

# Talking with Your Fiscal Shop

Division of Energy Assistance (DEA)

Office of Community Services (OCS)

Administration for Children & Families (ACF)

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)



ADMINISTRATION FOR  
**CHILDREN & FAMILIES**

# Agenda

- Introduction
- Developing Constructive Communication
- Scenarios
  - Terms and Definitions
  - Observations and Inquiries
  - Personal Experiences
- Questions and Answers



# Developing Constructive Communication

Understand other perspectives and learn how to make the best of every conversation.

# Constructive Communication

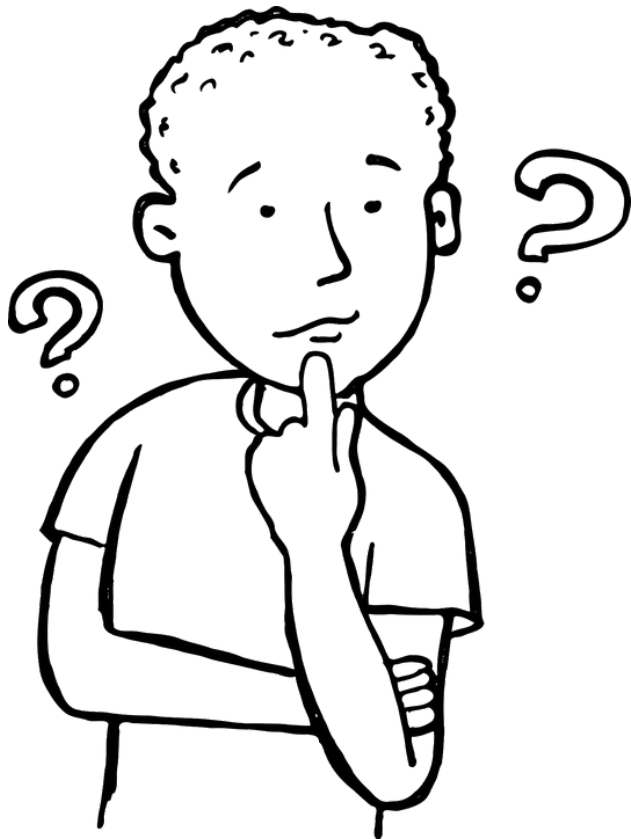
**Staying Emotionally  
Agile During  
Challenging Conversations**



# Communication Goals

- Gain some self-awareness around emotion (and how to manage it).
- Learn how to set up a Crucial Conversation.
- Recognize your stories.
- Change stories into behaviorally specific facts.

# ACTIVITY: Group Discussion



## SCENARIO

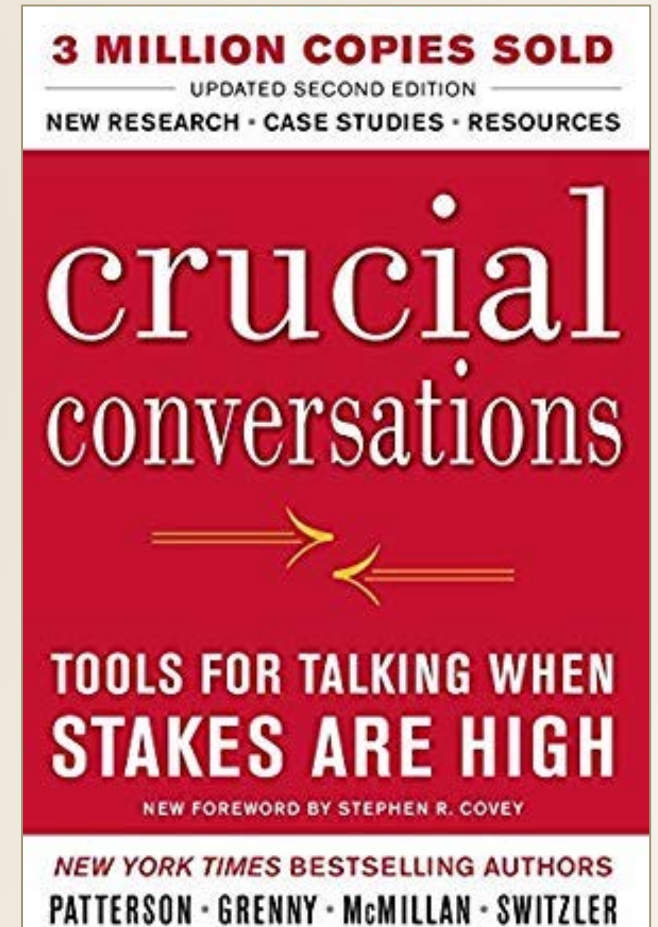
You are driving near the front of a long line of vehicles preparing to exit the highway. A driver from the next lane over speeds up and quickly moves in front of you without using a turn signal. That driver immediately breaks so as not to hit the car that was in front of you. This causes you to break hard so you do not hit them.

