



**LIHEAP Program
Information Memorandum**

IM-17-01

PROGRAM(S):	Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
SUBJECT:	Policy on Release of Weather-Related/Supply Shortage Funding – Governor’s Declaration/Executive Order 17-235
EFFECTIVE:	September 4, 2017

1. Purpose and Objective

To establish the policy for emergency release of the Weather-Related/Supply Shortage funds from the FY2017-2018 LIHEAP Subgrant Agreements.

2. Summary and Background – Requirements for Assistance

A. The Agency must:

1. Accurately document the client files with proof that the assistance is both energy and storm event related;
2. Pay vendors and contractors directly. Clients may not be paid or reimbursed directly, except as provided for in the Subgrant Agreement;
3. Establish a written policy for determining the conditions under which an applicant is eligible based on need for the purchase and/or repair of heating/cooling equipment. Preference should be given to households containing elderly, young children, and persons with disabilities. The written policy must be submitted to DEO for approval in order for funds to be released.
4. Ensure that all weather-related expenditures must be incurred by December 2, 2017 on eligible benefits during the period from September 4, 2017 through December 2, 2017.
5. Maintain all weather-related client documentation for special review during next on-site monitoring;

6. Continue to serve clients with regular Home Energy and Crisis benefits. The agency may not decrease the Home Energy line item to below 25% of the total allocation.

B. Applicant must:

1. Have a total household income at or below 150 percent of the federal poverty income guidelines;
2. Provide current proof of income;
3. Provide proof that the current crisis situation is directly related to the hurricane event. Prior usage, unpaid bills, and past due charges reflected prior to the Effective Date of this policy are not eligible expenses. All assistance must be energy and storm related;
4. Live in one of the 67 counties included under the Governor's Executive Order Number 17-235; and
5. Meet all other eligibility criteria as set forth in the FY 17-18 LIHEAP Subgrant Agreement.

C. Benefit Limits:

1. Maximum of \$1,000 in emergency energy-related benefits per household for expenses incurred as a result of the storm between September 4, 2017 and December 2, 2017.
2. A client may not be issued a weather-related benefit solely to supplement the regular home energy and crisis benefits. The agency may not combine the benefit with regular home energy benefits and summer crisis benefits to pay a large bill. For example, a client applies for a \$1,500 past due energy bill where the usage was incurred prior to the storm. The client is eligible; however, they have no damage from the storm, just a large unpaid bill. If the crisis cannot be resolved through the regular home energy and crisis benefit, the client must be denied as per the subgrant agreement. The agency may not use the additional weather-related benefit to make up the difference.
3. A client may receive the additional weather-related benefit even if they've already received regular assistance benefits, i.e., home energy or crisis.

D. Benefits Available:

1. Assistance necessary to restore home power lost due to flooding, including utility deposits, late fees and reconnect fees.
2. Assistance necessary to house the applicant temporarily in a safe environment:
 - The applicant must be unable to remain safely in the home until repairs needed to mitigate the unsafe conditions are completed.
 - Eligible expenses include hotel expenses and travel costs incurred to transport the client to a safe place (i.e., to a relatives to stay).
 - The applicant may not have already received emergency assistance from any other program for the same type of benefit, i.e., hotel expenses, travel expenses.
3. The following may be paid for with these funds, as needed, to install or repair heating/cooling equipment or to restore power lost due to flooding:
 - Building electrical wiring or gas line inspection
 - Utility box replacement
 - Contractor's/subcontractor's cost to repair electrical wiring or gas lines.
 - Other fees required to assure resumption of services.
4. For purchase and/or repair of air conditioning systems or cooling equipment:
 - Equipment must meet the Underwriter Laboratory (UL) listings and local codes.
 - All equipment repair or replacement must be conducted by a licensed repairman.
 - Vouchers for purchase of cooling equipment, such as portable air conditioners are not allowed.
 - Must follow the agency's written guidelines for eligibility.
 - Any equipment should be purchased in a manner to obtain the best possible product and price.
 - Central cooling equipment may be repaired or replaced in rental housing only with the written consent of the landlord.

NOTE: These funds may **not** be used to purchase, install, or repair any *unvented* appliances.
5. For pre-paid fuel assistance such as fuel oil or propane, the agency is encouraged to purchase enough fuel to supply the client through December 2, 2017. The loss of fuel oil or propane must be directly caused by the flooding and heavy rain event. Fuel oil or propane used up under regular living conditions is not eligible for refill under this release.

3. References and Documents

Governor's Executive Order Number 17-235 (attached)
Approval of Release of Weather-Related Funds (attached)

4. Inquiries

Debbie Smiley, Chief
Bureau of Economic Self-Sufficiency
Division of Community Development
Florida Department of Economic Opportunity
107 East Madison Street
Caldwell Building, MSC-400
Tallahassee, FL 32399
O: 850.717.8467
F: 850.488.2488
debbie.smiley@deo.myflorida.com