Buncombe County Department of Social Services/Human Services

ENERGY PROGRAMS OUTREACH PLAN

The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is a federally funded block grant program that is comprised of three different programs - Crisis Intervention Program (CIP), Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) and Weatherization. There are also non-Federal Crisis Intervention Programs – Duke Energy Progress Share the Light, Piedmont Natural Gas Share the Warmth, Duke Energy Progress NC Settlement Rate, and Wake Electric Round Up

To maximize the success of this program, outreach to county residents through key community partner stakeholders, each county department of social services is required to develop and implement an Energy Program Outreach Plan (EPOP). This plan is a framework to assure that eligible households are made aware of the assistance available through these programs.

The county director and/or his/her designee is required to develop the EPOP, which addresses outreach and application activities related to the Energy Programs. The Outreach Plan is due to North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) by **July 31, 2026**.

Each county must form an outreach planning committee that creates the opportunity for county level collaboration to discuss and plan how to effectively reach county residents to inform them of the services provided by the energy programs. The committee should meet at least twice yearly; September for outreach planning related to LIEAP and April to review the outcomes related to LIEAP and to plan for outreach activities for summer weather. *Energy Assistance Outreach Plan*

Answer all questions below. Address CIP, non-Federal CIP, and LIEAP were appropriate:

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Director of Social Services should engage a number of various community partners such as Vendors, Housing Authority, Public Libraries, Public School System/Local Colleges/Head Start, Legal Services, Meals on Wheels, Media, Public Health/Health Centers, Churches, Food Banks, Councils on Aging/Senior Centers, Community based Indian organizations, Volunteer Programs, Vocational Rehabilitation Offices, and Transportation, services, etc.

1. Provide a list of committee members and their agencies.

   The Buncombe Emergency Assistance Coordinating Network (BEACON) is a group of member agencies that meet bi-monthly for outreach and problem solving. This group serves as a committee.

See a list of agencies and members on the next page.

BEACON Member Agencies	Contact
American Red Cross	Jerri Goldberg
Ascend Women's Center	Kristi Brown
Asheville Buncombe Community Christian Ministry (ABCCM) North	Sheryl Olsen
Asheville Buncombe Community Christian Ministry (ABCCM) Main	Vince Brown
Asheville Buncombe Community Christian Ministry (ABCCM)	Brooke Smith
Asheville Buncombe Community Christian Ministry (ABCCM) - Veterans Services	Eric Watts
Asheville Buncombe Community Christian Ministry (ABCCM) Hominy Valley	Christy Shortridge
Asheville Buncombe Community Christian Ministry (ABCCM) South	Allen Pounders
Asheville Buncombe Continuum of Care- Right at Home Project	Sarah Dickerson
Asheville City Schools McKinney Vento	Sarah King
Asheville Dream Center	Michelle Coleman
Babies Need Bottoms Diaper Bank	Meagan Leimena
Buncombe County HHS	Tracie Franklin
Buncombe County HHS	Phillip Hardin
Buncombe County HHS- Nurse Family Partnership	Ksusha Nece
Buncombe County Schools	Shannon Boyd
Catholic Charities	Jesse Boeckerman
Catholic Charities	Jessica Pienta
Children First/ Communities in Schools	Alvena Landrum
Community Action Opportunities	Stacey Walbourn
Eblen-Kimmel Charities	John Bates
Eliada	Sasha Metcalf
Foster Community Services	Kathy Gildersleeve
Jewish Family Services of WNC	Cindy Smith
Land of Sky	LeeAnne Tucker
MANNA Food Bank	Lucy Phillips
Meals on Wheels	Emily Benson
Mountain Area Pregnancy Services	Kristi Brown
Mountain Housing Opportunities	Steffie Duginske
Operation Gateway	Tess Monty
Our Voice	Jenn Hegna
Society of St. Vincent de Paul- Asheville	Bob Phillips
St. Vincent de Paul Society, St. Barnabas (Arden)	James Loosemore
St. Vincent de Paul Society, St. Eugene	Lynn Brockman
St. Vincent de Paul- St. Margaret Mary (Swannanoa)	Anne Minks
Swannanoa Valley Christian Ministry	Kevin Bates
The Arc of Buncombe County	Linda McDaniel
The Salvation Army	Elizabeth Chapman
Verner Center for Early Learning	Whitney Rea
Western Carolina Community Health Services (WNCCHS)	Charlene Rumfelt
Western Carolina Rescue Ministries	Jeanna Reynolds
YWCA of Asheville	Crystal Reid