- *What emotions arise for you?*
- *What is your motive?*
- *What conclusion are you drawing?*

Take three minutes and discuss at your tables. Then, we will ask for volunteers to share your ideas with everyone.

# Communication Concepts

- **When a conversation is crucial:**
  - We can be both honest and respectful.
  - Difficult conversations are part of open, constructive communication.
  - How we manage the conversation (well or poorly) can directly affect the outcome.
- **What is the Attribution Theory?**
- **How might we react when conflicts arise?**





# Acknowledging Emotions and Motives

- Why should you manage your emotions and motives?
- What if you try and “fake” it?
- What is the cost of not managing your emotions and motives?





# Acknowledging Emotions and Motives

- We alone are responsible for our emotions.
- We can either act on our emotions or be controlled by them.



# Motives

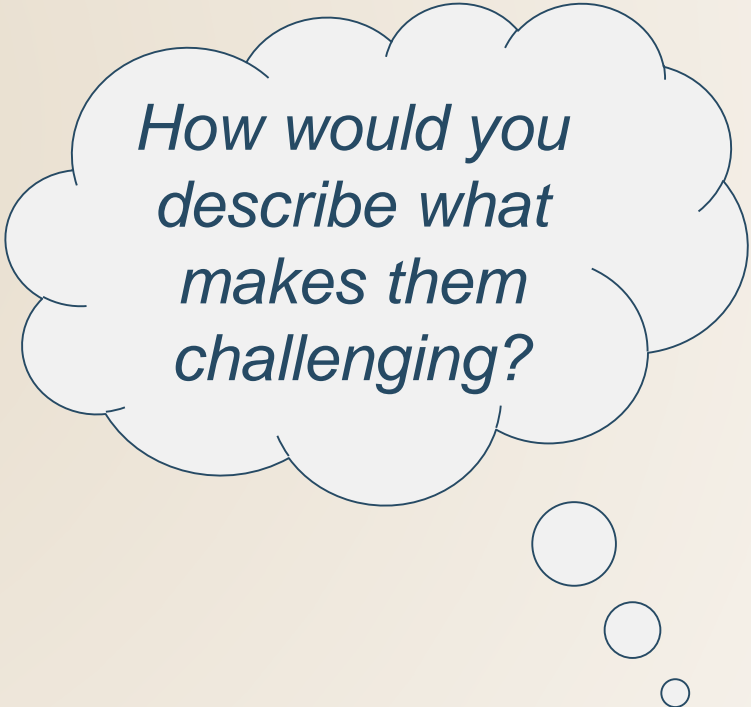
**Think about what motivates you when you are in conflict. What might motivate others? What are the differences?**

- **Be Right**
- **Look Good/Save Face**
- **Win**
- **Punish/Blame**
- **Avoid Conflict**
- **Keep the Peace**

- **Learn**
- **Find the Truth(s)**
- **Produce Results**
- **Strengthen Relationships**

# Considering Difficult Relationships

- **Think of a “difficult” person with whom you have a challenging relationship.**
  - Family Member?
  - Neighbor?
  - Coworker?
  - Client?
  - Supervisor?



