



Request for Proposals – Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program Software

Respondent Questions and IHCDA Answers

- 1. From Appendix E: “Can the system send communication automatically to clients/applicants, both templated/automatic and Ad Hoc?” What is meant by Ad Hoc? Please define this scenario and provide an example.**

 - a. We are looking to see options where we can have templated automatic messaging that can be sent out, but also for the ability for Local Service Providers (LSPs) to communicate with clients through the system and track those messages, so there does not need to be email correspondence outside of the system itself.

- 2. From Appendix E: “Does your software allow utility vendors and organizations doing intake/application review to communicate with each other and with the client through the system?” Who will vendors be needing to correspond with?**

 - a. Utility vendors will need to be able to communicate with LSPs to verify client information, as will IHCDA staff.

- 3. From Appendix E: “Does your software allow utility vendors and organizations doing intake/application review to communicate with each other and with the client through the system?” What types of communication options will be needed?**

 - a. Messaging back and forth. If your system allows users to schedule meetings between users, if need be, we would be interested in seeing that.

- 4. From Appendix E: “Can LSPs draw down funds from any available funding source in the system and use funds interchangeably?” Can you please define how one would use funding sources interchangeably?**

 - a. Funding sources refer to different active awards. For instance, if we currently have three open and active awards for a given subrecipient agency, we want to know if that agency would be able to direct a specific benefit to be paid from a specific open award, while directing another benefit to be paid from different open award.

- 5. From Appendix E: “Does your system contain offline data storage? Is there a way to offboard but retain denied EAP applications?” Please define what is meant by “offline data storage.”**

 - a. Essentially, we are looking for a way to potentially segregate active/approved data from denied data. We must retain both sets, but being able to move the denied data to a cold storage would be helpful.

- 6. From Appendix E: “Does your system contain offline data storage? Is there a way to offboard but retain denied EAP applications?” What is meant by “offboard” applications?**

 - a. IHCDA would like to keep a record of all EAP applications even if a client is determined to be ineligible for the program.

- 7. From Appendix E: “Does your system contain offline data storage? Is there a way to offboard but retain denied EAP applications?” Will you need the offboarded denied applications accessible for reporting purposes?**
 - a. Yes.

- 8. From Appendix E: “Does your system contain offline data storage? Is there a way to offboard but retain denied EAP applications?” Will the offboarded denied applications follow the standard EAP data retention policy?**
 - a. Yes, all data follows the same retention policy. Offboarded denied applications would need to be locked to “read only.”

- 9. Offline Data Storage: Could the IHCDCA please specify the required amount of data to be stored offline and the retention period for this data?**
 - a. The amount of data will be dependent upon the solution proposed combined with the data fields required for an EAP application. The retention period has yet to be determined, but we may request for the data to be retained for up to 10 years after the closeout audits are completed.

- 10. Data Migration: Could the IHCDCA please confirm if data needs to be uploaded from the existing system? If yes, what is the estimated volume of this data in terms of records or gigabytes?**
 - a. Yes, we would like to import historical data from our old system into the new system. We do not have an estimated volume of this data in terms of records or gigabytes, but our goal is to only import the data required for federal reporting purposes.

- 11. Document and Photo Uploads: Merging: Does the current system include a feature for merging documents and photos? If so, could the IHCDCA please identify the system in use and clarify whether it needs to be integrated with Salesforce or if the existing solution will be rendered obsolete?**
 - a. The current system does not merge documents and photos.

- 12. Integrations: Could the IHCDCA please indicate the number of systems anticipated to be integrated with Salesforce? If possible, please provide the names of these applications/systems and their usage details.**
 - a. There will be a need for the LIHEAP data system to connect with our weatherization data system to refer EAP-eligible clients to weatherization. The system will also need to connect with IHCDCA financial software.

- 13. Utility Vendor: Could the IHCDCA please estimate the number of external users expected annually?**
 - a. This depends on the system’s capabilities. Currently, IHCDCA works with approximately 270 utility vendors across the state.

14. Tracking A16 Activities: Could the IHCD please elaborate on what is meant by "A16 activities" and describe their nature?

- a. See the [LIHEAP Statute Section 2605 \(b\)\(16\)](#) which covers Assurance 16. A16 activities are meant to encourage and enable households to reduce their home energy needs, and thereby reduce the need for energy assistance, though activities such as energy education or family development.

