

LOW INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LIHEAP)

DETAILED MODEL PLAN

PUBLIC LAW 97-35, AS AMENDED

FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2012

GRANTEE State of Maine, Maine State Housing Authority (MaineHousing)

EIN: 010312916

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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

Expiration Date: 09/30/2011

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 Maine State Housing Authority agrees to:
(Grantee Name)

(1) 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;

(2) 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

(ii) an amount equal to 60 percent of the State median income;

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.

(3) 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;

(4) coordinate its activities under this title with similar and related programs administered by the Federal Government and such State, particularly low-income energy-related 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;

(5) 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;

(6) 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;

(7) if the State chooses to pay home energy suppliers directly, establish procedures to --

(A) notify each participating household of the amount of assistance paid on its behalf;

(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;

(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

(D) ensure 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;

(8) 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;

(9) 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));

(10) 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");

(11) permit and cooperate with Federal investigations undertaken in accordance with section 2608;

(12) provide for timely and meaningful public participation in the development of the plan described in subsection (c);

(13) 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; and

(14) cooperate with the Secretary with respect to data collecting and reporting under section 2610.

(15) * 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.

*** This assurance is applicable only to States, and to territories whose annual regular LIHEAP allotments exceed \$200,000. Neither territories with annual allotments of \$200,000 or less nor Indian tribes/tribal organizations are subject to Assurance 15.**

(16) 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.

Certification to the Assurances: As Chief Executive Officer, I agree to comply with the sixteen assurances contained in Title XXVI of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981, as amended.* By signing these assurances, I also agree to abide by the standard assurances on lobbying, debarment and suspension, and a drug-free workplace.

Signature of the Tribal or Board Chairperson or Chief Executive Officer of the State or Territory.**

Signature: _____

Title: Director, Maine State Housing Authority

Date: _____

*** Indian tribes/tribal organizations, and territories with annual regular LIHEAP allotments of \$200,000 or less, are not subject to assurance 15, and thus must only certify to 15 assurances.**

**** If a person other than the Chief Executive Officer of the State or territory, or Tribal Chairperson or Board Chairperson of a tribal organization, is signing the certification to the assurances, a letter must be submitted delegating such authority. (PLEASE ATTACH DELEGATION of AUTHORITY.) The delegation must include authority to sign the assurances, not just to administer the program.**

***** HHS needs the EIN (Entity Identification Number) of the State, territory or Tribal agency that is to receive the grant funds before it can issue the grant.**

In the above assurances which are quoted from the law, "State" means the 50 States, the District of Columbia, an Indian Tribe or Tribal Organization, or a Territory; "title" of the Act refers to Title XXVI of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981 (OBRA), as amended, the "Low Income Home Energy Assistance Act"; "section" means Section 2605 of OBRA; and, "subsection" refers to Section 2605(b) of OBRA.

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.)

		<u>Dates of Operation</u>
(use of funds)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> heating assistance	October 1, 2011 – April 30, 2012 (unless otherwise extended by MaineHousing)
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> cooling assistance	June 1, 2012 – September 30, 2012 Cooling assistance will be administered if emergency funds are provided for cooling.
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> crisis assistance	November 1, 2011 – March 31, 2012
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> weatherization assistance	October 1, 2011 – September 30, 2012

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)

	<u>68 %</u> heating assistance
	<u>0 %</u> cooling assistance
	<u>6 %</u> crisis assistance
2605(k)(1)	<u>15 %</u> weatherization assistance
	<u>0 %</u> carryover to the following fiscal year
2605(b)(9)	<u>10 %</u> administrative and planning costs
2605(b)(16)	<u>1 %</u> services to reduce home energy needs including needs assessment (assurance 16)
	<u>0 %</u> 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).
	<u>100 %</u> TOTAL

statutory
references

OTHER BENEFITS – Sub-grantees will provide outreach services at designated sites and home visits for households that are elderly, disabled or unable to travel to the sub-grantee’s main office. Other benefits will be used to pay for the sub-grantee’s costs associated with the taking of LIHEAP applications at the outreach sites only, as well as providing additional services to the applicants, such as budget counseling, energy education, payment arrangement assistance, and home visits. Other benefits are not considered administrative costs, and therefore are not subject to the 10% administrative limit.

Certification of the LIHEAP application and processing of a benefit will be charged to administrative costs. All processing of LIHEAP applications are subject to the 10% administrative limit.

