

A16 Guidelines and Best Practices

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Arizona Department of Economic Security

Division of Community Assistance and Development

What is Assurance 16?

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) statute requires states to adhere to 16 different requirements (or assurances). Assurance 16 (A16) allows states to spend up to 5% of their LIHEAP Block Grant funds on “services that encourage and enable households to reduce their home energy needs and thereby the need for energy assistance.” A16 also requires states to report to the Department of Health and Human Services on the impact of such activities. Arizona has elected to utilize the entire 5% of possible funds towards A16. Agencies must maintain a source document that substantiates that Assurance 16 clients are provided these services. Documentation must be kept on file by the contractor and will be reviewed independently of standard LIHEAP files during routine program evaluation.

Intentions

Encourage and enable households to reduce their home energy needs and, as a result, the need for energy assistance, including:

- Enabling, helping, or assisting households to be more self-sufficient in their energy use.
- Helping to develop household resilience, or flexibility, in the face of energy-related and other unexpected hardships.

Values

- Household energy security.
- Sustainable, transformative household impact.
- Balancing effectiveness, efficiency, and compliance with fairness and simplicity.

Focus

- Enable and encourage a household’s optimal, or most desirable, energy usage.
- Increase the affordability of energy.
- Enable household access to services and opportunities that increase or improve income and/or assets.

Exclusions

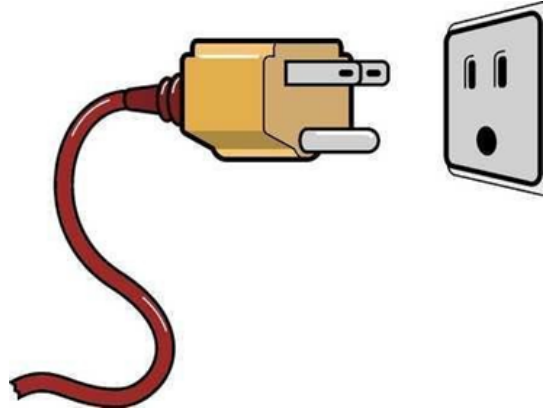
Those things not included, or not allowed, as part of A16:

- Administering other parts of LIHEAP
- Direct payments to households
- Payment of household energy bills

Funding

CAAs can spend no more than 50% of their A16 funding on Outreach activities. This reserves at least 50% of A16 funding for Energy Self-Sufficiency activities. The A16 funding limits are meant to ensure A16 activities are focused more directly on energy need reduction; they also act as a control on allowable A16 activities, which enables a substantial reduction in reporting.

A16 activities performed by case managers should be identified in the client's files in a separate section that details what A16 activities were provided to the client and what outcomes were documented over time in the standard 30, 60, and 90-day timelines. A reasonable cost allocation procedure must be in place to justify the proportion of any staff member's time which is charged to A16.



Suggested CAA A16 Projects

- CAAs can contact electric, gas, propane, and water utilities that serve their clients and request energy and water management tools and energy efficiency kits to distribute to clients. CAAs currently have utility contacts related to LIHEAP. Request at least 100 copies to start, then renew the request as needed.
- Make copies and distribute the Energy Star Join the Lorax activity book. It's free from Energy Star (https://www.energystar.gov/buildings/tools-and-resources/lorax_activity_book).
- Distribute the Touchstone Energy 101 EASY WAYS TO SAVE ENERGY AND MONEY to clients (https://www.touchstoneenergy.com/sites/tse/files/documents/101ways_final.pdf).
- Distribute links to the Energy Star Home Energy Audit to clients (<https://www.energystar.gov/campaign/home-energy-yardstick>). Clients will need access to the internet.
- Encourage clients to switch from regular electric meters to prepaid M-Power meters (where available). Clients may better manage their energy usage with a prepaid meter, versus a regular electric meter where the client pays after using the energy.
- Purchase and distribute energy efficiency kits (Example: <https://www.conservastore.com/product-category/conserve-energy/energy-saving-kits/>).



Home Energy Audit

These 8 simple low-cost actions may improve a home's energy efficiency, increase savings and enhance comfort. Some are one-time actions, some require maintenance every few months, and the rest are behavior changes or things to keep an eye on as you go about your day.

1. Unplug or turn off unused appliances and electronics. Appliance and miscellaneous electrical loads are taking up more and more of our monthly electric bills. One of the simplest things is to shut off electronics, appliances, and lights when not being used. Some electronics, such as televisions and cell phone chargers, can draw power even when turned "off," in what is known as phantom loads or vampire draw. Additionally, smart power strips have certain outlets that can cut power to electronics that are not in use.
2. Change out old incandescent light bulbs to Light-Emitting Diode (LED) bulbs. These bulbs can last 20-30 times longer than incandescents while saving more than 75 percent on energy (they are also more efficient than compact fluorescent lamps, or CFLs).
3. Change filters regularly. The filters in heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems can help keep the air in your home clean. A clean filter also allows your HVAC system to run more efficiently. Most air filters should be changed every one to three months. They are often found in your HVAC return grill or in a slot right at the air handler, and installation is usually as simple as removing the current filter and sticking in the new one.
4. Setting your thermostat fan to "Auto" will ensure that it is running only when the system is heating or cooling. When the fan is "on," it is running constantly and can add up to \$50 per month. Additionally, keep your thermostat to the warmest comfortable temperature in the summer and the coolest comfortable temperature in the winter. In the summer, aim for 78 degrees, and in the winter, shoot for 68 degrees. Programmable or smart thermostats automatically set temperatures when heating or cooling is needed.
5. Have ductwork checked for leaks. Leaks at the return, air handler, and supply can be a major source of high bills. Mobile homes check at the grill, cross-over duct, and down flow air handler, for leaks.
6. Use washer/dryer and dishwasher only when the loads are full. Use cold water when possible for general clothes washing. Hot water can be saved for bedding, stained or soiled clothes. When dishwashing, try air drying instead of heat drying.
7. Low-flow showerheads and faucets use less water and can save money and energy by reducing water heating. Look for one with the WaterSense® label, which indicates that the product met criteria set by the EPA to reduce energy use without compromising performance.
8. Look for the Energy Star® label. Energy Star® is a program through the EPA and U.S. Department of Energy that promotes energy efficiency products. Energy Star® appliances and electronics have gone through testing to ensure they perform as expected and reduce energy consumption. Energy Star® products include refrigerators, ceiling fans, light bulbs, washing machines and more.