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Informational Letter

Section 1

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To:	Local District Commissioners
Issuing Division/Office:	Division of Temporary Assistance
Date:	June 27, 2002
Subject:	Recurring Limited Temporary Assistance Energy Payments
Suggested Distribution:	Temporary Assistance Staff Staff Development Coordinators HEAP Coordinators WMS Coordinators Finance Directors
Contact Person(s):	Central Team at 1-800-343-8859 extension 4-9344
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Filing References

Previous ADMs/INFs	Releases Cancelled	Dept. Regs.	Soc. Serv. Law & Other Legal Ref.	Manual Ref.	Misc. Ref.
00 ADM-2 97 ADM-21 86 ADM-13 99 INF-13		352 370.4 381	131-a 131-s 159	Energy/HEAP Manual, Section IV. PASB	99 LCM-20

Section 2

I. Purpose

To inform districts that a Benefits Issuance Control System (BICS) enhancement has been implemented to allow the issuance of recurring vouchers for Temporary Assistance (TA) energy payments in amounts less than the entire bill.

II. Background

The Welfare Reform Act of 1997 (WRA) replaced the Home Relief (HR) program with the Safety Net Assistance (SNA) program. SNA includes a cash and non-cash component. The Law requires non-

cash SNA (case types 12 and 17) cases to have utility payments (including heat) restricted to the appropriate vendor. Cash SNA (case type 16) cases may have these payments restricted for administrative ease [18 NYCRR 381.3(c)] or mismanagement [18 NYCRR 352.5(f)(2)]. In addition, Family Assistance (FA, case type 11) cases may have these payments restricted upon request (18 NYCRR 381.4) or for mismanagement.

BICS did not allow for the production of system generated recurring vouchers for energy payments in amounts less than the entire bill. Districts that wanted to issue energy payments in an amount less than the entire bill had to authorize the payments manually as a “single issue” each month. This is administratively burdensome. These districts wanted to issue energy payments in the amount restricted in the ABEL budget (which may be less than the billed amount) to promote self-sufficiency. Districts may want to employ this method of payment to TA populations with sufficient income to pay the difference between the entire energy bill and the amount paid by the agency.

III. Program Implications

Upstate WMS and BICS will now support the authorization and generation of recurring vouchers, subject to a limited monetary amount (i.e. an amount less than the entire bill) for the payment of energy bills in the following circumstances:

- Limited to FA (case type 11) and SNA (case types 12, 16 and 17) cases; with
- Payment Type codes: “11-Fuel”, “12-Utilities to OTG”, “28-Cooking Fuel”, and “59-Other Than Natural Gas” and;
- Using Method of Payment (MOP) code “04-Vendor as Billed, Subject to Limit” and;
- Entering a monetary amount in the “Amount” field.

Note: Payment Types “E7-Electricity” and “58-Natural Gas” are reserved for use with the Utility Tape Exchange (UTX) process in UTX participating districts. UTX participating districts must use Payment Types “11”, “12”, “28” or “59” for this new method of payment. Payment Types “11”, “12”, “28” or “59” will appear on the UTX payment tape as “Walkin-Other”; however, the payments will not be part of the UTX Billing process.

The reconciliation of energy restrictions/payments is applicable to this method of payment and must be completed in accordance with current Office policy.

TA recipients who fail to pay energy bill balances when the agency pays only part of the entire energy bill are still subject to shut-off procedures by the energy vendor and must be provided emergency assistance in accordance with current Office policy.

The Restricted Payment Request form (LDSS-4580) must be completed for FA voluntary requests and non-cash SNA “heat only” vendor payments in excess of the heating allowance. The Restricted Payment Request is not required for cases of FA mismanagement or cash SNA administrative ease.

This method of payment is available to users effective June 1, 2002.

Issued By:

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