MaineHousing may also use up to 2% of the LIHEAP funds to pay accrued interest, at an estimated rate of 3%, on any MaineHousing funds advanced to participating qualified oil and/or kerosene (K-1) vendors choosing the Cap Price Plan pricing option or the Discounted Cash Price pricing option set forth in the attached Vendor Agreement (Oil and Kerosene) in order to assist them in securing lower-cost fuel supplies to fulfill their respective obligations to deliver home energy to eligible households. All funds advanced by MaineHousing will subsequently be credited to the accounts of eligible households by the participating oil and/or K-1 vendors. Further, all MaineHousing funds advanced by MaineHousing will only be advanced subject to, and in accordance with, the terms and conditions of the attached Vendor Agreement (Oil and Kerosene) to be executed by MaineHousing and each participating oil and/or K-1 vendor.

If Emergency funds are released by HHS for cooling, benefits will be issued to households determined eligible in the current program year. Benefits will be based on the number of households and amount of funds available.

2605(c)(1)(C)

(alternate use
of crisis assistance
funds)

➔The funds reserved for winter crisis assistance that have not been expended by March 31 will be reprogrammed to:

heating assistance

cooling assistance

weatherization assistance

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 X No _____

2605(b)(2)
2605(c)(1)(A)

→What are your maximum eligibility limits?
(Please check the components to which they apply.)
Current year guidelines must be used.

(eligibility)

X 150% to 170% of the poverty guidelines:
heating X cooling _____ crisis X wx X

_____ 125% of the poverty guidelines:
heating _____ cooling _____ crisis _____ wx _____

_____ 110% of the poverty guidelines:
heating _____ cooling _____ crisis _____ wx _____

X 60% of the State's median income:
heating X cooling _____ crisis X wx X

_____ Other (specify for each component)

_____ Households automatically eligible if one person is receiving
_____ TANF, _____ SSI, _____ Food Stamps, _____ Certain means-tested
veterans programs (heating _____ cooling _____ crisis _____ wx _____)

**statutory
references**

Maine will use the following standards to determine income eligibility:

- i. the lesser of 150% of Federal poverty guidelines or 60% of State median income; or
- ii. the lesser of 170% of Federal poverty guidelines or 60% of State median income for households that have members who are elderly, twenty-four months of age or under, or susceptible to hypothermia as diagnosed by and documented by a statement from a physician.

If Maine does not receive a base award in an amount sufficient to provide an average HEAP benefit equal to \$300, MaineHousing reserves the right to lower the percent of poverty criteria for HEAP eligibility.

2605(c)(1)(A)
2605(b)(2)
(eligibility)

→Do you have additional eligibility requirements for:
HEATING ASSISTANCE X Yes No

→Do you use: Yes No

Assets test? X

→Do you give priority in eligibility to:

Elderly? X

Disabled? X

Young children? X

Other: X
(If Yes, please describe)

statutory
references

Priority is given to those groups that have a direct heating cost.

Subsidized housing tenants with heat included in their rent will be eligible for a HEAP benefit in an amount not to exceed \$5.00. This one-time HEAP benefit will be payable to such households who are deemed eligible between October 1, 2011 and September 30, 2016.

Sub-grantees may begin taking applications as early as August 1st of each year but shall commence taking applications no later than either August 15th of each year or the date of receipt of funds from the Federal/State agency, whichever comes first.

Sub-grantees submit budgets and work-plans which outline their processes for administering the program (i.e. intake, outreach services, certification of applications, and benefit determination).

All sub-grantees may use a mail-out application process to households that were served in the prior year. Mail-out applications cannot be used for new applicants, previously denied applicants who apply this year, or applicants whose location/address has changed.

2605(c)(1)(A)
2605(b)(2)

→Do you have additional eligibility requirements for:
COOLING ASSISTANCE (____ Yes X No)

(eligibility)

→Do you use: Yes No

Assets test? _____ X

→Do you give priority in eligibility to:

Elderly? _____ X

Disabled? _____ X

Young children? _____ X

Other: _____ X
(If Yes, please describe)

2604(c)
2605(c)(1)(A)

→Do you have additional eligibility requirements for:
CRISIS ASSISTANCE (X Yes _____ No)

(eligibility)

→Do you use: Yes No

Assets test? _____ X

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

Must the household have exhausted regular benefit?	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>
Must the household have received a rent eviction notice?	<u> </u>	<u> X </u>
Must heating/cooling be medically necessary?	<u> </u>	<u> X </u>
Other (Please explain):	<u> </u>	<u> X </u>

➔What constitutes a crisis? (Please describe)

A crisis is considered to be a life threatening, energy-related emergency which poses a threat to the health or safety of one or more members of the Household. A Household may be eligible for Crisis Assistance if there is an imminent loss of heat due to:

- Less than 3-day supply of fuel (e.g. reading of 1/8 tank or less on a standard 275 gallon heating oil tank; reading of 25% or less on a propane tank; “3-day or less” supply standard applies to other delivered fuel types).
- Disconnection of service notice from electric utility if the Household’s heating system requires electricity.

