

BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM STATUS REPORT

January 1, 2020 – June 30, 2020

Department: Community Based Services (DCBS)Block Grant: Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

This report is submitted in compliance with KRS 45.357. This report on achievements may be compared to the Block Grant application currently on file with LRC.

Block Grant Manager: Marta Miranda-Straub

8/6/2020

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Marta Miranda-Straub
Commissioner

Date

1. FINANCES	Federal Funds	General Funds	Trust/Local Match	Total
Annual Budget	\$52,286,600.00	\$0	\$0	\$52,286,600.00
Actual Expenditures	\$51,341,349.38	\$0	\$0	\$51,341,349.38
Encumbrances	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Available Balance	\$945,350.62	\$0	\$0	\$945,350.62

2. RESULTS BUDGETED/ACHIEVED

OBJECTIVES	ACHIEVEMENTS
1. The Crisis Component of LIHEAP operated from January 6, 2020, through April 30, 2020. The season was extended through April 30, 2020, due to the mild winter and the receipt of CARES funding due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The crisis component served households at or below 130% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines (FPG) that faced disconnection from their utility provider or were within 4 days of running out of a deliverable fuel (e.g., coal, wood, propane, kerosene, and heating oil).	1. During the heating crisis component of the LIHEAP program, 122,408 households were served with an average benefit amount totaling \$193.76, with a total expenditure of \$24,343,994.
2. A spring subsidy cooling component began in May 2020 and ended June 2020. The spring subsidy cooling component offers assistance for summer cooling costs and serves households at or below 150% of FPG.	2. During the spring subsidy component of the LIHEAP program, 20,390 households were served with an average benefit amount totaling \$166.48, with a total expenditure of \$4,804,827.00.
3. Fifteen percent of LIHEAP funds were transferred to the Kentucky Housing Corporation (KHC) for use in the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP), which is administered through Community Action Kentucky, Inc. The purpose of these funds is to increase the number of homes weatherized and reduce utility costs for these	3. Approximately, 175 homes were weatherized during this timeframe with an average benefit of \$11,591, using a combination of DOE, WAP, and LIHEAP funds. The high average is due to a loss of production for over two months due to COVID-19, which lowered the

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<p>low-income households. Weatherization assistance is provided to low income households at or below 200% of the FPG utilizing a combination of U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) funds and LIHEAP Weatherization funds. Weatherization activities are designed to make the living conditions of a home safe and healthy. Additionally, successful implementation of the program provides homes with more efficient energy use, conservation, and lower energy bills.</p>	<p>completed houses while staffing costs remained stable.</p>
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3. AUTHORIZED CHANGES (from the Block Grant Plan in Finances and/or Objectives)

For State Fiscal Year 2020, the Cabinet for Health and Family Services agreed to transfer 15% of the LIHEAP allocation to KHC for weatherization activities. The program will be operated in accordance with DOE and LIHEAP rules.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Office of Community Services (OCS), Division of Energy Assistance (DEA), provided \$13.7 million to Kentucky in supplemental funding for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) for federal Fiscal Year (FY) 2020. Congress appropriated these funds under the *Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act* (Public Law 116-136), which the President signed into law on March 27, 2020. This funding was provided to “prevent, prepare for, or respond to” home energy needs related to the national emergency created by COVID-19. These additional CARES funds are being used to fund a new cooling program for Kentucky. On May 28, 2020, the Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS) filed Ordinary and Emergency regulation amendments to 921 KAR 4:116 to “revise the income limit for eligibility ceiling from 130% to 150% of the federal poverty level for LIHEAP services.” The regulation amendment also grants CHFS the flexibility to omit copays and authorize summer cooling. LIHEAP provides bill payment assistance year-round for heating and cooling during subsidy and crisis components of the program. The LIHEAP heating subsidy component offsets home heating costs; assistance amounts are structured as a percentage of the household’s annual heating costs and percentage of poverty met by the household. The LIHEAP heating crisis component offers assistance for an energy emergency. Assistance is limited to the amount necessary to relieve the crisis with the maximum amount not to exceed community action agency’s local cost for a deliverable supply of the households’ primary heating fuel or \$600 for gas or electric. The LIHEAP cooling subsidy/crisis component offers emergency cooling assistance. Recipients may apply more than once up to the maximum benefit amount of \$600.

4. EVALUATION OF RESULTS

LIHEAP includes quality assurance and compliance monitoring as evaluative components. The 23 agencies that administer direct LIHEAP services conduct self-evaluations of their services and are subject to annual program performance evaluations by the Community Action of Kentucky, Inc., (CAK) in an effort to continuously improve the program. CAK monitors each of the 23 agencies between February and May of each year to ensure compliance with programmatic requirements, including correct eligibility and benefit determinations.

5. ALTERNATIVES FOR IMPROVED SERVICE DELIVERY

Since 1989, the Cabinet for Health and Family Services has contracted with CAK to operate the Crisis Component and the Subsidy Component. CAK subcontracts with the state’s 23 community action agencies to operate the LIHEAP program throughout the Commonwealth’s 120 counties. The community action agencies have operated the program and delivered

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services in a manner that is consistent with the LIHEAP Block Grant Application, the federal and state regulations, and Cabinet policy. Annually, the program is reviewed for ways to improve services. Each year, a change committee meeting is held, which consists of front line staff, program managers, and others to discuss and submit changes that would improve the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the program. These changes are submitted to the Cabinet as recommendations for change to the program design. All approved changes are added to the LIHEAP program manual and appropriate staff are made aware of those changes.

To provide oversight and technical assistance, DCBS participates with CAK monitoring agencies for fiscal and program requirements.