

LOW-INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LIHEAP)

DETAILED MODEL PLAN

PUBLIC LAW 97-35, AS AMENDED

FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2008

GRANTEE: State of Maryland

EIN: 156600-2033-A2

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PLEASE CHECK ONE: TRIBE \_\_\_\_\_ STATE X INSULAR AREA \_\_\_\_\_

Department of Health and Human Services  
Administration for Children and Families  
Office of Community Services  
Washington, DC 20447

August 1987, revised 05/92, 02/95, 03/96, 12/98, 11/01  
OMB Approval No. 0970-0075  
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THE PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT OF 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13)

Use of this model plan is optional. However, the information requested is required in order to receive a Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) grant in years in which the grantee is not permitted to file an abbreviated plan. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and reviewing the collection of information. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

**ASSURANCES**

The State of Maryland agrees to:  
(Grantee name)

**ASSURANCE ONE:** Use the funds available under this title to--

- A. Conduct outreach activities and provide assistance to low income households in meeting their home energy costs, particularly those with the lowest incomes that pay a high proportion of household income for home energy, consistent with paragraph (5);
- B. Intervene in energy crisis situations;
- C. Provide low-cost residential weatherization and other cost-effective energy-related home repair; and
- D. Plan, develop, and administer the State's program under this title including leveraging programs, And the State agrees not to use such funds for any purposes other than those specified in this title;

**MARYLAND PLAN**

The Office of Home Energy Programs (OHEP) administers the Maryland Energy Assistance Program (MEAP) and Electric Universal Service Program (EUSP).

All funds available are for low-income energy assistance; energy crisis assistance, outreach, weatherization, leveraging, and other cost-effective energy related home replacement programs according to the requirements of the law.

**ASSURANCE TWO:** Make payments under this title only with respect to--

- (A) households in which one or more individuals are receiving --
  - i. assistance under the State program funded under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act;
  - ii. Supplemental security income payments under title XVI of the Social Security Act;
  - iii. food stamps under the Food Stamp Act of 1977; or
  - iv. payments under section 415, 521, 541, or 542 of title 38, United States Code, or under section 306 of the Veterans' and Survivors' Pension Improvement Act of 1978; or
- (B) households with incomes which do not exceed the greater of—
  - i. an amount equal to 150 percent of the poverty level for such State; or an amount equal to 60 percent of the State median income;
  - ii. except that a State may not exclude a household from eligibility in a fiscal year solely on the basis of household income if such income is less than 110 percent of the poverty level for such State, but the State may give priority to those households with the highest home energy costs or needs in relation to household income.

## **MARYLAND PLAN**

Payments under this program are paid only to persons eligible under the provisions of the Law. Households eligible for payments meet up to **175%** income eligibility limit of the poverty guidelines. The maximum income levels by family size are shown in **Attachment A** (Income Eligibility Limits)

All eligibility provisions described in 2605(b) (2) apply to the State of Maryland's Plan for crisis and energy assistance.

Homeless and battered spouse shelters that provide overnight accommodations during the heating season are eligible for energy assistance on behalf of their eligible residents at a percentage of annual residential heating costs incurred from November through March. This percentage is determined each year according to the availability of funds.

In addition, applicant-households are only eligible for assistance if:

- (A) the applicant-household is an individual or group of individuals who are living together as one economic unit for whom residential heating energy is usually purchased in common or who make undesignated payments for energy in the form of rent;
- (B) the household has not already received the basic Maryland Energy Assistance grant during the program year at the time of application;
- (C) the household provides proof of identity, residence, citizenship, registered lawful resident (alien) status and social security number of all household members, age 2 or over (if the SSN is unavailable, an application for one must be made and proof shown). Exception – if verification of this information was made for eligible recipients in the Previous year's program;
- (D) The household provides documentation of all income for the 30 days preceding the date of the application. The applicant is required to submit documentation of income with the application.
- (E) The household verifies its major fuel type used for heating or the alternate fuel source used for heating purposes. Payments for secondary heating sources are allowed if a crisis exists.

Applications are accepted in the jurisdiction of the applicant-household's delivery address. Such delivery address must be within the State of Maryland.

The following is exempt income when determining the gross income of a household: Maryland's Welfare Avoidance Grant; Payments made to a representative payee under Maryland's Temporary Cash Assistance Program, Restitution payments made to individuals because of their status as victims of Nazi persecution; payments from the State of Maryland renter's tax credit program; credits from the Maryland Homeowners' Tax Credit Program; Federal Earned Income Tax Credits; Medicare payments deducted from Social Security Grant; for households with a

foster child, the child will not be counted as a household member; the \$50 child support bonus is not counted; Pell Grants, Supplemental Education Opportunity Grants; National Defense Student Loans, State Student Incentive Grants; Guaranteed Student Loans; College Work Study; State, Local and federal Loans, Grants and scholarships; Civic and Fraternal Scholarships; Private Company Scholarships; and Loans with established Repayment Plans.

Lawful permanent residents are ineligible to receive MEAP benefits, except as follows:

- (A) Those who have resided in the U.S. for less than 7 years from the date they
  - i. entered the U.S. as a refugee under § 207 of the Immigration and Nationality Act;
  - ii. were granted political asylum under § 208 of the Immigration and Naturalization Act;
  - iii. arrived in the U.S. as a Cuban – Haitian entrant; or
  - iv. were granted withholding of deportation.
  
- (B) Those who have worked forty qualifying quarters as defined by Title 11 of the Social Security Act. (Individuals in this group can qualify on the basis of their own credited quarters as well as qualifying quarters worked by a spouse during their marriage if the 2 are still married or the spouse is deceased. However, neither the alien nor his or her spouse can count any quarter during which he or she received any federal means-tested public benefit.)
  
- (C) Those who are active-duty members or veterans of the U.S. armed forces, and their spouses or dependent children. Those in need of MEAP benefits because they or their children have been battered or subjected to extreme cruelty by a spouse or parent, or by a member of their family in the same household and with the consent of the alien's spouse or parent, as long as the alien does not reside in the same household as the person responsible for the battery or cruelty.

In addition, immigrants who are not lawful permanent residents are eligible for MEAP benefits if they are:

- (A) Canadian-born members of Native American tribes;
- (B) Aliens paroled in the U. S. for a least one year;
- (C) Aliens granted conditional entry; or
- (D) Aliens in need of benefits because they or their children have been battered or subjected to extreme cruelty by a spouse or parent, or by a member of their family in the same household and with the consent of the alien's spouse or parent, as long as the alien does not reside in the same household as the person responsible for the battery or cruelty.

Each applicant-household may receive only one energy assistance grant, inclusive of any supplemental grants during the program year.

This plan applies to the energy and crisis assistance components of the program.

**ASSURANCE THREE:** conduct outreach activities designed to assure that eligible households, especially households with elderly individuals or disabled individuals, or both, and households with high home energy burdens, are made aware of the assistance available under this title, and any similar energy-related assistance available under subtitle B of title VI (relating to community services block grant program) or under any other provision of law which carries out programs which were administered under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 before the date of the enactment of this Act;

### **MARYLAND PLAN**

The State of Maryland conducts specific outreach activities to assure those potential eligible households, with priority given to the elderly and disabled are aware of the availability of energy assistance.

All local energy staff are encouraged to identify their areas of greatest need and target assistance in those areas. In addition, persons who received help last year that did not apply in the current year, should be contacted to determine why application was not made.

A statewide press release will be issued announcing the program start date and the estimated amounts for benefits. Program funding status nationally will be announced when appropriations are authorized. All local agencies mailed an application to all previous years' elderly/disabled MEAP recipients. In some jurisdictions, applications were mailed to all previous year's recipients.

