

Douglas A. Ducey
Governor



Michael Wisehart
Director

July 6, 2022

Dear Community Action Agency Partners,

The Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES) and your Community Action Agency (CAA) have a strong history of working together toward our shared mission of helping vulnerable Arizonans address housing, food, and economic insecurity. As an element of this long-standing partnership, DES contracts with your CAA to administer the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and other programs. DES is delighted to work with you on changes that will expand access and assistance for our community members.

Expanding Access

Community members may continue to apply for LIHEAP benefits through their local CAA, as they do now; however, DES is expanding access via an online portal that builds upon the DES' expertise adjudicating applications and issuing benefits for more than 2.5 million Arizonans annually. Beginning in October 2022, all applications, including those submitted with assistance of CAA staff or by the client directly via online, phone or fax, will be entered into the DES portal. DES staff will determine LIHEAP eligibility and issue client benefits creating statewide consistency, equity and efficiency. Local CAAs will continue to administer and customize other LIHEAP components, such as energy education and weatherization, for their communities.

Expanding Assistance

Leveraging the capacity that CAAs gain with the transition of LIHEAP eligibility and benefit functions to DES, the CAAs will assist community members to navigate and apply for the broader array of DES programs and other local services that more holistically address the multifaceted and concurrent challenges that individuals and families often experience, in order to prevent or shorten crises and grow toward economic independence.

DES will continue to fund the CAA contracts at the same administrative level to support existing CAA staffing. In October 2022, DES will retain funds for client benefits as it assumes the benefit disbursement function. DES anticipates opportunities to increase and diversify funding for CAAs as the range of programs with which CAAs assists community members expands.

DES is grateful for the long-standing, collaborative partnership with your CAA, and looks forward to our continued work together to improve and accelerate pathways to safety, stability and economic independence for our vulnerable Arizonans. Please find enclosed a Frequently Asked Questions document that summarizes the future LIHEAP program design, which we continue to refine through our discussions with you and others. We will also be releasing the LIHEAP Model Plan for FFY 2023 on June 8, 2022. We welcome your feedback.

Thank you for your partnership.

Sincerely,

Molly D. Bright, M. S.
Assistant Director

Enclosure