*How would you describe what makes them challenging?*

# Facts versus Stories

- **What is the difference between a fact and a story?**
  - Both are important.
  - We have control over the stories, not the facts.
- **How do I recognize the difference?**
  - What does your difficult person say or do that makes you think they are \_\_\_\_\_?
  - Can you control how you perceive it?

# ACTIVITY: Which Statements Are Facts?



## STATEMENTS

1. "You were disrespectful to that client today."
2. "She never gives us a heads-up when she's going to be late!"
3. "I'm always cleaning up after him."
4. "You looked at your phone four times in our meeting today."
5. "That person is such a micro-manager!"
6. "My daughter is lazy."

*How many stories do you have about your "difficult person"?*

# Where Emotions Come From



# STORIES: The Key to Emotions

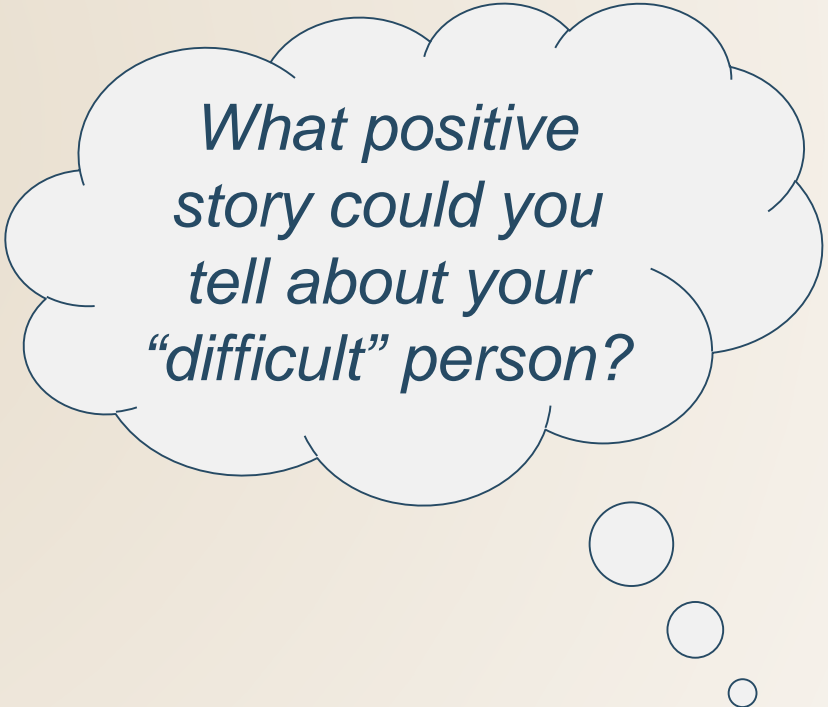
- We are reason-seeking beings.
- We make up stories, conclusions, and attributions to explain what we are seeing.
- Emotion and conflict are inextricably linked (fight-or-flight).
- We cannot have an emotion without first telling a story.
- There are an infinite number of stories to tell from the same facts.





# SKILL: Manage and Change Your Emotions

- **Fight-or-Flight: How to Get Blood Back into the Brain**
  - Get your motive right.
  - Ask: What do I really want long-term?
- **Tell yourself a story that produces empathy/compassion.**
  - “He is really struggling.”
  - “She wants the best for me.”
  - “I don’t know the whole story.”