2605(c)(1)(A)

→Do you have additional eligibility requirements for:
WEATHERIZATION (X Yes ___ No)

(eligibility)

→Do you use: Yes No

Assets test? ___ X___

Priority groups? (Please list) X ___

Sub-grantees establish priorities in the following order when selecting income-eligible Households for Weatherization services:

1. Households that have members who are elderly, twenty-four months of age or under, or susceptible to hypothermia as diagnosed by and documented by a statement from a physician.
2. Households which consume the highest amounts of energy per square foot of living space, thereby representing the highest potential energy inefficiency.
3. Households where there are opportunities to leverage funds for providing weatherization services.
4. All other LIHEAP income-eligible households.

Sub-grantees also consider the demographics of their eligible population and attempt to correlate services with the percentages of households that have members who are elderly, twenty-four months of age or under, or susceptible to hypothermia as diagnosed by and documented by a statement from a physician.

→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? ___ X___
Please list below.

statutory
references

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

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

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

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

publish articles in local newspapers or broadcast media announcements.

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

make mass mailing to past recipients of LIHEAP.

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

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

other (Please specify):

Each sub-grantee develops and provides additional services and benefits for LIHEAP clients from various private agencies. Many of these agencies are unique to a particular area and benefits range from transportation to an appointment for intake to blankets or fuel.

Additionally, sub-grantees supply program brochures and posters/flyers to energy vendors for placement/distribution in their customer service areas.

statutory
references

2605(b)(4)

→ 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.

(coordination)

Sub-grantees coordinate LIHEAP with the following programs: Social Security, TANF, Low-Income Weatherization, Maine Job Training System, State and local energy programs, Low Income Assistance Plan (LIAP), local municipalities, utility companies, and other public and/or private associations, as outlined in the Leveraging Activities (2607A). Other programs include but are not limited to Home Repair Programs, Homeless Shelters, the Alpha I Home Improvement Program, and the Efficiency Maine Trust Appliance Replacement Program.

2605(b)(5)

2605(b)(2)

2605(b)(8A)

→ 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.

(benefit
levels)

Sub-grantees enter all LIHEAP applications into MaineHousing's centralized database (MERAC) which uses a standardized calculation for determining percent of poverty and benefit amounts for all households. Benefit amounts are based on the household's percent of poverty and actual consumption for the prior heating season or by the Design Heat Load formula as set forth in Section 2605 (c)(1)(B).

statutory
references

HEATING COMPONENT

2605(b)(5) → Please check the variables you use to determine your benefit levels (check all that apply):

(determination
of benefits)

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

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

(benefit
levels)

→ 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 size.

Please describe benefit levels or attach a copy of your payment matrix.

Maine uses a tiered benefit calculation that assures the highest benefits go to households with the highest heating energy costs and the lowest income. Household applications are entered into MaineHousing's centralized database (MERAC) which automatically calculates household benefit amounts. As set forth in Chapter 24 of MaineHousing's Rules, the benefit calculation takes into account the following factors:

- Household's actual fuel consumption data collected from energy vendors or estimated annual heating costs calculated by using the Design Heat Load formula;
- Household income;
- Household size; and
- Susceptibility to hypothermia.

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

X Yes No If Yes, please describe.

Sub-grantees provide a number of in-kind and/or other benefits including:

- Extensive use of volunteers
- Coordination with utility benefits
- Private contributions for fuel assistance
- Blankets
- Free transportation to LIHEAP intake appointments

statutory references

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

(determination of benefits)

COOLING COMPONENT

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

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

If Emergency funds are issued to Maine for cooling, benefits would be issued to households determined eligible in the previous heating season. Benefits would be based on the number of households and amount of funds available.

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

(benefit
levels)

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

To date, Maine has not received Emergency (cooling) funds. If emergency funds are issued for cooling, Maine would implement a standardized methodology for calculating benefits (similar to the heating assistance benefit calculation).

