



Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance

ANDREW M. CUOMO
Governor

SAMUEL D. ROBERTS
Commissioner

MICHAEL PERRIN
Executive Deputy Commissioner

Local Commissioners Memorandum

Section 1

Transmittal:	16-LCM-16
To:	Local District Commissioners
Issuing Division/Office:	Center for Employment and Economic Supports
Date:	October 17, 2016
Subject:	2016-17 Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)
Contact Person(s):	HEAP Bureau at (518) 473-0332
Attachments:	Attachment 1 – 2016-17 HEAP Desk Gide – LDSS 5005 Attachment 2 – 2016-17 HEAP Administrative Forms Guide Attachment 3 – 2016-17 HEAP Regional Training (Questions and Answers) Attachment 4 – 2017 -17 HEAP Systems Quick Reference Tool
Attachment Available Online:	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section 2

I. Purpose

This is to provide local Social Services Districts (SSD) with information for the 2016-17 Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP).

II. Background

HEAP is a federally funded energy program intended to provide assistance to low income households in meeting their immediate home energy needs. To receive federal funding, states must submit a State Plan to the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) each year. New York State’s 2016-17 HEAP State Plan has been accepted by HHS and may be found on the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance’s (OTDA) website at <http://otda.ny.gov/programs/heap/stateplan.asp>.

III. Program Implications

A. Program Components – Opening Dates

Applications for the Heating Equipment Repair and Replacement (HERR) component must be accepted beginning November 7, 2016. This component will operate until March 15, 2017 or until funding allocated to this component is exhausted; whichever comes first. SSDs will be notified of the component’s closing date via General Information System message (GIS).

Applications for Regular benefits must be accepted beginning November 14, 2016. Client Notices for Regular benefits, payments or guarantees of benefits to vendors, including ten-day account hold requests to utility companies based on an anticipated receipt of a HEAP benefit, must not be issued before November 14, 2016. The anticipated closing date for the Regular component is March 15, 2017. SSDs will be notified of the component's closing date via GIS.

Applications for Emergency benefits must be accepted beginning January 3, 2017. Client Notices for Emergency benefits, payments or guarantees of benefits, including ten-day hold requests from utility companies based on an anticipated Emergency HEAP payment, must not be issued before January 3, 2017. The anticipated closing date for the Emergency component is March 15, 2017. SSDs will be notified of the component's closing date via GIS.

Applications for Cooling Assistance must be accepted beginning May 1, 2017. Client Notices for Cooling Assistance benefits, payments or guarantees of benefits must not be issued before May 1, 2017. SSDs will be provided detailed program information under a separate LCM. The Cooling component will operate until August 31, 2017 or until funding allocated to this component is exhausted; whichever comes first. SSDs will be notified of the component's closing date via General Information System message (GIS).

Funding permitting, applications for the 2017 Heating Equipment Clean and Tune component must be accepted beginning August 1, 2017. SSDs will be provided detailed program information under a separate LCM. Client Notices for Clean and Tune Assistance benefits, payments or guarantees of benefits, must not be issued before August 1, 2017. The Clean and Tune benefit will operate until November 3, 2017 or until funding allocated to this component is exhausted; whichever comes first. SSDs will be notified of the component's closing date via General Information System message (GIS).

The dates for these program components may be adjusted based on the amount and timing of receipt of federal funding. SSDs will be notified if program dates are changed. Applications for all components must be accepted through the specified closing date for each component.

B. Processing Time Frames

There are no changes to the HEAP application processing timeframes. Applicants must be notified in writing of the eligibility decision, either an approval or denial, within 30 business days from the application date. Any pending timeframes, up to ten business days, will not be counted towards the 30 business day requirement.

Payments for cases included as part of the HEAP Mass Authorization process (Autopay) must be authorized in WMS/myWorkspace no later than December 31, 2016.

C. Income Guidelines

Maximum income guidelines have been set at 60% of State Median Income (SMI) for household sizes 1-10 and at 150% of the federal poverty guidelines for household sizes 11 and above. See Attachment 1, 2016-2017 Home Energy Assistance Program Desk Guide (LDSS-5005 REV. 7/16) for income guideline amounts.

D. Application Process

Applicants may submit paper applications by mail, fax or in person at a SSD or certifying agency. A printable HEAP Application (LDSS-3421) will be available on the OTDA website effective November 14, 2016.