15. Emergency Repair and Replace (ERR): Could the IHCD please confirm whether there are distinct processes for emergency repairs versus non-emergency repairs?

- a. EAP does not provide non-emergency repairs. An emergency repair refers to a repair conducted on a primary heating source that is not operational without the repair during the EAP application period. Non-primary heating sources, heating sources that are functioning sub-optimally but not fully nonfunctional, or repairs conducted outside of the EAP application period, would not qualify for ERR funding under LIHEAP.

16. ER Diagram: If available, could the IHCD please provide the Entity-Relationship (ER) diagram to facilitate our understanding of the current system/model?

- a. There is no diagram available.

17. Please provide a budget for this project.

- a. We do not have a specified budget at this time for this project. We would like Respondents to propose all anticipated costs using the budget charts located in Appendix D of the RFP.

18. What are the major pain points of the current system?

- a. IHCD stakeholders have noted issues with the current system's reporting capabilities and data accuracy. Folks have also emphasized having a more organized and user-friendly way to handle a client's application documents within the system, such as being able to view documents without downloading them. Stakeholders have shared that the current system is not the most user-friendly interface for applicants, resulting in the submission of incomplete applications.

19. Please provide a list of all data sources.

- a. We are not fully certain as to what data sources this question is referring to. We do not have a compiled list of all data sources to provide.

20. Are there any existing APIs or integration points that need to be leveraged when connecting the new data system to the current systems?

- a. We are currently building an API for our weatherization application that will need to be maintained as well as linkage to IHCD's financial tools. See our responses to Questions 12 and 34 for more information.

21. How much historical data needs to be imported?

- a. Based on 2 CFR 200.334 Retention Requirements for Records, we currently think that approximately 4-5 years' worth of historical data would need to be imported. During the contracting phase, we would collaborate with the software provider to

ensure these details are worked out and it is clear on what exact data and how much needs to be imported.

22. What is the level of cleanliness to the existing data?

- a. For what we are currently pulling down, the data is mostly clean, with some duplicative entries surrounding EAP clients who have applied during multiple program years. IHCDCA has a data analyst on staff that would work with the selected provider to assist with cleaning the data sets prior to handing it over for upload into the system.

23. Has IHCDCA identified partner agencies for pilot testing? If so, can you provide?

- a. IHCDCA has not yet determined the partner agencies for pilot testing.

24. What criteria will be used to evaluate the success of the pilot test?

- a. We don't have any criteria to evaluate the success of the pilot testing phase at this time. We simply want to beta test the data system before we onboard our entire network.

25. Does IHCDCA have preferred training methods (e.g. train-the-trainer, classroom, virtual)?

- a. IHCDCA currently utilizes all of the above training methods. For this rollout, we anticipate a combination of virtual and in-person trainings as we onboard our network to the data system.

26. What specific reports are required? Please provide report examples.

- a. Please see a Summary of LIHEAP Reporting Requirements from HHS:
<https://liheappm.acf.hhs.gov/required-reports>

27. Who are the primary users of the system? How many users do you anticipate?

- a. The primary users of the system include IHCDCA staff, intake staff, IHCDCA subrecipients conducting outreach activities and assisting clients with their applications, utility vendors, and EAP applicants. In EAP Program Year 2023, 154,726 applications across Indiana were processed.

28. What type or level of ongoing support do you expect after going live?

- a. After the software goes live, we would like the provider to continue to work with IHCDCA on necessary system enhancements, resolving any bugs/issues with the system, and offering training/technical support to the users of the software. Our goal is for this to be a collaborative partnership during and after the system is built/customized.

29. Are there any specific SLAs or performance metrics that must be met?

- a. Please review the IHCDCA Contract Boilerplate Document and the Additional Terms and Conditions from the Indiana Office of Technology posted on IHCDCA's Public Notices webpage.

30. Have you seen any demos? If so, what did you like?

- a. No.

31. Have you considered a platform solution?

- a. We cannot provide a response at this time, as we do not have enough information to answer this question in greater detail.

32. How many people would need to be trained?

- a. We would expect representatives from all 20 subrecipient agencies (LSPs) to be trained as well as IHEDA staff.