2. Provide potential meeting dates, times, locations, as well as agenda topics.

- July 28, 2026, 9 am virtual meeting
  - All agencies share programs and eligibility, changes, challenges and outreach items to share with customers.
  - Discuss CIP and other cooling programs and resources.
  - Back to school assistance.
- September 22, 2026, 9 am virtual meeting
  - All agencies share programs and eligibility, changes, challenges and outreach items to share with customers.
  - Discuss CIP and other cooling programs and resources.
  - Thanksgiving assistance
- November 24, 2026, 9 am virtual meeting
  - All agencies share programs and eligibility, changes, challenges and outreach items to share with customers.
  - Heating assistance- LIEAP/CIP, household needs, coat programs
  - Holiday assistance
- January 26, 2027, 9 am virtual meeting
  - All agencies share programs and eligibility, changes, challenges and outreach items to share with customers.
  - LIEAP/ CIP heating assistance
- March 23, 2027, 9 am virtual meeting
  - All agencies share programs and eligibility, changes, challenges and outreach items to share with customers.
- May 25, 2027, 9 am virtual meeting
  - All agencies share programs and eligibility, changes, challenges and outreach items to share with customers.
  - Summer camp and food assistance programs
  - Discuss CIP and other heating assistance

Define how DSS/DHS will work with the committee as well as any other agencies to collaborate regarding the Energy Program and how outreach will be provided to the citizens in your area.

The mission of the committee is to coordinate the efficient, effective and compassionate provision of emergency assistance through information sharing and joint problem solving by member agencies. Each agency will be provided with information about LIEAP and CIP guidelines, services, and application procedures along with outreach materials to share with their customers.

1. What is the process for referring customers? What marketing tools or items will be used (please provide a copy of your previous marketing materials & how you would plan to enhance those in the future)?

Program flyers are distributed at community agencies and Human Services. Information is also listed on the county website. Applicants are directed to EPASS, to apply by phone or to apply in person if they choose.

2. What strategy does the county have to continue collaborative efforts with community partners to complete outreach activities to target potential eligible households including individuals and families?

   The Council on Aging offers paper applications or to assist with EPASS applications during their home visits, if appropriate.
   We have several older adult apartment complexes that share paper applications with their customers. If interested, they assist them in completing, obtain the signature and submit the applications to us.
   Eblen Charities keep paper applications on site to offer to low-income residents that they work with, and they are submitted to us for processing.
   BEACON agencies are provided with CIP and LIEAP flyers to pass on to their customers.

3. What additional activities will be conducted to target households with members with children under 5, age 60 and over and disabled?

   We use a Nixle communications system several times during the heating season to perform robocalls to public assistance recipients, targeting households with children under 5, those with members age 60 or older, and those who are disabled. These calls provide information about the LIEAP program and how to apply.

Media such as newspapers, social media, radio and television stations to publicize the Energy Programs?

The Health and Human Services Communications and Public Engagement (CAPE) team will send out a press release to the local newspaper, radio stations, news websites, and television stations. They also add this information to the Buncombe County Government Website at www.buncombecounty.org.

1. Provide a list of media outlets that will be used as well as timeframes in which they will be contacted (provide examples of how the county can enhance these efforts):

   Asheville Citizen-Times, The Mountain Xpress, Asheville Radio Group, Ashevegas, Asheville Blade, Biltmore Beacon-Mountaineer, Black Mountain News, Carolina Public Press, IHeart Radio, La Voz (Spanish), La Noticia (Spanish), WGZM Radio, Weaverville Tribune, Urban News and WLOS.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE:

Counties are required to provide application processes for CIP, non-Federal CIP programs, and/or LIEAP. This information must be reported to the NCDHHS annually.

1. Provide hours of operation, location and whether the programs are in-house or contracted out. If your agency contracts out to other agencies attach the contract(s).

   Applications will be taken in-house at 40 Coxe Avenue, Asheville NC 28801from 8 am until 5pm Monday through Friday. We no longer contract out this program.

BEST PRACTICES:

Best practices are a method or technique that has been generally accepted as superior to any alternatives because it produces results. Best practices are essential to the program.

1. If your county has gone above and beyond what is listed on this form please provide this information below:

   _____

   _____

   _____

2. Any additional comments or activities for CIP, non-Federal CIP, and/or LIEAP:

   _____

   _____

   _____

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Your contact information is essential to the success of the Energy Programs. Please complete the following information.

Name: Phillip Hardin – Community Resources Division Director
Kimberly Fullterton- Income Maintenance Administrator
Tracie Franklin- Economic Services Supervisor

Address: PO Box 7408 Asheville NC 28802

Telephone: 828-250-5500

Email: Phillip.hardin@buncombenc.gov
Kimberly.Fullerton@buncombenc.gov
Tracie.Franklin@buncombenc.gov

Please indicate which program:

☒ LIEAP

☒ CIP

This plan must be approved by the local Board of Social Services/Human Services Board or local agency governing body prior to submission. Refer to the latest Dear County Director Letter for instructions on how to submit this document to the North Carolina State office.

_____

Board of Social Services/Human Services or governing body Signature

_____

Date

_____

Director's Signature

_____

Date