All applicants outside of New York City have the option of submitting an application for Regular benefits online via myBenefits. In New York City you may download a HEAP application through Access NYC. All new, returning or Early Outreach HEAP applicants should be encouraged to apply for HEAP via myBenefits. After creating a secure account, applicants may complete, submit, and track their HEAP application online. Applicants may also use myBenefits to submit required documentation to SSDs who use OTDA's Imaging Enterprise Documentation Repository (I/EDR). When HEAP is open, households may apply via myBenefits for both HEAP and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) using a single application.

Applicants requesting a HERR benefit or an Emergency benefit cannot apply for these benefits via myBenefits. Applicants for the HERR benefit component must apply in person (or via an authorized representative) at the SSD or certifying agency. Applicants for the Emergency benefit component may apply in person or via telephone.

If an applicant submits multiple applications for a Regular or Emergency benefit, the application submitted to the SSD first, regardless of method (electronic or paper), takes precedence. Subsequent applications must be acted on and appropriate notice must be issued timely.

E. Autopay Process for Temporary Assistance¹ (TA) and SNAP Recipients

The Autopay process is utilized as a tool to maximize outreach and limit administrative costs while maximizing HEAP accessibility and targeting the highest benefits to the lowest income households.

TA and SNAP recipients who are in receipt of ongoing benefits are considered to be categorically income eligible for Regular HEAP benefits, but these recipients must also meet all other eligibility criteria in order to be eligible for a Regular benefit. These recipients consent to have their eligibility determined for HEAP through the Autopay process when they complete and submit the "Statewide Common Application" - (LDSS-2921), "Recertification Application for TA or SNAP" - (LDSS-3174), "Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Application/Recertification" - (LDSS-4826), or who apply for SNAP or who recertify for SNAP or TA using myBenefits. The consent language is found in the consent section of each application.

TA and SNAP recipients who are categorically income eligible, meet all other eligibility criteria, and are in receipt of ongoing benefits at the time of the Autopay pull down are not required to complete a separate HEAP Application (LDSS-3421).

OTDA uses the TA and SNAP eligibility information found in the Welfare Management System (WMS) at the time of the Autopay pull down to determine the household's income eligibility for HEAP, as well as other eligibility criteria, including living arrangement and vendor relationship. If all HEAP eligibility factors can be collected from WMS, a Regular

¹ Whenever 'Temporary Assistance' or 'TA' is used in this document, it means 'Family Assistance' and 'Safety Net Assistance.' Statutorily, these programs are referred to as 'Public Assistance.'

benefit eligibility determination is made and a payment amount is electronically issued, as appropriate, to either the vendor or household. If required HEAP eligibility factors beyond income eligibility cannot be retrieved from WMS, the case appears on an exception report for required SSD review and eligibility determination.

Individuals who become ongoing recipients of TA or SNAP after the Autopay pull-down will not be included in the Autopay process. These individuals must apply for HEAP by submitting a HEAP Application (LDSS-3421) on or after November 14, 2016.

Any individual who receives a Regular benefit via the Autopay must not be issued a duplicate Regular benefit. SSDs must complete WMS inquiry on all applications, for every component, to ensure a duplicate benefit is not issued.

Households may receive a HEAP supplemental Regular benefit if they received a heat-included benefit, but subsequently move within the program year and are then responsible for the heating bill. Additional information on this process has been provided to SSDs in the August 2, 2016 Dear WMS and BICS Coordinator Letter, "HEAP Systems Letter Outlining WMS Systems Implications for the 2016-17 HEAP Program Year."

F. Definition of Emergency Types

A HEAP eligible household is considered to be in a life threatening emergency when the household is without heat. A household without heat has no heating fuel or utility service has been disconnected. Any HEAP eligible household's life threatening emergency must be resolved within 18 hours from the time the household applies for an Emergency benefit.

A HEAP eligible household is considered to be in a crisis emergency when the loss of heat is imminent. A household with imminent loss of heat has less than $\frac{1}{4}$ tank of oil, kerosene, or propane, less than a ten-day supply of other deliverable fuels, or utility service is scheduled for disconnection. Any HEAP eligible household's crisis emergency must be resolved within 48 hours from the time the household applies for an Emergency benefit.

For applicants eligible for income deeming, the application date is the date the Emergency Benefit Budget Worksheet (LDSS-3594B) was completed by the SSD eligibility examiner with assistance from the applicant, either over the telephone or in person. For applicants ineligible for income deeming, or who have not received a Regular benefit in the current HEAP season, the application date is the date the signed and dated HEAP Application (LDSS-3421) is submitted to the SSD. This must accompany a completed Emergency Benefit Budget Worksheet (LDSS-3594B).

