

**LOW-INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LIHEAP) AND WEATHERIZATION
PROGRAM INTERIM STUDY COMMITTEE**

Department of Human Services' Presentation for October 11, 2006

DHS BASICS:

- Local offices in all 99 Iowa counties
 - ⇒ 70 full time offices – 5 counties have more than 1 office
 - ⇒ 34 less than full-time – scheduled times/days or by appointment
- Income maintenance (IM) workers determine eligibility/benefits for:
 - ⇒ Family Investment Program or FIP (cash assistance) – monthly average of 18,560 families in SFY 2006
 - ⇒ Food assistance – monthly average of 98,355 households in SFY 2006
 - ⇒ Medical assistance – monthly average of 316,773 individuals in SFY 2006
 - ⇒ Child care assistance – monthly average of 15,946 children in SFY 2006
- Program trends:
 - ⇒ FIP – slight downward trend over the past 2 years expected to continue but at a slower rate
 - ⇒ Food assistance – significant increases over the past 3 years; expected to continue but at a more moderate rate
 - ⇒ Medical assistance – continues to increase but more slowly than several years ago
 - ⇒ Child care assistance – 10% increases expected each of the next 2 years
- IM caseloads:
 - ⇒ Average caseload has increased from 257 in SFY 2000 to 431 in August 2006 = 67.7%
 - ⇒ Projected caseload by the end of SFY 2008 is 503 = 95.7% increase from SFY 2000
 - ⇒ Complexity of programs, often due to federal requirements has increased and continues to do so
 - ⇒ Potential for errors and penalties increases with caseloads
 - ⇒ DHS is constantly looking for ways to allow IM to work more efficiently, including but not limited to innovative technology, specialized units, and a Food Assistance Customer Service Call Center
 - ⇒ Recent study to identify additional ways to improve business processes indicate IM are currently working at 129% of capacity when comparing time needed to complete tasks and time available in regular work day
- Current relationship to LIHEAP:
 - ⇒ Intake process informs applicants of availability of LIHEAP
 - ⇒ Referrals made to local LIHEAP offices
 - ⇒ LIHEAP posters displayed and applications made available based on local office practice – can be increased

POTENTIAL FOR INCREASED DHS INVOLVEMENT/COORDINATION:

- Concerns about expanding role of DHS in LIHEAP administration or developing “one-stop” centers:
 - ⇒ Existing and projected IM caseloads
 - ⇒ Increased federal audits and other requirements concerning DHS programs intended to improve accuracy leading to an increased potential for penalties or corrective actions adding to workloads
 - ⇒ Additional workload and knowledge base required (for both DHS and LIHEAP)
 - ⇒ Program requirements, including eligibility and documentation needed – more different than similar

- ⇒ Utilization of separate and incompatible information systems used to gather information and determine eligibility and benefits
- ⇒ Geographical service areas do not correspond – same counties not included in same areas
- ⇒ Logistical issues of space and shared costs – counties are responsible for providing DHS office space
- Coordination with other similar initiatives or concepts:
 - ⇒ *Senior Living Coordinating Unit (SLCU)* – tasked under Iowa Code 231.58 to “develop common intake and release procedures for the purpose of determining eligibility at one point of intake and determining eligibility for programs administered by the departments of human services, public health, and elder affairs, such as the medical assistance program, federal food stamp program, home-maker home-health aide programs, and the case management program for frail elders administered by the department of elder affairs.”
 - ⇒ *Project Seamless* – an initiative led by the Department of Elder Affairs utilizing software and technology to simplify and streamlining access to available services for the elderly. An electronic data input system was developed to gather information at the older Iowan’s home and to store client data in a secure database, enabling the sharing of data with programs providing elderly services under the Case Management Program for Frail Elders (CMPFE), including Medicaid elderly waiver services. Project Seamless allows CMPFE case managers to assess client needs, transfer and store data, transfer data to entities that determine level of care and financial eligibility and complete care planning.
 - ⇒ *Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC)* – a federal grant administered by the Department of Elder Affairs intended to expand Project Seamless first by integrating the aging resources management information system (Iowa Family Caregiver Program) with that of the developmental disabilities information system (Iowa COMPASS), and later by adding the DHS Food Assistance application – DHS is in the process of developing an on-line application. Note that the SLCU acts as policy advisory committee to ADRC.
- DHS initiatives that may facilitate greater cooperation and interaction:
 - ⇒ Development and implementation of an on-line Food Assistance application – scheduled for November 2006
 - ⇒ A Food Assistance Customer Service Call Center available to help individuals and organizations complete applications – DHS is seeking additional funds in SFY 2008 to expand the center to include other programs
 - ⇒ DHS prepares an annual Food Assistance outreach plan each year – local initiatives involving other agencies can be incorporated and federal funds drawn down to match local funding
- DHS Recommendations:
 - ⇒ Utilize existing initiatives where possible to maximize use of resources and avoid duplication of effort
 - ⇒ Focus on the development of “virtual” rather than “physical” one-stop centers – maximizing available technology will require investment of additional resources
 - ⇒ At the local level, and based on available space and coordination, consider out-stationing LIHEAP workers at local DHS offices