

## Notice LHP-2020-02 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

---

**Q1: Does the agency administer the crisis payment as we did with the LIHEAP CARES, where client can receive both benefits at the time of a LIHEAP Cooling application if he/she has a past due balance on the account. This applicant will be eligible to receive a crisis benefit also.**

**A1:** Yes, a client may receive any benefit they are currently eligible for, and it may be simultaneously: 1 Crisis benefit in a 12-month calendar year, 1 Heating benefit per grant, and 1 Cooling benefit per grant. (Updated 11/19/2020)

**Q2: Do we pay the full amount of the utility bill or just the past due amount?**

**A2:** Per the LIHEAP Service Delivery Guide, the Crisis benefit payment should be for the amount of the bill, up to \$475 (FY2020 funds) or \$600 (FY2021 funds). To determine the amount of the crisis benefit payment exclude: tampering fees, NSF check amount and charges, and any other non-energy related charges. This still applies, only you will now add Past Due amounts into the formula. (Updated 11/19/2020)

**Q3: If a client comes in with a past due amount of say \$1200.00 and the crisis benefit amount is only \$475.00, do we help them even though the crisis is not resolved unless the whole bill is paid? Normal crisis procedures is that a client pays the amount over the \$475.00 benefit first and brings the receipt then we do the crisis application. Since it's just a past due and they will not be turned off, can we do the \$475.00 without them making a payment for the difference?**

**A3:** Yes, the requirement is specific to Disconnects not Past Due amounts. The purpose of paying the remaining balance is to alleviate the disconnect threat/crisis by providing intervention. If the client is going to be disconnected because the difference could not be met, then the disconnect will still occur and the crisis will not be alleviated. This is not the case currently with COVID-19 related Past Due amounts and no disconnect at the time of application. (Updated 11/19/2020)

**Q4: Are we required to make pledges for Past Due amounts?**

**A4:** No, LHC is not requiring pledges to utility vendors for Past Due amounts. It will be a Subgrantee determination. We encourage you to work with the Utility Vendors in your area to determine the best procedure. (Updated 11/19/2020)

**Q5: Do they have to have a hardship to receive the crisis, or are we just doing crisis applications on past due balances and using COVID-19 as the hardship?**

**A5:** Yes, applicants must always have a hardship to qualify for crisis assistance. This has not changed. The definition has only been expanded to include Past Due amounts as a hardship to qualify for crisis assistance.

Per Notice LHP-2020-02, ***“Intake** When a client presents with a shut-off or disconnect notice, a Subgrantee must still provide assistance within 48 hours for non-life threatening crisis and within 18 hours for life-threatening crisis. When a client presents with a Past Due amount only and no disconnect notice, Subgrantees must provide assistance on a first come, first serve basis in accordance with existing intake/scheduling policies for non-crisis appointments.”* (Updated 11/19/2020)

**Q6: Does the agency advertise that we are accepting past due utility bills in lieu of the disconnection notices for a Crisis benefit payment?**

**A6:** LHC will not require you to advertise this change due to the temporary timeframe. (Updated 11/19/2020)

**Q7: Will the Notice be extended beyond December 31, 2020 given the rise in COVID-19 cases?**

**A7:** This will be evaluated as we get closer to the end of the year and based on any potential changes to the Governor’s Orders. As of this date, Past Due amounts are only allowed to be included in the Crisis definition through December 31, 2020. (Updated 11/19/2020) This Notice has been extended thru March 31, 2021 per Notice: LHP-2021-01. Any further extensions will be evaluated as the new expiration approaches. (Updated 01/14/2021)

**Q8: Can Installment/Deferred Payment Plans be considered as Past Due amounts?**

**A8:** Yes, Installment/Deferred Payment Plans are a recommendation to utility vendors by the LPSC to work with clients and avoid disconnects. These plans are the result of large past due balances owed by clients and may be counted as past due amounts. (Updated 01/14/2021)