

STEVE SISOLAK
Governor



RICHARD WHITLEY, MS
Director

STEVE H. FISHER
Administrator

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF WELFARE AND SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

1470 College Parkway
Carson City, NV 89706-7924

<http://dwss.nv.gov>

Telephone (775) 684-0500 • Fax (775) 684-0614

NEVADA STATE DIVISION OF WELFARE & SUPPORTIVE SERVICES PUBLIC HEARING TO OBTAIN COMMENT FROM INTERESTED PERSONS AND CONSIDER THE PROPOSAL FOR THE FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2021 LOW-INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE (LIHEAP) STATE PLAN AND NEVADA FUND FOR ENERGY ASSISTANCE AND CONSERVATION STATE PLAN.

The public hearing to consider the proposal for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 Low-Income Home Energy Assistance (LIHEAP) State Plan and Nevada Fund for Energy Assistance and Conservation State Plan was brought to order by Robert Thompson, Deputy Administrator for Program and Field Operations of the Division of Welfare and Supportive Services at 1:00p.m. on Tuesday June 23, 2020.

This hearing was conducted as a conference call and the public was notified of, and encouraged to participate in, the Hearing.

DWSS Staff Present in the North:

Maria Wortman-Meshberger, Chief Employment & Support Services
Betsy Ransdell, Social Services Program Specialist
Angelia Haskett, Social Services Manager
Kelly O'Meara, Executive Assistant

DWSS Staff Present in the South:

Robert Thompson, Deputy Administrator, Program and Field Operations

Housing Division:

Shelly Calvert, Grants and Projects Analyst 2

Legal Representation:

Ryan Sunga, DAG

GUESTS PRESENT:

NORTH:

None

"Working for the Welfare of ALL Nevadans"

SOUTH:

None

Deputy Administrator Thompson opened the public hearing at 1:00 p.m., explaining how the hearing would proceed and that this public hearing had been noticed in accordance with the Open Meeting Law and posted on the Division's website.

Deputy Administrator Thompson invited Maria Wortman-Meshberger (Chief, Employment and Supportive Services) and Shelly Calvert (Grants and Projects Analyst 2, Housing Division) to present items on the agenda.

Mrs. Wortman-Meshberger explained the proposed changes for the FY2021 LIHEAP State Plan are as follows:

- Throughout the document, the Program year and other relevant dates will be updated.
- Minor text changes intended to clarify existing policy have been incorporated throughout the document.
- Under Section 1.9 'Other' we are proposing to add -- If a state of emergency is declared by the Governor, the DWSS Administrator has the authority to exempt income used to determine eligibility and benefit amount.
- Under Section 2.6, 3.6, 4.7, 4.12 we are proposing to increase the minimum benefit from \$180 to \$240.
- Under Section 4.2 We are proposing to update -- In the event of an unexpected 'emergency' or an emergency declared by the Governor that threatens the health and safety of a household member or members the DWSS Administrator has the discretion to authorize use of LIHEAP funding to assist eligible recipients with in-kind and energy related needs.
- Under Section 4.8 --We are proposing changing the language to read: An eligible household may receive an arrearage payment once every five years based on the program year the prior arrearage payment was received.
- Under Section 6.1 -- The language will be updated as follows: -- Identified staff to go out into the community for outreach.
- Section 11.2 will be updated with the comments made at the Policy Advisory Council meeting on February 20, 2020 and any public comment on the proposed changes received at this Public Hearing will be summarized in the State Plan as required.
- Under Section 12.1, 12.2 we will update it with the required fair hearing activity and outcomes data when available.

Maria Wortman-Meshberger introduced Shelly Calvert of the Housing Division to explained the proposed changes to the Weatherization Assistance Program for FY 2021:

- The Housing Division had no recommended changes to the above proposals.

Deputy Administrator Thompson invited Ms. Wortman-Meshberger to explain the Division of Welfare and Supportive Services proposed Energy Assistance Program and Conservation State Plan proposed changes for FY 2021. Ms. Wortman-Meshberger explained the following proposed changes:

- The program year and other relevant dates will be updated throughout the document.
- Minor text changes intended to clarify existing policy or correct grammar have been incorporated throughout the document.
- Under Section 2
 - The Arrearage Payment Component definition in 2.2 will be changed from once in a lifetime to an assistance payment once every five years.
 - A fourth meaning in 2.15 will be added to read “Energy emergency’ for the Division of Welfare and Supportive Services means an unexpected emergency or an emergency declared by the Governor that threatens the health or safety of Nevada households related to the cost or availability of natural gas or electricity; the DWSS Administrator has the authority to approve assistance for eligible households with in kind and energy related needs.
- Under Section 8
 - 8.1.4 Updated annual income to include: Note: If a state of emergency is declared by the Governor, the DWSS Administrator has the authority to exempt income used to determine eligibility and benefit amount.
- Under Section 8.1.6, 8.1.8, 10.1.4,,10.1.5, and 11.1 we propose to update the minimum payment from \$180 to \$240
- Under Section 10
 - 10.1.2.1 move to 10.1.11
 - 10.1.12 DWSS has the authority to render emergency assistance to a household if an emergency related to the cost or availability of natural gas or electricity threatens the health and safety of one or more of the members of the household.
- Under Section 11, 11.1.3 2 will be updated to an arrearage payment once in a lifetime to once every five years.

Maria Wortman-Meshberger introduced Shelly Calvert of the Housing Division to explained the proposed changes to the Weatherization Assistance Program for FY 2021:

- Under Section 10 Program Benefits, 10.2.6 we propose increasing the average per household expenditure from \$7, 541 to \$7,669.

- Under Section 10.2.15 – We recommend changing the name of the Community Services Agency to the Community Services Agency Development Corporation.
- Under Section 12 Appeal Process for Denied/Terminated Benefits, we recommend renaming the Nevada Housing Division Sub Grantee Administrative Manual to Weatherization Administrative manual.

Having heard the proposed changes to the LIHEA program and the Nevada Fund for Energy Assistance and Conservation, Deputy Administrator Thompson invited comment from the hearing participants. Hearing none, Deputy Administrator Thompson adopted the proposed changes and updates to the state plans on behalf of the Director of Department of Health and Human Services, effective July 1, 2020.

Deputy Administrator Thompson thanked those in attendance for their input on the state plans heard today and pronounced the hearing closed.