



Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance

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Local Commissioners Memorandum

Section 1

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| Transmittal: | 17-LCM-03 |
| To: | Social Services District Commissioners |
| Issuing Division/Office: | Integrated Family Assistance Programs Employment and Income Support Programs |
| Date: | May 16, 2017 |
| Subject: | 2016 - 2017 Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) Cooling Assistance Component (CAC) |
| Contact Person(s): | HEAP Bureau at: (518) 473-0332 |
| Attachments: | Attachment 1: LDSS-4992 HEAP Cooling Assistance Application Attachment 2: LDSS-2642 Documentation Requirements Attachment 3: Cooling Assistance Scratchpad ABEL Budget Attachment 4: LDSS-4993 HEAP Cooling Assistance Notice of Eligibility Decision Attachment 5: LDSS-5044 Cooling Assistance Services Invoice Attachment 6: LDSS-5043 HEAP Vendor Refund Form Attachment 7: 2016-2017 Additional Local District Administrative Allocations |
| Attachment Available Online: | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

Section 2

I. Purpose

This memorandum provides social services districts (districts) with instructions on administering the 2016 – 2017 Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) Cooling Assistance Component (CAC), including information on program dates, funding, eligibility requirements, processing and reporting timeframes.

II. Background

HEAP is a federally funded energy program intended to provide assistance to low-income households to meet their immediate home energy needs. The HEAP program is comprised of several different components including the HEAP CAC which provides for the purchase and installation of air conditioners and fans. The HEAP CAC is available for HEAP eligible households with at least one individual with a documented medical condition that is exacerbated by extreme heat. No additional HEAP cash benefits are available.

III. Program Implications

Districts must implement the HEAP CAC as outlined below and in accordance with the 2016 – 2017 New York State HEAP State Plan which may be accessed at the following link (<https://otda.ny.gov/programs/heap/stateplan.asp>). Program requirements and eligibility criteria for the HEAP CAC must be met by applicant households before the household is eligible for the HEAP CAC benefits and services.

A. Program Dates

Districts must accept applications for the HEAP CAC beginning on Monday, May 1, 2017 through Thursday, August 31, 2017, or until funds are exhausted, whichever comes first. If the component closes before August 31, 2017, districts will be notified via the General Information System (GIS).

B. Application Requirements

- If the household received a regular HEAP benefit greater than \$21 during the current program year or is currently in receipt of Temporary Assistance (TA) or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, the applicant may apply by completing, signing, dating and submitting to the districts the HEAP Cooling Assistance Application ([LDSS-4992, Attachment 1](#)). Applicant households for which the preceding does not apply must complete both the HEAP Application ([LDSS-3421](#)) **and** the Cooling Assistance Application (LDSS-4992). Districts must mark the HEAP Application as “Cooling” upon receipt.
- An authorized representative may apply on behalf of the applicant. Page 4 of the LDSS-3421, HEAP Application may be used to assign an authorized representative. A dated and signed statement from the applicant authorizing the individual to apply on their behalf is required if the authorized representative section of the HEAP application is not filled out.
- Applicants for CAC who received a regular HEAP benefit greater than \$21 during the 2016 – 2017 HEAP season are not required to have an interview.
- Applicants for CAC who **did not** receive a regular HEAP benefit during the 2016 – 2017 HEAP season must have an eligibility interview conducted either in person or by telephone.
- Applicants requesting assistance for Cooling Assistance cannot apply on-line through myBenefits.
- Any applicant who is denied may reapply for the HEAP CAC as long as the component is open.
- Each application must be date-stamped upon receipt.

C. Eligibility Requirements

Applicants must meet all HEAP eligibility criteria in order to be eligible for the HEAP CAC. See the HEAP Manual, Chapter 7 – Basic Eligibility for specific eligibility criteria.

