



DATE: August 13, 2025

OPERATIONS MEMORANDUM #25-08-02

SUBJECT: 2025-2026 Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) Policy, Procedures, and Form Changes

TO: Executive Directors
LIHEAP Coordinators

FROM: Robert Hixson
Director
Bureau of Operations

PURPOSE

To provide County Assistance Offices (CAOs) with LIHEAP policy, procedures, and form changes for the 2025-2026 program year.

BACKGROUND

In previous years and prior to the start of LIHEAP, staff have been provided with an Operations Memorandum (Ops Memo) that provides policy, guidance, procedures, and form changes that concern LIHEAP for the upcoming season. Effective this season, many of these details will be incorporated into the LIHEAP Policy Handbook.

DISCUSSION

Pre-season Mailings

A timeline of LIHEAP activities can be found in LIHEAP Handbook Chapter 603: Appendix A. Details on pre-season mailings are now found in LIHEAP Handbook 604.121.

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Access to Social Services (COMPASS) postcard-only county method utilized in previous season is no longer in effect. All counties will follow the same methodology outlined in Chapter 603 for receiving a postcard or a bar-coded application.

Postcard recipients who do not wish to apply for LIHEAP on COMPASS can receive a paper application at any time. A paper application can be obtained from either the LIHEAP Helpline at 1-866-857-7095 or their CAO. If the CAO has not yet received their shipment of applications, they can be printed from DocuShare. The household's

bar-code number must be written on the application when it is provided to the applicant. This bar-code number, found on the mailing lists in DocuShare, will be used to register the completed application when it is received. A household's COMPASS registration number can also be found on the mailing lists.

Program Parameters

Details on LIHEAP Program Parameters can now be found in the LIHEAP handbook. Maximum and Minimum LIHEAP Cash and Crisis amounts can be found in Chapter 638: Appendix B. Income Guidelines can be found in Chapter 650: Appendix A.

Policy Clarifications and Alignments

References to a Crisis Contractor have been removed from the LIHEAP Handbook.

LIHEAP Handbook Chapters 604.3 and 609.3 have been updated to clarify that any credit balance with the vendor, excluding those set aside for equipment service and repairs, is considered to be available and must be used first for the resolution of the Crisis.

LIHEAP Handbook Chapter 609.21 has been added to address the Termination Program.

LIHEAP Handbook Chapter 622 has been revised to update terminology.

LIHEAP Handbook Chapter 638.2 has been updated to clarify allowable and not allowable uses for all LIHEAP grants.

LIHEAP Handbook Chapter 650.212 has been updated to state that rental payments from one LIHEAP household member to another LIHEAP household member are excluded.

LIHEAP Handbook Chapter 650.3 has been updated to state that if a support payor is also in the LIHEAP household, the support would not be counted.

LIHEAP Handbook Chapter 650: Appendix A has been updated to state that the income limits will be updated each January when the annual guidelines are posted.

LIHEAP Handbook Chapter 698 has been updated to change the name of Crisis Weatherization to LIHEAP Emergency Services Program.

Forms

The HSEA 1 and HSEA 1.1 have been updated. Only applications from this season will be accepted; applications must have a form date of “July 2025” and the season date range of “2025-26” in the title to be valid. Pre-season applications will have a form date of “June 2025.”

Changes to the application include:

- Modified instructions for question 4.
- Addition of LIHEAP Crisis to the language of question 5.
- Modified question 6 to ask for primary heating vendor.
- Addition of question 9 to ask which heating source should receive payment.
- Modified instructions for question 10.
- Updated citizenship terminology for question 12.
- Modified instructions for question 13.
- Modified income instructions in “Did you remember to...”.

NEXT STEPS

1. Implement the policy, procedures, and form instructions in this Ops Memo for the 2025-2026 program year.
2. This Ops Memo will become obsolete on June 30, 2026.