33. Does it need to be integrated with an SSO?

- a. SSO would be entertained using Microsoft Entra for internal users. We are not sure at this time how feasible an SSO is for external partners.

34. What are the current payment systems?

- a. IHEDA currently works with a grants management system (DMS) and accounting software (Great Plains).

35. What are the use cases for the utility vendors that are mentioned in the RFP?

- a. Our current program model allows our agencies processing EAP applications to send transmittals to utility vendors. Utility vendors verify whether the approved EAP-applicants are in fact clients of their utility, which allows the LSPs to then move forward with the steps required to administer EAP benefits.

36. Please provide the number of internal users (program managers, agency employees) who will need full access to the system.

- a. Please see our response to Question 27.

37. Please provide the number of external users, if any, who will need access to the system.

- a. Please see our response to Question 27.

38. Is the agency currently using another system and/or vendor to manage program data and handle reporting needs? If so, what is the system/vendor? If not, how is the data currently being managed by the agency?

- a. Yes, we currently use another system to manage program data and handle reporting needs. We are not able to share who the incumbent is at this time.

39. Will this project require data migration from existing systems? If so, please describe the data, the number and type of records, the total size of the files, etc.

- a. Yes. Please see our response to Question 12.

40. Do the systems you wish this solution to interface with have APIs available? If so, are they available for review? If not, please describe integration capabilities.

- a. Please see our response to Question 20.

41. Are there any Security needs required to maintain the data? I.e., FEDRAMP and Audit requirements? If so, please describe.

- a. Please review the IHCDCA Contract Boilerplate Document and the Additional Terms and Conditions from the Indiana Office of Technology posted on IHCDCA's Public Notices webpage.

42. Does the agency hold licenses for an electronic signature tool you would like to use as part of this solution? If so, please provide the name. If not, do you have a preferred tool or would you like this to be included in the proposal?

- a. We have some licensing for Adobe Sign.

43. Please elaborate on the agency's preference for future systems maintenance. Does the agency prefer future support and maintenance is done by the selected partner, internal team or a combination of both?

- a. We anticipate this will be a collaborative partnership between IHCDCA staff and the selected software provider. IHCDCA will work with the provider to identify and plan for future system enhancements.

44. Is the vendor required to be on site for any portion of the contract term?

- a. As we onboard our network to the data system, we would like to plan for the vendor to be in-person in Indiana for training and technical assistance. This will be worked out in the contracting stage with our expectations for how long we expect the vendor to be on site.

45. Have you seen demonstrations of any systems prior to issuing this RFP? If so, will you share which systems?

- a. No.

46. Do you have an allocated budget for this project? If so, will you share the budget amount?

- a. Please see our response to Question 17.

47. Is the State expecting vendors to propose a fixed-price bid, or will the State accept a time and materials budget?

- a. Please submit your budget as outlined in Appendix D of the RFP. For example, time and materials should be included in your set price for "Training." We encourage you to explain all of your fixed cost estimates in the Budget Narrative.

48. If deliverables/milestones are required to trigger invoicing/payment, what are those deliverables/milestones and schedule that will be used?

- a. The deliverables and milestones for this project will be outlined in the contract between IHCDCA and the selected software provider. The contract will be created using the information provided in your proposal, and the select vendor will be given the opportunity to review/collaborate on what the deliverables for payment will be and when.