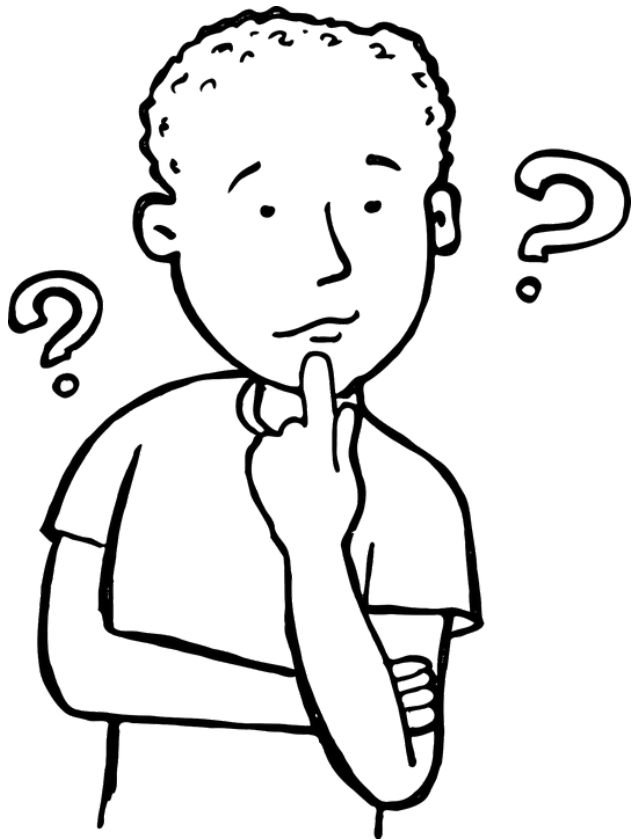


*What positive story could you tell about your “difficult” person?*

# SKILL: Turn Stories into Facts

- **What did they say or do that made you assign attribution?**
- **How would you describe someone who is disrespectful?**
  - Rolls eyes
  - Arrives late to meetings
  - Interrupts
  - Calls you a jerk

# ACTIVITY: Group Discussion

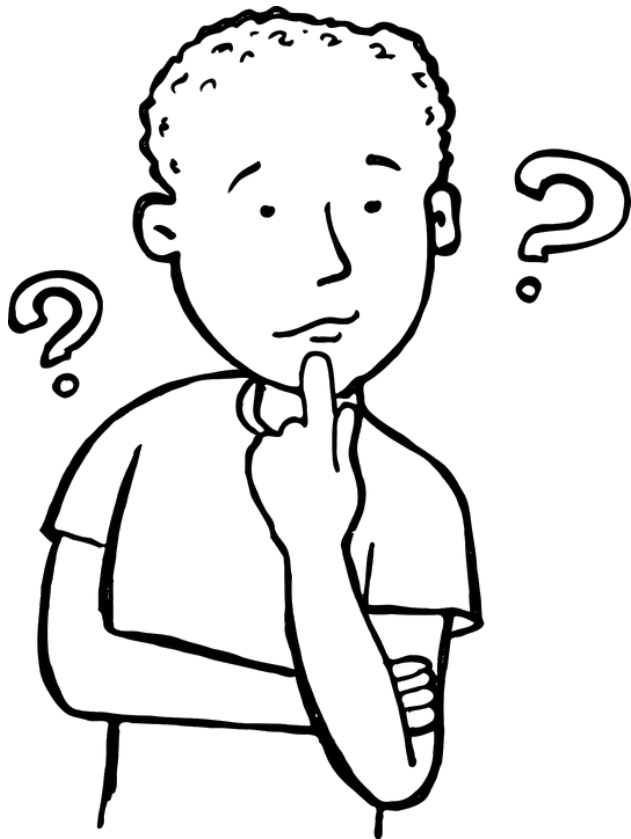


## SCENARIO

At your tables, generate four to five behaviors that would describe someone at your workplace who is:

1. Unorganized.
2. Obnoxious.
3. Unresponsive.

# ACTIVITY: Program/Fiscal Scenario



## SCENARIO

You have been working with Don, your fiscal manager, for only 3 months now. He has invited you to reach out with questions since you are new to your role as program manager. You have emailed him 3 times and called him twice in the last week, all without a response. You are beginning to think that he does not really care about your program.

# Set Up a Respectful and Honest Conversation

- **Establish a healthy motive.**
  - “I want to have a good working relationship with \_\_\_\_.”
  - “I want to be known as a collaborative partner.”
  - “I want to be someone that people can discuss difficult things with.”
- **Ask for the space to discuss the issue.**
  - “Can I check something out with you?”
  - “I’m hoping to explore some options with you around \_\_\_\_\_. Would that be ok?”

