

2014-15 HEAP Regional Training and myWorkspace Questions and Answers

	Index:	
HEAP Policy		Page 1
myWorkspace		Page 5
General		Page 6
Alternate Certifiers		Page 7
Vendors		Page 7
Cooling		Page 8
Heating Equipment Repair and Replacement (HERR)		Page 8

HEAP POLICY

1. Q. If a TA or SNAP recipient did not receive a HEAP benefit via the HEAP Mass Authorization (Autopay), does the applicant need to complete a new application?

A. Yes. If a TA or SNAP recipient did not receive a HEAP benefit via the Autopay, they must apply for using the HEAP Application (LDSS-3421).

2. Q. If a TA or SNAP client received a HEAP benefit via the Autopay, but files a HEAP Application as well (either electronic or paper), do the subsequent applications need to be denied or can they be withdrawn?

A. Any application that is filed with the SSD or Alternate Certifier must be acted upon. Multiple applications must be denied using Denial Code F02 – “Previously applied for/Automatic payment received”. The only time an application can be withdrawn if is the applicant requests that the application be withdrawn or if the electronic application was registered in myWorkspace in error by the eligibility examiner (this must be noted in the case record).

3. Q. If a returning client received Social Security last season and then received a Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) this season, does this need to be documented?

A. No. Only earned income must be documented by returning applicants. Social Security is considered unearned income. The eligibility examiners must determine if any changes in unearned income will effect eligibility and in these situations, the applicant must provide documentation of new income.

4. Q. If a client uses an authorized representative or Power of Attorney, is that person authorized to sign the application in applicant’s place?

An authorized representative may sign the HEAP Application (LDSS-3421) for an applicant who is physically incapable of signing or who habitually signs with an “X”. In all other instances, the applicant must sign the application Notations regarding the circumstances must be retained in the case file.

An individual with Power of Attorney may sign the HEAP Application on behalf of an applicant – this includes applications for HERR benefits. The power of attorney designation must be documented in the case record.

5. Q. Does the applicant need to be both customer and tenant of record to receive Regular benefit?

A. No.

6. Q. Are applicants required to provide full documents the second year they apply for HEAP?

A. No, since these applicants are considered to be “returning applicants,” they would only need to submit documentation of earned income, unless there have

been changes in other eligibility criteria since the previous year's application. Applicants would be required to provide documentation to verify these changes.

- 7. Q. Are applicants with no income, but who have responsibility for their heating costs, eligible for a HEAP benefit?**
 - A. Yes. The eligibility examiner must explore basic maintenance when the applicant has zero income or their shelter expenses exceed their income. In these instances the eligibility examiner must complete the Low Income Worksheet (LDSS-3829) based on information supplied by the applicant. They must also obtain any available documentation to support these statements.

- 8. Q. If an applicant has never made payments to their utility company, are they considered responsible for the bill?**
 - A. Yes. If the applicant has the bill in their name, then they are considered to be responsible for the bill, regardless if any payment has ever been made.

- 9. Q. After applying for and being found eligible for a Regular benefit, what is the minimum amount of time an applicant must wait to apply for an Emergency benefit?**
 - A. There is no minimum amount of time an applicant must wait to apply for an Emergency benefit. The applicant must meet all of the eligibility factors for an Emergency benefit, including having an emergency situation as defined by HEAP.

- 10. Q. Must the deed for life estate/life use include specific wording in order for an applicant to be eligible for a HERR benefit?**
 - A. Yes. The life estate contract will state which party is responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the property. The applicant must be the party responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the property.

- 11. Q. Is an applicant for a Regular or Emergency benefit eligible if their primary heat source is an electric space heater?**
 - A. No. Portable space heaters are not considered primary heating equipment and therefore these applicants would be ineligible for a benefit. Prior to the denying the application, eligibility examiners should conduct a thorough review to determine why the applicant is currently using electric space heaters.

- 12. Q. If the applicant is self-employed under an S-corporation and has bank accounts in the business' name, do we still count the corporation's bank accounts as a resource?**
 - A. No.

13. Q. If a SNAP recipient is clocking down for being over income, are they considered categorically income eligible for HEAP?

A. No. These applicants are not considered categorically income eligible and must complete a HEAP Application (LDSS-3421) with full documentation. In addition, these applicants are not included in the Autopay.

14. Q. Do TA and SNAP recipients who move and change from a non-heater to a heater within the same HEAP season have to fill out a HEAP Application to receive a supplement?

A. Yes, they must fill out a HEAP Application (LDSS-3421). The income section is not required, but all other sections must be completed and the application must be signed.

15. Q. In a household where the applicants are unmarried or unrelated and only one person has the utility bill or account in their name, who should apply for an Emergency benefit?

A. The customer of record must apply for an Emergency benefit.

16. Q. Are parents who live with their adult children considered household members?

A. Yes. Any individual residing in a household and related by blood, legal union, or adoption to any other household member is presumed to be a household member.

