

Request for Proposal



Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program Service Provider for Jefferson County

January 12, 2022

The Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) is soliciting a Request for Proposal (RFP) from interested parties to administer the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) in Jefferson County.

The program assists income-eligible households in meeting the costs of home heating and cooling. Funding is provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Eligible applicants include Community Action Agencies (CAA) or other public or nonprofit entities.

Proposals must be emailed to wendy.littles@adeca.alabama.gov by **12:00 PM (Noon) CST on Friday, February 11, 2022**. Any proposals received after the deadline will not be considered. All proposals must be complete; however, ADECA reserves the right to contact applicants for additional information and/or clarifications.

A confirmation of receipt will be emailed after submittal. Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit proposals in advance of the deadline.

Questions pertaining to this RFP may be emailed to wendy.littles@adeca.alabama.gov by *5:00 PM CST on Friday, February 4, 2022* to allow sufficient time for a response.

This RFP does not indicate acceptance or approval of any proposal in response to this request. No grant or contract payment can be made until a grant agreement has been fully executed. Therefore, no work shall begin on projects selected for funding until an executed grant agreement has been received. All grant awards are contingent upon the State of Alabama's receipt of federal funds awarded.

A. Overview

The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program is designed to assist low-income households in meeting their immediate home energy needs, particularly those with the lowest incomes that use a large proportion of their household income for home energy.

To qualify, households may have incomes at or below 150% of the federal poverty level. The target groups for this program are households with members that are elderly, persons with disabilities, and families with children.

The program year is divided into two seasons: the Heating season is from October 1 through May 31 and the Cooling season is from June 1 through September 30. If all points of eligibility are met and funding is available, eligible households may receive assistance up to four times during a program year in each of the following components: Heating, Crisis Heating, Cooling, and Crisis Cooling.

Crisis assistance is intended to aid an eligible household that is experiencing an energy-related crisis which may exist when:

- A household member's health and/or well-being would likely be endangered if Crisis assistance is not provided
- A household member has been negatively impacted by a State- or Federally-declared disaster or emergency
- A household has any children under age 18
- A household has any members 60 years old or older
- A household has any members who are disabled

B. Service Provider Duties

Duties expected of the selected service provider include:

1. Fully administer the LIHEAP in accordance with the State Plan, the Policy Manual, the LIHEAP Statute, and Federal regulations which are available at the following links:
<https://adeca.alabama.gov/liheap-documents/>
<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ocs/law-regulation/liheap-statute-and-regulations#Section2601>
2. Attend the annual LIHEAP training workshop.
3. Efficiently and accurately determine household eligibility for applicants, process the application and notify the household in a timely manner, and pay the home energy supplier within thirty (30) days of the LIHEAP award.
4. Adequately publicize program availability to the low-income target population so that potential beneficiaries are reasonably informed of the program. Including, in particular, low-income households that contain elderly, disabled, or children within Jefferson County.
5. Place priority on providing services for the elderly, disabled, households with children, and other high-energy users.

6. Provide a local or toll-free number for inquiries about LIHEAP such as how, when, and where to apply for services.
7. Provide outreach services to maximize participation of LIHEAP.
8. Participate in programmatic reviews and monitoring conducted by ADECA.
9. Submit timely financial reports. Expenditure Reports must be submitted by the 10th of the month following the month covered by the report.
10. Maintain an adequate accounting system to identify and support all expenditures reported. Conform to Office of Management and Budget Guidance Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards.
11. Utilize the state-provided online data system for all programs that are partially or completely funded by LIHEAP funds. The data system is used for household eligibility determination, priority points determination, tracking services provided and outcomes achieved, and to fulfill federal reporting requirements.

C. Funding History for Jefferson County

The table below provides a breakdown of LIHEAP funds made available to administer the program in Jefferson County during the past three program years.

Jefferson County	Amount
2019 Program Year	\$4,600,600
2020 Program Year	\$4,922,420
2021 Program Year	\$5,016,500
Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act - funds were expended by 9/30/2021	\$2,071,470
American Rescue Plan (ARP) – funds must be expended by 9/30/2022	\$3,730,940

D. Criteria for Selection

Proposals will be evaluated on the following criteria; therefore, a concise discussion of each of these areas as they are applicable to the proposal is warranted.

1. Describe your agency, including purpose, history, structure, and current operations.

2. List the current federal grants managed by the agency and the length of time the agency has administered each program.
3. Provide a description of your agency's qualifications, including experience and performance in administering LIHEAP or a similar assistance program requiring the determination of eligibility.

Current and former LIHEAP service providers and/or Weatherization service providers shall be granted special consideration in the evaluation process pursuant to the LIHEAP Act of 1981:

To the extent it is necessary to designate local administrative agencies in order to carry out the purposes of this title, to give special consideration, in the designation of such agencies, to any local public or private nonprofit agency which was receiving Federal funds under any low-income energy assistance program or weatherization program under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 or any other provision of law on the day before the date of the enactment of this Act, except that--

(A) the State shall, before giving such special consideration, determine that the agency involved meets program and fiscal requirements established by the State; and

(B) if there is no such agency because of any change in the assistance furnished to programs for economically disadvantaged persons, then the State shall give special consideration in the designation of local administrative agencies to any successor agency which is operated in substantially the same manner as the predecessor agency which did receive funds for the fiscal year preceding the fiscal year for which the determination is made;

Based on the special consideration clause outlined above, additional points are made available for applicants with past LIHEAP or Weatherization Assistance Program experience.