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

___ Yes X No If Yes, please describe.

statutory
references

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

(determination
of benefits)

CRISIS COMPONENT

→ How do you handle crisis situations?

X separate component _____ other (please explain)

Between November 1st and March 31st, a household may be eligible for crisis assistance if it's experiencing an energy-related emergency which poses a health and safety threat and the household is income eligible for one of the following time periods, or eligible for HEAP, whichever allows eligibility:

- i. The twelve (12) calendar months immediately preceding the Date of Application;
- ii. The three (3) calendar months immediately preceding the Date of Application;
- iii. The calendar month immediately preceding the Date of Application;
- iv. The thirty (30) days immediately preceding the Date of Application; or
- v. The previous year tax return period for self-employed applicants.

Crisis benefits may be paid to an electric utility to prevent disconnection of service if the Household's heating system requires electricity.

➔ If you have a separate component, how do you determine crisis assistance benefits?

_____ amount to resolve crisis, up to maximum

X other (please describe)

The maximum (crisis) benefit amount is determined annually based on economic conditions, available funding, and the average cost for 100 gallons of oil.

(benefit levels)

➔ Please indicate the maximum benefit for each type of crisis assistance offered.

heating \$ maximum (crisis) benefit amount is determined annually based on economic conditions, available funding, and the average cost for 100 gallons of oil. For example FY2011 benefit was up to maximum of \$400.

cooling \$ NA maximum benefit

year-round \$ NA maximum benefit

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

Yes X No If Yes, please describe.

statutory
references

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)

(benefit
levels)

➔Do you have a maximum LIHEAP weatherization benefit/expenditure
per household? Yes No

If Yes, what is the maximum amount? \$ 6,572
\$6,572 represents the maximum average expenditure per
household/dwelling, which is consistent with DOE guidelines.

➔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.)

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

- (agency designation)
- 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)
 - tribal office
 - other, describe:

Maine State Department of Health and Human Services is a designated sub-grantee. MaineHousing continues to work with State DHHS on efforts to streamline the LIHEAP application process and Social Security Income verification interface between MaineHousing’s LIHEAP system (MERAC) and State DHHS’ benefit system (ACES).

→ Have you changed local administering agencies from last year?
 Yes No

If Yes, please describe how you selected them.

Although there have not been any changes in local administering agencies from last year, MaineHousing will continue the following service area designations:

- Kennebec Valley Community Action Agency service area will officially include Lincoln and Sagadahoc Counties.
- Peoples Regional Opportunity Program service area of Cumberland County will officially include Freeport, Brunswick, Harpswell, and Pownal.

→ What components are affected by the change?

See above.

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)

1. Target weatherization to homes with high heating cost per square foot determined through MaineHousing's centralized database (MERAC) .
2. Repair/replace inefficient heating systems.

statutory references

2605(b)(7)
(energy suppliers)

→ Do you make payments directly to home energy suppliers?

Heating Yes No

Cooling Yes No

Crisis Yes No

If Yes, are there exceptions? Yes No

If Yes, please describe.

MaineHousing may issue direct checks to LIHEAP recipients who do not have a designated vendor in their area or who pay rent with heat included. MaineHousing and sub-grantees encourage recipients to apply their benefits to their electric utility account if their benefit cannot be used for their primary heating source and the eligible household is responsible for their electric utility bill. Benefits are determined based on a household's primary fuel source/type.

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)

Once the client's application has been approved for payment, the sub-grantee mails the client an award letter notifying them of the benefit amount being issued to their fuel vendor.

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.

Vendor performance is ensured through Vendor Agreements, annual reports provided by all contracted vendors, and on-site monitoring. Vendor Agreements (Vendor Agreement (Oil and Kerosene), Vendor Agreement (Propane, Electricity, Natural Gas and Coal) and Vendor Agreement (Wood Fuel)) attached hereto and incorporated herein.