Local agencies hold official opening ceremonies, Advisory Board meetings, or issue press releases to announce the program intake sites. Applications are made available to energy suppliers to enhance the accessibility to the program. Local administering agencies (LAAs) coordinates with Local Departments of Social Services (LDSS to inform the population about the program exists.

A 24-hour toll free hotline with specific information for each county exists and a toll free number for the hearing impaired. **The toll free number is 1-800-352-1446 and TTY for the hearing impaired is 1-800-925-4434.**

Applications are taken at the local senior centers to provide accessibility for seniors. Applications are also available at energy supplier offices.

Public hearings are held to allow the public to participate in the planning and development of the program. Press releases are made to inform the public about the purpose, time and place of the hearings.

The household notification and all public messages promote the use of conservation techniques and the advantages of fiscal payment responsibility.

The mail application package contains the Program brochure. The Program brochure includes an updated section on Save Dollars on Your Energy Bills. This section includes energy saving tips such as the value of replacing inefficient appliances, draft-proofing windows and use of lower thermostat temperatures on furnaces and hot water heaters. Brochures are available statewide and are distributed to an extensive mailing list including all Area Agencies on Aging, energy

suppliers, statewide and local community based groups, unemployment offices, libraries, churches, shelters, hospitals, and other health organizations and other local groups frequented by the low income population. These materials include specific information about the program and eligibility requirements including a telephone listing of where to call, benefits of program, who should apply and what is needed to complete an application.

Each local administering agency is required to submit annually an outreach plan that outlines all activities conducted locally. The outreach plan includes the list of activities completed by each local agency to inform the public about energy assistance and other related resources. It also contains an assurance that where the local jurisdiction is administered by a local Department of Social Services that additional outreach/intake sites are used.

Posters and Fliers are distributed statewide. Public service announcements, television, radio and newspaper announcements are made on an ongoing basis both at the State and local levels.

This plan applies to the energy and crisis assistance components.

**ASSURANCE FOUR:** Coordinate its activities under this title with similar and related programs administered by the Federal Government and such State, particularly low-income energy programs under subtitle B of title VI (relating to community services block grant program), under the supplemental security income program, under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act, under title XX of the Social Security Act, under the low-income weatherization assistance program under title IV of the Energy Conservation and Production Act, or under any other provision of law which carries out programs which were administered under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 before the date of the enactment of this Act;

### **MARYLAND PLAN**

The OHEP coordinates its program with related programs e.g., EUSP and agencies to form a diverse energy network and an effective service delivery system. Through this effort, many partnerships and networks exist. These partners recognize a public responsibility to ensure that energy remains affordable for low-income families.

Application intake is conducted through a contractual arrangement with 10 of Maryland's Local LAA's. The Community Action Agency (CAA)/MEAP contractual network was continued. In Maryland, 10 of its 20 administering agencies are from the CAA network.

The Office on Aging, through its senior centers continued to perform the outreach and application intake activities of the MEAP.

Coordination with the Department of Housing and Community Development's (DHCD) Weatherization Assistance Program occurs regularly. The OHEP application is used for the Weatherization Assistance Program. Additionally, MEAP and WAP have representation on each other's policy boards and serve on a number of related energy issue forums. An Agreement was continued for the Heating System Repair or Replacement Project.

The furnace repair/replacement project is intended to help elderly, disabled and other low-income households avoid health and safety risks that occur when heating equipment is inoperable or in need of repair.

MEAP helps utilities in the state enroll their customers in the Maryland Public Service Commission's Utility Services Protection Program (USPP). USPP provides eligible utility customers a safeguard against service termination and a voluntary way to have even monthly bill payments. In the BGE service territory USPP enrolled customers obtained additional bill credits ranging from seven to twelve dollars monthly as an incentive to make USPP even monthly bill payments on time.

The Department of Human Resources' (DHR) Family Investment Administration (FIA) coordinates and exchanges information, especially on related policy issues and provides wage verification information to local MEAP agencies, which minimizes administrative workload. A MEAP staff member participates on the FIA Policy Committee;

The DHR Office of Transitional Services provides a list of shelters.

The Energy Advocates, a diverse group of creative and dedicated partners, recognize the need to ensure that effective energy service delivery continues. This group meets monthly and includes Associated Catholic Charities, Office of the Peoples' Counsel, Welfare Rights, St. Vincent DePaul Society, WAP, Fuel Fund of Central Maryland, Community Action Agencies, Oil Industry, Office on Aging, Utilities and other related public/private agencies.

Some oil and utility suppliers have OHEP applications available at branch offices and provide assistance in application completion.

Local agencies provide training in application completion to local network agencies.

MEAP applicants are referred to other needed services as appropriate.

The plan applies to the energy and crisis assistance components of the program.

**ASSURANCE FIVE:** Provide, in a timely manner, that the highest level of assistance will be furnished to those households which have the lowest incomes and the highest energy costs or needs in relation to income, taking into account family size, except that the State may not differentiate in implementing this section between the households described in clauses 2(A) and 2(B) of this subsection.

### **MARYLAND PLAN**

The statistical data of low-income home heating consumption of the previous year influences the decision regarding minimum/maximum benefits. Level I recipients, the poverty level with the lowest incomes 0-75%, who heat with gas or electric receive a higher grant that takes into account family size.

To comply with the new requirements that there be other steps taken in addition to those meeting the plan requirements of 2605 (b), the following steps are taken:

The State conducts an annual survey to determine the actual average heating costs by region for low-income customers (Attachment B). This process includes a selected number of MEAP participating suppliers in each of the five regions in the State. The data is low-income specific and consequently more appropriate in use as a factor influencing benefit levels.

The FY 07 LIHEAP Survey of Average Winter Home Heating Consumption by Fuel Type results shows that the **most costly heating consumption source is oil, (this is a 5% increase from last year). Last year's highest fuel cost was oil, its statewide average is \$1,323 versus \$1,263 the prior winter. Electricity costs rose tremendously with a 34% per kwh increase from the prior year (statewide average increased from \$861 the prior winter to \$1,190).** This data is then used to ensure that the more costly fuels used receive the highest benefit level. The Heating Consumption Survey in Attachment B provides details pertaining to the cost of heat during the winter of 2006 - 2007.

In Maryland, 82% of the MEAP recipients used a utility to heat. We propose to service at least 100,000 households, assuming a federal appropriation of \$33 million. The average benefit for the last six years has been influenced by the federal appropriation that not only affected benefit level but number of families served. The benefit matrix is designed to offer range of benefit grants to reflect the amount of need based on fuel type, income, and household size. For utility service, including both gas and electric, usage is also incorporated into benefit determination. Other factors that may have influence on the benefit grant could be the living arrangements and geographical location of the household. (highest amount paid in Garrett County for a level I utility customer to the lowest income household, using the most costly fuel and in the coldest region of the State.) These criteria support the requirement that benefits are based on need, ensuring that those most at risk, with the lowest incomes, using the most costly fuel receive the highest benefit.

Based on this information, the MEAP payment will pay up to 65% of the lowest income of the families' average heating consumption. This percentage shows another means of complying with the requirement that additional steps are taken to ensure that funds are spent for those most in need.

There will be separate benefit variations based on those counties providing supplemental benefits in addition to receiving OHEP Monies. There is an additional benefit for Prince George's County and Montgomery County where a local energy tax rebate of \$72 and \$40, respectively, is added to the MEAP grant. In Garrett County based on heating degree-day differences, the benefit level is 125 percent of the equivalent levels for the balance of the State, thereby, providing a higher benefit where bills are higher due to weather conditions.

