

**NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS
FY2022 Weatherization Assistance Grant Program**

Request for Proposal

Please take notice that the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, Division of Housing and Community Resources, Office of Low-Income Home Energy Program has issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the FY2022 Weatherization Assistance Grant Program.

PURPOSE:

The Weatherization Assistance Program funded through the U.S. Department of Energy and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is designed to provide energy efficiency retrofits to low-income households to lower the cost burden of utilities on those households. The Weatherization Assistance Program consists of three grant programs, USDOE Annual Funds, LIHEAP Weatherization (“LIHEAP WX”) and the Heating Improvement Program (“HIP”). HIP is designed to provide for the upgrading, repairing, and replacing of low-income household’s heating systems. The Weatherization Assistance Program is guided by the current approved NJ State Plan for the Weatherization Assistance Program (“NJ WAP State Plan”) by the U.S. Department of Energy and the regulations concerning the Weatherization Assistance Program for Low-Income Families which are located at 10 CFR Part 440 and Weatherization Policy Notice 22-1. These regulations can be found on www.waptac.org. The NJ State Plan can be found and reviewed on <http://www.state.nj.us/dca/divisions/dhcr/offices/wap.html>.

SERVICE AREA:

Statewide

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS:

Community action agencies, local government or non-profit entities which meet the criteria set forth at 10 CFR 440.15.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE SESSION: Thursday, July 7, 2022, at 10:00 a.m.

July 7, 2022, at the Department of Community Affairs’ at 10:00 am. Via Microsoft Teams. Participation at the TA Session is mandatory. Applicants who do not participate in the TA session will not be permitted to apply. Please RSVP by email to Mark Schardine at Mark.Schardine@dca.nj.gov by noon on July 6, 2022.

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION: Friday, July 22, 2022, on SAGE.

The grant application will be available on Wednesday, June 22, 2022, on the Department’s System for Administering Grants Electronically (SAGE) <https://dcasage.intelligrants.com>.

LIHEAP 2022 RFP Q&A

Question: For the slide that indicates that the HIP grant would be allocated as a match to the LIHEAP grant, does that mean that the amount would be the same for HIP as it is for LIHEAP?

Answer: No, the amount is not the same because there are more HIP funds than there are LIHEAP funds. It will be based on \$50,000.00 base award and then the poverty factor will be applied. Once an agency receives their LIHEAP award, the HIP and Infrastructure awards are going to be closed applications and not open competitive, they will be for any grantee that receives the LIHEAP 2022.

Question: Can two agencies apply together?

Answer: Yes, partnerships are allowed but the lead agency must be clearly identified.

Question: Can you repeat the administrative cap?

Answer: For LIHEAP and HIP the administrative cap is 5% which is for administrative support such as fiscal staff, executive director, and office supplies. For DOE Infrastructure bill the admin will be capped at 7.5%.

Question: If you agree to be the lead for another agency who wants to partner, does that county count as one of the lead agency's maximum numbers.

Answer: Yes, because the lead agency is the one that is going to be responsible to respond to DCA.

Question: What is the performance outcome?

Answer: The performance outcome is adherence to policies and procedures as found in the New Jersey Weatherization Assistance Program Policy and Procedures Manual and the New Jersey Weatherization Field Guide, in addition to the energy audit guide, which we recently released, completion of production goals, completion of benchmarks identified as defined by OLEC, full expenditure of grant funds, timely submission of production and FSR's, and successful implementation of your training plan and quality weatherization work. Grantees are required to conduct a quality control inspection on every single unit weatherized and the state has monitors that inspect 10% of the units weatherized. That's how we ensure you have done quality weatherization work. Every agency that is selected into this program is assigned a state monitor that works with the agency on a weekly basis.

Question: We are currently conducting our 2022 audit; can the last completed audit be submitted?

Answer: Yes.

Question: In the case that there is a nonprofit and a for profit partner like a utility company with the agency, those are allowable and eligible partnerships as well, right?

Answer: In accordance to U.S. Department of Energy's federal rules, for profit organizations are not eligible for funding. Agencies are subgrantees and agencies are required to be non-profit, community action agencies, or local governments.

Question: Can a utility company be a supporter of a program?

Answer: Yes, they can provide a letter of support but for profits cannot be a part of the program.

Question: For past performance review, should we mention the delays due to COVID for possibly not meeting prior benchmarks?

Answer: No, you don't need to mention it because we are aware of it so we will take that into consideration.

Question: In reference to submitting a letter indicating when we will have a resolution since our board doesn't meet until after the deadline?

Answer: If your board is not meeting in time for you to get a board resolution to submit the application, you can upload a letter on the agency letterhead indicating when you expect to have the board resolution.

Question: Will DOE have a July 1, 2022, start date:

Answer: Yes, it will be retroactive because the grant for the infrastructure bill started July 1st. As mentioned, DOE is in planning phases first and not expecting production for the next few months. The due date for this state plan is October 1, 2022, but the funds (first 15%) are going to be made available soon and that is the first phase. But the grant is from July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2027.

