

**NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS  
LOW-INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM  
UNIVERSAL SERVICE FUND PROGRAM  
FY 2026 REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL**

**NAME OF GRANT PROGRAMS:** [Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program \(LIHEAP\)](#) and [Universal Service Fund \(USF\)](#) program.

**PURPOSE OF PROGRAMS:**

**LIHEAP:** To provide financial assistance to low-to moderate income households to defray the cost of heating and cooling their homes.

**USF:** To keep electric and gas costs to an affordable percentage of household income for low-to moderate income households.

The main purpose of this RFP is to provide funding for agencies to conduct outreach to enroll residents in the program. All selected agencies will also be mandated to attend all BPU/Utility companies outreach events in their assigned counties.

**FUNDING AVAILABLE:**

**LIHEAP:** Funding is provided by the US Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) through a Congressional Appropriation Act.

**USF:** Funding is provided by the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (NJBPUB) from its Societal Benefits Charge, a surcharge on natural gas and electric bills.

**ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS:**

**USF & LIHEAP:** Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) with an IRS 501(c)(3) delineation, Units of Local Government (ULGs) and other nonprofit organizations with an IRS 501(c)(3) delineation.

**MAXIMUM AMOUNT AWARD:** Grant awards will be based on the following:

- County need data from the American Community Survey (the number of households with gross income at or below 60% of the State Median Income)
- The estimated federal award from HHS and State award from NJBPUB.

**Please note: Grant awards to selected agencies may change depending on the amount of actual funding received from DHHS and the USF program and on the number of eligible households in each county. Eligible applicants must confirm in writing that they will be able to adjust their budgets accordingly when the final funding awards are confirmed.**

**Grant Award:**

Grant awards will be based on the following:

- The number of applications processed in the previous year for agencies currently participating in the program.
- The size of the application backlog and the degree of support required from the DCA to effectively process the pending applications.
- The estimated number of applications expected to be processed this year, based on the number of households within the agency's county earning no more than 60% of the State Median Income (applicable to agencies with less than 12 months of performance history).

- For agencies without a prior DCA grant, scoring will be based on other areas, including experience in administering other low-income assistance programs, demonstrated ability to operate on a reimbursement basis, and proposed budget.

**ADVANCEMENTS:** Each awarded grantee will receive 3 advances of 30% each. Once each advance is spent (documented), the grantee may request the next advance of 30%. The final 10% will be on a reimbursement basis to ensure timely compliance with final reporting,

**ELIGIBLE PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS:** To be deemed eligible the applicant's household gross income must be at or below 60% of the State Median Income; and the applicant must be directly responsible for home heating/cooling costs, or those costs must be included in the rent. The electric or gas bill must be registered in the name of a household member, unless there is a co-signer who resides outside the applicant's household.

**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 and emergency benefits.

USF eligible households receive monthly credit on their electric or natural gas bill to help reduce their energy cost. The credit is determined by a ratio of total household income and the household energy burden (amount of money paid for gas and electric service).

A household receiving assistance from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Pharmaceutical Assistance to the Aged and Disabled (PAAD) is categorically eligible for the program.

**GRANT TERM:** The LIHEAP funding cycle runs concurrent with the federal fiscal year, October 1, through September 30. The Universal Service Fund (USF) runs concurrently with the New Jersey state fiscal year, July 1, through June 30.

**QUALIFICATIONS:** Successful applicants must demonstrate the following:

- Knowledge of the New Jersey Model Plan for the LIHEAP program.
- Experience in implementing an energy assistance program or similar assistance program requiring the determination of eligibility.
- The ability to accommodate multiple walk-in clients.
- Superior customer-centered service delivery, including the ability to adapt to changing demographics and cultural sensitivity.
- The ability to organize and participate in outreach events in their county.
- The ability to adjudicate applications through an online portal.
- The ability to perform home visits and assist homebound households complete an application
- **The ability to adjust the organization's budget in response to changes in available funding.**
- All applications must be submitted and adjudicated exclusively through the online portal. Participating agencies are required to fully utilize the portal for application intake, review, and timely uploading of all required documentation.

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

1. Agency Capacity (Maximum 20 points): Does the applicant have the capacity to successfully administer the program?
  - a. Appropriate staff and financial structure
    - Does the agency have the ability to adjust its budget in case of a potential decrease in funding?
  - o Prior experience providing proposed activities.
    - Demonstrated effective grant management.
    - Achieved prior grant objectives within the established time frame.
      - Expended previous grant awards correctly and in a timely manner. (The average time taken to process applications from the initial submission date to the date assistance was disbursed over the past 12 months).
    - Produced and submitted prior grant's performance and financial reports correctly and on time.
2. Viability of Partnerships (Maximum 5 points): Describe all partnerships with entities that expand the program's reach and ensure more accessibility to eligible applicants using the following metrics:
  - Letter of Intent for each partner entity (including government officials)
  - Number of individuals or households served by the partner entity
  - Schedule of collaborative outreach events
  - Experience and outcomes of partnership relationship
3. Target Population and Outreach Plan (Maximum 35 Points) Describe the organization's outreach plan and past participation during the last program year in outreach 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
4. Management and Training Plan (Maximum 10 points): Provide a detailed plan to effectively manage and evaluate the administration of the program, retain/recruit prospective employees, and train staff to perform assigned responsibilities optimally. The plan should focus on the following:
  - A detailed recruitment and retention plan
  - A detailed list and description of training subject matter, based on assessment
  - A detailed process to evaluate the outcomes of programs and services providedPlease provide an organizational chart detailing staff assigned to the grants.
5. Past performance as an assistant agency based on CRM usage as defined below (USFHEA report card for existing agencies) (Maximum 20 points)
  - Number of applications by type (cooling, emergency, HEA and USF), number of applications submitted, denied, incomplete, paid out.
  - Response to applicants' inquiry
  - Number of errors in application processing
  - Number of applicant complaints.

