

Wilkes County Department of Social 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 - Energy Neighbor, Share the Warmth, Wake Electric Round Up, and Helping Each Member Cope.

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, 2025

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.

Hal Wilson – DSS Program Administer

Marianne Beamon – Adult Protective Services

John Triplett – Hope Ministries

Michelle Shepherd – Wilkes Community Partnership of Children

Cristal Prince – Special Assistance / Adult Medicaid

Jean Davis – Ebenezer’s Attic

Amanda Shumate – Services for the Blind

Jamie Morrison – Child Protective Services

Suzanne Manners – Wilkes County Public Library

Mike Johnson – Wilkes Transportation Authority

Mary Bauguess – North Wilkesboro Housing Authority

Andy Soots – Blue Ridge Opportunity Commission (BROC)
Carol Canter – St Paul's Episcopal Church

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

July 11, 2025 10:00 A.M. @ Wilkes County DSS with virtual option– policy for CIP applications (Crisis Intervention Program)

November 14, 2025 10:00 A.M. @ Wilkes County DSS with virtual option – policy for LIEAP application (Low Income Energy Assistance Program)

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.

Committee members will spread the word to their clients and contacts. Emphasis will be placed on reaching less targeted populations, with a goal of serving those who might not previously have known about the programs.

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 plan to enhance those in the future)?

Word of mouth is our largest referral process. Partner agencies reach out to those they serve. We also notify local newspapers, public television, and local radio stations when funding is available. Our energy worker reaches out to partner agencies by phone to keep them informed of funding.

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?

Keeping an open line of communication with our partner agencies is key. Our relationship with our partners is invaluable as we stay up-to-date on available services to assist our families. Our agency remains focused on community outreach, learning about what is available, and also sharing our programs

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

Wilkes County Public Library and Wilkes Community Partnership for Children are our major partners in reaching our under age 5 population. Local home health agencies and adult service organizations partner with us to reach the elderly and disabled.

Media involvement is vital to the success of outreach activities. How will your county utilize media such as newspapers, social media, and television stations to publicize the Energy Programs?

We contact newspapers, radio stations, and our local public television station to notify citizens of energy funding. Social media is also effective as we work to reach a varied population in a large area. These resources help us to reach those who are not necessarily working with our partner agencies.

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):

Wilkes Journal Patriot – when energy funds become available (We utilize the online as well as print-version of the paper for advertising) WKBC, WWWC Radio Stations – when energy funds become available.

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).

Monday through Friday 8:30 A.M. – 5:00 P.M. at the Wilkes County Department of Social Services, located at 304 College Street Wilkesboro NC 28697 - currently we do not contract out to other locations

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:

N/A

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: Elaine Vanstory, FNS & Energy Programs Supervisor

Address: 304 College Street Wilkesboro NC 28697

Telephone: 336 651 7578

Email: elaine.vanstory@wilkes.nc.gov

Please indicate which program:

X LIEAP

X 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.

Shirley B. Randleman

Chair Signature, Wilkes County Board of Commissioners

7/1/2025

Date

[Signature]

DSS Director's Signature

7/1/2025

Date