The first benefit level includes **0 - 75** percent, the second is **>75 -110** percent, the third is **>110 - 150** percent and fourth **>150 – 175** percent of the current year's federal poverty guideline.

Benefits paid to eligible renters are equal to benefits paid to homeowners except when heat is included as part of the rent. In this case a different and standard benefit is used.

Public and subsidized housing residents who are responsible for directly paying their heating costs and who meet all other eligibility criteria receive the level IV benefit by fuel type.

Roomers and boarders who meet the eligibility criteria receive the Level IV benefit by fuel type.

Households receiving the Level I benefit are determined to meet the Federal requirement of giving the highest benefit to those with the lowest incomes and highest energy costs in relation to income.

### **Energy Crisis Assistance**

To provide equity in the issuance of energy assistance benefits, to ensure timeliness of service delivery in crisis situations and to provide a larger benefit level, the State issues only one energy assistance grant per household. There are no second or emergency grants. The State reserves the right to issue supplemental benefits when sufficient federal funds are available to help defray high energy costs. The State has a crisis assistance capability. While there is only one grant per year, more than one payment may be issued to accommodate crisis payments or departmentally approved supplemental payments.

The major provisions of the crisis assistance program include:

- (A) When a client is experiencing a heat-related crisis at the time of application, the Local Administering Agency authorizes the household's designated energy supplier to deliver the amount of the MEAP level 4 benefit, of fuel within 18 hours if the energy crisis is life threatening or within 48 hours, except that the crisis payment cannot exceed the regular grant for which the household is eligible to receive.
- (B) When a client is experiencing a cooling crisis at the time of application the local administering agency reviews the application to see if a grant had already been issued the current program period. If a grant has been issued the cooling crisis benefit will be processed as a supplemental payment to the original grant payment.
- (C) Vendors are guaranteed the amount of energy crisis assistance for which the households are entitled. It is mandatory that the crisis assistance portion of the benefit (lowest grant amount for fuel type) or the amount of the regular grant be delivered by the vendor within 18-48 hours from the time the applicant applies for crisis assistance. The vendor will be notified by the Local Administering Agency as to when delivery should be made.
- (D) Energy suppliers are sent the amount of the crisis assistance payment authorized by the local administering agency.

Households are not permitted to "split" benefits between utility and non-utility vendors. If a household selects a utility vendor for crisis assistance, the balance of the household benefit goes to the utility vendor. The same circumstance prevails if a household selects a non-utility vendor for crisis assistance; the balance of the benefit must go to the non-utility vendor. Only when a household selects an alternate heating source or relocates is the remainder of the benefit provided to a second vendor.

Payment for a secondary heating source is made only in a Crisis situation and must be approved by the local agency coordinator/designee.

**ASSURANCE SIX:** To the extent it is necessary to designate local administrative agencies in order to carry out the purposes of this title, to give special consideration, in the designation of such agencies, to any local public or private nonprofit agency which was receiving Federal funds under any low-income energy assistance program or weatherization program under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 or any other provision of law on the day before the date of the enactment of this Act, except that—

- (A) the State shall, before giving such special consideration, determine that the agency involved meets program and fiscal requirements established by the State; and
- (B) if there is no such agency because of any change in the assistance furnished to programs for economically disadvantaged persons, then the State shall give special consideration in the designation of local administrative agencies to any successor agency which is operated in substantially the same manner as the predecessor agency which did receive funds for the fiscal year preceding the fiscal year for which the determination is made;

### **MARYLAND PLAN**

In FY 2008, The State of Maryland complies with this Assurance by continuing with the existing LAAs from the previous year that were given special consideration in the designation of local administering agencies.

This plan applies to the energy and crisis assistance components of the program.

Some examples of ways that the local administering agencies meet this requirement regarding alternate sites for intake and outreach are:

- (A) Each senior information center under the Office on Aging is a participating intake/outreach site. These centers include information in their newsletters, display materials and take applications for the homebound. Training is provided and a cooperative/coordinated relationship exists.
- (B) Many local administering agencies use or coordinate with community agencies such as churches, Salvation Army, or other non-profit agencies with a similar mission. These alternate sites vary by county but represent the diversity of the energy assistance network in ensuring public awareness about the program.
- (C) To ensure compliance with this requirement, each local administering agency is required to include in its annual readiness/outreach plan a list of activities demonstrating compliance with establishing alternate sites.

**ASSURANCE SEVEN:** If the State chooses to pay home energy suppliers directly, establish procedures to --

**ASSURANCE SEVEN (A):** Notify each participating household of the amount of assistance paid on its behalf;

## **MARYLAND PLAN**

Contingent upon the service delivery methodology, each eligible household receives a notice stating the following: (see Attachment D)

- (A) Name and address of head of household
- (B) Dollar amount of benefit
- (C) Type of energy
- (D) Name of energy supplier, energy supplier's number, an applicant' account number with the energy supplier
- (E) Fair Hearings process
- (F) The notice also serves as the check and balance for the program's required three percent discount from all oil, kerosene, propane and coal/wood suppliers. The full amount of the households' grant is shown on the client notice, but the supplier is sent a payment for the full grant less the three percent discount.

**ASSURANCE SEVEN (B):** Assure that the home energy supplier will charge the eligible household, in the normal billing process, the difference between the actual cost of the home energy and the amount of the payment made by the State under this title;

## **MARYLAND PLAN**

The State, through a complaint and monitoring process, assures that the vendors will supply the data necessary to monitor this assurance and has included this requirement as a provision of the Energy Supplier Agreement. Agreements are signed by each vendor.

**ASSURANCE SEVEN (C):** Assure that the home energy supplier will provide assurances that any agreement entered into with a home energy supplier under this paragraph will contain provisions to assure that no household receiving assistance under this title will be treated adversely because of such assistance under applicable provisions of State law or public regulatory requirements; and

**ASSURANCE SEVEN (D):** Assure that the provision of vendor payments remains at the option of the State in consultation with local grantees and may be contingent on unregulated vendors taking appropriate measures to alleviate the energy burdens of eligible households, including providing for agreements between suppliers and individuals eligible for benefits under this Act that seek to reduce home energy costs, minimize the risks of home energy crisis, and encourage regular payments by individuals receiving financial assistance for home energy costs;

## **MARYLAND PLAN**

The State of Maryland requires in its agreement with individual energy suppliers that eligible households, receiving goods under this contract are not treated adversely, and receive equitable

treatment except when the supplier participates in price reduction projects sponsored and/or endorsed by the State. Oil, propane, kerosene, and coal/wood suppliers are required by the State to give a three percent discount off the lowest residential price to eligible recipients.

Unfair treatment of eligible households is cause for termination of the agreement.

**ASSURANCE SEVEN (E):** Any home energy supplier receiving direct payments must agree in its contract not to discriminate, either in the cost of the goods supplied or the services provided, against the eligible household on whose behalf payments are made;

### **MARYLAND PLAN**

The State of Maryland, in its agreement with individual energy suppliers receiving direct payments, requires the following:

- (A) That each energy supplier delivers to each household receiving goods, a bill showing unit cost and total cost of goods delivered.
- (B) That each energy supplier provides the same services to households receiving payments as are provided other customers.
- (C) The energy supplier maintains adequate delivery records consistent with the normal operating practice.
- (D) All recipients receive a notice of the amount of assistance the vendor received as payment for fuel.

This plan applies to the energy and crisis assistance components of the program.

**ASSURANCE EIGHT:** Provide assurances that--

- (A) the State will not exclude households described in clause (2)(B) of this subsection from receiving home energy assistance benefits under clause (2), and
- (B) the State will treat owners and renters equitably under the program assisted under this title;

### **MARYLAND PLAN**

In taking applications and certifying eligibility, LAA's treat categorically eligible energy needy households equitably to those eligible based on income.

