

2020 CARES ACT LIHEAP SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

Q1: If a client is denied because of their utility allowance for non-crisis, are they still eligible for CARES?

A1: Yes, the Utility Allowance does not apply to the 2020 CARES Act. Per Notice LHP-2020-01, "This utility allowance will **not** apply to the CARES Act Supplemental benefit. If the client is a renter who receives a utility allowance, the Hancock Software utility allowance field should be left blank for the 2020 CARES Act in order for the client to receive the full flat \$600 supplemental benefit."
(Updated 6/5/2020)

Q2: Do we have to spend all of 2019 monies before we can start spending 2020 monies? In LHP-2020-01, it states "Crisis" fund. Please clarify.

A2: No, the requirement is specific to Crisis. Per Notice LHP-2020-01, "Clients are eligible for one benefit from each allocation; however, Subgrantees must expend any remaining 2019 Crisis funds before utilizing 2020 Crisis funds." Subgrantees may submit Budget Revisions to move 2019 Crisis funds to 2019 Cooling, and then proceed with only 2020 Crisis funds to simplify, if desired. (Updated 6/5/2020)

Q3: Residents of our local housing authority are only eligible during the heating season, since they pay excess electric to the housing authority. Can they receive the CARES funding?

A3: Yes, Per Notice LHP-2020-01, "While the regular LIHEAP allocations have a prescribed utility vendor that must be paid, for the purpose of the CARES Act Supplemental funds, Clients must be given the opportunity to determine which utility vendor to apply the supplemental benefit. Clients may choose their heating vendor or cooling vendor or both. Subgrantees should strongly encourage clients to apply the supplemental benefit to any utility in arrearages due to the COVID-19 pandemic." In the scenario provided, the 2020 CARES Act benefit could be applied to the Heating Vendor.
(Updated 6/5/2020)

Q4: Are clients required to apply for and be approved for LIHEAP to receive the supplemental benefit?

A4: Yes, 2020 CARES Act funds are a supplement to the FFY2020 LIHEAP Grant; therefore, they must still be LIHEAP eligible. (Updated 6/5/2020)

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Q5: Can we use the information from the 2020 Cooling allocation applications which have already been taken to apply the 2020 CARES Act benefit?

A5: Yes, Per Notice LHP-2020-01, “Clients who previously received LIHEAP assistance for the period beginning April 15, 2020 and who were assisted with 2020 Cooling funds prior to the release of the CARES Act Supplemental Funds will be eligible for the \$600 supplemental benefit without having to reapply. No additional appointment or application will be necessary.” Subgrantees will still have to enter the application into the 2020 CARES Act allocation in the Hancock Energy Software (HES). (Updated 6/5/2020)

Q6: Does a credit balance on an account disqualify applicants for both regular and the supplemental benefits?

A6: Yes, a credit balance on a utility account will still disqualify an applicant for both regular LIHEAP and supplemental LIHEAP. This was not changed in LHP-2020-01. The 2020 CARES Act Supplemental funds were awarded to address the hardships created by the COVID-19 pandemic and alleviate potential disconnects resulting from the Stay-At-Home order. Please note that for LIHEAP purposes, a credit is created by still having a previously-awarded utility benefit (i.e. LIHEAP or other organization) or refunds. Pre-payments for energy services that are required by a particular utility vendor are NOT considered credits. (Updated 6/5/2020)

Q7: Does the 6-month utility bill stipulation still apply for an application or can we go further back to find a bill that does not have a credit (assuming all 6 months have a credit)?

A7: Yes, the requirement still applies. Per the LIHEAP Service Delivery Guide, the utility bills must be current (i.e. within the previous 6 months). This requirement has not changed. Applicants may re-apply once additional assistance is needed. (Updated 6/5/2020)

Q8: If you have a credit on all 6 months of light bills and no credit on the gas, can I use the gas bill to compute the TEC and put the payment to the light, because I am in the Cooling Allocation?

A8: In order to calculate the TEC for a household with different heating and cooling vendors, Subgrantees must use 1 month of **both** gas and electric bills from the same month and within the past 6 months. If the cooling bill has a credit, this would be added to the heating bill charge to determine the TEC. If this results in a TEC of \$0 or less, then the client would not be eligible at this

time for the Cooling benefit. Applicants may re-apply once additional assistance is needed.
(Updated 6/5/2020)

Q9: If an applicant is receiving additional pay due to COVID-19 (i.e. Hazard Pay, Bonus Pay, Premium Pay, etc.), do we treat it as income?

A9: Yes, the LIHEAP Service Delivery Guide, Section 3.1, A. Inclusions lists “*Gross wages and salary*”. Section 3.2, B. “*The applicant’s average income is calculated using the gross amount from each pay period.*” ... “*If earnings fluctuate greatly, determine if the fluctuation is due to an unusual circumstance (e.g. death, substituting for a co-worker, Christmas bones). If so, exclude the pay stub when calculating the average. Decisions to exclude pay stubs must be clearly documented in the applicant’s file.*” “*If the fluctuation occurs regularly (e.g. overtime, shift work), include it when calculating the average. A fluctuation can be considered regularly occurring if it appears on at least two of four consecutive check stubs*” ... “*It may be necessary to contact the applicant’s employer to determine if the fluctuation is unusual or regularly occurring.*” Ideally, this type of pay will be reoccurring and will be similar to overtime. Subgrantees must review how often the pay change is occurring to determine whether it must be included. (Updated 7/7/2020)

Q10: Can we transfer funds to the 2020 CARES Act Allocation if we run out? Will more be coming?

A10: No, Subgrantees are unable to move funds into the 2020 CARES Act funding allocation as this is a supplemental pot of funds that must be tracked separately. Congress has not appropriated any more LIHEAP funds at this time, and we currently do not anticipate receiving any more until FY2021. LHC encourages Subgrantees to continue spending the regular LIHEAP funds available from the FY2019 and FY2020 allocations. (Updated 7/7/2020)

Q11: How do we spend the remaining 2020 CARES Act balances that are below \$600?

A11: Due to the 2020 CARES Act Matrix, Subgrantees are currently unable to provide a benefit in Hancock for less than \$600 total. LHC is currently working on a solution to expend the last funds, and we will provide additional guidance when available. (Updated 7/7/2020)