

**NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS  
NEW AGENCIES FOR THE  
LOW INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM  
and  
UNIVERSAL SERVICE FUND  
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

**NAME OF GRANT PROGRAMS:** Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and Universal Service Fund (USF)

**PURPOSE OF PROGRAMS:** LIHEAP is funded by the US Department of Health and Human Services (USDHHS) to provide financial assistance to low-income families and individuals to defray the cost of heating and cooling their homes.

The USF program is funded by the Board of Public Utilities (BPU) to provide financial assistance with heating and cooling costs to low-income households. The Board of Public Utilities (BPU) provides funding for the USF program through the societal benefits charge collected from electric and gas utility customers. BPU pays client's benefits directly to the utility providers.

**AVAILABLE FUNDING:** Funding allocations for the LIHEAP and USF programs are pending USDHHS and BPU approval. Available funds for LIHEAP and USF are awarded to Community Based Organizations (CBOs) based on the projected number of applications that will be processed within each program year.

**MAXIMUM AMOUNT of AWARD:** Grant awards to CBOs are based on a formula utilizing 2018 American Community Survey (ACS) data, the number of automatic enrollees from DHS and DFD, and the projected number of eligible households in the new year. DCA may award multiple agencies in service areas but will prioritize counties with larger eligible populations or lower participation rates.

Agencies awards will be based on a formula using a feasibility analysis, projecting current year production by, considering county wide previous year production, the number of eligible households, and per application allocation of \$75.00.

**ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS:** Non-Profit entities with an IRS 501(c)(3) delineation and units of local government.

**ELIGIBLE PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS:** To be deemed eligible for LIHEAP financial assistance, the applicant's household gross income must be at or below 200% of the US DHHS Poverty Guidelines; and the applicant must be directly responsible for home heating/cooling costs or those costs must be included in the rent.

To be deemed eligible for USF financial assistance, the applicant's household gross income must be at or below 185% of the US DHHS Poverty Guidelines, and the household heating and

cooling cost must be more than 3% of its annual income for electric or natural gas. If an applicant's home has electric heat, then the household heating cost must represent more than 6% of the household annual income.

**ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES:** The LIHEAP program provides a one-time annual benefit to eligible households to assist with heating costs (including: electric, natural gas, oil and other deliverable fuels). LIHEAP benefits are also available for medically necessary cooling costs.

USF eligible households will receive a monthly credit on their electric and/or natural gas bill to help reduce their energy cost. The size of the USF credit is based on a ratio of total household income and the amount of money paid for gas and electric service.

A household receiving assistance from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and/or Pharmaceutical Assistance to the Aged and Disabled (PAAD), are reviewed for program eligibility through an automated data transfer process from the NJ Department of Human Services, Division of Family Development.

**GRANT TERM:** The LIHEAP funding cycle is based on the federal fiscal year, October 1 to September 30, and USF funding is based on the state fiscal year, July 1 to June 30.

**QUALIFICATIONS of grant applicants to be eligible for funding:** Successful applicants must demonstrate the following:

- Knowledge of the New Jersey Model Plan for the LIHEAP program.
- Experience in implementing an energy assistance or similar assistance program requiring determination of eligibility.
- Ability to accept payment on a reimbursement basis.
- The ability to accommodate multiple clients for simultaneous intake.
- Superior customer centered service delivery, including ability to adapt to changing demographics and cultural sensitivity.

**APPLICATION RATING CRITERIA:** A review panel consisting of members of the DCA Staff, LIHEAP Staff and BPU will score the applications based on a 100-point system in the following areas:

1. Agency Capacity (including fiscal capacity)
2. Physical Space and Equipment
3. Target Population and Outreach Plan
4. Management and Training Plan
5. Comprehensive Budget and Fiscal Soundness

**APPLICATION PROCESS:** Applicants must submit information regarding the following program components in SAGE. **Applicants applying for multiple counties must submit one application per county.**