In addition to basic eligibility, all applicants for HEAP CAC must meet the following criteria:

- The applicant or a household member must have a documented medical condition that is exacerbated by extreme heat. The medical documentation must be issued in writing and signed by a physician, physician's assistant, or a nurse practitioner and clearly state the medical condition. The document must be dated within the previous 12 months from the month of application. Documentation older than 12 months may be used if the documentation provides sufficient information to indicate that the medical condition is considered chronic; e.g., Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD). If the applicant is having difficulty in obtaining medical documentation, the districts must assist the individual in obtaining the documentation.
- Households that received a 2016 – 2017 HEAP benefit in an amount less than or equal to \$21.00 are not eligible for the CAC. However, such households who move into an eligible living situation may apply for this component using both the Cooling Assistance Application and the HEAP Application.
- The applicant must not have a working air conditioner newer than five years old, as determined by the vendor.
- The applicant must not have received a HEAP funded air conditioner within the past ten years.
- The applicant's household income must not exceed the established income guidelines for the 2016 – 2017 heating season.

D. Documentation

Applicants must meet all HEAP documentation requirements in order to be eligible for the HEAP CAC. See the HEAP Manual, Chapter 5 – Documentation Requirements for the Cooling Assistance Component.

- Applicants who apply using only the Cooling Assistance Application do not need to provide additional income documentation.
- Applicants must report any changes in circumstance (change of address, household composition, etc.) when applying for the HEAP CAC.
- Applicants who apply using both the Cooling Assistance Application and the HEAP Application must provide documentation of residence, identity for each

household member, documentation of household income and a valid Social Security number for each household member.

- Districts must use any permanent documentation available in the applicant's case record or in the agency if applicable.
- Applicants in receipt of ongoing TA or SNAP or who are currently in receipt of SSI benefits which are designated as Federal Living Arrangement Code A and State Supplement Code A are categorically income eligible.
- Applicants who are pended to provide required documentation must be provided with the Documentation Requirements form ([LDSS-2642- Attachment 2](#)). A copy must be retained in the case record.
- Applications may be pended for a maximum of ten business days for documentation. If the applicant fails to provide the requested documentation by the due date, the application must be denied.

E. Income Budgeting

For applicants required to provide income documentation, districts must use a scratchpad HEAP regular benefit Automated Budgeting Eligibility Logic (ABEL) budget to determine income eligibility for the HEAP CAC. A sample Scratchpad Cooling Assistance ABEL Budget is found in Attachment 3.

- The ABEL input screen must include the applicant's first and last names in the CASE NAME field.
- The ABEL output screen must be printed and added to the case record with the following changes:
 - An "X" must be drawn through the regular benefit amount;
 - A statement must be added, "Budget used to determine income eligibility for HEAP CAC"; and,
 - Budgets must be initialed and dated.

F. Scope of Benefits and Equipment Specifications

The HEAP CAC benefits and services are provided on a first come, first served basis to eligible households through August 31, 2017, or until all of the funds are exhausted, whichever comes first. The following is a listing of equipment, benefit limits, and services that are provided if an individual is found eligible for the HEAP CAC.

- Benefits are not to exceed \$800 per household, including the cost of: an air conditioner, administrative costs, labor, program support, materials, removal of the old unit and minor repairs essential for safe installation. Funds may not be

used for any other purpose.

- Only one HEAP funded air conditioner or fan will be provided in an eligible dwelling.
- If an eligible applicant received HEAP funded fan when an air conditioner could not be safely installed, and subsequently moves into a dwelling that will support an air conditioner, one may be provided using HEAP funds.
- Vendors are required to determine the most appropriate living space for the creation of a cooling room.
- Vendors are required to ensure that the client's electrical system meets load requirements necessary for safe operation of the air conditioner and must conduct an assessment of electric load capacity prior to installation.
- Vendors must calculate the BTUs of the cooling room to ensure the purchase of an appropriately sized air conditioning unit.
- Air conditioners are limited to window installations, existing sleeve installations and portable units. Whenever possible, window equipment with an Energy Star rating must be installed. In the event that an Energy Star rated window unit cannot be safely installed, a non-Energy Star rated unit or a portable unit may be installed.
- Vendors are responsible for registering warranties with manufacturers and providing copies of the completed warranty and the manufacturer's owner's manual to clients.
- In circumstances where an air conditioner cannot be safely installed, the vendor must provide a fan, at a reasonable cost, for the established cooling room.
- It will be the responsibility of the client or dwelling owner to maintain the air conditioner. This includes removing, covering, storing and reinstalling the unit.
- Recipients of the HEAP CAC should be directed to contact the vendor directly for any issues that arise with the unit after installation.

