

2. Assistance Group

The Assistance Group (AG) consists of any individual or group of individuals who are living together as one economic unit or who are sharing expenses and for whom residential home heating is customarily purchased in common or for whom home heating is included in a rent or mortgage payment as a specified amount.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to list all individuals who are living in the home, regardless of whether or not they are family members or whether or not they share the cost of home heating. For the purpose of LIEAP eligibility, all household members are considered one AG.

When the AG includes a person(s) who has already received a LIEAP payment, he is not included in the AG and his income is not counted in determining eligibility.

EXAMPLE: An employed woman and her two children are included in her mother's AG. The mother applies for and is approved for a LIEAP payment for an AG of 4. Her daughter and grandchildren then move out of her home to live with the children's father. The father applies for LIEAP and reports an increase in AG size and income. His LIEAP application is approved for an AG of 1 and only his income is counted.

When an AG includes an illegal alien, that person's income must be counted even though he cannot be included in the LIEAP AG.

3. Vulnerability To The Cost Of Home Heating

In order to qualify for a LIEAP payment, an AG must be determined vulnerable or partially vulnerable to the cost of home heating.

a. Vulnerable AGs

Vulnerable AGs are those which must pay the heating cost for the home in which they reside. The expense for heating must be billed separately from the rent or mortgage payment of the residence, even if the AG combines these payments. The amount billed for the heating cost must be stated on a rent receipt, lease, or other documentation.

NOTE: AG's that have utilities included in their rent but are not billed separately for a heating cost are not eligible for LIEAP.

AGs may also be considered vulnerable if there has been a documented increase in a rent or mortgage payment due to increased fuel costs. The increase does not have to be permanent if the only reason for the increase is winter heating.

Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP)

4. Residence And Citizenship**a.** Residence

See Section 8.2 for the residence requirement.

b. Citizenship

See Chapter 18 for the eligibility requirements of citizenship or permanent alien status.

NOTE: The LIEAP AG is composed only of citizens and/or qualified aliens, using the income of the entire household.

5. Duplicate Payments

All eligible AGs are entitled to one Regular LIEAP payment only. Subsequent applications received from persons who have already been found eligible for or who have received a Regular LIEAP payment are denied. Cases requiring corrective or supplemental payments must be referred to the Office of Client Accounts as provided in section 26.5.

NOTE: Supplemental LIEAP funds may be made available during the program year, therefore, it is possible that eligible AGs may be entitled to receive an additional LIEAP payment. The Family Support Policy Unit will notify the local offices if supplemental funds become available.

6. Customer Account Number

The customer account number must be provided at the time of application or within 15 calendar days following the date the information is requested. A list of PSC-regulated utility vendors is provided in Appendix B of this chapter. Customers of vendors not listed must be issued a direct payment.

7. Time Limits

Action must be taken to approve or deny a Regular LIEAP application within 30 days of the date it is received for processing by DHHR.

NOTE: Workers may deny an application after expiration of the verification due date when the information is not received. If the client returns the information within 30 days of the application date, the benefit may be approved without a new application. After 30 days, the client must reapply.