26.1 INTRODUCTION

The Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) provides financial assistance to eligible Assistance Groups (AGs) that are responsible for a home heating cost. It is not the purpose of this program to meet the entire cost of home heating during the winter season, but it is designed to partially offset the cost.

The program is time-limited and dependent on the availability of federal funds. It is subject to closure without prior notice when funds are deemed to have been exhausted. Funds are normally disbursed on a first-come, first-serve basis, but may also be subject to disbursement based on need. When this occurs, priority is given to those groups of individuals with the greater energy burden as demonstrated by income, AG size and heating cost.

Program operation is accomplished by automatic payments, mail-out applications, outreach, and an open application intake period for both Regular and Emergency LIEAP.

A.   MAIL-OUT APPLICATIONS

The LIEAP mail-out contains an application form, DFA-LIEAP-1, and an instruction sheet, DFA-LIEAP-1a. It is mailed to any household which received LIEAP during the last LIEAP season. These applications are mailed prior to the program starting date. The client may choose to return the completed form and information by mail or complete it online by use of West Virginia inROADS.

The process below outlines guidelines for submitting the application on inROADS:

-       The recipient receives certain information in the letter which must be entered online in order to complete the inROADS process.

-       inROADS brings current basic demographic information from eRAPIDS into the online application.

-       No signature page is required and the application is considered electronically signed when the recipient uses this process and enters information from the letter and other requested identifying information.

-       The online process is available for use through the end of the Regular LIEAP season. The Worker must print the summary and E-signature page which is to be filed in the case record.

NOTE: Due to system constraints, these applications will function the same as a redetermination but will appear on INBX during the batch process. See the WV inROADS Desk Guide for further details.

B.   OUTREACH

1.   The Department's Role

Outreach is a federal requirement to insure that potentially eligible, low-income AGs are made aware of and encouraged to apply for benefits. Outreach is accomplished as follows:

-    Applications mailed as described above

-    LIEAP informational leaflets provided to all appropriate agencies and interested individuals

-    Contracts with Area Agency on Aging offices and the State Office of Economic Opportunity which permit senior citizen centers, local Community Action agencies, homeless shelters, and/or other interested parties to receive LIEAP applications or provide information and referral services as desired.

-    Information and referral service organizations.

2.   The Role Of The Sub-Grantee Agency

If the sub-grantee organization wishes to participate in the program, the outreach role may consist of accepting applications from persons who have received a mail-out application, reviewing the applications for completeness, obtaining required verification and forwarding the completed applications to the local DHHR office for final disposition. Outreach may also include providing forms and assisting in the completion of applications for those who wish to apply but did not receive the mail-out. This service may also include home visits as needed.

Instead of receiving or accepting applications, the sub-grantee agency may simply inform interested persons about the program. Such activity involves providing the LIEAP Fact Sheet and referring those who wish to apply to the local DHHR office.

Sub-grantees interested in expanding their role may also provide follow-up counseling in energy conservation and/or money management.

C.   OPEN APPLICATION INTAKE PERIOD

During the annual open application intake period, individuals who did not receive a LIEAP mail-out application may apply for LIEAP at their local DHHR office or at any of the outreach locations listed in item C,1. The application is also available on the DHHR website at www.wvinroads.org. An inROADS application is complete when the application is electronically signed by the applicant or the signed signature page is received. If mailed, the signature page must be postmarked by the close of business on the last day of the intake period.

When an application is received through inROADS with an E-Signature, the signature and identity is considered verified. The application is considered complete when all verification is received, in addition to the E-signed application**.**

D.   LIEAP FORMS

One or more of the following forms may be used in connection with the application itself and the processing of the LIEAP payment.

-       The DFA-LIEAP-1a, Instructions for Completing the Application Form, also provides the current LIEAP income guidelines and directions for mailing the form and obtaining additional assistance.

-       The DFA-LIEAP-3, Repayment Agreement, is used to initiate the repayment process when a LIEAP payment has been issued in error.

-       The DFA-LIEAP-4, Zero Income/Home Heating Cost Verification form, is used when the applicant reports zero income.

-       The DF-67, Authorization For Payment, is used to authorize Regular LIEAP payments on behalf of the applicant experiencing a heating emergency.

-       The DFA-LIEAP-5, Authorization for Delivery and Payment of Emergency/ Regular LIEAP, is used as an option to the DF-67 when desired by the local LIEAP staff and accepted by the vendor.

-       The DFA-67, Authorization For Payment, is a eRAPIDS-generated voucher for the authorization and payment of Emergency LIEAP.

-       The DFA-LIEAP-6, LIEAP Application Log, can be used by the county DHHR office to track LIEAP applications and insure timely processing and issuance of checks. Use of this form is optional, but the use of some type of log is mandatory.