



LIHEAP Intake Staff Training

Handout 2: Staff Scenarios

Topic 2: Initial Contact

Scenario 1:

Subgrantee: Thanks for calling. May I help you?

Caller: Yes, I need to apply for emergency funds to help me with my heating bill. They want to cut off my heat next week, and I can't pay the bill.

Subgrantee: I'm sorry; we are out of funds in the program. We can't help you right now. You can always check back with us in a few months in case more money has come in.

Scenario 2:

Subgrantee: Thanks for calling. May I help you?

Caller: Yes, I need to apply for emergency funds to help me with my heating bill. They want to cut off my heat next week, and I can't pay the bill.

Subgrantee: We can't take your application over the phone, so you'll need to fill out a paper application. You can get it on our Web site. Fill that application out and bring it into the office.



Scenario 3:

Subgrantee: Thanks for calling. May I help you?

Caller: Yes, I need to apply for emergency funds to help me with my heating bill. They want to cut off my heat next week, and I can't pay the bill.

Subgrantee: We can't take your application over the phone, so you'll need to fill out a paper application. You can get it on our Web site. Do you have Internet access?

Caller: No, I don't have access to the Internet.

Subgrantee: Okay. You can come into our office to get a paper application to complete, or we can mail one out to you, whichever you prefer. Do you have our address?

Caller: Yes, I know where you are located.

Subgrantee: Great! We are open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Can you make it in during those hours?

Caller: Yes, I can.

Subgrantee: Good. Once you submit your application, we will have one of our counselors review the application and determine for what benefits you are eligible. We will process your application within 48 hours. Do you have any questions?

Caller: No.

Subgrantee: If you have any other questions, feel free to call. Otherwise, we'll see you when you come in to complete your application.

Caller: Thanks!



Scenario 4:

Subgrantee: We have reviewed your application and are pleased to be able to provide you \$250 to pay your gas bill. It may take a few days to get that money processed; but, in the meantime, we'll call the gas company to have them hold off on the disconnection of your heat.

Applicant: Only \$250? That's not enough! My back gas bills are \$500.

Subgrantee: Unfortunately, you only qualify for \$250. You will have to find a way to get the other \$250 on your own. When we talk to the gas company, we'll ask them to place you on a budget payment plan to help you get caught up.

Applicant: [Getting emotional] That won't work! There is no way I can get \$250 together. That is the reason I'm behind in the first place. If I could get \$250, I would have paid it earlier and not gotten in this much trouble! [Begins to cry]. My daughter was sick, so I had some doctor bills and prescriptions to get. My husband was laid off work and hasn't been able to get a new job yet. I just don't know what we're going to do!

Subgrantee: I'm very sorry. As I said, I will talk to the gas company and ask them to extend your due date so it gives you more time to get this resolved. I have a list of other agencies that may be able to help you. Let me see if one of these groups can help you with either your gas bill or some other bills to help you get this resolved. Let's look through this list to see what we can do.

Applicant: Thanks!