The State will assure that owners and renters who are assisted under this program will be treated equitably by instituting the following procedures:

- (A) Whatever the State determines as income eligibility criteria for this year will be applied to both owners and renters in all aspects, including consideration of the lowest incomes and the highest energy costs in relation to income.

- (B) Fully vulnerable renters and owners have benefits calculated in the same manner assuring equitable treatment.

The plan applies to the energy and crisis assistance components.

**ASSURANCE NINE:** Provide that--

- (A) the State may use for planning and administering the use of funds under this title an amount not to exceed 10 percent of the funds payable to such State under this title for a fiscal year; and
- (B) the State will pay from non-Federal sources the remaining costs of planning and administering the program assisted under this title and will not use Federal funds for such remaining cost (except for the costs of the activities described in paragraph (16));

### **MARYLAND PLAN**

The Federal government allows the State to use an amount not to exceed 10% of its funds payable for planning and administering the Program. The 10% administrative cost allowance is not to exceed Local Administering Agencies costs plus the State's administrative costs. To the extent that administrative costs exceed the 10% allowance under LIHEAP, the remaining costs will be paid from non-Federal sources, except for those costs, which are paid under the provisions of section 16 of the LIHEAP Act.

This plan applies to the energy and crisis assistance components of the program

**ASSURANCE TEN:** Provide that such fiscal control and fund accounting procedures will be established as may be necessary to assure the proper disbursement of and accounting for Federal funds paid to the State under this title, including procedures for monitoring the assistance provided under this title, and provide that the State will comply with the provisions of chapter 75 of title 31, United States Code (commonly known as the "Single Audit Act");

### **MARYLAND PLAN**

Utility payments are issued through the State's fiscal system, which meets standard accounting procedures.

The State has established fiscal controls for monitoring the administrative and benefit expenditures and will perform fiscal and program monitoring on a regular basis to assure conformance with the law. Monthly financial reports on both benefits and administrative funds are required as well as a field visit to monitor the accounting procedures of each LAA. On an annual basis, each contractual local agency submits an audit report.

MEAP, as a part of the Single Audit Act, will meet the annual audit requirements which meet OMB circular 133 guidelines.

The plan applies to the energy and crisis assistance components of the program.

**ASSURANCE ELEVEN:** Permit and cooperate with Federal investigations undertaken in accordance with section 2608;

**MARYLAND PLAN**

The State will comply with the Act by developing and adhering to program assurances designed to execute the legislative intent of the Act.

In the event that complaints regarding State non-compliance with the Act's intent or State Assurances are registered with the Secretary of HHS, the State will cooperate with any investigation in accord with Sections 2608(b)-(d).

This plan applies to the energy and crisis assistance components of the plan.

**ASSURANCE TWELVE:** Provide for timely and meaningful public participation in the development of the plan described in subsection (c);

**MARYLAND PLAN**

The State provided for public participation in the development of its program plan before release of its Public Hearing Document as follows:

Representation from citizen advocacy organizations, energy suppliers, state and local public service agencies, and other interested groups were consulted regarding numerous policy issues through regular meetings of the OHEP Advisory Board.

Monthly meetings of the Energy Advocates of Maryland, a broad-based representation of clients, advocates, energy suppliers and public and non-profit agencies;

The Public Hearing Document and announcement of the public hearing schedule was distributed to a representative at each of the diversified groups working with OHEP.

Two statewide public hearings were held. The two statewide public hearings were as follows:

**SALISBURY**

Shore Up! Inc., Wicomico County Public Library Room 1  
June 5, 2007 10:30AM - 12:30PM  
122 South Division Street  
Salisbury, MD 21803-0430  
Contact: Helena Brown  
410-749-1142 ext. 302

## **BALTIMORE CITY**

June 6, 2007 10:00AM – 12:00PM  
2700 North Charles Street  
Conference Room 205  
Baltimore, Maryland 21218  
Contact: Cheryln Mitchell  
410-396-3584

Written comments concerning the Public Hearing Document were accepted until June 15, 2007. However, no comments were received.

The extensive preplan meetings, forums, and the public hearings, all coordinated with other groups, facilitated a more timely and meaningful public participation process.

This plan applies to the energy and crisis components of the program.

**ASSURANCE THIRTEEN:** Provide an opportunity for a fair administrative hearing to individuals whose claims for assistance under the plan described in subsection (c) are denied or are not acted upon with reasonable promptness;

## **MARYLAND PLAN**

All applicants are guaranteed access to a fair hearing process when the complaint is not resolved by the LAA's informal dispute settlement procedures in the following instances:

- Assistance is denied;
- Certification or assistance denial is not provided within 45 days from the date all required documentation is presented by the applicant;
- The amount of assistance received is disputed;
- Help is not given within a reasonable time.

Following the LAAs informal resolution of the Complaint, the Complainant must be given a written statement as to the LAA's decision, and the basis for the decision, together with a written description of the method for obtaining a fair hearing.

The Fair Hearings process follows the above local process, if an appeal is filed. A local review before an LAA-Designated review officer is the first level of appeal. The office of Administrative Hearings is the second level of appeal if the applicant's complaint is not resolved at the local level. The following must be adhered to:

- The location must be convenient and accessible to the applicant;
- Timely and adequate written notice of the date, time and location must be given the applicant;
- All specified time limits must be followed;

- The review officer must not be involved in the original dispute decision;
- The applicant may bring legal counsel, a representative, or interpreter, and may present evidence and examine witnesses;
- The fair hearings process described above relates to energy assistance and crisis assistance.

This plan applies to the energy and crisis assistance components of the program.

**ASSURANCE FOURTEEN:** Cooperate with the Secretary with respect to data collecting and reporting under section 2610.

**MARYLAND PLAN**

The State will comply with the Act by collecting data concerning number and income levels of households assisted and make such reports available to the Secretary by the prescribed dates listed in Section 5.

This plan applies to the energy and crisis assistance components of the plan.

**ASSURANCE FIFTEEN:** Beginning in fiscal year 1992, provide, in addition to such services as may be offered by State Departments of Public Welfare at the local level, outreach and intake functions for crisis situations and heating and cooling assistance that is administered by additional State and local governmental entities or community-based organizations (such as community action agencies, area agencies on aging and not-for-profit neighborhood-based organizations), and in States where such organizations do not administer functions as of September 30, 1991, preference in awarding grants or contracts for intake services shall be provided to those agencies that administer the low-income weatherization or energy crisis intervention programs.

**MARYLAND PLAN**

The State of Maryland has 24 jurisdictions. In 16 of those jurisdictions, the local administering agency is a community-based organization representing 71.74% of the total MEAP population.

In the eight remaining jurisdictions (Prince George's - 5.94%; Kent - .98%; Baltimore County - 8.9%; Caroline - 1.41%; Cecil - 2.5%; Dorchester - 1.83%; Frederick - 3.21%/ and Montgomery - 3.49%), the local administering agency for these counties is the Department of Social Services, representing 28.26% of the total MEAP Population. These local agencies differ from traditional "welfare only" agencies in that their organization also includes such services as Adult Community Services, Home Care and Aging Services Unit.

Following is a list of the outreach/intake available locations/activities to meet the Assurance 15 requirement for outreach and intake:

- Area Agencies on Aging in the local jurisdictions, take applications for their population at their Senior Centers. These agencies receive training on eligibility requirements annually at their quarterly meetings by the MEAP local and state staff. In addition, as required, applications are taken by these agencies for the homebound, and through their newsletters information is provided to assist in the outreach effort.
- There was a large intake application fair, two held in Baltimore City, one in Montgomery County and two in Prince George's County.
- Local government offices are used as both intake and outreach sites. Local staff are trained in eligibility requirements and provided applications to complete as necessary.