G. Regular and Emergency Benefit Amounts

For the 2016-17 season, the benefit amounts for households who heat with oil, kerosene, or propane or a utility will remain the same. The benefit amount for households who heat with wood, wood products or coal has increased from \$500 to \$525. Additionally, the add-on benefit **for Tier I households only**, has increased from \$25 to \$26. See Attachment 1, 2016-2017 HEAP Desk Guide, (LDSS-5005) for benefit amounts.

H. Forms

Several forms used to administer HEAP have been revised. Attachment 2, Home Energy Assistance Program Administrative Forms Guide, is a table that identifies revised forms, and whether the form is mandatory or optional. Any versions of these forms that do not reflect the most current revision dates outlined on the table in Attachment 2 must be destroyed.

Only forms with revision dates matching those on Attachment 2 may be used for the 2016-

17 program year. New forms with a revision date of 2016 may be ordered on or after September 6, 2016. SSDs must inform alternate certifiers that these forms have been revised.

The HEAP Application (LDSS-3421) is now available in alternative formats. Alternative format applications in audio format, data format, and large print will be available for download on the OTDA website. Audio CDs, Data CDs and Braille applications may be ordered through BMS Document Services. Please refer to 16-ADM-08 "Alternative Format and Disability Accommodation Indicator Use" for further information.

An updated HEAP Systems Quick Reference Tool, Attachment 4, is included with this LCM and should replace the version that was provided in the HEAP Regional Training meeting 2016 Participant Training Manual.

No forms will be drop shipped. All forms should be ordered by the SSDs as needed. All forms were made available on September 6, 2016 to order and for electronic downloading from e-forms, through Centraport or warehouse order.

NOTE: Please be sure not to place orders for hardcopies prior to the annual availability date, orders received before this date will be filled with stock from the previous HEAP season.

How to order forms:

1. All forms with LDSS or PUB numbers are produced by OTDA and can be ordered. When ordering or reordering any HEAP form, be sure to order sufficient quantities for the entire HEAP season. SSDs must also take into consideration the form supply needs of Alternate Certifiers when placing orders. Please check the current supply at the SSD prior to placing an order.
2. HEAP forms are available on the OTDA Intranet website at http://otda.state.nyenet/ldss_eforms/default.htm and may be available for downloading by local districts for reproduction locally, depending on print specifications.

Requests for printed copies of HEAP forms should be submitted to the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) using either the OTDA 876EL (DOC) or OTDA 876 EL (PDF) available at the link above and either mail, fax or e-mail it to:

Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance
BMS Document Services and Operational Support
PO Box 1990
Albany, NY 12201

E-mail: forms.orders@otda.ny.gov
Social Services Districts (SSD) online forms ordering system: <http://formorders/>
Fax: (518) 402-0084

Questions concerning ordering forms should be directed to BMS Document Services at (518) 474-9522.

How to request a Local Equivalent Form:

1. To make changes to a mandated LDSS form, the HEAP Coordinator **MUST** submit to the Bureau of Management Services (BMS) a written request on county letterhead with a

modified version of the form attached, prior to program opening. The request must include the reason for the change and a contact person. The request must receive written approval from the OTDA BMS prior to using the local equivalent form.

2. Local equivalents are forms developed by SSDs which are designed to be used in place of State-mandated forms. Local equivalent forms must contain all of the information required on the State-mandated forms, but may also contain additional information required for the SSD's own purposes. Local equivalents may differ in format as well as media from the mandated forms. SSDs develop local equivalent forms for many reasons. These include producing forms to accommodate sight-impaired workers; producing different sized forms which better fit in local case folders; producing forms which have the agency address preprinted; and producing electronic forms to be used in place of hard copy forms. The goal of the local equivalent form approval process is to guarantee that SSDs are using forms which are legally, programmatically and systemically accurate and up-to-date.
3. All prior year approved waiver requests remain valid unless OTDA revises a form that a SSD has an approved waiver or the SSD would like to make additional revisions to a form with an approved waiver.
4. SSDs interested in this procedure should consult 16-ADM-03 for guidance.