An applicant may refute the presumption that certain individuals age 21 or older residing in the household, even those related by blood, legal union, or adoption, are household members. A signed statement is required by the applicant to support the exclusion of a household member. This statement must include the name of the person(s) not included in the HEAP household and whether or not the individual contributes to the household. The certifier must review the living situation in these cases. If the individual is sharing living expenses, has household bills in his/her name or is the owner or co-owner of the dwelling, that individual must be a household member.

17. Q. Is an applicant eligible for a Regular benefit if their utility bill or vendor account is not in their name?

A. The applicant may still be eligible if they can document that they are paying the vendor directly for actual charges incurred.

18. Q. What is the "From Date" if an early outreach application is received by the certifier after 10/1/14 but before program opening?

A. If the application is received by the certifier after 10/1/14, the "From Date" is the date the application was received. If the application is received by the certifier prior to 10/1/14, the "From Date" must be 10/1/14. For all applications, regardless of when they were received, the "To Date" must always be 9/30/15.

19. Q. If the Regular benefit component closes on December 31, 2014, will applicants for Emergency benefits who have not received a Regular benefit be eligible after that date?

A. Yes. Applicants who meet all the eligibility criteria for the Emergency benefit component will still be eligible even if they did not receive a Regular benefit before December 31, 2014. Receipt of a Regular benefit is not an eligibility criterion for an Emergency benefit. Since the applicant did not receive a Regular benefit, they will not be eligible for income deeming. The applicant must complete a HEAP Application (LDSS-3421) with full documentation, and have an interview (either over the phone or in person).

20. Q. Is a second signature required if the HEAP supervisor processes the HEAP application and makes determination?

A. Yes, regardless of who processes the HEAP application, all applications require 100% review unless the district has an approved Case Supervisory Review (CSR) plan in place.

21. Q. What time frame does a vendor have to deliver a Regular benefit in an emergency situation?

A. Vendors agree that when accepting HEAP payments for an applicant in an emergency situation, that upon receipt of funds or guarantee from the SSD, they will make arrangements with their customer for a delivery.

22. Q. How long must the SSD retain denied HERR applications?

A. The SSD must retain all HERR applications and documentation for a period of ten years.

23. Q. Can SSDs use their CSR plans for TA and/or SNAP to process HEAP applications for TA and SNAP recipients?

A. No. Regardless of who processes the HEAP Application all applications require 100% review unless the district has an approved, HEAP specific CSR plan in place and on file with OTDA.

24. Q. Do comments in the Imaging Enterprise Documentation Repository (I/EDR) take the place comment in the "Agency Use" section of the HEAP Application (LDSS-3421)?

A. No. Eligibility examiners must make comments in the "Agency Use" section of the HEAP Application (LDSS-3421). The "Agency Use" section of the HEAP Application is separate from comments in I/EDR. If the application was processed via myWorkspace, the "Agency Use" section does not need to be completed.

MYWORKSPACE

- 1. Q. Is there myWorkspace training available?**
 - A. Yes, there is training available through trainingspace.org.
- 2. Q. When adding or changing consumer account information or vendor ID in myWorkspace, does this information carry over to WMS?**
 - A. This information does carry over from myWorkspace to WMS, as long as it properly batches overnight. Changes in myWorkspace or WMS do not happen in real time.
- 3. Q. Is it required that electronic applications are processed via myWorkspace?**
 - A. It is strongly recommended that eligibility examiners process electronic applications via myWorkspace. It is district option to process paper applications via myWorkspace.
- 4. Q. Can HEAP benefits be authorized off the active SNAP case via myWorkspace?**
 - A. Yes. It is strongly recommended that SSDs process electronic applications via myWorkspace. SSDs may process paper applications in either myWorkspace or WMS.
- 5. Q. Must SSDs print the summary page from myWorkspace in order to sign it?**
 - A. No. The summary page does not need to be printed.
- 6. Q. How can SSDs request specialized reports for myWorkspace statistics?**
 - A. At this time the report is not available.
- 7. Q. Is the electronic myBenefits application automatically uploaded into I/EDR?**
 - A. No. If the SSD uses I/ERD, only the attached documents that are submitted with the application via myBenefits are uploaded into I/EDR. Applications submitted via myBenefits and processed through myWorkspace will be automatically retained by the system and do not need to be scanned into I/EDR. Applications submitted via myBenefits but processed in WMS must be printed and scanned into I/EDR.
- 8. Q. If an applicant has applied for HEAP and SNAP via myBenefits with a combination application is the eligibility examiner required to separate the applications prior to denying either benefit?**
 - A. Yes, combination applications must be “split” or “separated” in order to process a denial for either program.

GENERAL

- 1. Q. What should a certifier do if they receive a paper application from someone outside their county?**
 - A. If a certifier receives an application from someone outside their county, the application should be forwarded to the correct SSD.

- 2. Q. Are SSDs required to have an after-hours policy in place?**
 - A. Yes. Each SSD must establish its own policies regarding operating hours.

- 3. Q. Why are contract workers not allowed to register cases?**
 - A. The function is only permitted for employees of the SSD.

