

## Benefit Matrix Development Scenario (1)

### Background:

- ❖ **A grant award in the amount of \$100,000 is made for Big Sky Reservation for this fiscal year. This is the same amount received for the prior five years of your LIHEAP program. The LIHEAP Benefit Matrix has worked all along so there has been no perceived need to revisit it.**
- ❖ **The highest benefit must be delivered to the lowest income client.**
- ❖ **There are 500 tribal households. 350 households are eligible for LIHEAP assistance.**
- ❖ **Heating program and Crisis programs are administered, and the Big Sky Tribe uses 5% for Assurance 16. 10% will be used for Administration of the program and**
- ❖ **30% tribal members are elderly and retired, 50% are between 35-50 years old and the remainder are under the age of 34 with 100 families with children 6 and under.**
- ❖ **Grantees can decide some households are automatically eligible for LIHEAP if at least one member is enrolled in one of these programs: SNAP, TANF, SSI, Means Tested Veterans Programs.**
- ❖ **The final FPG will be available by the end of January for the next fiscal year.**

### Scenario #1 Big Sky Reservation

The LIHEAP program on Big Sky has been able to serve most of its eligible households in years past except for a few households who cannot manage to get back into the LIHEAP office with the required documentation to accompany their applications, despite staffs repeated follow up reminders within the intake timeframe. Big Sky served 347 unduplicated households with at the least one LIHEAP benefit last year. This year the local elementary school will be completed before the new school year. A recent election will bring new leadership to the tribe, including one member who promised all those who need energy assistance will receive it if elected.

The new council promised 25 new tribal government positions to be filled by tribal members by July of this year to help keep up with administration and staffing of the new tribally owned Fish & Tackle Quick Mart on the interstate bordering the reservation. Many of the new council members are split evenly amongst elders and younger professional tribal members newly returned to the reservation and promising new technologically advanced upgrades to the tribal benefit systems. The younger members also ran on a promise to lure young families back to the reservation before school begins with their children in hopes of filling a new language immersion program as part of the newly completed elementary school. This coupled with 30 newly built Tribal Housing Authority homes and 50 homes originally set for remodel and energy conservation fixes will be finished by August of this year. The Council is hoping to bring back more young families and allow the ones on the reservation to leave their parents homes for their own new homes.

Weather has been most unpredictable the last few years since the fire which ran through half the reservation and surrounding federal forests two years ago. The tribe has been working on developing emergency response planning teams and policies ever since. There was the fire two years ago, a mudslide last fall closing a road to one of the reservation communities for two weeks and just two month ago flooding throughout half the reservation impacting one third of the homes with the late summer rains.

## Scenario Guidance & Instruction

- Read through your table's scenario.
- Choose a recorder to jot down group thoughts and plans.
- Pick a person to report back out to the group on your scenario assessment, findings and resulting action plan.

### Part 1: Assess the Scenario (10 minutes)

- Assess scenario for potential changing conditions which may impact the way you develop a benefit matrix.
  - Are factors like energy cost, income, household size, energy needs and poverty level evident in the scenario? If so, How?
  - How are vulnerable populations described?
  - Is the allocation available throughout the program year?
  - Is the program open for all the months of the program year?

### Part 2: Following the Scenario Assessment, discuss the following. (20 minutes)

- What is the goal of LIHEAP?
- What type of information can be gathered from reading the scenario as it relates to your role as a LIHEAP Coordinator?
- How will you use your allocation? How would you allocate your funds by program component?
- What are the three required LIHEAP factors that you would include?
- What are the community needs and conditions that you would consider?
  - Has anything changed in the community that significantly impact these factors?
- How do you plan to vary the benefits?
- Did you follow a benefit matrix policy and procedure when you discussed, analyzed and decided on changes to be made? Based on your results, do you feel the policies and procedures require an update?
- How often should one revisit their benefit matrix to ensure your LIHEAP program is meeting community needs?

### Part 3: Report out to the whole group on the following questions (15 minutes):

- How will you modify your LIHEAP allocation distribution among your LIHEAP components according to the scenario presented?
- In general, how will benefits change and be varied to meet your community's scenario needs?
- Do you see a need to make changes to your benefit matrix? if so, how will you make changes, when and with whom, and why? How will this information be shared? Who will be notified of the changes?

## Benefit Matrix Development Scenario (2)

### Background:

- ❖ A grant award for Eelgrass Flats Township in the amount of \$100,000 is made for the fiscal year. This is the same amount received for the prior five years of your LIHEAP program. The LIHEAP Benefit Matrix has worked all along so there has been no perceived need to revisit it.
- ❖ The highest benefit must be delivered to the lowest income client.
- ❖ There are 500 tribal households. 350 households are eligible for LIHEAP assistance.
- ❖ Cooling and Crisis programs are administered. 10% is used for administration.
- ❖ Grantees can decide some households are automatically eligible for LIHEAP if at least one member is enrolled in one of these programs: SNAP, TANF, SSI, Means Tested Veterans Programs.
- ❖ The final FPG will be available by the end of January for the next fiscal year.