- A. Applicants with past experience in providing LIHEAP services will be evaluated on previous performance. Monitoring reports and other relevant documentation will be used in the evaluation process in addition to the extent to which the applicant responded in a timely manner to findings, corrective actions, high risk status, or other actions as the result of monitoring visits, trainings, and technical assistance.
- B. Applicants without past LIHEAP experience will be evaluated by their experience administering a similar assistance program requiring the determination of eligibility, experience assisting low-income persons, and the capacity to implement an effective LIHEAP program in a timely manner.

Letters and other documents from administrators of funds for work-related matters may be submitted and used for this evaluation.

4. Explain how LIHEAP services would be provided in Jefferson County. Include how potential applicants will be identified, how and where applications will be taken, the location of outreach offices, and how the management of the office(s) will be addressed.

5. Provide a brief narrative of the steps and associated timetable necessary to establish a timely and effective program in the new service territory. Include a discussion of any ramp-up activities or staffing adjustments that may be necessary. In addition, include a plan to retain former employees, not to include management, from the previous Jefferson County service provider who were paid from LIHEAP funds.
6. Describe how your agency will ensure that all applicants have meaningful and equal access to benefits and services. This includes, but is not limited to, persons with limited English proficiency (LEP) and those who are disabled or impaired.
7. Provide your agency's two (2) most recent independent financial audits if they are not currently posted on the Federal Audit Clearinghouse website at the following link:
<https://facweb.census.gov/uploadpdf.aspx>

ADECA may investigate the qualifications of any agency under consideration, require confirmation of information furnished by agency, and require additional evidence of qualifications to perform the work described in this RFP. Poor performance implementing prior ADECA grants may disqualify potential service providers from this solicitation.

See the attached Proposal Rating Sheet for the scoring methodology.

ADECA reserves the right to:

- Reject any and all proposals or withdraw the RFP entirely.
- Remedy technical errors in the RFP process.
- Appoint an evaluation committee to review proposals.
- Negotiate with any, all, or none of the RFP respondents.
- Reject and replace one or more proposed subcontractors.
- Use any or all ideas and/or approaches presented in a proposal. Selection of the proposal does not affect this right.

E. Required Submittals

Proposals must be emailed in pdf format to wendy.littles@adeca.alabama.gov no later than **12:00 PM (Noon) CST on Friday, February 11, 2022**. The following must be included in the agency's submission:

1. Applicant Agency Cover Sheet - Attachment A.
2. State of Alabama Disclosure Statement which can be found at the following link:
<https://adeca.alabama.gov/liheap-documents/>
3. Responses to Criteria #1 through #6 listed in Section D - *Criteria for Selection*. **Please limit your narrative responses to Criteria #1 through #6 to no more than ten (10) pages total.**
4. For applicants without LIHEAP experience, letters and other documents from administrators of funds for work-related matters in response to Criteria #3.

F. Required Submittals After Selection

After the selection process is concluded and the successful agency has been notified, the following documents will be required prior to the grant agreement being issued:

1. Beason-Hammon Alabama Taxpayer and Citizen Protection Act
2. Completed copy of the E-Verify Memorandum of Understanding
3. Program Implementation Plan
4. Signatory Authority Form
5. Copy of active status from www.sam.gov
6. Procurement Policy

Blank templates for required documents #1 - #5 can be found at the following link:
<https://adeca.alabama.gov/liheap-documents/>

LIHEAP Proposal Rating Sheet

Category: LIHEAP Service Provider for Jefferson County

Reviewer:

Proposer:

Date:

Proposal adequately detailed the agency's purpose, history, structure, and current operations. (Criteria #1)	Scaled	1-10 pts	
Proposal detailed a history of managing federal grants. (Criteria #2)	>10 years	15 pts	
	5-9 years	10 pts	
	<5 years	5 pts	
Proposal detailed a history of LIHEAP experience OR similar assistance program requiring the determination of eligibility. (Criteria #3)	>10 years	10 pts	
	5-9 years	5 pts	
	<5 years	3 pts	
Agency adequately demonstrates qualifications/capacity to effectively administer the program and meet the requirements of the LIHEAP Statute and Federal requirements. (Criteria #3 and evaluation of previous performance/letters/supporting documents submitted)	Scaled	0-10 pts	
Applicant has been or is an existing LIHEAP and/or Weatherization Assistance Program service provider. (Criteria #3)	Yes	5 pts	
	No	0 pts	
Proposal provided feasible explanation of client outreach, targeting, and access to serve eligible households across entire service territory (Criteria #4)	Scaled	0-10 pts	
Proposal provided obtainable steps and timetable necessary to establish a timely and effective program. (Criteria #5)	< 2 months	10 pts	
	3 - 4 months	5 pts	
	>5 months	1 pt	
Proposal adequately detailed a plan to retain former employees of previous LIHEAP service provider. (Criteria #5)	Yes	5 pts	
	No	0 pts	
Proposal adequately identified how agency will ensure equal access to benefits and services. (Criteria #6)	Scaled	0-10 pts	
Results of two (2) most recent independent financial audits. (Criteria #7)	Satisfactory, no findings	15 pts	
	Unrelated Findings	8 pts	
	Related Findings or Questioned Costs	0 pts	
Total Points (100 points available)			

NOTES:

Attachment A
Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program
Service Provider for Jefferson County
Applicant Agency Cover Sheet

Name of Applicant Agency: _____

Agency Address: _____

City/State/Zip+4: _____

Federal ID Number: _____

DUNS Number: _____

Contact Person for Matters
Related to This Application: _____

Contact's Phone Number: _____

Contact's Email Address: _____

This application, which seeks to provide Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) services to Jefferson County, has been authorized by the governing body. We certify we are a Community Action Agency or other public or nonprofit entity. We further certify that we have not been disbarred or suspended from doing business with the federal government. We further certify that, to the best of our knowledge, all representations made in this application are true and correct.

ATTEST:

Executive Director

Board Chair

Date

Date