- 4. Q. Will fire blocks be allowed for HEAP as a wood substitute?**
 - A. Yes, fire blocks are considered a wood product.

- 5. Q. How do we select a voucher for early process?**
 - A. A full description of the Early Selection process is available in the Indirect Payment Processing Sub-System (IPPS) Manual, Appendix H – HEAP OSC Payment Process. SSDs can access the IPPS Manual via CentraPort.

- 6. Q. If an SSD's CSR plan has already been approved by OTDA, are they required to submit a new one each year?**
 - A. No, once a CSR plan has been approved, the SSD does not need to resubmit it unless changes have been made to the plan since it was approved.

- 7. Q. Should HEAP vouchers be adjusted to be zero in order to void the payment line?**
 - A. HEAP vouchers should not be adjusted to zero. Vouchers must be voided first and the payment line must be voided in WMS.

- 8. Q. Prior to program opening how are denials reported in Pending Application Report?**
 - A. The only applications that need to be counted in the Pending Application Report are those that are pending documentation, applications that have had no action taken on them or applications that have not been processed. Denied applications which have been authorized in WMS/myWorkspace are still considered processed prior to program opening.

9. Q. Can certifiers use another form, other than the Documentation Requirement form (LDSS-2642) when pending an application for documentation?

A. No. The Documentation Requirements from (LDSS-2642) is mandated.

10. Q. Will HEAP Applications be drop shipped?

A. No forms will be drop shipped this year.

ALTERNATE CERTIFIERS

1. Q. Can an Alternate Certifier direct data enter HEAP Applications?

A. No.

2. Q. Is there any training available to Alternate Certifiers specific to their role in myWorkspace?

A. No, but Alternate Certifiers have access to the same myWorkspace training as SSD staff.

3. Q. If an alternate certifier does not have access to Centraport, is there any way they may access online trainings?

A. The Alternate Certifier must coordinate access with their SSD.

VENDORS

1. Q. Will there be vendor meetings held this year?

A. No, there will be no onsite vendor meetings this year, but OTDA will conduct conference calls with vendors the first week of November.

2. Q. If a payment was made in error to a vendor and the requested refund has not been returned, can the payment be made to the correct vendor?

A. The refund must be received by the SSD in order to issue a new benefit. The only exception to this is, if the payment is for a Regular benefit, the Emergency benefit component is open, and the application meets ALL the Emergency benefit eligibility criteria. In that situation the SSD may issue an Emergency benefit.

3. Q. Can the Autopay remittance list be sent to vendors once the program opens?

A. OTDA does not recommend that SSDs send any reports to vendors. A vendor specific remittance report will be generated once the payment file goes to the New York Office of the State Comptroller (OSC) in December.

COOLING

1. **Q. Is an applicant who already has a working air conditioner eligible for a Cooling Assistance benefit?**
 - A. If the applicant has an air conditioner anywhere in their home, they meet all other eligibility criteria, AND their current air conditioner is 5 years or older, the applicant is eligible. If the air condition is less than 5 years old the applicant is not eligible, regardless of where the air conditioner is presently installed.
2. **Q. If a medical professional writes that an applicant has a medical condition and could benefit from an air conditioner, should this be questioned?**
 - A. SSD should accept the all documentation from medical professionals as valid.
3. **Q. Do SSDs need to create a CAC budget for open TA or SNAP cases?**
 - A. SSDs must create a scratchpad budget for all CAC benefits and the budget should be retained in the case record.
4. **Q. How should SSDs report Cooling Assistance denials?**
 - A. Since all denials for the Cooling Assistance component are issued manually and not through the Client Notice System (CNS), they must be reported annually on the Denied Applicant Report.

HERR

1. **Q. Is the HERR Assessment Form (LDSS-5010) a mandated form?**
 - A. Yes.
2. **Q. Are weatherization referrals required for clients who received HERR benefit?**
 - A. SSDs should make a referral to the New York State Home and Community Renewal (HCR) Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP).
3. **Q. Must SSDs authorize a Regular benefit when authorizing a HERR benefit?**
 - A. If the applicant is eligible for a HERR benefit, the Regular benefit component is open, and the application has not yet received a Regular benefit, the SSD must authorize a benefit for both components.
4. **Q. Can repairs be made to heating equipment that was replaced using the HERR component?**
 - A. Yes, repairs may be made to heating equipment that was replaced using the HERR component, but the manufacturer's warranties and workmanship should be explored first.

- 5. Q. Is a household categorically income eligible for a HERR benefit if the member in receipt of on-going TA or SNAP is not the homeowner?**
- A. No. The only instance where the household would be categorically income eligible for a HERR benefit if the homeowner is residing in the dwelling for which assistance is being requested and in receipt of on-going TA or SNAP.
- 6. Q. Is documentation required to show a client's homeowner's insurance will not cover heating equipment repair and/or replacement?**
- A. No, the client's statement is acceptable, but if the heating system was made inoperable due to flood, fire, or natural disaster, the application must be denied.
- 7. Q. Is chimney repair covered by HERR?**
- A. Yes, as long as the damage was not caused by fire, flood, or natural disaster.