

Texoma Council of Governments Energy Services Complaint Policy and Appeals Process

In compliance with the LIHEAP Act, Texoma Council of Governments (TCOG) provides an opportunity for a fair administrative hearing to individuals whose application for assistance is denied, terminated or not acted upon in a timely manner.

Applicants/customers may be denied services for the following reasons:

1. The household is over-income based on Federal poverty guidelines.
2. Applicant resides outside of the service area.
3. A vendor agreement has not been secured from a utility company.
4. Applicant fail to provide required documents to complete processing.
5. Home is beyond the Scope of the Weatherization Assistance Program

Income Eligibility

Applicants/customers deemed over income will receive a letter of denial within ten (10) calendar days of determination.

Appeal process Applicants may appeal a decision in writing within twenty (20) calendar days of denial. Income will be reviewed for a 2nd time by the program manager or departmental director. A letter will be sent to the applicant with the results of the review within ten (10) calendars days.

If the 2nd appeal does not result in favor of the applicant, the applicant can appeal to the Texas Department of Community and Housing Affairs for a 3rd review and final decision.

Denials based on income eligibility are not subject to hearings.

Outside of Service Area

Applicants that live outside of TCOG's service area will receive a denial letter with a referral to 2-1-1 Texas for program referrals to agencies that addresses an expressed need for energy assistance.

Vendor Agreement

Utility companies must maintain a current vendor agreement with TCOG. Failure to do so can result in denial of services for applicant/customers. TCOG will make every effort to secure and maintain current vendor agreements in order to serve customers that qualify for LIHEAP programs.

Missing Documents

Applicants must return all documents within 28 business days of date an application was logged as received. Staff will contact applicants by telephone, mail and or email to inform applicant of missing documents.

Hearings

An applicant/customer must request a hearing with TCOG first. If not satisfied with the results of the hearing the applicant/customer then appeals to the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs. TDHCA then schedules a fair administrative hearing.

1. The appeal will be reviewed by an appeals committee of at least three people.
2. The applicant/customer will receive in writing further action required, if required by law, resulting in
 - a. A private hearing by telephone or in person within ten (10) business days after appeal request.
 - b. TCOG shall record the hearing.
 - c. The hearing shall allow time for a statement from program staff with knowledge of the case.
 - d. The hearing will allow the applicant at least equal time, if requested, to present relevant information contesting the decision.
 - e. TCOG shall notify applicant of decision in writing. TCOG shall mail the notification by close of business on the third calendar day following the decision (three-day turn-around).

Customer Dissatisfaction

An applicant/customer expresses dissatisfaction in relation to work provided by TCOG through the LIHEAP act, the applicant/customer should consider speaking directly with the staff member(s) associated with the project. If the applicant/customer is unable to address concerns you can submit a complaint with TCOG in the following ways:

- By completing a client satisfaction survey through our website and providing contact information with your survey response.
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/9LLTX2N>
- By email an Energy Services staff member located at our website
- Or by sending a letter in the mail to Texoma Council of Governments Attn: Energy Services, 1117 Gallagher Dr. Suite 200. Sherman, TX 75090

**If we receive your complaint verbally, we may ask you to put your complaint in writing*

Compliant Investigation

Upon receipt of complaint, TCOG will be relying on information provided by the customer and information on file for the customer. We may need to contact the customer to clarify details or request additional information where necessary. To help us investigate the customers complaint quickly and accurately we may ask for the following information:

- Customer name and contact details
- The name of the staff member(s) in association with complaint
- If applicable, the day and time the incident occurred

- The nature of the complaint
- Details of any steps the customer and staff member have taken to resolve the complaint
- Copies of any documentation which supports the complaint

Customer Compliant Timeline

TCOG is committed to being responsive to the needs and concerns of our customers or potential customers and to resolving complains as quickly as possible. Upon receipt of the complaint, TCOG will take the follow steps to resolve complaint.

1. Complaint Received
 - a. TCOG has 1-3 business days to acknowledge receipt of complaint
2. Department Review
 - a. TCOG will conduct an investigation by at least one individual not originally associated with the complaint with 5-10 business days.
 - b. TCOG will inform customer/applicant of findings. Any solution must adhere to rules imposed by the funding entity
3. Executive Director Review
 - a. If customer/applicant is still dissatisfied with outcome, the Executive director will make the final decision on whether to concur or disagree with the nature of the complaint by writing