In each of the eight Department of Social Services jurisdictions, the other additional intake/outreach sites used include, churches, utilities and local government agencies e.g., Office of Aging.

In addition, local outreach efforts include distributing of materials by churches, media, Salvation Army, libraries, day care centers, neighborhood frequented local establishments, local fairs, school administrators, local media, and missions.

This plan applies to the energy and crisis assistance components of the program.

**ASSURANCE SIXTEEN:** Use up to 5 percent of such funds, at its option, to provide services that encourage and enable households to reduce their home energy needs and thereby the need for energy assistance, including needs assessments, counseling, and assistance with energy vendors, and report to the Secretary concerning the impact of such activities on the number of households served, the level of direct benefits provided to those households, and the number of households that remain unserved.

### **MARYLAND PLAN**

Under "Family Energy Services", Maryland is exercising the option under Assurance 16 that allows up to 5% of its funds to be used for services that encourage and enable households to reduce their energy needs through needs assessments, counseling and assistance with energy vendors to promote self-sufficiency.

The required report by the Department that must be submitted by November 30th of each year, using the prescribed format by the Department will include the requested information in Section 96.84(d) (2) (i)(ii), (iv) and (iv).

The regulations applicable to this Assurance 16 apply equally to the regular and crisis components of the program. There are no additional restrictions on eligibility for this component.

A number of countable services, also known as self-sufficiency activities are allowable. Some examples are:

- 1) Arranged extension due date for bill payment
- 2) Assisted with reconnection of energy service
- 3) Discussed/enrolled household in USSP
- 4) Discussed/enrolled household in BGE's CAMP
- 5) Arranged special fuel delivery
- 6) Arranged for energy supplier to start furnace
- 7) Arranged for emergency furnace repair
- 8) Referred to Fuel Fund
- 9) Referred to EAFC
- 10) Referred to Shelter
- 11) Referred to weatherization
- 12) Obtained church contribution for energy costs
- 13) Obtained other contribution for energy costs
- 14) Arranged household to obtain earned income tax for energy costs
- 15) Arranged household to obtain renter's tax credit for energy costs
- 16) Arranged for alternative home heating
- 17) Gave detailed instructions for conservation

To facilitate easy data collection for this service, database entries are used by local agencies to track use of services. Local agencies are already providing the kinds of services covered by Assurance 16. This is only a practical means of documenting the provision of these services and properly coding them for fiscal reasons.

**GRANTEE:** State of Maryland

**FFY:** 2008

Statutory References

Certification to the Assurances:

Signature of the Chief Executive Officer of the State of Maryland

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Secretary \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

EIN: \_\_\_\_\_ 1-566002033-A2 \_\_\_\_\_

Statutory References

2605(a)

2605(b) (1)

➔ Please check which components you will operate under the LIHEAP program: (Note: You must provide information for each component designated here as requested elsewhere in this plan.)

(use of funds)

	Dates of Operation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> heating assistance	07/01/07 - 04/30/08
<input type="checkbox"/> cooling assistance	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> crisis assistance	11/16/07 – 04/30/08
<input type="checkbox"/> weatherization assistance	

2605(c)(1)(C)

➔ Please estimate what amount of available LIHEAP funds will be used for each component that you will operate: **The total of all percentages must add up to 100%. +**

(use of funds)

	76.92 %	heating assistance
	0%	cooling assistance
	5%	crisis assistance
2605(k)(1)	3%	weatherization assistance
	0%	carryover to the following fiscal year
2605(b)(9)	10%	administrative and planning costs
2605(b)(16)	5%	services to reduce home energy needs including needs assessment (assurance 16)
	.08%	used to develop and implement leveraging activities (limited to the greater of 0.08% or \$35,000 for States, the greater of 2% or 100 for territories, tribes and tribal organizations).
	100%	<b>TOTAL</b>

Statutory References

2605(c)(1)(C) → The funds reserved for winter crisis assistance (alternate which have not been expended by March 15 will be use of crisis reprogrammed to:

(assistance funds)

- heating assistance
- cooling assistance
- weatherization
- Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

→ Do you accept applications for energy crisis assistance at sites that are geographically accessible to all households in the area to be served? (This is required by the statute.)

Yes  No

2605(b)(2) → What are your maximum eligibility limits?  
2605(c)(1)(A) → (Please check the components to which they apply)  
**Current year guidelines must be used**

(eligibility)

\_\_\_\_\_ 150% of the poverty guidelines:

Heating	Cooling	Crisis	Wx	
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

\_\_\_\_\_ 125% of the poverty guidelines:

Heating	Cooling	Crisis	Wx	
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

\_\_\_\_\_ 110% of the poverty guidelines:

Heating	Cooling	Crisis	Wx	
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

\_\_\_\_\_ 60% of the poverty guidelines:

Other (specify for each component) 175% of the poverty guidelines for heating, crisis and wx

Statutory references

2605(c) (1) (A)      ➔ Do you have additional eligibility requirements  
 2605(b) (2)      for: **HEATING ASSISTANCE**        X   Yes           No

(eligibility)

➔ Do You Use      Yes      No  
 Assets test?                  X  

Subsidized housing tenants eligible:

If heat is included in rent                  X  

heat is paid directly        X            

Restricted eligibility

➔ Do you give priority in eligibility to:

Elderly        X            

Disabled        X            

Young children        X            

Restricted eligibility for Non-subsidized renters        X            

Other: (If yes, please describe)

Statutory references

**NON-APPLICABLE**

2605(c) (1) (A) → Do you have additional eligibility requirements  
2605(b) (2) for: **COOLING ASSISTANCE** \_\_\_\_\_ Yes X No

(eligibility)

→ Do You Use Yes No

Assets test? \_\_\_\_\_ X

Subsidized housing tenants eligible:

If heat is included in rent \_\_\_\_\_ X

heat is paid directly \_\_\_\_\_ X

Restricted eligibility

→ Do you give priority in eligibility to:

Elderly X \_\_\_\_\_

Disabled X \_\_\_\_\_

Young children X \_\_\_\_\_

Restricted eligibility for Non-subsidized renters X \_\_\_\_\_

Other: (If yes, please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

Statutory references

2604(c) **→** Do you have additional eligibility requirements  
 2605(c)(1)(A) for: **CRISIS ASSISTANCE**  X  Yes   No

(eligibility)

**→** Do You Use Yes No

Assets test?    X

Subsidized housing tenants eligible:

If heat/cooling is included in rent    X

If heat/cooling is paid directly  X

Must the household have received a shut-off notice or have an empty tank?  X

Must the household have exhausted regular benefit?    X

Must the household have received a rent eviction notice?    X

Must heating/cooling be medically necessary?    X

Other: (Please explain):

**→** What constitutes a crisis? (Please describe)

Any household who has a weather-related supply shortage emergency and/or other household energy-related emergency.

Statutory references **NON-APPLICABLE**

2605(c)(1)(A)

➔ Do you have additional eligibility requirements for: **WEATHERIZATION**  X  Yes   No

(eligibility)

➔ Do You Use Yes No

Assets test?    X

Subsidized housing tenants eligible:

If heat/cooling is included in rent    X

If heat/cooling is paid directly    X

Priority Groups? (Please list)

Elderly?  X

Disabled?  X

Young children  X

➔ Are you using Department of Energy (DOE) Low Income Weatherization Assistance Program (LIWAP) rules to establish eligibility or to establish priority eligibility for households with certain characteristics?  X

If yes, are there exceptions? Please list below.

