



Eliot Spitzer
Governor

NEW YORK STATE
OFFICE OF TEMPORARY AND DISABILITY ASSISTANCE
40 NORTH PEARL STREET
ALBANY, NY 12243-0001

David A. Hansell
Commissioner

Local Commissioners Memorandum

Section 1

Transmittal:	07-LCM-11	
To:	Local District Commissioners	
Issuing Division/Office:	Division of Employment and Transitional Supports	
Date:	August 9, 2007	
Subject:	2007-2008 Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) – Client Notice System (CNS) Early Mail-Out	
Contact Person(s):	HEAP Bureau Liaisons @ 518-473-0332	
Attachments Available On – Line:	I: HEAP Early Mail-Out Processing Plan II: HEAP Batching Instructions III: Additional Administrative Allocations	

Section 2

I. Purpose

The purpose of this Local Commissioners Memorandum (LCM) is to provide local social services districts with information regarding the upcoming 2007-2008 HEAP Client Notice System (CNS) Early Mail-Out.

II. Background

The Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) assumed responsibility for mailing out applications for the Home Energy Assistance Program to those households who received a HEAP benefit in the previous HEAP season and whose head of household was in receipt of Code A SSI, was 60 years of age or older, or under age 60 with a vulnerable household member. OTDA began this initiative in the 2005-2006 HEAP program year and found it resulted in a more streamlined process, which produced more timely authorizations and better service to our most vulnerable households.

III. Program Implications

A. Client Notice System (CNS) MAIL-OUT

The CNS Early Mail-Out is scheduled to begin the week of August 20, 2007. Once again, local districts and alternate certifiers **must** begin processing these targeted applications no later than August 31, 2007.

New York City must begin the mail-out of applications to targeted households no later than August 31, 2007.

The mail-out will be conducted in the following order: Erie, Onondaga, Suffolk, Oneida, Niagara, Chautauqua, Broome, Steuben, St. Lawrence followed by the rest of the upstate districts in local fiscal code order (Albany-Yates) with Monroe County last. The mail-out will begin in this order for the over 60/SSI group first and when finished, the under 60 w/vulnerable group will run in the same order. We expect the total mail-out to consist of approximately 130,000 applications and be completed in 2 ½ weeks. Control lists will once again be transmitted to districts through the Benefit Issuance Control System (BICS). Local district HEAP coordinators must contact their local WMS coordinator to print the control lists.

The return address on these applications will contain the address provided by the local district. If you are not sure of the address provided, please contact your HEAP Bureau liaison.

An enhancement has been made to the process for this year. Applicants will not be sent a blank HEAP application but instead will receive a four-page form that will have the applicant's name, address, date of birth, social security number, and sex pre-filled by the system. Samples of the new format will be provided during HEAP regional meetings.

B. PAYMENT AUTHORIZATION

Districts may authorize payments through WMS during the early outreach period. The 2007-2008 HEAP season WMS on-line edits will be available effective in August. Detailed information on edits and systems changes will be provided by the OTDA WMS Bureau.

Systems changes will now require the entry of both vendor ID and customer account number in the appropriate fields on screen 6 of the WMS authorization document. Since payments to vendors will be issued centrally through the NYS Office of the State Comptroller (OSC), correct account numbers are essential to ensure that payments can be accurately credited to a recipient's account.

C. NOTICES

Notices may not be sent until program opening. In order to prevent the issuance of notices until program opening, districts must utilize the "Batch" process to hold the notices. Batching instructions are contained in Attachment II. Please note that the batching process only applies to approval notices. Denials processed during the early outreach period must not be processed through WMS/CNS until program opening.

D. ISSUANCE OF BENEFITS

Benefits may not be issued until program opening. Districts may not guarantee a HEAP benefit in order to resolve an emergency prior to program opening.

Payments made directly to vendors will be issued centrally, based on local district authorization, by OSC. Detailed information on this new payment process will be provided shortly. It is expected that these payments will begin once federal funding has been received.

E. REQUIREMENTS AND ADDITIONAL FUNDING

Local district contracts or memorandums of understandings (MOU) with alternate certifiers that process mail-in applications, including offices for the aging, must be in place prior to the early mail-out period and must contain provisions that the certifier will begin application processing during the early mail-out period.

In order to assist local districts in this process, additional administrative funds will once again be available to help districts defray the start-up costs associated with early outreach (see Attachment III). **In order to access these funds, districts must complete the attached Early Processing Plan (see Attachment I).** Districts must outline activities scheduled during the early processing period and the plan must be signed by the Commissioner or Accounting Supervisor. **If your district utilizes an alternate certifier for this process, a signed copy of the contract or MOU is also required.**

Once the plan has been received and approved by OTDA, these additional funds will be added to your 2006-07 allocation and will be made available to your district on your FFY07 ceiling report. Your district will receive confirmation that your plan has been approved. Funds must be obligated by September 30, 2007 and claimed no later than December 31, 2007. Funds may be used for personnel and office related costs associated with early processing. Unclaimed funds **cannot** be rolled over into the 2007-08 HEAP season.

Funds will not be provided to districts that do not submit an acceptable plan. Funds are subject to audit to ensure that activities outlined in the plan were conducted within required timeframes.

Plans must be submitted no later than August 17, 2007 and should be returned to:

Christel Bathrick
NYS Office of Temporary & Disability Assistance
HEAP Bureau, 11D
40 North Pearl Street
Albany, NY 12243
FAX (518) 474-9347

Issued By
Name: Russell Sykes
Title: Deputy Commissioner
Division/Office: Division of Employment and Transitional Supports