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NEW YORK STATE
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Commissioner

Local Commissioners Memorandum

Section 1

Transmittal:	06-LCM-03	
To:	Local District Commissioners	
Issuing Division/Office:	Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance	
Date:	July 13, 2006	
Subject:	2006-07 Home Energy Assistance Program	
Contact Person(s):	HEAP Bureau Liaison 518-473-0332	
Attachments:		
Attachment Available On – Line:	Additional administrative allocations HEAP Early Processing Plan	

Section 2

I. Purpose

This is to provide you with information regarding the early mail out and processing period for the start up of the 2006-07 Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) and the requirement to participate in the process for 2006-07 HEAP.

II. Background

During the 2005-06 HEAP season, OTDA initiated a project to use the Client Notices System (CNS) to mail HEAP applications to those households that received HEAP benefits in the previous year and whose household contained an individual under age 6, age 60 or older, or disabled. This mail out began in mid-August in an attempt to provide certifiers with processing time for these applications prior to the HEAP opening date in November.

While we strongly recommended that districts take advantage of this early processing period, not all districts did so. In reviews of the 2005-06 program, we found that districts that began processing these applications in August had all or most completed by November and were able to authorize benefits for these households in a more timely manner and could concentrate resources on processing applications for households that applied after program opening, including emergency benefit cases.

In light of today's high energy prices, it is vital that HEAP benefits are authorized and paid in a timely manner.

III. Program Implications

CNS MAIL OUT

Since early mail out and processing resulted in a more timely authorization of benefits and in issuance of notices within the required thirty (30) business day timeframe, all districts must begin processing targeted applications during the early mail out period, beginning in August 2006.

Mail out of applications to those households that received a benefit in 2005-06 and whose household includes a vulnerable individual will again be conducted by OTDA using the CNS process. This process does not apply to NYC. Mail out is scheduled to begin the week of August 21, 2006.

In order to streamline application processing and to insure that eligible households receive notices and benefits within the required thirty (30) business day timeframe, local districts and alternate certifiers must begin processing these applications no later than August 28, 2006.

PHONE INTERVIEWS and NYC MAIL OUT

Districts that have a waiver to use the phone interview process for heads of households aged 60 and over or in receipt of Code A SSI must begin this process on August 21, 2006 and must complete initial phone contacts or mail out no later than September 30, 2006. OTDA will provide a listing of households eligible for this early processing.

NYC must begin mail out of applications and/or phone interviews to targeted households no later than August 21, 2006.

REQUIREMENTS AND ADDITIONAL FUNDING

Local district contracts or memorandums of understanding (MOU) with alternate certifiers that process mail in applications, including office for the aging, must be in place prior to the early mail out period and must contain provisions that the certifier will begin processing during the early mail out period.

In order to assist local districts in this process, additional administrative funds will be made available for such purposes (see attachment). In order to access these funds, local districts must complete and return the attached Early Processing Plan. If your district utilizes an alternate certifier in this process, a signed copy of the contract is also required. Once the plan has been received and approved by OTDA, these additional funds will be made available to your district.

Issued By _____

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