1. **Agency Capacity (25 Points)**: Describe the agency's organizational capacity to deliver this program, in terms of the practical application of effective program planning and fiscal operations.
  - The history and current practice of delivering programs and services (Past performance in LIHEAP/USF or similar programs that require income qualification);
    - Name of Program; Types of benefits; Income levels; number of clients served.
  - Management of fiscal operations (please utilize the Nonprofit Financial Management Assessment to reflect on your organization's policies and procedures as they relate to fiscal planning, monitoring, operations, and governance.)
2. **Physical Space (15 Points)**: Describe location and accessibility of proposed office/intake center, using the following metrics:
  - Proximity to public transportation  
(provide map of location and use the link below to demonstrate accessibility)  
[https://www.njtransit.com/sf/sf\\_servlet.srv?hdnPageAction=TripPlannerServiceNearTo](https://www.njtransit.com/sf/sf_servlet.srv?hdnPageAction=TripPlannerServiceNearTo)
  - Indicate the projected number of clients expected daily, an adequate waiting area must be capable of seating at least 25% of that number.
  - The facility must be accessible to people with disabilities
  - Number of intake booths available (5% of daily projected traffic)
  - Agencies in counties with more than 45,000 LIHEAP eligible households or 40,000 USF eligible households, must have a minimum of 2 sites open five days a week to receive and process applications.
3. **Target population and Outreach Plan (33 Points)**: Describe the organization's outreach plan for the program eligible population, detailing the methods, activities, and partnerships, with an emphasis on outreach to:
  - Disabled and Elderly households
  - Occupants of multi dwelling units (apartment complexes)
  - Recertifying and New applicants

Successful responses will include the number of projected applicants in each targeted population, a detailed Language Assistance Plan to ensure the needs of the target populations

are met, and a detailed description of how the outreach plan will be implemented.

4. **Management and Training Plan (12 Points):** Provide a detailed plan to effectively manage and evaluate administration of the program, retain/recruit prospective employees and train staff to perform assigned responsibilities optimally. The plan should focus on the following:

- Detailed recruitment and retention plan
- Detailed assessment of training needs.
- Detailed list and description of training subject matter, based on assessment
- Detailed process to evaluate outcomes of programs and services provided

5. **Comprehensive Budget and Fiscal Soundness (10 Points):** Provide a comprehensive budget detailing total operating expenses needed to locally administer the LIHEAP/USF program. The applicant’s response to this section must also demonstrate:

- Capacity to operate on a reimbursable basis (substantiate other sources of funds, which should be at minimum 9% of total grant budget);
- Fiscal soundness based on audits of the preceding 3 years.
- Amounts allotted to the Administrative category adhering to the 10% cap;

All costs are to be recorded in one of the following categories:

Administrative	Costs for administrative support such as fiscal staff, Executive Director, office supplies, etc.	10%
Consultant and Professionals	Name of consultant/ consulting company, the specific work to be performed and rate of compensation.	Every budget line item <b><u>MUST</u></b> include a budget justification.
Occupancy and Equipment	Must include justification and operating budget	

Salaries for Operational Staff Only	Must be supported by personnel activity report.	
Fringe	Allocated based on the related salary expense, by person.	

The occupancy and equipment operational budget and justification must include following items:

1. Rent
2. Utility expenses
3. Property insurance
4. Property tax
5. Security/maintenance
6. Cost share of the use of office space if the building is owned by the agency.

**6. Required Submittals:**

1. Application Cover Sheet (Certification Sheet)
2. IRS 501(c) 3 Determination Letter (required for non-profit only)
3. Certificate of Incorporation and By-Laws (required for non-profit only)
4. List of Officers and Board of Directors
5. Certification Regarding Debarment and Suspension
6. Certification Regarding Lobbying
7. Organizational Chart
8. Hours of operation
9. List of total staff dedicated to the Program.
10. List of Directors and Supervisors and their resumes;
11. Percentage of time dedicated to LIHAP/USF program

**The above required documents are considered part of the application for funding. Failure to submit any of the above listed attachments will result in application being disqualified. Attachments that cannot be uploaded on SAGE must be mailed or delivered no later than 11:59 p.m. on January 6, 2020.**

**Past performance of agencies that have participated in the LIHEAP/USF program, or similar programs will be taken into consideration when reviewing applications.**

**REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:** Financial Status Reports (FSR) must be submitted by the 15<sup>th</sup> calendar day of the month via SAGE. Monthly production activities will be evaluated by reviewing the monthly production report and data compiled by the USF/HEA system.

**PERFORMANCE MEASURES:**

- Achievement of monthly production goals for processed applications.
- At least 75% of applications processed must result in a benefit.
- Timely submission of FSRs, as stated above in reporting requirements.
- Quality program performance including minimal delays in processing of applications
- Number of Eligible applications received and processed
- Number of elderly/disabled applications received and processed
- Number and nature of complaints received from clients.

**TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE SESSION:** Applicants MUST attend the Technical Assistance webinar on **December 16, 2019** at 2:00pm by signing up at

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/5578850934427217921>

**DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION: 6<sup>th</sup> day of January 2020.**