# Set Up a Respectful and Honest Conversation

- **Start with the facts.**
  - “You’ve offered to help me with any questions I had.”
  - “Last week, I called you twice and emailed you three times.”
  - “I haven’t received a response.”

# Set Up a Respectful and Honest Conversation

- **Tell them your story.**
  - “I’m beginning to worry you don’t have the time to help me.”
- **Ask an open-ended question to test your story.**
  - “Can you help me understand what’s going on?”
  - “Is that what’s happening or is there something else?”
  - “What am I missing?”



# How To Have a Respectful/Honest Conversation

- **Your goal is to be in dialogue:**
  - With humility.
  - With uncertainty.
  - With curiosity.



# Starting the Conversation

The LIHEAP program manager has called a meeting with the Fiscal department manager to discuss gaps in her knowledge about fiscal terms related to LIHEAP reporting.



# Understanding the C&R Report

The focus of the meeting starts off with basic questions regarding the statute for carryover limits.



# Example Terms and Definitions

Term	Definition
<b>Allotment</b>	The amount from an appropriation or grant approved to be expended for a particular purpose during a specific period of time (e.g., an annual allotment of LIHEAP funds to a subrecipient agency).
<b>Reallotment</b>	The redistribution of previously allotted funds (e.g., the reallotment of unobligated federal LIHEAP funds).
<b>Fiscal Year (FY)</b>	The twelve-month accounting period in which all financial transactions are recognized (e.g., the LIHEAP Federal Fiscal Year from Oct. 1 through Sep. 30).
<b>Amount Payable</b>	On the <i>Carryover and Reallotment (C&amp;R) Report</i> , the total LIHEAP block grant and any reallotted funds received for the current year. If made available, it would also include emergency contingency funds awarded in the current year.
<b>Carryover</b>	Funds that are not obligated in the first year of the LIHEAP grant period that are brought forward to be obligated for allowable costs in the second year.

# Understanding Obligations and Expenditures

## **45 CFR § 96.30(a) Fiscal and administrative requirements.**

*Except where otherwise required by Federal law or regulation (the grantee) shall obligate and expend block grant funds in accordance with the laws and procedures applicable to the obligation and expenditure of its own funds.*





# Understanding Obligations and Expenditures

## **45 CFR § 75.2 Definitions.**

*Obligation - orders placed for property and services, contracts and subawards made, and similar transactions during a given period that require payment by the non-Federal entity during the same or a future period.*



# Example Terms and Definitions

Term	Definition
<b>Obligation</b>	An amount which has been legally committed to expenditure at a future time, as defined by the grantee.
<b>Expenditure</b>	The action of spending funds or the amount of money spent, as defined by the grantee.
<b>Unobligated Funds</b>	Funds not committed to expenditure from the current year's total funding or amount payable.
<b>Invoice</b>	A bill; a document from an external provider listing goods or services at a stated cost for payment.
<b>Purchase Order</b>	A document issued by a buyer authorizing the procurement of goods and services at a stated cost from an external provider.



# Tracking Revenues and Expenses

**45 CFR § 96.14 Time period for obligation and expenditure of grant funds.**

*... a maximum of 10 percent of the amount payable to a grantee may be held available for the next fiscal year. No funds may be obligated after the end of the fiscal year following the fiscal year for which they were allotted.*



# Example Terms and Definitions

Term	Definition
<b>Accrual</b>	An accounting method that records revenue when it is made available and records expenditures when they are incurred.
<b>Accounts Payable</b>	Amount of money you owe to a creditor for delivered goods or completed services.
<b>Accounts Receivable</b>	Amount of money owed to you by a debtor for services rendered.
<b>Debit and Credit</b>	Entries that record changes in the funds in the account resulting from transactions by the agency or program. A debit is an increase to an <i>asset</i> and a decrease to a <i>liability</i> . A credit is the opposite: a decrease to an <i>asset</i> and an increase to a <i>liability</i> .

