

**NORTHERN CALIFORNIA  
INDIAN DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, INC**

Attachment 6

**LOW INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM  
PROGRAM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

The Northern California Indian Development Council, Inc. (NCIDC) has established the following policies and procedures for the operation of the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).

In an effort to best use the limited LIHEAP funds towards Tribal members' energy related needs, NCIDC is requesting the assistance of each Tribe in the delivery of services. Each Tribe is asked to identify and prioritize the Tribal members that will receive LIHEAP. In addition, we ask that each Tribe assist their members with completing necessary forms and providing the necessary information required to assure eligibility for the program services.

The NCIDC will provide the Tribes with the LIHEAP allocations for their Tribal members as received from the Department of Health and Human Services – Administration for Families and Children – Office of Community Services – Division of Energy Assistance (DHHS). The Tribe will identify their members most in need of LIHEAP services, assist the members with completing the required forms and gathering the necessary information, and transmit the forms and information to NCIDC for eligibility review and processing of the energy assistance.

**Energy Assistance Components under the LIHEAP**

In the NCIDC application to DHHS the energy assistance components identified are heating, cooling and summer crisis and year round assistance. The categories are broken down into the percentage of funds targeted as follows: heating assistance is targeted at 51.5%, cooling at 10.85% and 18.19% for summer crisis and 19.45% for year round crisis assistance. These percentages have been established for the overall program and do not necessarily have to reflect the expenditures of each Tribes allocation; however, the Tribal member services should somewhat reflect these breakouts.

**Eligible Beneficiaries**

To receive LIHEAP services the households' income may not exceed an amount equal to one hundred fifty percent (150%)<sup>1</sup> of the poverty level as determined by DHHS annually (DHHS poverty guidelines are included in this packet). In addition, households in which one or more individuals are receiving assistance under one or more of the following programs are also eligible for LIHEAP services:

- Assistance under the State program funded under part A of Title IV of the Social Security Act – Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF);

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<sup>1</sup> NOTE: If a Tribe wishes to provide LIHEAP services to only the most in need of energy assistance they may set the eligibility level at 125% or 110% of poverty.

- Supplemental security income payments under Title XVI of the Social Security Act – Assistance for Aged, Blind and Disabled Persons;
- Food stamps under the Food Stamp Act of 1977; or
- 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.

### **Service Priorities**

In the LIHEAP application NCIDC set priorities for serving eligible beneficiaries. The priorities are the elderly, disabled and young children. This means that in providing services to Tribal members, each Tribe should attempt to serve the elderly first, disabled persons second, and families with young children next (especially single parent families). An additional method of setting priority can be the differentiation of households given their energy burden. That is, to determine the amount of energy burden a household has by dividing the household energy costs by the total household income, then provide LIHEAP services to those with the greatest energy burden.

### **Crisis Assistance**

A certain amount of the LIHEAP funds allocated to each Tribe may be used to assist households that are in an energy crisis situation. In order to be considered for energy crisis assistance, a household must have received a shut-off notice from their electrical or natural gas energy supplier or have an empty propane or other gas tank. Also the household must have exhausted all other regular energy benefits available to them.

### **Payment of Benefits**

Energy Assistance payments will be made to the energy vendor on behalf of the client household. No payments will be made to the LIHEAP client. NCIDC will be using a voucher system and direct intervention with the energy providers on behalf of the clients. The system of energy payments to the vendors will vary with the type of vendor and their location within the State. NCIDC will assure that the proper credits are applied to each client's energy account, and that the credits are applied to the clients' account statement.

### **Firewood Vendors**

NCIDC requests that each Tribe designate no more than two (2) reliable firewood vendors that serve their area. Firewood vendors should not be related to the client being served. Such vendors must be able to deliver the prescribed amount of wood to each client in a timely manner. They will be responsible for assuring that the required paperwork be completed and that the clients sign the Firewood Delivery Invoice for the amount of wood delivered.

**Fraud Reporting Mechanisms**

The NCIDC has established reporting mechanisms to make it easier for the public to report cases of suspected LIHEAP fraud, waste or abuse. Each Tribe that participates in NCIDC's LIHEAP program will be provided materials to post that will inform the public of what they can do to report suspected cases of LIHEAP fraud, waste or abuse. The participating Tribes will be required to post this material at the Tribal office and encouraged to post at stores, Head Start centers, schools and other public gathering locations. The materials will include various methods of reporting fraud including an e-mail address, telephone number and will provide more information via NCIDC's website.