### Scenario #2

#### Eelgrass Flats Township

Eelgrass Flats Township prides itself on everything running smoothly and without a glitch with its LIHEAP program for the last five years. Nobody really leaves the reservation despite the economic development opportunities being very few if any. Most tribal members subsist on an abundance of fish, seaweed, octopus, small game, plants and berries. All 350 eligible households are served with at least one payment for cooling during the summer season. There have only been five crisis requests each year for the last two years consecutively.

Many of Eelgrass' tribal elders remain active and seem to stay very healthy. Eelgrass is proud of their 20 households with centenarians (100+ years old) and has been featured in the paper in the last year for this fact. Many of these elders participate in governance decisions still and take turns helping to shore up the Eelgrass language and cultural programs for the younger members of the community. At last count, as many as 80 new elders will be added to the rolls next year, all turning 65.

There is a large gap between those 65 years and older, and the 20-30-year old age group just beginning and growing their families. Most of the population is unemployed with just 150 tribal members working outside jobs or in tribal administrative and programmatic positions bringing in a steady income. Only a small percentage of those, about 25 earn a decent income and the remainder are earning a living wage. There is a shortage of homes for all the members, so there can be large families living together with ages ranging from babies to 100+ years old in the same house. Though electricity cost have been rising, they have recently seen a reduction in cost due to the new wind farm erected by and paid for by the local borough the township resides in.

It used to be opening windows in the summer was enough to keep things cool but hotter and hotter summers with strong southerly winds have occurred over the last two years with another predicted record-breaking high temperature summer this year. Furthermore, winter temperatures are now starting to dip below 40 degrees Fahrenheit for at least a month between January and February. Eelgrass saw snow last winter for the first time ever!

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## Benefit Matrix Development Scenario (3)

### Background:

- ❖ A grant award has been issued for Cama'i Village in the amount of \$100,000 is for this fiscal year. This is the same amount received for the prior five years of your LIHEAP program. The LIHEAP Benefit Matrix has worked all along so there has been no perceived need to revisit it.
- ❖ The highest benefit must be delivered to the lowest income client.
- ❖ Heating and crisis programs are administered. Some weatherization funds (15%) were used last year to help 20 homes with weather stripping and caulked windows.
- ❖ There are 500 tribal households. 350 households are eligible for LIHEAP assistance.
- ❖ Staff believe sharing energy conservation information and tips will be helpful with their LIHEAP clients,
- ❖ Grantees can decide some households are automatically eligible for LIHEAP if at least one member is enrolled in one of these programs: SNAP, TANF, SSI, Means Tested Veterans Programs.
- ❖ The final FPG will be available by the end of January for the next fiscal year.

### Scenario #3

#### Cama'i Village

Cama'i Village may only be reached by boat or plane. There are no roads into the community just one rough road open in the summertime between Cama'i and the next village; and the local rivers may be traveled by boat to reach a larger hub community in the summer. A snow highway in the winter for four-wheelers and snow machines opens once the land and rivers freeze over in late September. Most of the community live in homes built in the 1970's and the average temperature in the winter hovers around 0 degrees Fahrenheit. Summers have always been relatively mild and never get higher than 65 degrees (which feels very hot to most villagers, especially elders).

The energy need is mostly fuel oil and is needed to run generators in the community, while few individual homes have propane tanks. Oil arrives on a barge and is only delivered during the open water months in summer, late May through mid-September. It is meant to last through the winter. The oil supply has decreased in this area and prices have risen dramatically high toward the end of last winter. All 350 households were served at least once for heating last year. This year it is anticipated the LIHEAP staff will receive more applications for assistance as homes are more weathered and draftier. Staff expects a potential abundance of crisis requests for those twenty homes with propane tanks as the price of propane has more than doubled in the past two years.

This is a subsistence community and very few full-time jobs exist in the community. The coming winter is predicted to be even colder for longer due to the predicted Blowhard Cycle which hits every five years, causing vast amounts of snow and ice leading to flooding in the Spring during break up. Due to the long winters, there appears to be a baby boom in the village with 25 families expecting in the fall, two families with twins.

Many homes have wood stoves as a backup heating source, but wood is difficult to come by nearby. Someone from the community must travel 80 miles or so in the summer to gather wood for the winter months. With energy prices high, this becomes an expensive alternative.

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