

Introduction

Thank you for joining us today. The purpose of this interview is to gain a deeper understanding of how Tribal LIHWAP programs operate, identify promising practices that could be modeled to enhance LIHWAP administration and implementation, identify barriers and challenges to Tribal LIHWAP implementation, and identify Tribal LIHWAP accomplishments and successes.

Participation in this interview is entirely voluntary and should take approximately one hour.

OSC formally welcomes public comment on this data collection effort. Please address all comments to: Sarah Dalglish, Program Specialist, sarah.dalglish@acf.hhs.gov

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Interview Questions:

- 1) Please describe the sources/systems that are commonly used to provide water and wastewater services to households in your community? For example, pipes and conveyances, wells, cisterns, septic tanks.
- 2) Please tell us how you currently operate your LIHWAP program. Consider any barriers you have encountered as well as accomplishments and successes. Include information about the following, as applicable: critical partnerships that make the LIHWAP program possible; the number of program staff and if they are cross trained to work on LIHWAP; what type of outreach are you using; what is your intake and benefit determination process; how are payments processed; how is categorical eligibility is applied; a description of the partnership with your water service providers; utilization of any of the LIHWAP flexibilities; the use of supplemental funding;
- 3) Please tell us about the timeframes that were needed to set up the LIHWAP program. For example, what were the timeframes for: adopting LIHWAP policies and procedures; gaining Tribal Council or other Tribal leadership reviews and approvals; identifying and preparing staff to stand up and implement the LIHWAP program; establishing any internal and external contracts necessary to operate the LIHWAP program; initiating agreements and contracts with local water vendors and/or suppliers; coordinating outreach and enrollment; or completing initial payments and reimbursements.
- 4) Please tell us about any successes or challenges that you may have encountered in implementation. Consider any of the following that apply: bundled billing; billing/payment for arrearages; payments for households without outstanding balances; coordination with water vendors/suppliers; working with landlords; coordination with public housing; services outside Tribal boundaries; provision of bottled water; how are your community's water

service systems; coordination with other programs for infrastructure repairs, if needed; federal LIHWAP program policies; and LIHWAP funding allocation amounts.

- 5) How has the LIHWAP impacted your water utility providers? For tribes that own their water utility, how has participating in LIHWAP impacted business and processes, for example what changes had to be made to processes or systems, what is the impact of receiving revenue through benefit payments?
- 6) What system(s) does your program use for data collection? Do you have any feedback relate to LIHWAP reporting requirements? Are there any successes with data collection you'd like to share?
- 7) Please tell us about your successes and challenges with establishing agreements with water vendors/suppliers. How do you maintain ongoing communication with water suppliers? How do you ensure that the utility payments have been credited to the proper account?
- 8) Please tell us about your successes and challenges in coordinating community stakeholders, such as other Tribal service agencies, State and local agencies, water utility providers, and landlords. Has your LIHWAP program coordinated with other Tribal programs, such as LIHEAP and CSBG?
- 9) Please tell us about your successes and challenges with outreach to eligible populations.
- 10) How has your LIHWAP program impacted individuals, families, and the Tribal community? What immediate household burdens stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic were alleviated as a result LIHWAP funding? Please share any beneficiary success stories related to household needs.
- 11) Describe any notable accomplishments in the implementation of your LIHWAP program. Would you like to offer any advice to your fellow LIHWAP Tribal grant recipients?
- 12) Are there ways the LIHWAP has fallen short for Tribal communities? Are there needs in your community related to water affordability that LIHWAP has been unable to address?
- 13) Was there any Training and Technical Assistance (TTA) provided that you thought was useful? Were there any gaps in TTA?
- 14) Is there anything else you would like to share regarding your LIHWAP experience(s) that we haven't asked today?