



# Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance

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## Local Commissioners Memorandum

### Section 1

<b>Transmittal:</b>	16-LCM-05
<b>To:</b>	Local District Commissioners
<b>Issuing Division/Office:</b>	Center for Employment and Economic Supports
<b>Date:</b>	April 21, 2016
<b>Subject:</b>	2015-2016 Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) Cooling Assistance Component (CAC)
<b>Contact Person(s):</b>	HEAP Bureau at (518) 473-0332 or (800) 343-8859 ext. 3-0332
<b>Attachments:</b>	<a href="#">Attachment 1 – LDSS-4992 HEAP Cooling Assistance Application</a> <a href="#">Attachment 2 – Scratchpad Cooling Assistance ABEL Budget</a> <a href="#">Attachment 3 – LDSS-4993 HEAP Cooling Assistance Notice of Eligibility Decision</a> <a href="#">Attachment 4 – LDSS-5044 HEAP Cooling Assistance Services Invoice</a> <a href="#">Attachment 5 – HEAP Pending Case Report</a> <a href="#">Attachment 6 - 2016 HEAP Cooling Administrative Allocations</a>
<b>Attachments Available Online:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

### Section 2

#### I. Purpose

This is to provide local Social Service Districts (SSDs) with instructions on administering the 2015-2016 Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) Cooling Assistance Component (CAC), including information on program dates, funding, eligibility requirements, processing and reporting timeframes.

#### II. Background

HEAP is a federally funded energy program intended to provide assistance to low income households to meet their immediate home energy needs. The HEAP program is comprised of several different components including the HEAP CAC which provides for the purchase and installation of air conditioners and fans. The HEAP CAC is available for HEAP eligible households with at least one individual with a documented medical condition that is exacerbated by extreme heat. No additional HEAP cash benefits are available.

### III. Program Implications

Local SSDs must implement the HEAP CAC as outlined below and in accordance with the 2015-2016 New York State HEAP State Plan (<https://otda.ny.gov/programs/heap/stateplan.asp>). Program requirements and eligibility criteria for the HEAP CAC must be met by applicant households before the household is eligible for the HEAP CAC benefits and services.

#### A. Program Dates

SSDs must accept applications for the HEAP CAC beginning on Monday, May 2, 2016 through Wednesday, August 31, 2016, or until funds are exhausted, whichever comes first. If the component closes before August 31, 2016, SSDs will be notified via the General Information System (GIS).

#### B. Application Requirements

- If the household received a HEAP benefit greater than \$21 during the current program year or is currently in receipt of Temporary Assistance (TA) or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, the applicant may apply by completing, signing, dating and submitting to the local SSD the HEAP Cooling Assistance Application (LDSS-4992, Attachment 1). Applicant households for which the preceding does not apply must complete both the HEAP Application (LDSS-3421) **and** the Cooling Assistance Application (LDSS-4992). SSDs must mark the HEAP Application as “Cooling” upon receipt.
- An authorized representative may apply on behalf of the applicant. Page 4 of the LDSS-3421 HEAP Application may be used to assign an authorized representative. A dated and signed statement from the applicant authorizing the individual to apply on their behalf is required if the authorized representative section of the HEAP application is not filled out.
- Applicants for CAC who received a regular HEAP benefit greater than \$21 during the 2015-16 HEAP season are not required to have an interview.
- Applicants for CAC who **did not** receive a regular HEAP benefit during the 2015-16 HEAP season must have an eligibility interview conducted either in person or by telephone.
- Applicants requesting assistance for Cooling Assistance cannot apply online through myBenefits.
- Any applicant who is denied may reapply for the HEAP CAC as long as the component is open.
- Each application must be date-stamped upon receipt.

#### C. Eligibility Requirements

Applicants must meet all HEAP eligibility criteria in order to be eligible for the HEAP CAC. See the HEAP Manual, Chapter 7 – Basic Eligibility for specific eligibility criteria.

In addition to basic eligibility, all applicants for HEAP CAC must meet the following criteria:

- The applicant or household member must have a documented medical condition that is exacerbated by extreme heat. The medical documentation must be issued in writing and

signed by a physician, physician's assistant, or a nurse practitioner and clearly state the medical condition. The document must be dated within the previous 12 months from the month of application. Documentation older than 12 months may be used if the documentation provides sufficient information to indicate that the medical condition is considered chronic, e.g. Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD). If the applicant is having difficulty in obtaining medical documentation, the SSD must assist the individual in obtaining the documentation.

- Households that received a 2015-16 HEAP benefit in an amount less than or equal to \$21.00 are not eligible for the CAC. However, such households who move into an eligible living situation may apply for this component using both the Cooling Assistance Application and the HEAP Application.
- The applicant must not have a working air conditioner newer than five years old, as determined by the vendor.
- The applicant must not have received a HEAP funded air conditioner within the past ten years.
- The applicant's household income must not exceed the established income guidelines for the 2015-16 heating season.

#### **D. Documentation**

Applicants must meet all HEAP documentation requirements in order to be eligible for the HEAP CAC. See the HEAP Manual, Chapter 5 – Documentation Requirements for the Cooling Assistance Component.

- Applicants who apply using only the Cooling Assistance Application do not need to provide additional income documentation.
- Applicants must report any changes in circumstance (change of address, household composition, etc.) when applying for the HEAP CAC.
- Applicants who apply using both the Cooling Assistance Application and the HEAP Application must provide documentation of residence, identity for each household member, documentation of household income and a valid Social Security number for each household member.
- SSDs must use any permanent documentation available in the applicant's case record or in the agency if applicable.
- Applicants in receipt of ongoing TA or SNAP or who are currently in receipt of SSI benefits which are designated as Federal Living Arrangement Code A and State Supplement Code A are categorically income eligible.
- Applicants who are pended to provide required documentation must be provided with the Documentation Requirements form (LDSS-2642- Attachment 2). A copy must be retained in the case record.

- Applications may be pended for a maximum of ten business days for documentation. If the applicant fails to provide the requested documentation by the due date, the application must be denied.

## **E. Income Budgeting**

For applicants required to provide income documentation, SSDs must use a scratchpad HEAP regular benefit Automated Budgeting Eligibility Logic (ABEL) budget to determine income eligibility for the HEAP CAC. A sample Scratchpad Cooling Assistance ABEL Budget is found in Attachment 3.

- The ABEL input screen must include the applicant's first and last names.
- The ABEL output screen must be printed and added to the case record with the following changes:
- An "X" must be drawn through the regular benefit amount
- A statement must be added, "Budget used to determine income eligibility for HEAP CAC,"
- Budgets must be initialed and dated.

## **F. Scope of Benefits and Equipment Specifications**

The HEAP CAC benefits and services are provided on a first come, first served basis to eligible households through August 31, 2016, or until all of the funds are exhausted, whichever comes first. The following is a listing of equipment, benefit limits, and services that are provided if an individual is found eligible for the HEAP CAC.

- Benefits are not to exceed \$800 per household, including the cost of: an air conditioner, administrative costs, labor, program support, materials, removal of the old unit and minor repairs essential for safe installation. Funds may not be used for any other purpose.
- Only one HEAP funded air conditioner or fan will be provided in an eligible dwelling.
- Vendors are required to determine the most appropriate living space for the creation of a cooling room.
- Vendors are required to ensure that the client's electrical system meets load requirements necessary for safe operation of the air conditioner and must conduct an assessment of electric load capacity prior to installation.
- Vendors must calculate the BTUs of the cooling room to ensure the purchase of an appropriately sized air conditioning unit.
- Air conditioners are limited to window installations, existing sleeve installations and portable units. Whenever possible, window equipment with an Energy Star rating must be installed. In the event that an Energy Star rated window unit cannot be safely installed, a non-Energy Star rated unit or a portable unit may be installed
- Vendors are responsible for registering warranties with manufacturers and providing copies of the completed warranty to clients.

- In circumstances where an air conditioner cannot be safely installed, the vendor must provide a fan, at a reasonable cost, for the established cooling room.
- It will be the responsibility of the client or dwelling owner to maintain the air conditioner. This includes removing, covering, storing and/or reinstalling the unit or the installation sleeve after vendor installation.
- Recipients of the HEAP CAC should be directed to contact the vendor directly for any issues that arise with the unit after installation.

## **G. Processing Timeframes and Client Notification**

SSDs must determine an applicant's eligibility for the HEAP CAC within 30 business days of receipt of the completed HEAP Cooling Assistance Application or the HEAP Application.

The Client Notice System (CNS) notices cannot be used for this component. SSDs must provide recipients with a completed HEAP Cooling Assistance Notice of Eligibility Decision (LDSS-4993, Attachment 4) for both approvals and denials. Applicants must be provided written notice of the eligibility decision made on the application for HEAP CAC benefits no later than 30 business days from the date of receipt of the final vendor invoice for payment.

- Approval notices must contain:
  - The vendor name
  - Customer account number. If the vendor does not use customer account numbers, SSDs must enter the client's case number or the vendor's invoice number. WMS Screen 6 VND/ACCT field (Vendor ID field on the 3209).
  - Benefit amount
- When denying an application, on a new applicant household, case type 60, SSDs must place an N in the notice indicator to suppress the CNS notice and use a HEAP denial code of Y99.
- A copy of all notices must be retained in the case record for six years.
- All HEAP CAC denials are considered manual denials. All manual denials must be reported annually by September 30 on the HEAP Denied Applicant Report.

## **H. Vendor Participation**

All vendors who wish to participate must have a signed HEAP Cooling Assistance Services Vendor Agreement on file with the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) HEAP Bureau. This legally binding document provides both OTDA and participating vendors with assurances that vendors understand the scope of the work to be performed. In addition, it ensures that participating vendors will abide by the provisions set forth in the document.

Each SSD can find a list of all its HEAP CAC participating vendors in the HEAP Participating Vendor list found in CentraPort. This list is updated on a daily basis and SSDs should check

this list prior to authorizing a benefit. Vendors who contact SSDs to participate in the HEAP CAC must be instructed to contact the OTDA HEAP Bureau at (518) 473-0332.

OTDA will be hosting a series of conference calls to provide additional information to participating vendors. SSDs are encouraged, but not required to participate. A schedule of vendor conference calls and call details will be sent under a separate cover.

## **I. Installation Scheduling**

Participating HEAP CAC vendors are responsible to contact eligible household to schedule installation. If a vendor cannot schedule an installation with the household within ten days of the referral, the vendor must notify the SSD. The SSD must then send the household a copy of the Documentation Requirements form with the "Other" box checked and the following language, "(vendor name) tried to contact you regarding installation of cooling equipment, but was unsuccessful. Please contact us by (date) to resolve this."

If the client does not contact either the SSD or the vendor within the ten-day pending period to arrange installation, a HEAP Cooling Assistance Notice of Eligibility Decision, denial notice must be sent. The box for "you failed to provide the following information," is checked and the following language inserted "you failed to make arrangements for installation of your cooling equipment by the due date of (date)."

## **J. HEAP Cooling Assistance Services Invoice (LDSS-5044)**

The HEAP Cooling Assistance Services Invoice form, (LDSS- 5044- see Attachment 5), is used by both the SSD and by the vendor.

SSDs use this form to notify a vendor that an individual is approved for services. SSDs must complete the following sections:

- Customer contact section is to be completed by the SSD and is used to communicate customer information to the vendor.
- SSD Agency Use Section with the Application Date, Date Approved, and Invoice Date Received.

In order to receive payment, vendors must return the completed form to the SSD, with client signature. The sections to be completed prior to returning to the SSD are:

- The Services Provided checklist to identify services performed by the vendor,
- The Customer Section to be completed by the client to attest that services have been completed; and
- An invoice section with total amount for the air conditioner and installation and signed by the technician.

## **K. Payment and Authorizations**

SSDs must not authorize any HEAP CAC payments to vendors prior to the HEAP CAC component opening on May 2, 2016.

Vendors must submit a completed HEAP Cooling Assistance Services Invoice (LDSS-5044) to SSDs in order for a payment to be authorized. Payments to vendors must not exceed \$800 per benefit.

All HEAP CAC payments are authorized by the SSDs through WMS or myWorkspace using payment type H2. These payments must be issued on a Case Type 60 (HEAP only) or an appropriate TA or SNAP Case Type.

As a result of changes to §179-f of the State Finance Law, HEAP vendor payments to small businesses for the Cooling Assistance Component must be paid within 15 calendar days of receipt of an invoice, excluding legal holidays. Be sure all HEAP invoices are date stamped when they are received. Please refer to GIS 16 TA/DC023 regarding the amendment to finance law 179-F for further information.

As with all vendor direct payments for districts outside New York City, HEAP CAC payments will be issued through the New York State Office of the State Comptroller (OSC)/Statewide Financial System (SFS) payment process. Any vendor wishing to refund a benefit to the SSD must use the Vendor Refund form (LDSS-5043- Attachment 6). The form includes the HEAP CAC participant information, payments received by the vendor, and the amount refunded to the SSD. All HEAP refunds (including local district related HEAP refunds and HEAP OSC refunds) will be processed using CAMS (Cash Management System) cash receipts.

Refer to the HEAP Manual, Chapter 22 – Payments/Statewide Financial System and the BICS Indirect Payment Processing Sub-System (IPPS) Manual - Appendix H for more information regarding the HEAP OSC/SFS Payment Process and HEAP refunds. The IPPS Manual can be found at: [http://otda.state.ny.net/bfdm/finance/IPPS\\_Manual.asp](http://otda.state.ny.net/bfdm/finance/IPPS_Manual.asp)

#### **L. Payment Type and System Requirements:**

The Payment Type used to authorize a HEAP CAC benefit is H2 and can be processed in either WMS or myWorkspace. This pay type does not require a stored ABEL budget and will **not** produce a CNS notice.

In order to write a Payment Line with an H2 Payment Type SSDs must follow these rules:

- Only Case Types 11, 12, 16, 17, 31, and 60 may be used
- Payment Type H2 is valid with all Transaction Types except 03 – Denial
- Only two Methods of Payment may be used – either 02 (Vendor as Authorized) or 04 (Vendor as Bill Subject to Limit)
- Special Claiming Code H must be used
- Pay line service period covers an active HEAP season
- EMPLOYER NO/SSN appears in the BICS vendor record and must consist of nine non-equal numeric digits (for example, digits cannot be all zeroes or all nines)
- A valid Customer Account Number (cannot be blank or inactive.)
- Valid SFS Vendor data

Vendor Direct Payline Example

LN	ACT	Pay Typ	Meth Pay	Amount	Iss	Pay Sch	P-U Cd	Effective From	To	Ind LN	Clm Cd	Vend Id
01	2	H2	02	800.00	2		1	050116	83116		H	AC SERV
02												
03												
Energy Rst HVnd/Acct Replace LN												
			CHK/FSB				LN		Vnd/Acct CHK/FSB	ACSERV	1234	

**M. SSD Reporting Requirements**

SSDs will no longer be required to manually log HEAP CAC applications on a daily basis or submit weekly denied applicant reports to OTDA. Starting with the 2015-16 season, SSDs will be required to submit the number of pending HEAP CAC application weekly using the established HEAP Pending Case Report. SSDs must include CAC cases that fall into the following categories:

- Applications that have been received, but do not have a transaction through WMS or myWorkspace (either a payment or denial transaction)
- Cases that are waiting for an interview or documentation and/or have not had eligibility determined
- Cases where eligibility has been determined, but the WMS or myWorkspace transaction has not yet been conducted
- Applications awaiting processing at the Alternate Certifier

Due to the limited funding for the HEAP CAC, it is essential that OTDA track pending expenditures. SSDs must continue to complete the HEAP Pending Case Report on a weekly basis. The report will continue to be available until close of business (COB) every Tuesday. SSDs must start submitting HEAP CAC pending applications beginning on Friday, May 6, 2016 and will be instructed to continue to do so until notified via GIS that the component is closing. A screen shot of the updated HEAP Pending Case Report can be found in Attachment 7.

To access the HEAP Pending Report in eReports, go to CentraPort:  
<https://centraport.otda.state.nyenet/centraport>

- On the left side under Links, expand the Applications menu
- Third from the bottom of the list, select eReports
- Select the HEAP Pending Case Report
- To log all pending applications select the current date from the dropdown box and click the "Find" button



- Enter the number of pending Regular, Emergency, Furnace Repair, Furnace Replacement, Supplemental, and Cooling Assistance benefit applications that are currently pending in the applicable box
- If no applications are pending in a component, please enter a “0” in that field
- Click “Submit” and then “Ok” to complete the form

SSDs who fail to submit their pending applications in the HEAP Pending Case Report by COB Fridays will receive a computer generated message on Monday reminding them to submit the report. Failure to submit the report by COB Monday will result in a computer generated email reminder on Tuesday, as well.

SSDs who do not submit their HEAP Pending Case Report by COB Tuesday may email Emily Urban with their pending numbers at [Emily.Urban@otda.ny.gov](mailto:Emily.Urban@otda.ny.gov).

Each SSD must have at least one person designated to submit data to the HEAP Pending Case Report and Erroneous Payment Report. If SSDs have any changes in their designee(s), please provide Emily Urban with identifying information for the person or persons who should have access to these reports: (a) Name; (b) User ID; (c) e-mail address; (d) phone number; and (e) fax number. Changes can be e-mailed to [Emily.Urban@otda.ny.gov](mailto:Emily.Urban@otda.ny.gov). Please contact Emily Urban with any questions at (518) 473-0332.

## **N. Fair Hearings**

Applicants for and recipients of CAC may seek review of their eligibility determination at an administrative fair hearing, as authorized under 18 NYCRR Parts 393.5 and 358.

## **O. Forms Information**

All forms used to administer HEAP have been revised for the 2015-16 program year. All forms with a revision date of prior to 2015 are now obsolete and must be destroyed. New forms with a revision date of 2015 may be ordered. Only these forms may be used for the 2015-16 program year.

No forms will be drop shipped this year. All forms should be ordered by the SSDs as needed. All forms are currently available to order. SSDs may also access electronic forms for download and printing at [http://otda.state.nyenet/ldss\\_eforms/](http://otda.state.nyenet/ldss_eforms/).

## **P. Funding/Administrative Funds**

A total of \$3M has been authorized for the 2016 HEAP CAC. SSDs will be provided with administrative funds to operate this component. Administrative funds are to be used to meet staffing and operational needs of SSDs for the 2015-16 HEAP CAC. Acceptable uses of administrative funds include, but are not limited to, staff salaries, staff overtime, temporary staff costs, fringe benefits, indirect costs, and equipment purchases to aid in the administration of the program.

As in the past, reimbursement of administrative costs in excess of your allocation cannot be guaranteed. Administrative costs incurred on and after October 1, 2015 may be charged against the 2015-16 allocation. The HEAP CAC administrative funds will be added to your 2015-16 administrative allocation. These funds must be obligated by September 30, 2016

and claimed by December 31, 2016. Unclaimed funds cannot be rolled into the 2016-17 administrative allocation. A chart listing each SSD's allocation is found in Attachment 8.

**Q. Phone Conference**

The HEAP Bureau has scheduled two conference calls to provide SSDs updated information on the 2015-16 HEAP CAC and to answer any questions. Information regarding these conference calls will be sent to local district HEAP Coordinators under a separate cover.

**Issued By**

**Name: Phyllis Morris**

**Title: Deputy Commissioner**

**Division/Office: Center for Employment and Economic Supports**