



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**Health, Education, and Human Services Committee approves
legislation to amend policy manual for Low Income Energy Assistance Program**

LEUPP, Ariz. - Last Wednesday, the Health, Education and Human Services Committee approved Legislation No. 0358-13, amending the policy manual for the Low Income Energy Assistance Program, housed under the Navajo Nation Division of Social Services.

The purpose of LIHEAP is to provide assistance to low income households by assisting with the cost of heating and cooling in their homes to meet their home energy needs. In order to help those in need, major adjustments to the financial process were necessary, according to the DSS.

“What we are trying to do is consolidate all the financial opponents. One of the things we did is, we took out any financial assistance out of Public Family Services and put it under the Program for Self Reliance,” said legislative analyst with the DSS, Thomas Cody.

Under the Program of Self Reliance, clients are ensured that the managing of funds and customer due of process is fairly regulated, added Cody.

In response to complaints over the delay in receiving checks, the Program of Self Reliance has implemented the use of debit cards in place of financial services and plans are underway to use this type of method for LIHEAP.

“So, in this process, do you keep [the Office of the Controller and the Office of Management and Budget] in the loop because this will relate back to the subcommittee on external funds?” asked legislation sponsor Council Delegate Jonathan Hale (Oak Springs, St. Michaels).

Cody said that all financial entities are well aware of these changes.

“Are applicants provided summary sheets that outline their qualifications? Are they provided information that is simple for the clientele to understand?” Delegate Hale questioned.

According to the LIHEAP policy manual, it is the responsibility of eligible clients to understand program requirements in order to receive sufficient assistance in a timely manner.

Also, it is the responsibility of clients to attend a mandated two-hour orientation to determine eligibility requirements as well to discuss energy conservation.

Orientations will be conducted at various sites, including chapter houses, throughout Navajo Nation.

HEHSC voted 3-0 to approve Legislation 0358-13. The HEHSC serves as the final authority for the legislation.

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