Have inoperable or failing heating equipment.

Statutory references

2605(b)(3)  
2605(c)(3)(A)

➔ Please check the outreach activities that you conduct that are designed to assure that eligible households are made aware of all LIHEAP assistance available:

(outreach)

  X   provide intake service through home visits or by telephone for the physically infirm (i.e. elderly or disabled).

  X   place posters/flyers in local and county social service offices, offices of aging, Social Security offices, VA, etc.

  X   publish articles in local newspapers or broadcast media announcements.

  X   include inserts in energy vendor billings to inform individuals of the availability of all types of LIHEAP assistance.

  X   make mass mailing to past recipients of LIHEAP.

  X   inform low income applicants of the availability of all types of LIHEAP assistance at application intake for other low-income programs.

  X   execute interagency agreements with other low-income program offices to perform outreach to target groups.

       other (Please specify):

Statutory references

- 2605(b)(4)  
(coordination)
- Please describe how you will assure that LIHEAP is coordinated with similar and related programs. The description provided applies to all components unless specifically noted.  
Coordinated activities with other related agencies are described in the Assurance Section, under Plan for Assurance 4.
- 2605(b)(5)  
2605(b)(2)  
2605(b)(8A)  
(benefit levels)
- The statute requires that there be no difference in the treatment of households eligible because of their income and those eligible because they receive benefits under TANF, Food Stamps, SSI, or certain means-tested veterans programs ("categorically eligible"). How do you ensure there is no difference when determining eligibility and benefit amounts? This applies to all components unless specifically noted below.
- The criteria for determining benefit amounts for non-categorical households and categorical households are the same and, therefore, these households are not treated differently when determining benefit amounts.
- This plan applies to the energy and crisis assistance components of the program.

Statutory references

2605(b)(5) HEATING COMPONENT

➔ Please check the variables you use to determine your benefit levels (check all that apply):

(benefit determination)

- income
- family (household) size
- home energy cost or need
  - fuel type
  - climate/region
  - individual bill
  - dwelling type
  - energy burden  
(3% of income spent on home energy)
- energy need
- other (describe)

2605(b)(5) Describe how you will assure that the highest benefits go to households with the lowest incomes and the highest energy costs or needs in relation to income, taking into account family. (Please describe benefit levels or attach a copy of your payment matrix.)

(benefit levels)

The methodology for the determination of benefit levels is described in the Assurance Section, under Plan for Assurance 5. The additional steps taken to ensure that Maryland complies with this requirement, above what is said to meet the requirement under 2605 (B) (5), are included under plan for Assurance 5.

The grantee benefit amounts for heating is as follows:

\$ 50 minimum

\$ 408 average

\$ 1200 maximum

The grantee provides in-kind (e.g., blankets, space heaters) and/or other forms of benefits.

Yes  No If yes, please describe.

The Local Administering Agencies provides blankets and fans as needed.

Statutory references **NON-APPLICABLE**

2605(b)(5) **COOLING COMPONENT**

2605(c)(1)(B)

➔ Please check the variables you use to determine your benefit levels (check all that apply):

(benefit determination)

- \_\_\_\_\_ income
- \_\_\_\_\_ family (household) size
- \_\_\_\_\_ home energy cost or need
  - \_\_\_\_\_ fuel type
  - \_\_\_\_\_ climate/region
  - \_\_\_\_\_ individual bill
  - \_\_\_\_\_ dwelling type
  - \_\_\_\_\_ energy burden (3% of income spent on home energy)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ energy need
  - \_\_\_\_\_ other (describe)

2605(b)(5) Describe how you will assure that the highest benefits will go to households with the lowest incomes and the highest energy costs or needs (benefit in relation to income, taking into account family size. Please describe levels) benefit levels or attach a copy of your payment matrix.

(benefit levels) The benefit determination method for the energy crisis component is contained in the Assurance Section, under Plan for Assurance 5.

The methodology for the determination of benefit levels is described in the Assurance Section, under Plan for Assurance 5.

\*\*The grantee’s benefit amounts are as follows:

<b>Heating</b>	<b>Cooling</b>
\$ <u>50</u> minimum*	\$ _____ minimum
\$ <u>408</u> average	\$ _____ average
\$ <u>1200</u> maximum	\$ _____ maximum

(Level 4-benefit amount by heating source)

\*The amount needed to resolve the emergency up to \$ 50 at benefit level 4. The amount cannot exceed the maximum regular grant.

\*\*Benefit amounts to be determined when funds are available. Plan amendment will be submitted when cooling crisis activity takes place.

Do you provide in-kind (e.g. fans) and/or other forms of benefits?

  X   Yes        No    If yes, please describe.

The Local Administering Agencies provides blankets and fans as needed.

Statutory references

2605(b)(5) CRISIS COMPONENT  
2605(c)(1)(B)

(benefit determination) → How do you handle crisis situations?

         Separate component                        X   other (please explain)

The benefit determination method for the energy crisis component is contained in the Assurance Section, under Plan for Assurance 5.

         amount to resolve crisis, up to maximum

         other (please describe)

(benefit levels) → Please indicate the maximum benefit for each type of crisis assistance offered.

heating                      \$   1200   maximum benefit

cooling                      \$   N/A   maximum benefit

year-round                      \$   N/A   maximum benefit

→ Do you provide in-kind (e.g. blankets, space heaters, fans) and/or other forms of benefits?

  X   Yes             No    If yes, please describe.

The Local Administering Agencies provide blankets, space heaters and fans when needed.

Statutory references

**NON-APPLICABLE**

2605(b)(5)  
2605(c)(1)  
(B) & (D)

**WEATHERIZATION & OTHER ENERGY RELATED HOME REPAIR AND IMPROVEMENTS**

➔ What LIHEAP weatherization services/materials do you provide? (Check all categories that apply.)

(types of assistance)

- Weatherization needs assessments/audits
- Caulking, insulation, storm windows, etc.
- Furnace/heating system modifications/repairs
- Furnace replacement
- Cooling efficiency mods/repairs/replacement
- Other (Please describe)

Eligible homeowners who meet MEAP income standard or who obtain waivers from the state MEAP director may be provided heating equipment repair/replacement services.

(benefit levels)

➔ Do you have a maximum LIHEAP weatherization benefit/expenditure levels) per household?  
 Yes  No If yes, what is the maximum amount? \$

➔ Under what rules do you administer LIHEAP weatherization? (Check only one.)

(types of rules)

- Entirely under LIHEAP (not DOE) rules
- Entirely under DOE LIWAP rules
- Mostly under LIHEAP rules with the following DOE LIWAP rule(s) where LIHEAP and LIWAP rules differ (Check all that apply):
  - Weatherize buildings if at least 66% of units (50% in 2- & 4- unit buildings\_ are eligible units or will become eligible within 180 days
  - Weatherize shelters temporarily housing primarily low income persons (excluding nursing homes, prisons, and similar institutional care facilities).
  - Other (Please describe)
- Mostly under DOE LIWAP rules, with the following LIHEAP rule(s) where LIHEAP and LIWAP rules differ (Check all that apply.)
  - Weatherization not subject to DOE LIWAP maximum statewide average cost per dwelling unit.
  - Other (Please describe.)