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 X No

COOLING ASSISTANCE

_____ Yes X No

CRISIS ASSISTANCE

_____ Yes X No

WEATHERIZATION

_____ Yes X No

CENTRAL HEATING IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (CHIP)

X Yes _____ No

Properties owned by landlords who are not income-eligible under HEAP are ineligible for CHIP benefits, except that a limited one-time CHIP benefit in an amount not to exceed \$300 per heating system may be used for minor repairs in the following cases:

- i. A single-family dwelling rented by an HEAP eligible household and owned by a person or entity who is not eligible under HEAP;
- ii. A multi-family residential building containing 2-4 units if 50% of the units in the building are occupied by HEAP eligible households; or
- iii. A multi-family residential building containing more than 4 units if 66% of the units in the building are occupied by HEAP eligible households.

statutory
references

2605(b)(10)

(program,
fiscal
monitoring,
and audit)

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

In order to ensure good fiscal accounting and tracking around HEAP/ECIP, HEAP WX and CHIP, MaineHousing performs an on-site annual review of each sub-grantee which includes a review of agency fiscal policies and procedures; a reconciliation of billings submitted to agency general ledger detail and supporting documentation; and an examination of each sub-grantee's A133 Federal Compliance Audit. Additional on-site reviews may be required in the event MaineHousing identifies significant compliance concerns with an individual sub-grantee.

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

On-site program monitoring will begin at the start of the program year. MaineHousing will conduct at least one on-site visit of each agency during the year with additional monitoring (either desk reviews or on-site visits) as deemed necessary. Each on-site visit will include an entrance and exit interview. On-site monitoring includes but is not limited to: review of the previous audit report to identify focus areas for the review; analyzing the data used by each sub-grantee to determine client income eligibility and benefit determination; observation of the applicant intake process; and other monitoring steps to ensure overall program compliance. Additionally, desk reviews may be completed periodically and would

include such things as checking agency LIHEAP data residing in the centralized database (MERAC) for anomalies using pre-determined indicators or specific data points (i.e. duplicate addresses, certification outside the required 20 day period, etc). The fair hearing process in place at MaineHousing also provides an opportunity to conduct additional in-depth client file monitoring because a thorough analysis needs to be completed by the MaineHousing Compliance Officer of each filed complaint to ensure that the Sub-grantee followed program rules in determining client eligibility and benefit determination.

The monitoring of energy suppliers is conducted in a number of ways:

- On-site visits to vendors (those deemed high risk as well as a sampling of others)
- Desk reviews of vendors which include a review of a random sample of client accounts providing us a glimpse of the vendor practices so a determination can be made on their risk rating
- Review of submitted annual vendor reports using data points to identify anomalies.

After each conducted monitoring, MaineHousing will issue a written report containing all findings to the sub-grantee/vendor. The report will establish a reasonable time period for comment and the required corrective action(s) by the sub-grantee/vendor.

Upon request from the sub-grantee/vendor, MaineHousing will provide technical assistance in all areas needing corrective action.

Depending upon the significance of the issue(s), failure to comply with the required corrective action plans could result in a Notice of Termination.

➔How is your LIHEAP program audited?

Under the Single Audit Act? Yes No

If not, please describe:

➔Is there an annual audit of local administering agencies? Yes No

If not, please explain.

Audit – A compliance and fiscal audit is conducted annually by an independent auditor and shall be conducted in accordance with the Comptroller General’s Standards for Audit of Governmental Organizations, Programs, Activities and Functions and A-133.

statutory
references

2605(b)(12)

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

(timely and
meaningful public
participation)

MaineHousing meets monthly with sub-grantees at their Housing and Energy Council meetings to discuss program concerns, policy, and best practices/procedures.

A notice of Public Hearing will be published on June 10-11, 2011 to receive public comment on the proposed State Plan. Written comments will be accepted through July 1, 2011. Copies of the draft State Plan will be sent to all interested parties who request copies prior to the public hearing.

2605(a)(2)

➔Did you conduct public hearings on the proposed use and distribution of your LIHEAP funds? When and where?

Yes No

(Not required for Tribes and tribal organizations)

(public
hearings)

Public Hearing will be held at MaineHousing on June 21, 2011 at 10:30 am.

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)

FAIR HEARINGS -- HEAP, ECIP, CHIP/WEATHERIZATION

Fair hearings for LIHEAP, ECIP, CHIP and Weatherization will be conducted by MaineHousing, in accordance with the Maine Administrative Procedures Act, Title 5, Chapter 375, upon request of any household in accordance with the Maine State Housing Authority, Home Energy Assistance Program Rule, Chapter 24, as amended.

Applicants are notified of their fair hearing rights at the time of application and through the benefit determination process. Once determination has been completed applicants are notified if they are eligible or not. Fair hearing rights information is provided to the applicant on the application form and also on the award letter, as applicable. Applicants who are not eligible for a benefit will receive a denial notice containing a form to request a fair hearing. (See Attached Denial Form)

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 X No

If Yes, describe alternate process for outreach and intake:

COOLING ASSISTANCE

_____ Yes X No

If Yes, describe alternate process for outreach and intake:

CRISIS ASSISTANCE

_____ Yes X No

If Yes, describe alternate process for outreach and intake:

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.)