- 49. Is it acceptable to include assumptions in the price narrative?**
- a. Any assumptions made when putting together your budget tables should be documented and explained in your Budget Narrative.
- 50. Would this scope of work include creating API connections with Agency house systems? If so, how many unique house systems are there?**
- a. Please see our response to Question 12.
- 51. Would this scope of work include creating API connections with Agency Finance systems, for alignment of payment processing? If so, how many unique house financial systems would be integrated?**
- a. Please see our responses to Questions 12 and 34.
- 52. Would this system be capturing CSBG reporting from agencies outside of LIHEAP? If yes, please describe.**
- a. No.
- 53. Salesforce has data limits on its built in file storage. Would the system need to be able to connect to a state file storage container like AWS S3 or Microsoft Azure? Either as a direct repository or as an archival Repository?**
- a. Any external requirements needed as part of the implementation plan should be documented within the proposal, including whether or not the Respondent needs to collaborate further with IHCD to meet those needs.
- 54. Please list and describe any additional systems this solution will need to integrate with that weren't covered in the previous questions.**
- a. There aren't any additional systems this solution will need to integrate with that aren't covered in this Q&A at this time.
- 55. The RFP has only a few references to Weatherization, understanding that the Wx program is very much a part of LIHEAP, at what level should the LIHEAP system interact with a Wx system? Is this another API, or data sharing integration? How much energy usage does the LIHEAP system need to be set up for? Is this energy usage detail data, if needed, going to be manually entered, or as a batch data load process?**
- a. IHCD does refer EAP clients to weatherization through Categorical Eligibility, meaning that if a client is EAP-eligible, they are automatically income-eligible for IHCD's Weatherization program. We will need an API to ensure EAP applicants can be pulled into the Weatherization software.
- 56. For the Moratorium element, is there any FTP or bulletin board that files would need to be posted or transferred to that shares access to LIHEAP Eligible Households to the Utility Companies? If so, at what points are these files to be processed (Eligibility and/or Payment amount Processed?)**
- a. We do not have any FTP or bulletin boards. Currently, this communication takes place through a portal that utility vendor users can access. The portal provides notification that a customer has applied (which triggers provisional protection), with

additional information once the applicant has been approved (which triggers full protection). Payment is not relevant to moratorium protection.

57. The RFP mentions access to Utility Vendors (270 of them). Do we need to integrate these utility vendors to share and collect data from their systems?

- a. We would like our utility vendors to have access to the statewide data system in order for them to run reports on their clients/check their client's status for the purpose of processing transmittals. IHCDCA does not need to collect any data from the utility vendors' data systems.

58. Ability to interface with state financial systems - We will need more details like data types, access to APIs/webhooks, complexity, etc.

- a. IHCDCA uses Great Plains 2018 and will work with the selected vendor to build APIs and web hooks as appropriate.

59. The RFP talks about importing historical data from the current EAP system. To understand the complexity of this Data Migration, can we know the current tech stack, Database, and database structure?

- a. IHCDCA's current database resides on an MS SQL 2019 database server, and the structure is complicated.

60. Approximately how many applications are received via USPS mail each year state-wide?

- a. During our most recent program year, 54% of applications were mailed in, which is approximately 81,707 applications. Of that total, 61% of clients who mailed-in their applications were approved for EAP benefits (74,976). Our goal is to cut down on paper applications and encourage the use of a user-friendly online application.

61. Approximately how many LIHEAP staff need access to the software - how many total LSP staff?

- a. We do not have an exact total for the number of staff that will need access to the software across the state. We know that there are 976 registered and active users of the current statewide EAP database, with 50 of those users being IHCDCA staff.

62. What are the current vendor payment systems that we need to interface with?

- a. Please see our response to Question 34.

63. What is the size of the current database? Number of records?

- a. This information is unknown.

64. Which external systems integrations and data identifiers are included in current data that will need migration and transformation? For example, Payment systems integrations and related IDs in current data may need to be migrated/mapped. User Identification and Authorization integrations like Active Directory, OID, etc.

- a. The current system integrates with our financial system (Great Plains) and loosely with our grant management system (DMS) and will be integrating with our

Weatherization application. Currently the system has its own authentication module.

65. What secure reading and migration technologies are supported by IHCD policy?

- a. SFTP and MFP are both supported.

66. Is there information available on the requirements of the SF-425 report?

- a. For the SF-425 report, IHCD completes the following fields each quarter:
 - i. Cash Receipt, Cash Disbursements, Cash on Hand, Total Federal Funds Authorized, Federal Share of Expenditures, Federal Share of Unliquidated Obligations, Total Federal Share, Unobligated Balance of Federal Funds.

67. Is there any specific security level requirement to meet? (i.e. HIPAA, FRPA, DoD)

- a. No named standards, but FIPS140-2 is a good start. The ability to pass a SOC2 would be helpful.

68. What is the expected budget range for the initial development and deployment?

- a. Please see our response to Question 17.

69. What is the expected budget range for the ongoing support of the implementation?

- a. Please see our response to Question 17.

