Alaska Housing Finance Corporation	Coordinated effort to reduce energy consumption; each agency conducts outreach for the other; LIHEAP award is an automatic prequalifier for weatherization
Alaska Affordable Heating Program	State GF	Monies are used to pay benefits to LIHEAP households when LIHEAP funds are exhausted

Section 15: Training

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

a. Grantee Staff:

Formal training on grantee policies and procedures

How often?

Annually

Biannually

As needed

Other – Describe:

Employees are provided with policy manual – [accessed via State DPA website](#)

Other – Describe:

b. Local Agencies: Not Applicable – we do not use local agencies

Formal training conference

How often?

Annually

Biannually

As needed

Other – Describe:

On-site training

How often?

Annually

Biannually

As needed

Other – Describe:

Employees are provided with policy manual

Other – Describe:

c. Vendors

Formal training conference

How often?

Annually

Biannually

As needed

Other – Describe:

Policies communicated through vendor agreements

Policies are outlined in a vendor manual

Other – Describe: [Visits to vendors as time permits](#)

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

Yes

No

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

16.1 Describe performance goals and measures that will be tracked for the upcoming Federal fiscal year.

- Disconnects prevented and restorations of service will be tracked through application questions.
- We will attempt to manually collect usage information. This will be very time consuming until it is automated. Work was done to create a vendor portal to collect the energy usage data but it was struck down by the State’s IT Governance Committee. We were informed we would need to wait until we are incorporated into ARIES (the state’s new eligibility system). We have been informed that the target date for this is July 2016.
- We are also asking questions on our application to determine if clients use more than one heating source/vendor over the year. This will help us determine if we have complete data from our delivered fuel vendors.
- We are working with our software contractor to try to identify reports we can run/ways we can make this process more efficient and less time consuming for all involved (vendors as well as HAP staff).

16.2 Summarize results of performance goals and measures for the prior Federal fiscal year.

- We were able to report in the PMIWG pilot test that we restored service to 702 households and prevented loss of service to 540 households.

Section 17: Program Integrity, 2605(b)(10)

17.1. Fraud Reporting Mechanisms

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

- Online Fraud Reporting
- Dedicated Fraud Reporting Hotline
- Report directly to local agency/district office or Grantee office
- Report to State Inspector General or Attorney General
- Forms and procedures in place for local agencies/district offices and vendors to report fraud, waste, and abuse.
- Other – describe:

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

- Printed outreach materials
- Addressed on LIHEAP application
- Website

Other – describe: [Fraud brochure](#)

17.2. Identification Documentation Requirements

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

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

*Households may include members who are not seeking assistance and may not be included in the household count.

b. Describe any exceptions to the above policies. - [None](#)

17.3. Identification Verification

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

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

- Match SSN/Tribal ID number with tribal database [
- Other – describe:

17.4. Citizenship/Legal Residency Verification

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

- Clients sign an attestation of citizenship or legal residency [on application](#)
- Clients' submission of Social Security cards is accepted as proof of legal residency
- Noncitizens must provide documentation of immigration status
- Citizens must provide a copy of their birth certificate, naturalization papers, or passport
- Noncitizens are verified through the SAVE system [if questionable](#)
- Tribal members are verified through Tribal database/Tribal ID card
- Other – describe:

17.5. Income Verification

What methods does your agency utilize to verify household income?

- Require documentation of income for all adult household members
 - Pay stubs
 - Social Security award letters
 - Bank statements
 - Tax statements
 - Zero-income statements
 - Unemployment Insurance letters
 - Other – describe:

- Computer data matches:
 - Income information matched against state computer system (e.g., SNAP, TANF)
 - Proof of unemployment benefits verified with state Department of Labor
 - Social Security income verified with SSA
 - Utilize state directory of new hires
- Other – describe:

17.6. Protection of Privacy and Confidentiality

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

- Policy in place prohibiting release of information without written consent
- Grantee LIHEAP database includes privacy/confidentiality safeguards

- Employee training on confidentiality for:
 - Grantee employees
 - local agencies/district offices
- Employees must sign confidentiality agreement
 - Grantee employees
 - local agencies/district offices
- Physical files are stored in a secure location
- Other – describe:

17.7. Verifying the Authenticity of Energy Vendors

What policies are in place for verifying vendor authenticity?