Question: For agencies that are awarded LIHEAP 2022, will the contract and money be available to them starting September?

Answer: The RFP closes July 22nd, and it takes the team about a week to review the applications and then we submit the recommendations to the department for approval. Once that's done, hopefully we can get these approved quickly and then we can start on the DOE Infrastructure Bill and start planning the five-year grant with every agency that has received this award.

Question: What is the timeline for completing training to be certified?

Answer: That is going to be contingent upon Virginia Community Housing partners and when they arrive to your agency and do a checklist and then they will let me know what the time frame for the field mentoring and getting your organization ready to go.

Question: Is there a difference between DOE 2022 and Infrastructure 2022?

Answer: The only difference right now is the amount that has been allocated. DOE 2022 was due May 1st which is why no new grantees will be in that state plan, it is only the current agencies that are in that state plan. With the infrastructure bill we are hoping to attract more agencies into the program so that there is an expanded network to work with to spend the \$87,0212,248.

Question: Can you please repeat the total eligible allocation for the agencies?

Answer: It's not per agency right now because technically everyone is competing. If you look at a county, the award is based on a base award of \$50,000 and the remaining funds are applied based on poverty factor in each county.

So, what's in that chart, which is also in your RFP, is what the allocation is per county. You can request less, but you cannot request more than what's on there for that county.

Question: Will DOE 2022 be released, and infrastructure will be added as an amendment or separate.

Answer: Infrastructure must be separate. They made that very clear, those two grants must remain separate.

Question: If you currently represent two counties now and you want to add either Burlington or Camden is that allowable or the limit still 3?

Answer: The limit is 3.

Question: Is braiding/dual funding with infrastructure funds allowed?

Answer: Yes, braiding will be allowed but it will only be with LIHEAP and DOE. You cannot braid with DOE annual and DOE Infrastructure.

Question: Can an agency request funds to hire a new staff member to get certified as a QCI as part of the budget or must current staff only get certified?

Answer: No, an agency can hire someone. Especially if you're a new agency that does not have individuals that are certified, by the time infrastructure money is released you must have a certified QCI because DOE does not allow a unit to be reported to them if it has not been QCI'd by a certified QCI. We have more flexibility with LIHEAP which is why if we get new agencies in, we will work with you to try to ramp you up using LIHEAP but, you will not receive infrastructure funds until you have the certified individuals in place.

Question: If we allow one of our QCI's to support another agency without applying for that county, does that account against us?

Answer: No

Question: Our auditor is still in process; he'll be tested looks like August maybe. So, I have a sub-contract being our QCI. Is that still acceptable?

Answer: Yeah, that's allowed. You just have to make sure that that QCI is current and has a certification that has not expired.

Question: How much technical assistance can a current Weatherization agency provide to a new agency?

Answer: That is something between the current agency and the partner agency, we don't get involved in two agencies working together in that type of setting. We work with Virginia Community Housing partners to provide technical assistance. Plus, once you're in the program you're assigned to state monitor. One of their roles is to continue to provide you technical assistance, but it's not against the rule for current agency if they're willing to give technical assistance to another agency.

Question: In a previous meeting we asked if we hire a new person, can they be paid under just training?

Answer: We are still pending that response from DOE.

Question: Also, the use of stipends or money to pay for the contractor to take classes, the sub-contractors?

Answer: That is a debate at the US Department of Energy right now and they said they would release guidance.

Question: Is the \$50,000.00 base award included in the target service amount?

Answer: Yes

Question: Is there a requirement for an organization to have a physical location in each County that they propose to work in?

Answer: Physical presence can be securing a day to collect applications either mall, utility, space at another non-profit. In the application, you must indicate how you intend to secure applications in that service area.

Question: What is the maximum amount we can apply for?

Answer: The Target Service Areas reflects the maximum allowable per county.

Question: How many units are required to be completed during the 5-year grant? Or how many units per year need to be completed?

Answer: This is not a five-year grant. It's a one-year grant. Multiply the total amount * 77% and divide by \$8,009 to determine the total number of units.

Question: Is there a list of qualified auditors for agencies to contact?

Answer: You can reach out to the Building Performance Association for a list of individuals who have the certification.

Question: When completing the grant application, you mentioned that we should only send one proposal. Now that the counties are separated, do we show separate budgets for each county or combine the budget or show both versions?

Answer: Combine the budgets for each county that the agency proposes to serve into one budget.

Question: In the PowerPoint presentation (slide 26), it reads, "Must provide a staffing chart for all activities listed in the Weatherization Workflow Process, see Attachment A..." where is that attachment located?

Answer: That attachment is found in the RFP.

Question: If an agency does not have the RRP certification at the time of submitting grant application, can they still apply?

Answer: Yes, as long as the applicant provides proof that it has applied for the RRP, i.e. invoice, cancelled check. RRP must be obtained prior to grant being executed. No grant funds will be released until the RRP is obtained.