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TO: Subscribers

SUGGESTED DISTRIBUTION: Commissioners, HEAP Coordinators, TA, SNAP, Finance and Accounting Directors

FROM: Jeffrey Gaskell, Deputy Commissioner
Employment and Income Support Programs

SUBJECT: Calculation of Utility Arrears for Households Enrolled in Budget Billing

EFFECTIVE DATE: Immediately

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The purpose of this General Information System (GIS) message is to inform social services districts (districts) how to calculate utility arrears for households enrolled in budget billing and to clarify the difference between estimated bills and budget billing.

An estimated bill is designed to accurately reflect a specific time period of utility use. It is based on a utility company's analysis of a dwelling unit's usage history, area utility usage, and temperature trends. An estimated bill amount may be included in the actual charges due on the account in arrears. Therefore, estimated billings may be used in the calculation of a four-month arrearage amount for a utility arrears payment.

A budget bill is based on a utility company's assessment of a household's average usage over the course of a year. It is designed to simplify payment and billing, and is not intended to reflect the customer's usage at a specific time or billing period. A budget bill amount is distinct from the balance due on an account in arrears. Budget bill amounts must not be used in the calculation of a four-month arrearage amount for a utility arrears payment.

For households applying for utility arrears who are enrolled in budget billing, the district must calculate payment based on the actual or estimated cost of utilities for the arrears period.

The [Temporary Assistance Energy Manual](#) has been updated to clarify this information. For additional information on the calculation of utility arrears payments, see [GIS 15 TA/DC012](#) and [GIS 13 TA/DC035](#). For additional information on determining household type, see section IV of the TA Energy Manual; for calculating arrearages and issuing payments, see sections V A-J, VI A-J, and VII A-B; and for handling shared meter situations, see section XII B. For additional information on processing Temporary Assistance (TA) requests for energy emergencies, see [GIS 18 TA/DC041](#).