



**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**  
**Board of Public Utilities**  
44 South Clinton Avenue, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Suite 314  
Post Office Box 350  
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0350  
[www.nj.gov/bpu/](http://www.nj.gov/bpu/)

AUDITS

IN THE MATTER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF	)	ORDER APPROVING
COMMUNITY AFFAIRS' STATE FISCAL YEAR 2017	)	BUDGET
UNIVERSAL SERVICE FUND ADMINISTRATIVE COST	)	
BUDGET	)	DOCKET NO. EO16070661

**Parties of Record:**

**Jose Sanchez, Supervisor**, New Jersey Department of Community Affairs  
**Stefanie A. Brand, Esq., Director**, New Jersey Division of Rate Counsel

BY THE BOARD:

By this Order the Board is considering the Department of Community Affairs' proposed Universal Service Fund ("USF") administrative cost budget for the state fiscal year 2017.

**BACKGROUND/PROCEDURAL HISTORY**

The Electric Discount and Energy Competition Act, N.J.S.A. 48:3-49 et seq. ("the "Act") established the USF. The Act directed the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities ("Board"), inter alia, to determine for the USF the level of funding, the appropriate administration, and the purposes and programs to be funded. N.J.S.A. 48:3-60(b).

On April 30, 2003, in Docket No. EX00020091 ("April 2003 Order"), the Board approved a permanent USF program to ensure that low-income customers have access to more affordable energy. The Board ordered that the program be operated on a state-wide basis and funded through uniform charges on customers' electric and natural gas bills through the Societal Benefits Charge collected pursuant to N.J.S.A. 48:3-60(a). The Board also determined in this Order that initial administrative expenses would be capped at ten per cent (10%) of the program costs or \$3 million. Further, the Board determined it must approve additional expenses above \$3 million in advance.

In its Order dated July 16, 2003, in Docket Number EX00020091, the Board clarified that this cap would total \$3 million, and any administrative costs (excluding one-time start-up costs) exceeding this amount must be approved in advance by the Board. The Board also stated that the USF would be an ongoing, evolving program, subject to review and amended as necessary. In this same Order, the Board designated the Department of Human Services ("DHS") as the USF program administrator.

The USF program was intentionally linked to the Federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (“LIHEAP”) in order to take advantage of the existing infrastructure already in place to administer LIHEAP. Through a shared application and database system, repetition of administrative resources was reduced and applicants were conveniently able to apply for both programs simultaneously. LIHEAP was jointly administered by DHS and the Department of Community Affairs (“DCA”) when the permanent USF program was authorized by the Board.

On August 31, 2006, DCA was designated as the State’s administrator of LIHEAP. The DCA Commissioner sent a letter dated September 21, 2006, requesting that the Board designate the DCA as the Universal Service Fund program administrator. On October 23, 2006, the Board changed the USF program administrator from DHS to DCA. By December 2006, DCA assumed full responsibility as USF program administrator.

On August 19, 2015, the Board approved the projected State Fiscal Year 2016 (“FY 2016”) DCA USF administrative cost budget in the amount of \$7,265,447.00. The FY 2016 Budget encompassed an increase above the \$3 million cap instituted in the April 2003 Order, which required Board approval prior to such expenditures.

## **DISCUSSION**

On July 28, 2016, DCA submitted its USF administrative cost budget for State Fiscal Year 2017 (“FY 2017”) in the amount of \$6,883,454.00. This is a \$381,993.00 decrease from the prior fiscal year’s budget.

Each year the DCA submits a joint USF/LIHEAP budget with costs broken down between the two programs according to the percentage of recipients benefited from each program in the previous fiscal year. In FY 2016 the breakdown was 42% USF recipients and in FY 2017, the breakdown is expected to be 40% USF recipients. The budget decrease was also partially due to attrition at DCA and a decrease in anticipated costs from the NJ Office of Information Technology, which administers the USF/LIHEAP database system.