# Understanding Subaward Funds

## **45 CFR § 75.2 Definitions.**

*Unobligated Balance – means the amount of funds authorized under a Federal award that the non-Federal entity has not obligated. The amount is computed by subtracting the cumulative amount of the non-Federal entity's unliquidated obligations and expenditures of funds under the Federal award from the cumulative amount of the funds that the Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity authorized the non-Federal entity to obligate.*



# Example Terms and Definitions

Term	Definition
<b>Grant</b>	An allotment of funds awarded to a grantee organization for a specific purpose and with no requirement to repay (e.g., the LIHEAP grant).
<b>Block Grant</b>	A grant awarded by the federal government to non-federal state or local agencies and earmarked for a specific project or program. The recipient of the block grant is subject to federal guidelines as to how the money can be spent, but is also allowed to add its own guidelines, particularly when funds are to be passed through to other non-federal agencies, which may also add guidelines.
<b>Grant Agreement</b>	A legal instrument establishing the transfer of funds between the Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity to the non-federal entity to carry out the purpose of the program
<b>Grant Awards</b>	An allotment of funds for the purpose of conducting the activities under the grant agreement.
<b>Contract</b>	A legal instrument by which a non-Federal entity purchases property or services needed to carry out the project or program

# Summarizing the Conversation

Before wrapping up a conversation, be sure to summarize what was discussed to ensure both sides are in agreement on items discussed, action items, and next steps.



# Continuing the Conversation the Next Day

As soon as possible, follow up on the conversation to keep the flow of information going.





# Who Should Attend?

- **Program:**
  - LIHEAP Program Manager
  - Program fiscal liaison staff person, if applicable
  - Administrative and management staff, as needed
- **Fiscal:**
  - Fiscal accounting staff person assigned to LIHEAP
  - Fiscal management staff, as needed
- **Other:**
  - Legal, Administrative, Personnel, and other staff, as appropriate



# When Should Meetings Occur?

- **Regular quarterly Program/Fiscal meetings**
- **Other times when meetings may be helpful in LIHEAP**
  - Before the start of the new program and fiscal years
  - At the end of the old program and fiscal year
  - At least once during the “high season” (i.e., winter heating)
  - Toward the end of the Crisis availability period (ending March 15)
  - Prior to a secondary season (i.e., summer cooling) as applicable
  - Prior to important fiscal report dates (e.g., Carryover, Closeout)
  - Anytime, as needed, because of any fiscal-related issues that arise

# What Should Be Discussed?

- **Quarterly Meeting Topics**

- Review Fiscal Department's LIHEAP budget and expenditure reports
- Discuss upcoming program events that may impact expenditures and obligation:
  - Start of a new season (winter heating, summer cooling, Crisis programs)
  - Discuss funding changes (e.g., additional federal grant funds, second allotment, reallocation, emergency, leveraged)
  - Review any upcoming reports (e.g., Carryover and Reallocation, Federal Financial Report [SF-425])

# What Should Be Discussed?

- **Other Meeting Topics**

- Program issues that have a fiscal impact (e.g., reports of higher than expected households served)
- Fiscal issues that have a program impact (e.g., reductions in funding)
- Latest calculations and projections on key LIHEAP fiscal rules (e.g., budget caps [Admin, Carryover, Assurance 16, Weatherization])

# Finding Common Ground

Find ways to work together to utilize processes, methods, and materials that the other side has developed. This saves time and helps both sides cultivate cooperation and understanding of what the other side does and needs.



# Understanding Administrative Costs

## **45 CFR § 96.88 Administrative costs.**

*Costs of planning and administration.  
Any expenditure for governmental  
functions normally associated (by the  
grantee) with administration of a public  
assistance program must be included in  
determining administrative costs  
subject to the statutory limitation on  
administrative costs ...*



# Sample Terms and Definitions

Term	Definition
<b>Budget</b>	An approved financial plan for the delivery of program services over a specific period of time by the grantee and subgrantees.
<b>Award</b>	In general, grant funding that provides support to accomplish a public purpose. With block grants, the grant award constitutes the authority to carry out the program and to draw and expend funds.
<b>Subaward</b>	An allotment of award funds by a pass-through entity to a subrecipient to carry out the purpose of the award.