- All vendors must register with the State
- All vendors must supply a valid SSN or TIN/W-9 form
- Vendors are verified through energy bills provided by the household
- Grantee and/or local agencies/district offices perform physical monitoring of vendors
- Other – describe, and note any exceptions to policies above:

17.8. Benefits Policy – Gas and Electric Utilities

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

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

Other – describe:

17.9. Benefits Policy — Bulk Fuel Vendors

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

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

17.10. Investigations and Prosecutions

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

- Refer to state Inspector General
- Refer to local prosecutor or state Attorney General
- Refer to US DHHS Inspector General (including referral to OIG hotline)
- Local agencies/district offices or Grantee conduct investigation of fraud complaints from public [The HAP Eligibility Office Manager initially investigates.](#)
- Grantee attempts collection of improper payments. If so, describe the recoupment process.
 - [If the client gave inaccurate information then the Eligibility Office Manager sends a letter requesting the full amount of the overpayment, with a request for the client to call to set up a schedule for recoupment/repayment, if full payment cannot be made.](#)
 - [If it is an agency error, the client is notified of the error, but recoupment is not enforced.](#)
 - [If the client doesn’t follow through, their next year’s benefit is reduced by the amount owed the program.](#)
- Clients found to have committed fraud are banned from LIHEAP assistance. For how long is a household banned?
- Contracts with local agencies require that employees found to have committed fraud are reprimanded and/or terminated
- Vendors found to have committed fraud may no longer participate in LIHEAP
- Other — describe:

Attachment A

This space is reserved for an updated delegation letter allowing the Commissioner to sign the plan. The updated letter will be included in the final submission.

Attachment B

Heating Assistance Benefit Computation

Step 1 – Community fuel points

The division has assigned heating cost points to each community in the state, based upon the community's annual fuel cost and climatic conditions.

- If the household uses natural gas and another fuel type for heat, the division will use the community heating cost points for natural gas.
- If the household uses self-harvested wood or coal for heat, the division will use the community heating cost points for oil multiplied by 0.5.
- If the household uses purchased wood or coal for heat, the division will use the community heating cost points for oil multiplied by 0.8.

Step 2 – Dwelling type

The division will multiply the community heating cost points by the first one of the following factors that describes the household's dwelling. If more than one factor applies, the division will use the factor listed first:

- (1) the factor of 1 if the household resides in a two-bedroom single family home;
- (2) the factor of 1.4 if the household resides in a mobile home with heated living space of 980 square feet or more;
- (3) the factor of 0.4 if the household resides in a travel trailer or mobile home less than 35 feet in length, or in an RV, tent or pickup camper;
- (4) the factor of 0.15 if the household resides in a one-room dwelling such as a studio apartment, hotel or boarding home;
- (5) the factor of 0.35 if the household resides on a boat;
- (6) the factor of 0.55 if the household resides in a one-bedroom dwelling, or a one-room house or cabin without bedrooms;
- (7) the factor of 1.3 if the household resides in a three-or-more-bedroom single family, duplex or triplex home;
- (8) the factor of 0.7 if the household resides in a two-bedroom unit in an apartment building of four or more attached units.
- (9) the factor used when a Subsidized Rental Housing Utility Deposit is being requested.

If the household resides in a single residence with one or more other households, the heating cost points are reduced to the household's proportionate share of the home heating expenses.

Step 3 – Household size and income

The division reviews and verifies each household's gross income for the month prior to application. Verification may be provided through: documentary evidence (wage stub, award letter, etc.); Division of Public Assistance and Department of Labor records; or impartial third parties such as fee agents, village council representatives, or social service agencies.

The division will assign each household the following percentage of heating cost points based upon the household's gross monthly income and family size, expressed as a percentage of the Alaska poverty level.

