

LIHEAP ADVISORY COMMITTEE
JANUARY 25 AND 26,2007
COMFORT INN

Those present: Luellen Hart, Joann Heinen, Nancy Stamness, Jackie Vetter, Leisha Peterson, Robin Addington, Brenda Heilman, Cindy Unger, Julie Hahne, Jane Backlund, Ron Knutson and Linda Elstad.

Absent: none

CUSTOMER ACCOUNTS FOR EXCEL –county report

Excel did not bill payments timely to the state office therefore households were getting shut-off notices. The state office has and will be again contacting Excel.

OTHER COUNTY REPORTS

Ward reported that their Community Action Agency is only doing replacements of furnaces. The state office will also make contact with the CAA there.

There was discussion about Self Reliance and how to get more referrals. Several counties reported there are fewer emergencies this year so there are less referrals. Some counties refer households when they apply.

COUNTING BEDROOMS

A clarification was made of counting basement bedrooms. If the bedroom is exposed to at least 4 - 5 feet of the outside then it will be counted as a bedroom.

ALIENS

More information about aliens should be added to the manual, for instance; what is done with the income of the illegal alien; and when are they considered permanent. Reminder: LIHEAP is different from the other programs.

GARNISHMENT

Any type of garnishment is considered a deduction from income for LIHEAP households

RETIREMENT ACCOUNTS

If a household has a person who has retired and not taken their 401 K or other retirement plans out they are not counted. The reason they are not counted is that they have not been rolled over to other retirement accounts.

NOTICES WITH SSN NUMBER

The furnace cleaning notice has Social Security number on it should this be taken off? Are there other forms that have SSN numbers?

It was asked if case numbers should be assigned instead of using SSN' s.

SUGGESTIONS FOR EASING CASELOADS IN OCTOBER

- 1) It was suggested that there be year round redeterminations so that not all applications are taken at the same time each year.
- 2) Counties send out their applications August 1 to social security and non- fluctuating income households. This will cause applications to come in at different times. Therefore income guidelines, policy and maxtrix information would be needed earlier
- 3) Extend processing times from 45 days to 60 days (probably not an option)

It was suggested that counties send out the applications August 15 (415-15-05-10 paragraph 3). Policy will probably change to allow applications to be sent out August 1 every year.

ASSETS

Some counties stated that when the elderly come in with large assets they let them know that they could designate some of the assets as burial accounts. This started a discussion about using \$5,000 for burial accounts. It was suggested that those over 60 be allowed assets in the amount of the burial plus their regular assets:

- A) One household member would be allowed different asset levels in 2008 (\$8,000 or \$10,000 if changed; regular assets, \$5,000 burial accounts; and extra \$2000 for being over 60)
- B) Two household members would be allowed different asset levels in 2008 (\$8000 or \$10,000 if changed, for regular assets; \$10,000 for burial accounts; and an extra \$2,000 for extra assets).

Committee members also suggested that all households be allowed \$10,000 in assets and that LIHEAP allow two vehicles to be exempt. Another exempt vehicle would be for most families that have two cars because two persons in the household work.

The state office staff will take these ideas into consideration.

The state office will also set up next meeting.