Yes No

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

No more than 1% of our LIHEAP funds may be used for purposes such as outreach services, budget counseling, needs assessments, home energy education and referrals.

The "Other Assistance or Benefits" category is defined in sub-grant agreements and is contractually limited to 1%. Sub-grantees must budget and report this category separately from fuel assistance administration. MaineHousing enforces the 1% limit through its budget review and approval process, and by performing on-site fiscal monitoring to ensure (sub-grantee) compliance. Any costs in excess of the 1% must be borne by other funds.

statutory
references

2607A

(leveraging)

→ 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:

- (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).

* 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.

The sub-grantees (nine Community Action Agencies) partner with local organizations to provide additional resources/funding for fuel assistance. The sub-grantees appropriate and distribute these funds to low-income households as supplements and/or alternatives to the LIHEAP program. The type and amount of assistance provided by the resource is directly affected by the LIHEAP benefit amount received by the households. These resources include but are not limited to Youth Alternatives Ingraham (YAI), churches, United Way, fuel vendors, and other organizations.

Participating Maine oil and K-1 vendors provide home heating fuel to LIHEAP clients at a capped/discounted price. The terms and conditions are set forth in the grantee's Vendor Agreements.

Maine's public utility companies offer LIHEAP-eligible households discount rates and other benefits such as water tank (insulating) wraps and debt forgiveness. These programs are coordinated through the utility companies and the sub-grantees.

The Efficiency Maine Trust (EMT) provides funding for the replacement of inefficient refrigeration appliances and lighting for LIHEAP households.

Sub-grantees also partner with local church groups and other organizations that provide donated materials or volunteer labor for the installation of winterization measures in dwellings occupied by LIHEAP recipients.

Various fund-raising initiatives and drives provide items – such as blankets, sleepers, snow suits, and sweatshirts – intended to improve client comfort and reduce heating costs. Sub-grantees ensure all LIHEAP clients are aware of and have access to these benefits: examples include Project Santa and American Red Cross.

statutory
references

2605(b)

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

(performance)
goals and
measures)

Maine will continue to focus on the following areas:

- Provide fuel assistance benefits to 65,000 households.
- Provide the highest benefits to those with a combination of the highest energy consumption and the lowest incomes. Use actual energy consumption data and income data gathered through reports to determine if the Design Heat Load formula is ensuring that the highest benefit is going to those with the highest consumption and lowest income.
- Intake/Application Process: give priority to those households most susceptible to hypothermia (elderly, those with special needs, and families with children 24 months of age or under).
- Make a reasonable and good-faith effort to conduct outreach activities for, and process and serve, any eligible household which is the recipient of benefits for wood fuel within ninety (90) days of the commencement of the program year.
- Provide the most effective use of program funds by setting aside the maximum amount allowed to provide long term weatherization benefits to high energy users.

ADDITIONAL CERTIFICATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

Attached are additional certifications required as follows:

- * **Lobbying certification**, which must be filed by all States and territories. If applicable, Form LLL, which discloses lobbying payments, must be submitted. **(Tribes and tribal organizations are EXEMPT.)**
- * **Debarment and suspension certification**, which must be filed by all grantees.
- * **Drug-free workplace requirement certification**, which must be filed by all grantees, unless the grantee has filed a statewide certification with the Department of Health and Human Services. **STATES ONLY:** If you have filed a statewide certification for the drug-free workplace requirement, please check here: _____
- * One of the requirements included in the 1994 reauthorization of the statute is that state grantees must include in their annual application for funds a report on the number and income levels of households applying for and receiving LIHEAP assistance, and on the number of recipient households that have members who are elderly, disabled, or young children.

All Tribes and those territories with allotments of less than \$200,000 need only submit data on the number of households served by each component (heating, cooling, weatherization and crisis). The approval for the collection of information contained in the **LIHEAP Household Report** is covered by OMB approval number 0970-0060.
- * Though not a part of this application, the report on funds to be carried over or available for reallocation as required by section 2607(a) for the preceding year must be submitted by August 1 of each year. A grant award for the current fiscal year may not be made until the carryover/reallocation report is received. The approval for the collection of information contained in the **LIHEAP Carryover and Reallocation Report** is covered by OMB approval number 0970-0106.