Attachment B

- 100 percent of points if the household's gross monthly income is no more than 25 percent of the Alaska poverty level;
- 90 percent of points if the household's gross monthly income is more than 25 percent but no more than 50 percent of the Alaska poverty level;
- 80 percent of points if the household's gross monthly income is more than 50 percent but no more than 75 percent of the Alaska poverty level;
- 70 percent of points if the household's gross monthly income is more than 75 percent but no more than 100 percent of the Alaska poverty level;
- 60 percent of points if the household's gross monthly income is more than 100 percent but no more than 125 percent of the Alaska poverty level;
- 50 percent of points if the household's gross monthly income is more than 125 percent of the Alaska poverty level but no more than the maximum allowable.

If the household's gross monthly income exceeds the maximum allowable poverty level the household is not eligible.

Step 4 – Priority groups

The division will add one point to the income adjusted heating cost points if the household includes one or more members 60 years of age or older, legally disabled, or under six years of age.

Step 5 – Round points

The division will round the final total heating cost points to the nearest whole number. The total heating cost points may not exceed 35 points.

Step 6 – Heating points of 2.0 or more

Households must have heating cost points of 2.0 or more before rounding to be eligible for heating assistance.

Step 7 – Multiply by the benefit rate to determine household benefit

The division will multiply by the FY 2013 benefit rate of \$150 to determine the amount of the household's heating assistance.

The amount of heating assistance may be reduced by the amount of the unpaid balance that the household owes the division for previously awarded heating assistance to which the household was not entitled. The division will use this method of recoupment of overpayments only if the household has not responded to the division's request for repayment or the household defaults on its repayment agreement.

Attachment B

EXAMPLES

The following examples illustrate how a household's heating assistance benefit is determined.

Example 1			Benefit calculation:
Step 1.	Community, Fuel	Anchorage, N Gas	5 points
Step 2.	Dwelling	3 bedroom house	5 points x 1.3 = 6.5 points
Step 3.	Household Size, Income	4, \$3,100	101-125% of poverty = 60% 6.5 points x 0.6 = 3.9 points
Step 4.	Household includes elderly, disabled or child under age 6	No	N/A
Step 5.	Heating points of 2.0 or more	Yes	3.9 points
Step 6.	Round points		Rounded = 4 points
Step 7.	Multiply by benefit rate		4 points x 150 = \$600

Example 2			Benefit calculation:
Step 1.	Community, Fuel	Fairbanks, Oil	10 points
Step 2.	Dwelling	2 bedrm, 4+unit bldg	10 points x 0.7 = 7 points
Step 3.	Household Size, Income	2, \$2,400	126-150% of poverty = 50% 7 points x 0.5 = 3.5 points
Step 4.	Household includes elderly, disabled or child under age 6	Yes	3.5 points + 1 = 4.5 points
Step 5.	Heating points of 2.0 or more	Yes	4.5 points
Step 6.	Round points		Rounded = 5 points
Step 7.	Multiply by benefit rate		5 points x \$150 = \$750

Example 3			Benefit calculation:
Step 1.	Community, Fuel	Savoonga, Oil	27 points
Step 2.	Dwelling	2 bedroom house	No adjustment
Step 3.	Household Size, Income	5, \$2,700	76-100% of poverty = 70% 27 points x 0.7 = 18.9 points
Step 4.	Household includes elderly, disabled or child under age 6	Yes	18.9 points + 1 = 19.9 points
Step 5.	Heating points of 2.0 or more	Yes	19.9 points
Step 6.	Round points		Rounded = 20 points
Step 7.	Multiply by benefit rate		20 points x \$150 = \$3,000

Example 4			Benefit calculation:
Step 1.	Community, Fuel	Anchorage, N Gas	5 points
Step 2.	Dwelling	Studio apartment	5 points x 0.15 = 0.75 points
Step 3.	Household Size, Income	1, \$1,600	126-150% of poverty = 50% .75 points x 0.5 = 0.375 points
Step 4.	Household includes elderly, disabled or child under age 6	No	N/A
Step 5.	Heating points of 2.0 or more	No	0.375 points = less than 1 point
Step 6.	Round points		N/A
Step 7.	Multiply by benefit rate		Ineligible