MAKAH

ENERGY ASSISTANCE

PROGRAM POLICIES

September 1, 2016

**DEFINITIONS**

1. LIHEAP – Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program
2. LIHEAP grant – Funds received from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
3. Administrative Fees = There are no administration costs – the tribe pays the costs of office supplies postage, etc. (indirect costs).
4. Applicant- a tribe or tribal organization that applies for LIHEAP grant – for the purposes of these policies and procedures, the Makah Tribe.
5. Client – a person that applies for LIHEAP assistance to help pay their electric or propane bill, firewood assistance or assistance with weatherization.
6. Obligation – the funds become obligated when the program coordinator notifies the local utility of the pledge to pay clients bill. Check requests are then generated through our accounting department. When the Coordinator receives the checks they are immediately mailed to the utility company. Expenditure- We send a list of clients to pud and then a credit is issued by PUD and then the check is issued to PUD .
7. Firewood – After collected by the wood cutters, the Program Coordinator scales the load to ensure adequate amount to one cord. The Wood cutter then delivers the firewood to the client, who then inspects and signs for verification of delivery. The wood cutter returns the signed document to the Program Coordinator who then processes for payment in the established manner by the Accounting Department.
8. Reimbursements – the Program Coordinator is in regular communication with the utility company. If there should be any reimbursements by the utility company, the funds are returned to the Makah Tribe who then reissues the funds to the next available client(s).

**TYPES OF ASSISTANCE PROVIDED**

1. Heating/Utility Payment – electrical and propane.
2. Firewood – both heating and crisis
3. Crisis funds
4. Weatherization assistance.

**ASSURANCE 16 (5% for activities to reduce bill, etc.)**

1. The program pays deposits in the amount of $150 minimum to $350 maximum benefits.
2. The program pays for deposits required for name change on account for a maximum of $350.
3. The program pays towards an electrical pole hook-up for a maximum of $350.

**CRISIS PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

Crisis – When electrical services are getting turned off. It is up to the discretion of the Social Services Manager regarding the number of times a household can apply for crisis assistance. Such crisis instances may include medical emergencies, self-certify, receipt documentation (reason why you could not pay bill). There is a 48 hour timeline to assist, if funding is available.

What is a life threatening issue – shut off notice with disabilities or medical issues such as breathing machine, oxygen, feeding machine, dialysis machine, etc. There is a 18 hour timeline to assist, if funding is available.

In a natural disaster or other life and death situations, immediate assistance would be provided to the client for a safe heated living environment. This includes emergency assistance for shut off notices, repair of furnace, temporary energy assistance, including propane fuel and firewood supply.

Households are eligible for heat and crisis assistance. Priority is given to elderly, disabled and young children. Client must have a shut off notice or empty fuel tank. The client must exhaust regular heating benefits. There must be no other heating source.

**HOW OFTEN CAN A HOUSEHOLD BE ASSISTED?**

Heating/Firewood – one time per funding year. Households have the option to choose firewood in place of utility assistance.

Crisis/Firewood - one time per funding year. Households have the option to choose firewood in place of utility assistance.

Weatherization – one time per funding year with a limit of $600 per household.

**INTAKE PROCESS**

1. Timelines – The approval process is allowed 10 days from the time of application completion. Timeline begins at the time of full completion.
2. Process – At the time of application, the applicant is notified of the decision prior to leaving, including the amount of funds qualified to be paid on their behalf.
3. Location – Applications are accepted at the Social Services Building, 111 Resort Drive, Room 1, 8am-5p Monday-Friday.
4. Priority is given to elderly, disabled and young children.
5. Determining Income eligibility –
   1. What is countable income – wages (gross income), self-employment, unemployment, SSA, SSI, retirement/pension, General Assistance, TANF, VA benefits, written income verification from Makah Fisheries Management, and other like income.
   2. How is it calculated – the monthly incomes is used to determine the annual rate for the household.
   3. Household must be at 150% of the federal poverty guidelines.
6. Renters – if utilities is included in your monthly rent paid, the household is not eligible.
7. The household must have a valid utility bill.
8. Service area is within the Makah Indian Reservation boundaries.
9. All files/applications are kept confidential.
10. No client shall be treated adversely.
11. Required Documents –
    1. Form of ID – such as driver’s license, State ID, tribal ID card or tribal enrollment verification.
    2. Social Security Card for all household members.
    3. Income verification for all household members.
    4. Current utility bill.
12. Benefit Matrix – an updated matrix is submitted with the annual application and is used when determining benefit.

**APPEAL PROCESS**

The Makah Tribe provides for a fair hearing to any household that is denied assistance, if the application is not denied or approved within the established timelines, or if the benefits are less than the household believes it should be.

Clients are informed of their rights when the sign the application.

A client may appeal a decision up to 90 days after receiving the written notifications.

When an appeal is filed, the application is brought before the LIHEAP Appeal Committee, appointed by the Social Services Manager. The Appeal Committee will be made up of three current tribal employees who have full knowledge of the program requirements. The Client may bring a representative to the hearing. The client has the right to provide written and oral statements, have witnesses, and access to an interpreter if necessary. The committee will meet and make decision within 10 days and notice will be provided to the client within 20 days of final decision.

**CURRENT VENDORS**

1. Public Utility District – Clallam County, P.O. Box 47, Clallam Bay, Washington 98326
2. Ferrell Gas, 704 Marine Drive, Port Angeles, Washington 98363
3. Pioneer Propane, 931 Carlsberg Road, Port Angeles, Washington 98362

**ACCOUNTING, RECORDKEEPING AND REPORTS**

1. Accounting – the Makah Tribe prescribes to sound accounting practices with appropriate checks and balances throughout the entire process. The financial department is audited annually. The Department follows all appropriate OMB Circulars.
2. Recordkeeping – the Program Coordinator maintains in the files the following documents:
   1. Current release of information – signed at the time of application.
   2. All required documentation for application.
   3. Primary application and and appropriate appeals.
3. A Database is used to track all payments to program vendors and clients.
4. Physical files are stored in a locking file cabinet in a secure location.