While the overall USF administrative budget decreased from the previous fiscal year, it should be noted that two line items did increase: 1) “Materials and Supplies” increased by \$7,130.00; and 2) “Other” increased by \$20,432.00. The “Materials and Supplies” line item was increased to accommodate DCA printing additional brochures and applications to enable the sub-grantees to increase their outreach efforts to the eligible population. The “Other” line item was increased to add funding for a formal training conference for the sub-grantees. The training conference is important because it gives the staff of the sub-grantees who represent the program to the public a chance to receive formal training from the State and utility companies and in turn, provide valuable feedback to the State regarding how programs can be improved.

Staff has thoroughly reviewed the budget submission and, based upon the size and complexity of the program as well as the efficiencies being made, believes that the budget request is warranted.

The FY 2017 budget is broken down as follows:

DCA	\$1,629,095.00
Subgrantees-	
County Welfare Organizations	\$227,200.00
Community Based Organizations	<u>\$5,027,159.00</u>
Total	\$6,883,454.00

It has been thirteen years since the Board created the permanent USF program in its April 2003 Order and during that time the administrative costs for the program have remained low in relation to the yearly program cost, despite the fact that the overall cost of the program has increased from \$30 million in 2003 to \$175 million for the 2015-2016 program year. DCA's proposed administrative budget for the 2016-2017 program year does present administrative costs above the \$3 million cap that was instituted in the April 2003 Order, which accordingly requires Board approval prior to such expenditures.

Staff has reviewed DCA's proposed budget and has found that the costs listed therein appear to be appropriate and necessary for the administration of the USF program by DCA. The costs contained in the budget are proportionally justified, relative to the enrollment size of the program. Therefore, Staff recommends the Board approve the proposed FY 2017 budget. It is noted that the budget is an estimate. DCA will provide the Board with an accounting of all expenditures; after reviewing these expenditures Board Staff will come before the Board for final approval of all expenditures.

**FINDINGS AND ORDER**

Accordingly, the Board **HEREBY FINDS** that DCA has adequately justified its FY 2017 USF administrative cost budget and **HEREBY APPROVES** said budget in the amount of \$6,883,454.00. The DCA FY 2017 USF administrative cost budget summary is attached hereto as Schedule "A."

This Order will be effective on September 3, 2016.

DATED:

8/24/16

BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES  
BY:



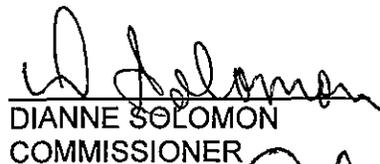
RICHARD S. MROZ  
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JOSEPH L. FIORDALISO  
COMMISSIONER



MARY-ANNA HOLDEN  
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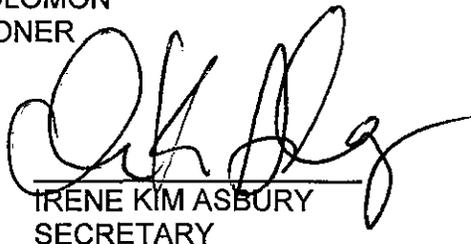


DIANNE SOLOMON  
COMMISSIONER



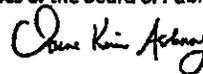
UPENDRA J. CHIVUKULA  
COMMISSIONER

ATTEST:



IRENE KIM ASBURY  
SECRETARY

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the within document is a true copy of the original in the files of the Board of Public Utilities



IN THE MATTER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS' STATE FISCAL YEAR  
2017 UNIVERSAL SERVICE FUND ADMINISTRATIVE COST BUDGET  
DOCKET NO. EO16070661

SERVICE LIST

Jose Sanchez  
Department of Community Affairs  
Division of Housing & Community Resources  
101 South Broad Street  
Post Office Box 811  
Trenton, NJ 08624-0811  
[jose.sanchez@dca.nj.gov](mailto:jose.sanchez@dca.nj.gov)

Irene Kim Asbury, Esq.  
Secretary of the Board  
Board of Public Utilities  
44 South Clinton Ave, 3rd Floor, Suite 314  
Post Office Box 350  
Trenton, NJ 08625-0350  
[Irene.asbury@bpu.nj.gov](mailto:Irene.asbury@bpu.nj.gov)