70. What is the anticipated term of the ongoing contract?

- a. Contracts with IHCD are typically for one calendar year, with annual amendment possibilities for an additional five years, based on the contractor meeting scopes and benchmarks. The expectation is that the performance of the system will be one of high quality and will become the system of record for the State of Indiana.

71. *“Third paragraph in Scope of Services: The data system should be user-friendly for intake staff in addition to IHCD’s subrecipients on the ground conducting outreach activities.”* Please define the term ‘subrecipients’ in the third paragraph of the Scope of Services section of the RFP.

- a. “Subrecipients” in this context refer to IHCD’s partner agencies (LSPs) that process applications (intake) and are conducting outreach activities in our local communities. These agencies will be users of our system for processing applications and helping potential clients submit their applications online.

72. *“RFP Appx E: Do you have a LIHEAP application for clients?”* Are you referring to an online application where clients can apply directly for services?

- a. Yes.

73. *“RFP Appx E: Can the system send communication automatically to clients/applicants, both templated/automatic and Ad Hoc?”* Please clarify what is meant by Ad Hoc in this context. Are you looking to create ad-hoc communications automated by the system or ad hoc communications automatically sent by the system based on end user input/entry?

- a. Please see our response to Question 1.

74. “RFP Appx E: Does your system contain offline data storage? Is there a way to offboard but retain denied EAP applications?” Can you please clarify what you mean by offline data storage? What data would be stored offline? What does offboard mean? Please explain what offboard means and when would offboarding happen? Is this in reference to Closing Out a program year or the project?

- a. Please see our responses to Questions 5 and 6.

75. “RFP Appx E: Assurance 16: Does your system have a module for tracking A16 activities?” Please provide additional requirements regarding the module to track A16 activities in your state. Can you describe how A 16 activities are currently tracked? Can you provide copies of forms used to track and report A 16 activities and impacts?

- a. Subrecipients currently track households receiving energy education, energy kits, or case management in our current statewide database using application actions that can then be compiled on a report by date range. We do not currently have any IHCD A-issued forms for these purposes; it is incumbent on the subrecipient to develop its own tracking.

76. Please elaborate on what IHCD A views as a complete monitoring module reference in Appendix E.

- a. In designing this question, we were curious to see whether your system had the ability to pull down information in bulk form for viewing large amounts of data sets from our subrecipient agencies. We don’t have anything specific in mind here, we just wanted to see if your software had some sort of module specifically for program monitoring purposes. IHCD A’s goal is to have access to all of the data within the system.

77. Please provide detail on the statewide production-oriented processes and reporting vs the individual agency. Will these processes below be run across all partner agency or within each agency?

- a. **Processes Listed: Vendor Notification, Client Notification, Payment Process, Commitment Process**
- b. Most of the notifications between applicants and vendors will be carried out by our subrecipient agencies. For the payment process, transmittals are carried out between the subrecipient agency and IHCD A. For additional process questions, feel free to review our policy and procedures manual, which can be found on the IHCD A Program Partners website here: <https://www.in.gov/ihcda/program-partners/energy-assistance-program-eap/>

78. Please elaborate on the following as it relates to your EAP program.

- a. **Do you collect usage data?**
 - i. **If you capture usage data, is it an annual amount or captured monthly?**
 - ii. **If you capture usage data, is it entered by the agency caseworker or submitted electronically by the utility?**
 1. Usage data for performance measures is currently collected once a year from the utility vendors based on 12 month usage of selected EAP applicants. All applicants are required to provide their utility

bills during application. We are open to other ways of collecting usage data.

b. Is there a utility-by-utility acct# validation schema?

- i. There is not a schema currently from the system standpoint. Vendors are required to confirm accounts are active and accurate when they approve transmittals. The larger utilities receive the transmittals in a format that allows their system to automate that process, but Indiana's program has MOAs with over 200 utility vendors, so not all of them have that infrastructure or ability.

c. Besides commitment reporting and client payment details reporting to support payment is there any other reporting sent to vendors?

- i. For metered electric and gas utilities, those utilities that must adhere to Indiana's Moratorium need to know when an applicant has applied for EAP, as the applicant is protected once they apply not once the benefit level has been determined. It is also helpful if utilities know if there is anyone who applied that was then deemed ineligible.