# Understanding Administrative Costs

## **45 CFR § 96.88 Administrative costs.**

*... regardless of whether the expenditure is incurred by the State, a subrecipient, a grantee, or a contractor of the State.*





# Identifying Concerns

When you realize that there is an issue, or even just a potential issue, make time to sit down and talk through it as soon as possible.



# Continuing the Conversation the Next Day

When necessary, make the time to take issues aside to look at them and regroup at a later date to go over the findings.



# Benefit Matrix

## VI. BENEFITS

Carryover (previous FFY)	\$ 3,000,000			
Available (with carryover)	\$ -			
			<b>Projection</b>	
			Prior Year	Projected No.
	<b>Dollars</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Avg Benefit</b>	<b>Households</b>
<b>HEATING ASSISTANCE</b>	<b>\$ 48,694,900</b>	64.9%	<b>\$ 439</b>	<b>110,922</b>
COOLING ASSISTANCE	\$ 3,000,000	4.0%	\$ 75	40,000
CRISIS ASSISTANCE	\$ 4,000,000	5.3%	\$ 204	19,608
WEATHERIZATION	\$ 8,250,000	11.0%	\$ -	N/a

# Benefit Matrix

## VI. BENEFITS

Carryover (previous FFY)	\$ 3,000,000			
Available (with carryover)	\$ -			
			<b>Projection</b>	
			Prior Year	Projected No.
	<b>Dollars</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Avg Benefit</b>	<b>Households</b>
<b>HEATING ASSISTANCE</b>	<b>\$ 45,357,400</b>	63.7%	<b>\$ 439</b>	<b>103,320</b>
COOLING ASSISTANCE	\$ 3,000,000	4.2%	\$ 75	40,000
CRISIS ASSISTANCE	\$ 4,000,000	5.6%	\$ 204	19,608
WEATHERIZATION	\$ 7,837,500	11.0%	\$ -	N/a

# Benefit Matrix

## VI. BENEFITS

Carryover (previous FFY)	\$ 3,000,000			
Available (with carryover)	\$ -			
			<b>Projection</b>	
			Prior Year	Projected No.
	<b>Dollars</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Avg Benefit</b>	<b>Households</b>
<b>HEATING ASSISTANCE</b>	<b>\$ 45,357,400</b>	63.7%	<b>\$ 410</b>	<b>110,628</b>
COOLING ASSISTANCE	\$ 3,000,000	4.2%	\$ 75	40,000
CRISIS ASSISTANCE	\$ 4,000,000	5.6%	\$ 204	19,608
WEATHERIZATION	\$ 7,837,500	11.0%	\$ -	N/a



# Group Discussion: What Would You Do?





# Conclusion

Let's identify what you learned in this session or found most helpful.



# Resources

- **LIHEAP Web Site**  
<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ocs/programs/liheap>
- **LIHEAP Plans and Program Integrity Assessments**  
<https://liheapch.acf.hhs.gov/Tribes/trplans.htm>
- **Examples of LIHEAP Grantees' Policies and Plans**  
<https://liheapch.acf.hhs.gov>
- **LIHEAP Grantee Resources**  
<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ocs/resource/grantee-resources>
- **LIHEAP Grantee Resource Guide**  
<https://liheapch.acf.hhs.gov/tribal-manual>
- **45 CFR §75.2 Definitions**  
[https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=4d5494c40507a6148d77784f29bc0545&mc=true&node=sp45.1.75.a&rgn=div6#se45.1.75\\_12](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=4d5494c40507a6148d77784f29bc0545&mc=true&node=sp45.1.75.a&rgn=div6#se45.1.75_12)

# Questions?