Miguel Gonzalez  
Department of Community Affairs  
Division of Housing & Community Resources  
101 South Broad Street  
Post Office Box 811  
Trenton, NJ 08624-0811  
[miguel.gonzalez@dca.nj.gov](mailto:miguel.gonzalez@dca.nj.gov)

Alice Bator  
Division of Audits  
Board of Public Utilities  
44 South Clinton Ave, 3rd Floor, Suite 314  
Post Office Box 350  
Trenton, NJ 08625-0350  
[Alice.bator@bpu.nj.gov](mailto:Alice.bator@bpu.nj.gov)

Stefanie A. Brand, Esq., Director  
Division of Rate Counsel  
140 East Front Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Post Office Box 003  
Trenton, NJ 08625-0003  
[sbrand@rpa.state.nj.us](mailto:sbrand@rpa.state.nj.us)

Albert Weierman  
Division of Audits  
Board of Public Utilities  
44 South Clinton Ave, 3rd Floor, Suite 314  
Post Office Box 350  
Trenton, NJ 08625-0350  
[Albert.weierman@bpu.nj.gov](mailto:Albert.weierman@bpu.nj.gov)

Sarah Steindel  
Division of Rate Counsel  
140 East Front Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Post Office Box 003  
Trenton, NJ 08625-0003  
[ssteindel@rpa.state.nj.us](mailto:ssteindel@rpa.state.nj.us)

Peter Hilerio, Esq.  
Office of the Secretary  
Board of Public Utilities  
44 South Clinton Ave, 3rd Floor, Suite 314  
Post Office Box 350  
Trenton, NJ 08625-0350  
[Peter.hilerio@bpu.nj.gov](mailto:Peter.hilerio@bpu.nj.gov)

Geoffrey Gersten, Esq.  
Deputy Attorney General  
124 Halsey Street  
Post Office Box 45029  
Newark, NJ 07102-45029  
[Geoffrey.gersten@dol.lps.state.nj.us](mailto:Geoffrey.gersten@dol.lps.state.nj.us)

Maureen Clerc  
Office of the Secretary  
Board of Public Utilities  
44 South Clinton Ave, 3rd Floor, Suite 314  
Post Office Box 350  
Trenton, NJ 08625-0350  
[Maureen.clerc@bpu.nj.gov](mailto:Maureen.clerc@bpu.nj.gov)

Schedule A: DCA FY 2017 Budget Summary

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY  
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS  
DCA USF BUDGET - EXPENSE SUMMARY**

**Address:** Dept of Community Affairs  
101 S. Broad Street  
Trenton NJ, 08625  
PO BOX 811

**Phone:** 609 633-6204

**Chief Executive Officer:** Janel Winter

**Prepared By:** Jose Sanchez

<b>BUDGET CATEGORIES COSTS</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>HEA</b>	<b>USF</b>
<b>A. PERSONNEL AND FRINGE</b>	\$1,322,062	\$824,558	\$497,504
<b>B. CONSULTANTS AND PROFESSIONAL FEES</b>	\$1,490,000	\$934,000	\$556,000
<b>C. MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES</b>	\$176,500	\$105,900	\$70,600
<b>D. OTHER</b>	\$1,271,970	\$766,979	\$504,991
<b>DCA SUB TOTAL COST</b>	<b>\$4,260,532</b>	<b>\$2,631,437</b>	<b>\$1,629,095</b>
County Welfare Agencies	\$568,000	\$340,800	\$227,200
Community Based Organizations (CBO's)	\$12,566,470	\$7,539,311	\$5,027,159
<b>Subgrantees SUB TOTAL COST</b>	<b>\$13,134,470</b>	<b>\$7,880,111</b>	<b>\$5,254,359</b>
<b>TOTAL COST (DCA &amp; Subgrantees)</b>	<b>\$17,395,002</b>	<b>\$10,511,548</b>	<b>\$6,883,454</b>