

GENERAL INFORMATION SYSTEM
Center for Employment & Economic Supports

July 1, 2013

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TO: Subscribers**SUGGESTED DISTRIBUTION:** Commissioners, TA and SNAP Directors, HEAP Coordinators, Staff Development, WMS Coordinators**FROM:** Phyllis Morris, Deputy Commissioner
Center for Employment and Economic Supports**SUBJECT:** Implementation of the myBenefits/myWorkspace Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) Application Process**EFFECTIVE DATE:** Immediately**CONTACT PERSON:** HEAP Bureau at 1-(800) 343-8859, extension 3-0332

The purpose of this GIS message is to inform Social Service Districts (SSDs) that effective with the 2013–2014 Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) season, all HEAP applicants outside of New York City (NYC) will have the option of submitting an application for HEAP assistance via myBenefits. SSDs outside of NYC will be required to use myWorkspace to register and process all HEAP applications, including early outreach, new and returning applicants.

Telephone Conference

In anticipation of continuing questions and issues related to the publication of this GIS and required SSDs action, CEES has scheduled two conference calls that will provide assistance to SSDs. Representatives from OTDA's HEAP Bureau and systems staff will be present for questions related to the implementation of myBenefits and myWorkspace.

The call-in schedule and directions are as follows:

- **Date:** July 9, 2013
- **Time:** Group One – 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., Group Two – 1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.
- **Group One:** Broome, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Clinton, Erie, Franklin, Hamilton, Herkimer, Lewis, Livingston, Monroe, Niagara, Oneida, Onondaga, Orleans, Otsego, Putnam, Rockland, St. Lawrence, Schenectady, Schoharie, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Tioga, Ulster and Westchester
- **Group Two:** Albany, Allegany, Cayuga, Chemung, Chenango, Columbia, Cortland, Delaware, Dutchess, Essex, Fulton, Genesee, Greene, Montgomery, Nassau, Ontario, Orange, Oswego, Saratoga, Suffolk, Sullivan, Tompkins, Washington, Wayne, Warren, Wyoming and Yates

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- Each SSD can join in the conference on their respective date and times listed above.
- Call toll-free: (to be provided under separate cover)- You will hear a welcome and will be asked to enter your numeric participant passcode followed by the # sign. The passcode is (to be provided under separate cover) for both groups.

myBenefits for all SSDs outside of New York City (NYC)

Starting with the 2013-14 HEAP season, HEAP applicants may use myBenefits to apply for HEAP in counties outside of NYC. New, returning or early outreach HEAP applicants will be encouraged to use myBenefits to apply for HEAP. All SSDs outside of NYC will receive HEAP applications submitted via myBenefits.

Applicants and recipients of HEAP who use myBenefits must first create a secure account before they can complete, submit, and track their HEAP application through myBenefits. They may also submit required documentation via myBenefits to SSDs that use OTDA's imaging application (I/EDR).

myWorkspace for SSDs outside of New York City (NYC)

During the 2012-2013 HEAP season, three SSDs piloted the use of myWorkspace. The pilot SSDs found the following benefits of using myWorkspace:

- Seamless interaction with WMS and CNS;
- Promotes timely eligibility determinations in accordance with office regulations which ultimately reduces the number of pending applications;
- Provides State function to support SSD questions and audits;
- Worker has access to eligibility information which is readily available; and
- Waiting room traffic and phone calls to the SSD are reduced because applicants can track their applications and submit required documentation (only for SSDs that use I/EDR) via myBenefits.

Since the pilots found the above benefits useful in the administration of the HEAP program, and it is expected that operational efficiency will be enhanced with the use of myWorkspace, SSDs must prepare their internal operations and alternate certifiers for the use of myWorkspace.

It is anticipated that a SSD that currently processes SNAP and /or TA cases in myWorkspace should have a smooth transition to processing HEAP cases because they can easily transfer their SNAP and TA myWorkspace knowledge and experience to implement HEAP processing.

To prepare SSDs to implement myWorkspace prior to the opening of the 2013-2014 HEAP season an "action checklist" can be found in Attachment 1. The use of the checklist is not mandatory but is a good tool to prepare for myWorkspace implementation.

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Access to myWorkspace

System access to myWorkspace for SSD employees, including granting entitlements to myWorkspace and the resetting of passwords, is performed at the local level by a SSD systems administrator. Your LAN Administrator will be responsible for granting entitlements and setting up Lightweight Directory Access Protocol (LDAP) accounts to all users, including alternate certifiers.

Alternate Certifiers' Access to myWorkspace

HEAP policy does not grant permissions to alternate certifiers to determine final HEAP eligibility, complete final HEAP authorizations in Welfare Management System (WMS) or alleviate energy emergencies by guaranteeing payment to an energy vendor. To accommodate the processing of HEAP applications by alternate certifiers, two additional roles have been incorporated in myWorkspace: alternate certifier worker and alternate certifier supervisor.

Alternate certifier system entitlements, both worker and supervisor, will be limited to application inquiry, Automated Budgeting and Eligibility Logic (ABEL) scratchpad budget and ABEL budget storage. The alternate certifier supervisor has the added functionality of withdrawing an application. Neither role has the capability of submitting a transaction directly to WMS; all transactions are submitted to a SSD supervisor for review prior to submission to WMS.

Training

Training for myWorkspace will be held during the HEAP regional meetings. The HEAP regional meeting description and registration is currently available on STARS.

Elimination of the Heating Benefit Calculator (HBC) and e-HEAP (e-workbook and e-app)

The e-HEAP and HBC functionality has been terminated, as alternate certifiers will have the ability to calculate HEAP eligibility using myWorkspace.

Problem Solving

SSD HEAP Coordinators experiencing problems accessing myWorkspace must contact their Systems Administrator.

For all other problems related to the use of the myWorkspace, the SSD Systems Administrator should utilize the "**Contact Us**" button in myWorkspace (located on the myWorkspace Homepage – External links). When reporting problems using the "**Contact Us**" functionality, please include as much information as possible, including at a minimum the registry/case number, and any error number and message you receive.

Alternate certifier staff experiencing problems accessing myWorkspace and/or having HEAP policy questions must contact the SSD HEAP Coordinator. SSD staff may access

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information regarding updates to myBenefits/myWorkspace, and a document that answers certain basic "How Do I?" questions by using an SSD accessible SharePoint site at <http://sharepoint.otda.state.nyenet/districts/mbmw/default.aspx>