**GRANTEE:** State of Maryland

**FFY:** 2008

2605(b)(6) The state administers LIHEAP through the following local agencies

- county welfare offices
- community action agencies (weatherization component only)
- community action agencies (heating, cooling or crisis)
- charitable organizations
- not applicable (i.e. state energy office)
- other, (describe)

Local government agencies

➔ Have you changed local administering agencies from last year?  
 Yes  No If yes, please describe how you selected them.\$

(agency designation)

➔ What components are affected by the change? N/A

2605(c)(1)(E) Please describe any additional steps (other than those described elsewhere in this plan) that will be taken to target assistance to households with high home energy burdens. (This applies to all components. If all steps to target households with high home energy burdens are described elsewhere in the plan, no further information is required here.)

(targeting of assistance)

Statutory references

➔ Do you make payments directly to home energy suppliers?

Heating  X  yes \_\_\_\_\_ no

Cooling \_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no

N/A \_\_\_\_\_

Crisis  X  \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, are there exceptions?  X  yes \_\_\_\_\_ no

If yes, please describe.

For the energy assistance component, vendor payments are used unless the vendor is a non-participating supplier or the heat is included in the rental payment, in which case the payment is sent to the landlord.

For the energy crisis component, vendor payments are used.

2605(b) (7)  
(A)

➔ If you make payments directly to home energy suppliers, how do you notify the client of the amount of assistance paid? (Please describe)

For the energy and crisis components, all households receive a Notice, Attachment D. The notice includes the amount paid, to whom, date of payment and rights/responsibilities. This is also the check and balance for assuring that where required, the three percent discount is received. Individuals eligible for the discount are notified of the full grant amount while the supplier is sent a payment of 3% less.

2605(b) (7)  
(B) & (C)

➔ How do you make sure the home energy supplier performs what is required in this assurance? If vendor agreements are used, they may be attached. Indicate each component for which this description applies.

Energy Supplier Agreement includes provisions assuring that vendors comply with this requirement.

Statutory references

2605(b)(8)(B) → Is there any difference in the way owners and renters are treated? If yes, please describe.

(owners and renters)

**HEATING ASSISTANCE**

yes  no

**COOLING ASSISTANCE**

yes  no **N/A**

**CRISIS ASSISTANCE**

yes  no

**WEATHERIZATION**

yes  no

Statutory references

2605(b)(10) → How do you ensure good fiscal accounting and tracking of LIHEAP funds? (Please describe. Include a description of how you monitor fiscal activities.)

The procedure for meeting this requirement is described under Plan, Assurance 10.

(program, fiscal monitoring, and audit) → How do you monitor program activities? (Please be sure to include a description of how you monitor eligibility and benefit determination.)

The procedures for meeting this requirement are described under Plan, Assurance 10.

→ How is your LIHEAP program audited?

Under the Single Audit Act?  X  yes   no

If not, please describe:

Additionally, every three years an audit is performed by the States' Office of Legislative Audits.

For States and Territories:

→ Is there an annual audit of local administering agencies? If not, please explain.  X  yes   no

Statutory references

2605(b)(12) → How did you get timely and meaningful public participation in the development of the plan? (Please describe.)

In the Assurance Section, under Plan for Assurance 12, public participation is outlined which shows the opportunity provided for a timely and meaningful participatory process by the public.

(meaningful public participation)

2605(a)(2) → Did you conduct public hearings on the proposed use and distribution of your LIHEAP funds?

X yes \_\_\_\_\_ no When and where?

**(Not required for Tribes and tribal organizations)**

(public hearings)

Two statewide public hearings were held, statewide advisory board meetings held, notices published and written comments solicited as described in the Plan section under Assurance 12.

**SALISBURY**

June 5, 2007 10:30AM – 12:30PM  
Shore Up! Inc., Wicomico County Public Library Room 1  
122 Division Street  
Salisbury, MD 21803-0430  
Contact: Helena Brown  
410-749-1142 ext. 302

**BALTIMORE CITY**

June 6, 2007 10:00AM – 12:00PM  
Baltimore City Department of Housing & Community Development  
2700 North Charles Street  
Conference Room 205  
Baltimore, Maryland 21218  
Contact: Cheryl Mitchell  
410-396-3584

Statutory references

2605(b)(13) → Describe your fair hearing procedures for households whose applications are denied or not acted on in a timely manner. When are applicants informed of these rights

(fair hearings) The Fair Hearings Process is described under Plan for Assurance 13

→ Denials

The Denial Process is described under Plan for Assurance 13.

→ Applications Not Acted On In a Timely Manner

The Applications Not Acted On In a Timely Manner Process is described under Plan for Assurance 13.

Statutory references

2605(b)(15) **For States and Puerto Rico only** (not applicable to Tribes and tribal organizations, or to territories whose annual regular LIHEAP allotments are \$200,000 or less):

➔ Does the State agency that administers the following LIHEAP component also administer the State's welfare program?

(alternate outreach and intake)

**HEATING ASSISTANCE**

yes                       no

If yes, describe alternate process for outreach and intake:

The alternate outreach and intake process is described under Plan for Assurance 15.

Non - Applicable

**COOLING ASSISTANCE**

yes                       no

If yes, describe alternate process for outreach and intake:

**CRISIS ASSISTANCE**

yes                       no

If yes, describe alternate process for outreach and intake:

The alternate outreach and intake process is described under Plan for Assurance 15.

Statutory references

2605(b)(16) Do you use LIHEAP funds to provide services that encourage and enable households to reduce their home energy needs and thereby the need for energy assistance? (This assurance refers to activities such as needs assessments, counseling, and assistance with energy vendors.)

X  yes            no

If yes, please describe these activities.

**Assistance With Energy Suppliers By:**

1. arranging extension due date for bill payment;
2. assisting with reconnection of energy service;
3. enrolling household in USSP;
4. enrolling household in BGE's CAMP;
5. arranging special fuel delivery;
6. arranging for energy supplier to start furnace; and
7. arranging for emergency furnace repair.

**Referred Because MEAP Insufficient To:**

1. Fuel Fund;
2. E AFC;
3. shelter;
4. weatherization;
5. churches
6. community resources

**Counseled Household To Obtain:**

1. earned income tax for energy costs;
2. renter's tax credit for energy costs;
3. alternative home heating;
4. information for conservation

If yes, how do you ensure that you don't use more than 5% (statutory ceiling) of your LIHEAP funds for these activities?

The State has established fiscal controls that ensure that spending does not exceed 5% ceiling. If the amount exceeds 5%, non-federal funds are utilized.

Statutory references

2607A Please describe leveraging activities planned for the fiscal year. **(This entry is optional.)\*** Complete this entry if you plan to apply for LIHEAP leveraging incentive funds and to include in your leveraging report resources/benefits provided to low income households this fiscal year under criterion (iii) in 45 CFR 96.87(d)(2). Provide the following information for each:

(leveraging)

1. Identify and described each resource/benefit;
2. Identify the source(s) of each resource; and
3. Describe the integration/coordination of each resource/benefit with the LIHEAP program, consistent with 1 or more of conditions A-H in 45 CFR 96.87(d)(2)(iii).

**Plan**

The State of Maryland provides for the following leveraging incentive activities:

**Fuel Funds of Maryland**

Fuel Fund payments are given to MEAP eligible low-income households for the purpose of combining with the family's own contribution toward overdue oil or gas and electric bills.

The Maryland Energy Assistance Program's local administering agencies work closely with the Fuel Fund of Central Maryland and other Fuel Funds year round to acquire and disburse funds through a variety of fund raising activities. These monies are donated by individuals, private charities, corporations, utility customers and matching funds from utility companies.

The State MEAP and the Local Administering Agencies (LAA's) work closely with fuel funds to refer year round low income customers for whom the MEAP benefit is not sufficient to meet home heating energy needs for gas and electricity. When MEAP benefits are not enough to allow for reconnection or to prevent shutoff, the Fuel Fund dollars provided often help to pay for arrearage and service reconnection for customers to enable them to use the MEAP benefit for current heating needs.