6. Budget: (Maximum 10 points): Provide a detailed budget showing total operating expenses for both

LIHEAP and USF. The budget must demonstrate the following:

- Fiscal stability determined by the applicant's audits submitted to the DCA Division of Auditing for the preceding three years.
- Amounts allotted to the administrative category adhering to the 10% cap. All costs must 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 the 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 reports.	
Fringe	Allocated based on the related salary expense for each employee.	

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

**Physical Location:**

1. Rent
2. Utility expenses
3. Property insurance
4. Property tax
5. Security/maintenance
6. The cost-share of the use of office space if the agency owns the building.

Threshold Requirements: Only applications that meet all the following threshold requirements will be reviewed.

1. Application Cover (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. Updated SAMS/DUNS number
9. Hours of operation.

10. The total number of staff and each staff's name dedicated to the program.
11. List of Directors and Supervisors and their resumes.
12. Percentage of time dedicated to LIHEAP/USF program.
13. Statement that organization can operate program (ramp up and down operations) based on actual FFY 2026 funding received.

#### **FY2026 Program Expectations:**

**Agencies selected through this RFP process will be required to meet the following expectations:**

1. Achieve a designated target number of processed applications.
2. Maintain zero backlog of pending applications throughout the program year.
3. Submit comprehensive documentation of outreach activities. *Note: Performance in the subsequent RFP will be assessed based on the effectiveness of outreach efforts and their contribution to increased application intake.*
4. Notify DCA of any staffing changes during the year, including hires, departures, or role transitions.

**REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:** Financial Status Reports (FSR) and Monthly outreach/production reports must be submitted by the 15<sup>th</sup> calendar day of the month.

#### **PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

- Consistent achievement of monthly targets for processed applications
- A minimum of 75% of processed applications must result in approved benefits
- Timely submission of Financial Status Reports (FSRs), in accordance with reporting requirements
- High-quality program performance demonstrated by minimal delays in application processing
- Total number of eligible applications received and processed
- Total number of applications received and processed for elderly and/or disabled individuals
- Volume and nature of client complaints received

**DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION: Friday, August 1, 2025.**

**This is a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP), open to all qualified Community-Based Organizations and Non-Profit agencies operating in New Jersey. Selected applicants will be notified following the review and approval of submissions.**

**Attachments that cannot be uploaded in SAGE must be emailed to either [Rosaura.collazo@dca.nj.gov](mailto:Rosaura.collazo@dca.nj.gov) or [fidel.ekhellar@dca.nj.gov](mailto:fidel.ekhellar@dca.nj.gov) no later than 11:59 p.m. on Friday, August 1, 2025 2025.**

#### **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE SESSION**

**A Technical Assistance Session will be held on Friday, July 18, 2025, at 10am on Teams. Please use the information below to join the Session - Meeting ID: 281 671 985 408 2 Passcode: 4ax7bH6v. To dial by phone, please call +1 856-338-7074. Phone conference ID: 304 625 265#**

Maximum allocation per County			
County	Estimated Number of Households at or below 60% of State Median Income (\$47,896)	Percentage of Households in State	Allocation
Atlantic	32,925	4.19%	\$754,834
Bergen	62,543	7.97%	\$1,433,853
Burlington	31,988	4.07%	\$733,353
Camden	54,357	6.92%	\$1,246,182
Cape May	11,084	1.41%	\$254,110
Cumberland	18,636	2.37%	\$427,247
Essex	101,088	12.88%	\$2,317,531
Gloucester	22,180	2.82%	\$508,496
Hudson	79,000	10.06%	\$1,811,144
Hunterdon	6,788	0.86%	\$155,621
Mercer	35,120	4.47%	\$805,157
Middlesex	58,541	7.46%	\$1,342,104
Monmouth	46,162	5.88%	\$1,058,304
Morris	27,781	3.54%	\$636,904
Ocean	60,551	7.71%	\$1,388,185
Passaic	49,184	6.26%	\$1,127,586
Salem	7,199	0.92%	\$165,043
Somerset	19,022	2.42%	\$436,096
Sussex	8,993	1.15%	\$206,172
Union	42,757	5.45%	\$980,242
Warren	9,240	1.18%	\$211,835
<b>Total</b>	<b>785,139</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>\$18,000,000</b>
	The data is from the 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates		