

NYS Home Energy Assistance Program Cooling Assistance Component

A. Benefit Component

The Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) Cooling Assistance Component (CAC) provides for the purchase and installation of air conditioners or fans. CAC benefits are available for HEAP eligible households containing at least one individual with a documented medical condition that is exacerbated by extreme heat. No additional HEAP cash benefits are available.

B. Application Requirements

Applicant households that received a Regular HEAP benefit greater than \$21 during the current program year or are currently in receipt of Temporary Assistance (TA) or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, **AND** who have not moved or had a change in household composition since receiving a current program year Regular HEAP benefit, may apply by completing, signing, dating and submitting to the local social services district (district) the HEAP Cooling Assistance Request for Benefit ([LDSS-4992](#)).

Applicant households for which the preceding does not apply must complete both the HEAP Application ([LDSS-3421](#)) **and** the Cooling Assistance Request for Benefit ([LDSS-4992](#)). Districts must check the box “Cooling” in the agency use section on page one of the HEAP Application ([LDSS-3421](#)) upon receipt.

- An authorized representative or an individual with power of attorney may apply on behalf of the applicant. The applicant must designate an Authorized Representative using page 4 of the HEAP Application ([LDSS-3421](#)), or with a dated and signed statement from the applicant authorizing the individual to request a Cooling Assistance benefit on their behalf.
- Applicants for the HEAP CAC who received a Regular HEAP benefit greater than \$21 during the current HEAP season are not required to have an interview.
- Applicants for the HEAP CAC who did not receive a current program year Regular HEAP benefit must have an eligibility interview conducted either in person or by telephone.
- Applicants for the HEAP CAC cannot apply online through [myBenefits](#).
- Any applicant who is denied a HEAP CAC benefit may reapply for the HEAP CAC benefit.
- Each application must be date-stamped upon receipt and acted on.

C. Eligibility Requirements

Applicants must meet all HEAP eligibility criteria 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 the CAC must meet the following criteria:

- The household income must not exceed the established income guidelines for the program year for which assistance is requested.
- The applicant or a household member must have a documented medical condition that is exacerbated by extreme heat.
 - The medical documentation must be issued in writing and be 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 it 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 district must assist the individual in obtaining the documentation.
- The applicant household must not have a working air conditioner newer than five years old, as determined by the vendor.
- The applicant household must not have received a HEAP funded air conditioner within the past ten years.

Applicant households that received a current program year Regular HEAP benefit in an amount less than or equal to \$21 are not eligible for the HEAP CAC. However, such applicants who move into an eligible living situation may apply for this component using both the HEAP Cooling Assistance Request for Benefit ([LDSS-4992](#)) and the HEAP Application ([LDSS-3421](#)).

D. Documentation

Applicants must meet all HEAP documentation requirements to be eligible for the CAC.

- Applicants who apply using only the HEAP Cooling Assistance Request for Benefit ([LDSS-4992](#)) do not need to provide additional income documentation.
- Applicants who request a benefit using both the HEAP Cooling Assistance Request for Benefit ([LDSS-4992](#)) and the HEAP Application ([LDSS-3421](#)) must provide documentation of residence, identity for each household member, documentation of household income and a valid Social Security Number for each household member.
- Districts must use any permanent documentation available in the applicant's case record or within the agency.
- Applicants whose request for benefit is pended to provide required documentation to determine eligibility must be provided the Documentation Requirements form ([LDSS-2642](#)). A copy must be retained in the case record.
- Districts may pend a benefit request for a maximum of ten business days for documentation. If the applicant fails to provide the requested documentation by the due date, the benefit request must be denied.