I. Case Supervisory Review Process

In accordance with 12-LCM-12, SSDs are required to complete a supervisory review and approval on 100% of all HEAP applications, unless the SSD has a Case Supervisory Review (CSR) plan approved by OTDA. The CSR process permits SSD supervisors to review and approve a targeted or random sampling of HEAP cases.

Each SSD which chooses to review their cases with an approved CSR plan may implement a plan specific to their district to ensure that cases are processed properly and that corrective action measures are instituted. In order to maintain accuracy standards, HEAP cases chosen for review must receive a thorough case review by a supervisor. The case review must be based upon all current information pertaining to eligibility and benefit levels, and the supervisor's approval must be indicated by including the supervisor's dated signature in the case record.

SSDs which elect to perform a targeted or random sample review should emphasize increased staff training, when appropriate, to address those areas which are identified through the supervisory review approval process as needing worker improvement.

All applications from known relatives of any SSD employee require two levels of review. Written SSD guidelines that provide for stricter protocol take precedence.

CSR plans must be submitted to and approved by OTDA. The plan must include the following:

1. A description of which cases will be subject to supervisory review approval. SSDs must identify areas or types for cases that should be targeted for 100% review. For example:
 - a. Error prone areas (i.e. earned income cases);
 - b. New applications, new workers' cases; or
 - c. Emergency applications cases from an alternate certifier.

2. The minimum number of HEAP cases each supervisor will be required to review per worker, per week/month;
3. A description of how case processing errors will be addressed to assure accuracy; and
4. A description of how the plan will address alternate certifiers. Alternate certifiers must not review or approve HEAP cases.

Plan Submission

Plans must be submitted to:

HEAP Bureau
Center for Employment and Economic Supports
Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance
40 North Pearl Street, 11-B
Albany, NY 12243

Upon the submission of a CSR plan, OTDA will review each SSD's plan and approve the plan in whole or in part within 60 days of the date of submission by the SSD. The time frame may be extended with the agreement of both parties. If any or all components of the plan are not approved, OTDA will specify the reason(s) for the disapproval and will specify the steps, if any; the SSD must take to rectify the plan. Once a plan is approved by OTDA, a SSD does not need to submit another plan unless the SSD makes revisions to the originally approved plan. SSDs which currently have a CSR plan approved by OTDA for HEAP do not need to re-submit a plan unless revisions are made to the originally approved plan.

CSR and HERR Benefits

All applications for HERR benefits require two levels of review and a CSR process cannot be used for this component.

It is recommended that the SSD designated HEAP Coordinator perform review and sign-off on all heating equipment repair and replacement benefit applications, unless the HEAP Coordinator has determined eligibility. In that case a supervisor one level up must sign off.

J. Required Signatures on Authorization

SSDs are required to provide 100% supervisory review and approval of the authorization document for HEAP unless the SSD has a Case Supervisory Review (CSR) plan approved by OTDA. Generally, SSDs use the Non-Services Authorization Document (LDSS-3209) to authorize assistance; however, a SSD may request a waiver to use a different process to authorize assistance (05-LCM-09). An alternative method of authorization must be approved by OTDA. The LDSS-3209 is signed by the worker who prepared the authorization and the supervisor who approved it. Once both signatures are obtained, the LDSS-3209 becomes the official authorization. The exception for this procedure would be for SSDs operating under an approved waiver from OTDA Budget, Finance and Data Management.

K. Pending Report Information

SSDs are required to complete and submit HEAP Pending Reports for the 2016-17 program year to the HEAP Bureau via electronic reporting effective Friday, September 9, 2016. You must continue to report the number of pending cases for each program component year-

round, on a weekly basis. If you have no pending cases for a specific component, you must enter 0 in that field.

If a SSD has any changes in their pending report designee, please provide the HEAP Bureau with the following information for the person or persons that you would like to have access to eReports: (a) name, (b) user ID, (c) email address, (d) phone number, and (e) fax number. This information can be e-mailed to Emily Maher Cmaylo at Emily.MaherCmaylo@otda.ny.gov or Emily Urban at Emily.Urban@otda.ny.gov. If you have questions, please call your HEAP Bureau liaison at (518) 473-0332.

L. HEAP Participating Vendor List

The HEAP database for commodity vendors is available through Centraport. Each SSD has a unique password for the participating list. These will remain unchanged, unless a SSD requests a new password. SSDs must contact their OTDA HEAP Bureau liaison if a new password is required.

SSDs must check the vendor list when processing applications to ensure that only participating vendors in their county are issued benefits.