The Fuel Fund of Central Maryland and other Fuel Funds have regulations that use the same percent of poverty income guidelines as MEAP and require that applicants have previously applied for MEAP, when available, or exhaust the MEAP benefit in order to be determined eligible.

## **Utility Companies**

Credits, waivers of reconnection and deposit fees and service application charges are provided by utility companies to assist low-income families pay for home heating costs.

The utility companies' in-kind contributions, (credits, waivers of reconnection, deposit fees, service application charges) are used to assist low-income families' with their heating costs

The Maryland Energy Assistance Program's (MEAP) local administering agencies refer MEAP eligible participants to utility companies who provide bill credits, waivers of reconnection and deposit fees to help low income households meet their energy needs. When utility companies encounter low-income households who are MEAP eligible, they refer them to the local agency for heating assistance.

## **Three percent discount – propane, coal, wood, fuel, oil and kerosene for MEAP customers**

Through the establishment of the Oil Advisory Committee, the MEAP and the energy suppliers organized to address the overall policy of the program and the industry as they relate to the low-income customers served. Through these exchanges of information, a number of initiatives were developed and implemented including the 3% discount off the deliverable energy suppliers' cash price, an additional discount by suppliers to the elderly, cash donations to fuel funds/other charitable organizations and donated fuel. These initiatives are coordinated and implemented with the cooperative efforts of the program and the industry as ways to address the goal of maximum use of existing program funds.

Additionally, statewide vendor meetings are held, representatives are on the MEAP Policy/Planning Committee and are involved in statewide efforts

## **Local Energy Tax Dollars Added To MEAP Grant**

A local energy tax rebate is provided to MEAP eligible households in Prince George's, Montgomery and St. Mary's Counties. In each of these Counties the local MEAP administering agency was a significant factor in persuading the local County councils to rebate local energy tax dollars to MEAP eligible households. To be eligible for these local rebates, the household must be a MEAP recipient. In Prince George's and Montgomery Counties, the rebate is added to the MEAP grant. In St. Mary's County, a list is obtained from MEAP of the eligible MEAP households in St Mary's County.

The efforts for this rebate are significantly coordinated in each of these jurisdictions resulting in a net benefit to the MEAP recipient. The amount of the rebate follows: Prince George's - \$72; Montgomery - \$40 and St. Mary's - \$55 .

### **All Other Fuel Suppliers (Except Utilities)**

Fuel suppliers contribute cash contributions to fuel funds, waiver payments to low-income households and award discounts of up to 10 cents per gallon in addition to the required 3 percent discount for the elderly low-income customers whom they serve.

The coordination of the State MEAP, LAAs bulk fuel energy suppliers and other entities associated with energy issues affecting low-income families have in part resulted in the offering of additional discounts, waivers of payment and cash contributions to fuel funds by fuel suppliers. The 1990 and 1991 Energy Suppliers' Conference and the attendant Energy Suppliers' Survey (s) helped to identify and highlight the need for effective leveraging strategies. Some suppliers initiated activities at that time, while others expanded the concept throughout subsequent years.

### **Energy Assistance Providers**

Funds are provided by various service organizations to assist low-income households in meeting their energy needs. Private donations from service organizations, such as the Salvation Army, Knights of Columbus, Moose, Lions Club, American Legion, Kiwanis and various other organizations are used to help low income households meet energy costs.

In response to a letter, sent by MEAP, inquiring about the amount of aid given for energy needs for low-income households, the Energy Assistance Providers responded with specific dollar amounts given and specific numbers of households aided.

The Energy Assistance Providers work directly with the local MEAP agencies to provide coordinated service delivery to customers. Benefits are coordinated with local energy agencies to ensure maximum use of resources. The administration and disbursement of funds mirror that of local fuel funds in that the funds are raised privately but are coordinated with and use low-income guidelines for administration.

The Energy Assistance Providers and the Maryland Energy Assistance Program coordinate on various referrals. MEAP refers low-income customers to the various Energy Assistance Providers when the MEAP grant is not sufficient to help with their energy burden.

### **Shelters**

Funds are provided by churches and various service organizations to assist shelters in meeting their energy needs.

Donations from county/city government, churches, civic/service organizations and private individuals are used to help Battered Spouse and Homeless Shelters meet their energy costs.

The Maryland Energy Assistance Program (MEAP) provides limited benefits to Battered Spouse and Homeless Shelters who serve MEAP eligible residents. The Local Administering Agencies communicate orally and/or in writing the criteria established by the State Department of Human Resources, Community Services Administration, Office of Home Energy Programs in determining eligibility of shelter residents.

Benefits are determined based on a percentage of the documented total energy costs of the

shelter during the MEAP heating season. Currently, the MEAP grant reimburses 50% of the shelters documented total energy costs between October and March each year. The remaining 50% of the heating bills are paid with monies donated by county/city government, churches, civic/service organization and private individuals.

### **Energy – Related Emergency Assistance Grants**

The Family Investment Administration produced a report from Maryland's Client Information System (CIS). The report identified energy-related emergency assistance grants issued to low-income households across Maryland. The monthly one-person grant includes \$40 for energy heating needs.

The Local Department of Social Services (DSS) determines the eligibility criteria for energy-related emergency assistance grants. Applicants seeking emergency assistance during the heating season must apply for MEAP first. If the MEAP grant is not sufficient to resolve an energy-related emergency, the local MEAP agency refers the customer to the local DSS office to apply for an emergency assistance grant. Energy-related emergency assistance is also available when MEAP is not available through the local DSS.

Grants for energy-related emergency assistance vary in amount by the local jurisdiction. Only one emergency grant per year may be issued to households.

### **Electric Universal Service Program (EUSP)**

Funds are provided to all Maryland electric customers, both homeowners and renters who meet the eligibility criteria. These funds assist customers in meeting their electric needs through help with their current and past due bills and weatherization measures. The customer is able to compete successfully in a deregulated environment by obtaining electric bill rate affordability.

The customer with knowledge about Electric Universal Service Program/Maryland Energy Assistance Program is able to make intelligent decisions. In addition, the Office of Home Energy Programs is able to reach rural, low-income, disabled, elderly, ethnic minority and other traditionally underserved populations and is able to increase the customer's awareness of energy efficiency and conservation options that result in more affordable bills.

Fund Expenditures Report is compiled from the State's Financial Management Information System (FMIS) of Department of Human Resources/Office of Home Energy Programs which gives the description of what was expended minus the refunds from the utility companies.

The Office of Home Energy Programs administers the Electric Universal Program (EUSP) and provides limited benefits to citizens of Maryland who meets the eligibility criteria. The Local Administering Agencies, Department of Social Services and city governments communicate orally and /or in writing the criteria established by the State Department of Human Resources, Community Services Administration, Office of Home Energy Programs in determining eligibility requirements for electric customers.

The EUSP has three components: Bill Payment Assistance (Helps with current bills); Arrearage Retirement (Help with past due bills one time only); and Low-Income

Weatherization;

EUSP and the Maryland Energy Assistance Program are closely coordinated and use a common application form to promote effective use of resources and achieve administrative simplicity.

\* Leveraged resources/benefits that are counted under criterion (iii) in 45 CFR 96.87(d)(2) must be identified and described in the grantee's LIHEAP plan and distributed as indicated in the plan. In addition, leveraging resources/benefits that are counted under criterion (ii) must be carried out under one or more components of the grantee's regular LIHEAP program.

Statutory references

2605(b) Please describe performance goals and measures planned for the fiscal year.  
**(This entry is optional.)**

(performance  
goals and  
measures)