E. Scope of Benefits and Specifications

CAC benefits are provided on a first come, first served basis to eligible applicants. The following is a listing of benefit limits, equipment and services that are provided through 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 proper and safe installation. Funds may not be used for any other purpose.
- Vendors are required to charge the same rate for services performed for households not in receipt of HEAP.
- Only one HEAP funded air conditioner or fan may be provided per eligible dwelling.
- Vendors are required to determine the most appropriate living space for the creation of a cooling room.
- Vendors are required to calculate the British Thermal Units (BTUs) of the cooling room to ensure the purchase of an appropriately sized air conditioner.
- 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 is the responsibility of the client or dwelling owner to maintain the air conditioner. This includes removing, covering, storing and reinstalling the unit.
- Vendors are required to register all warranties with the manufacturer and provide a copy of the completed warranty and the manufacturer's owner's manual to clients.
- With client consent, vendors are required to remove and properly dispose of old air conditioning units.
- Recipients of the HEAP CAC should be directed to contact the vendor directly for any issues that arise with the unit after installation.

If an eligible applicant received a HEAP funded fan when an air conditioner could not be safely installed, and subsequently moves into a dwelling that will support an air conditioner, one may be provided using HEAP funds.

F. Processing Timeframes and Client Notification

Districts must determine an applicant's eligibility for the HEAP CAC within 30 business days of receipt of the completed HEAP Cooling Assistance Request for Benefit ([LDSS-4992](#)) and/or the HEAP Application ([LDSS-3421](#)).

Applicants must be provided with 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.

Manual notices must be used for the approval or denial of the CAC benefit when CNS is not available. Districts must provide recipients with a completed Home Energy Assistance Program Cooling Assistance Notice of Eligibility Decision ([LDSS-4993](#)) when using a manual notice for the CAC benefit.

All manual CAC denials that are not processed through WMS or myWorkspace must be reported on the 2018-2019 HEAP Denied Applicant Report under Cooling.

G. Vendor Participation

All vendors providing CAC services 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 requires participating vendors to abide by the provisions set forth in the document. Vendors must be directed to contact the OTDA HEAP Bureau at: (518) 473-0332 to become a provider of CAC services.

Each district can find a list of all its HEAP CAC participating vendors in the HEAP Participating Vendor list found in [Centraport](#). This list is updated daily, and districts must confirm vendor participation using this list prior to authorizing a benefit.

H. Cooling Assistance Installation Scheduling

Once notified by the district of an approved applicant, HEAP CAC vendors are responsible for contacting eligible households to schedule installation. If a vendor cannot schedule an installation with the household within ten business days of the referral, the vendor must notify the district. The district must then send the household a Documentation Requirements form ([LDSS-2642](#)) with the “Other” box checked and the following language, “(Vendor name) tried to contact you to schedule installation of cooling equipment, but was unsuccessful. Please contact us by (date) to resolve this.”

If the client does not contact the district within the ten-business day pending period to arrange installation, the case must be denied using denial reason code M09 “Cooling Benefit Denial”. Workers should utilize the “other” selection and cite “you failed to make arrangements for installation of your cooling equipment by the due date of (date)”.

I. HEAP Cooling Assistance Services Invoice ([LDSS-5044](#))

The HEAP Cooling Assistance Services Invoice form, ([LDSS-5044](#)) is used by both the district and the vendor.

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

- Customer contact section, which is used to communicate approved applicant information to the vendor; and,
- Agency Use Section, which is used to record the Application Date, Date Approved, Invoice Date Received and date of Collateral Contact with Client to confirm the satisfactory installation and operation of the cooling equipment upon job completion.

To receive payment, vendors must return the completed form to the districts, with the client's signature. The sections to be completed by the vendor are:

- Services Provided checklist, used to identify services performed by the vendor;
- Invoice section, used to itemize the cost of the job including equipment, work completion date and technician signature; and,
- The Customer Section with client signature to attest that services have been satisfactorily completed.

J. Payment and Authorizations

Vendors must submit a completed HEAP Cooling Assistance Services Invoice ([LDSS-5044](#)) to the district for a payment to be authorized. Payments to vendors must not exceed \$800 per benefit.

All HEAP CAC payments are authorized by the districts 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.

K. Social Services District Reporting Requirements

Districts are required to complete and submit the number of pending HEAP CAC applications weekly, using the established HEAP Pending Case Report in [eReports](#).

Districts who do not submit their HEAP Pending Case Report by close of business (COB) each Tuesday may email Emily Urban and Anna Vitolins with their pending numbers at: Emily.Urban@otda.ny.gov and Anna.Vitolins@otda.ny.gov.