M. Notice Production

Use of the Client Notice System (CNS) is required. Manual notices must only be used when the CNS does not support the action taken. Proper use of CNS ensures accuracy and further supports consistency of program rules and policy across the state.

Approval notices will be produced via CNS when the payment file is sent to Office of the State Comptroller (OSC) or when the SSD sets the HEAP BICS locks to “off” to produce EBT payments and locally issued two party checks.

SSDs may process denial transactions beginning November 14, 2016.

N. Subscription to Policy Directives

SSD staff, as appropriate, can subscribe to receive Administrative Directives (ADM), Information letters (INF), Local Commissioner Letters (LCM), and General Information Systems (GIS) messages via email by going to: <http://otda.state.nyenet/dta/subscription.htm>. See the Dear WMS-CNS Coordinators letter dated June 6, 2016 for more information.

O. Systems

It is strongly suggested that SSDs outside of New York City use myWorkspace as the primary computer application to complete eligibility processing for Regular applications submitted via myBenefits.

System access for SSD employees, including granting entitlements to myWorkspace and the resetting of passwords, is performed at the local level by a SSD LAN Administrator. The LAN Administrator will be responsible for granting entitlements and setting up Lightweight Directory Access Protocol (LDAP) accounts to all users including alternate certifiers. Instructions for LAN Administrators can be found in GIS 15/TAmyB009 “Providing Remote Access to myWorkspace for Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) Alternate Certifiers (AC).”

1. Alternate Certifiers' Access to myWorkspace

The Alternate Certifiers' role and responsibilities have not changed from previous years. **Alternate Certifiers cannot determine final HEAP eligibility, complete final HEAP authorizations in myWorkspace or resolve energy emergencies by guaranteeing payment to energy vendors.** Applicants may apply for a Regular benefit using myBenefits and SSDs may use myWorkspace to process Regular applications. The current and future 'Remote Access End User Guide' can be accessed from the myWorkspace 'Resources' link on CentraPort (HEAP Information): https://otda.state.ny.net/dta/myWorkspace/myWS_switchboard.html.

The SSD identifies the Alternate Certifier role that works best for their operations and is responsible to communicate the roles and responsibilities to the Alternate Certifier. SSDs can grant one of two levels of entitlements in myWorkspace; either an Alternate Certifier worker or an Alternate Certifier supervisor. A listing of the Alternate Certifier worker and supervisor functionality in myWorkspace is found in the GIS 14 TA/myB013.

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

2. MyWorkspace Problem Solving

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

The SSD Staff must use the "**Contact Us**" button in myWorkspace (located on the myWorkspace Homepage – External links) to report problems with myWorkspace. When reporting problems using the "**Contact Us**" functionality, SSD should include as much information as possible, including at a minimum the registry/case number, and any error number and message you receive.

SSD staff may access information regarding myWorkspace from the myWorkspace 'Resources' link on CentraPort: https://otda.state.ny.net/dta/myWorkspace/myWS_switchboard.html

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

3. New CNS case reason codes HERR Denial Codes- M08 and W74

The HERR (furnace repair/replacement) denial reasons will be separated from the current CNS reason codes M04 and W73. **M08 - HEAP HERR Denial**, and **W74 – Resources Available to Meet HERR** will allow for more accurate tracking related to new Federal reporting guidelines. The M04 and W73 will remain active and continue to provide CNS notice support for HEAP Emergency Denials.

P. OSC Vouchers

HEAP OSC Voucher Production

Initial production of the 2016-17 HEAP vouchers for vendor direct payments will remain in issued status until they are transferred to NYS Office of State Comptroller (OSC) for payment once federal funding is in place.

The initial 2016-17 vouchers for HEAP OSC vendor payments authorized outside of the Autopay will be available to SSDs on Monday, October 10, 2016 and continue each Monday thereafter.

The TA and SNAP Autopay vouchers will be available to SSDs on Monday, October 17, 2016.

Voucher Review Period

During the review period there are only two actions that districts may perform on a HEAP OSC voucher that is in OSC-Issued status: correction of the customer account number and voiding the voucher.

Please note that each payment line has a unique voucher number and districts are able to void HEAP OSC vouchers using Accounts Menu, Selection 4 – Void a Voucher.

Districts must not adjust payment lines to zero on OSC vouchers.

Issued By

Name: Phyllis Morris

Title: Deputy Commissioner

Division/Office: Center for Employment and Economic Supports