

Low Income Energy Assistance Program

Revising a form to improve processing efforts and the rate of completed applications

Agency: Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF)
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Context

DCF sought a solution to the problem of incomplete faxed applications and tested a revised form.

Key Findings

Two LIEAP applications were submitted via fax and both included signatures. The DCF identified and resolved the processing problem, and the revised LIEAP application has been adopted statewide.

*BetaGov trains agency personnel to become research-savvy "pracademics" who lead trials.

Trial Rationale

The Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF) offers the Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP), which pays a portion of home energy costs for eligible households. On average, 55,000 households qualify for annual LIEAP benefits. In previous years, about 10% of LIEAP applications were submitted via fax. Because the application is double-sided with the signature line on page six, many applications have been rejected due to being incomplete. Specifically, page six and the signature sections have been missing as fax machines do not transmit the even numbered pages.

DCF implemented a trial to test the faxed completed application rate for a revised version of the LIEAP application form as compared to the current form.

Trial Design

Applications were randomly distributed such that about half the applicants received Form A, the revised form with the signature line on page five, and half the applicants

received Form B, the original form with the signature line on page six. The Kansas City and Topeka field offices were provided with 1,000 copies of each form.

Results and Implications

During the trial period, 143 Form A applications and 118 Form B applications were returned to DCF. Two Form A and no Form B applications were returned to the DCF via fax, and both faxed applications included signatures.

The low rate of faxed applications compared with previous years could be due to an unusually mild winter, the recent opening of four regional DCF processing centers which made returning applications in person more convenient, and the fact that fax machines are being used less often than in the past. In spite of the low response rate, DCF identified a problem and a promising solution. The DCF has since adopted the revised LIEAP form with the signature line on page five to improve the processing of future applications.

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