G. Processing Timeframes and Client Notification

Districts must determine an applicant's eligibility for the HEAP CAC within 30 business days of receipt of the completed HEAP Cooling Assistance Application and/or the HEAP Application.

The Client Notice System (CNS) notices cannot be used for this component. Districts must provide recipients with a completed HEAP Cooling Assistance Notice of Eligibility Decision ([LDSS-4993, Attachment 4](#)) for both approvals and denials. Applicants must be provided written notice of the eligibility decision made on the

application for HEAP CAC benefits no later than 30 business days from the date of receipt of the final vendor invoice for payment.

- Approval notices must contain:
 - The vendor name.
 - Customer account number. If the vendor does not use customer account numbers, districts must enter the client's case number or the vendor's invoice number.
 - The benefit amount.
- When denying an application, for a new applicant household, case type 60, districts must place an N in the notice indicator to suppress the CNS notice and use a HEAP denial code of Y99.
- A copy of all notices must be retained in the case record for six years.
- All HEAP CAC denials are considered manual denials. All manual denials must be reported annually by September 30th on the HEAP Denied Applicant Report.

H. Vendor Participation

All vendors who wish to participate must have a signed HEAP Cooling Assistance Services Vendor Agreement on file with the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) HEAP Bureau. This legally binding document provides both OTDA and participating vendors with assurances that vendors understand the scope of the work to be performed. In addition, it ensures that participating vendors will abide by the provisions set forth in the document.

Each district can find a list of all its HEAP CAC participating vendors in the HEAP Participating Vendor list found in CentraPort. This list is updated on a daily basis and districts should check this list prior to authorizing a benefit. Vendors who contact districts to participate in the HEAP CAC must be instructed to contact the OTDA HEAP Bureau at: (518) 473-0332.

OTDA will be hosting a series of conference calls to provide additional information to participating vendors. Districts are encouraged, but not required to participate. A schedule of vendor conference calls and call details will be sent under a separate cover.

I. Installation Scheduling

Participating HEAP CAC vendors are responsible to contact eligible households to schedule installation. If a vendor cannot schedule an installation with the household within ten days of the referral, the vendor must notify the districts. The districts must then send the household a copy of the Documentation Requirements form with the "Other" box checked and the following language, "(vendor name) tried to contact you

regarding installation of cooling equipment, but was unsuccessful. Please contact us by (date) to resolve this”.

If the client does not contact either the districts or the vendor within the ten-day pending period to arrange installation, a HEAP Cooling Assistance Notice of Eligibility Decision, denial notice must be sent. The box for “you failed to provide the following information” is checked and the following language inserted “you failed to make arrangements for installation of your cooling equipment by the due date of (date)”.

J. HEAP Cooling Assistance Services Invoice (LDSS-5044)

The HEAP Cooling Assistance Services Invoice form, ([LDSS-5044 – see Attachment 5](#)), is used by both the districts and by the vendor.

Districts use this form to notify a vendor that an individual is approved for services. Districts must complete the following sections:

- Customer contact section is to be completed by the districts and is used to communicate customer information to the vendor.
- Districts Agency Use Section with the Application Date, Date Approved, and Invoice Date Received.

In order to receive payment, vendors must return the completed form to the districts, with client signature. The sections to be completed prior to returning to the districts are:

- The Services Provided checklist to identify services performed by the vendor;
- The Customer Section to be completed by the client to attest that services have been completed; and,
- An invoice section with total amount for the air conditioner and installation and signed by the technician.

K. Payment and Authorizations

Districts must not authorize any HEAP CAC payments to vendors prior to the HEAP CAC component opening on May 1, 2017.

Vendors must submit a completed HEAP Cooling Assistance Services Invoice (LDSS-5044) to the district in order for a payment to be authorized. Payments to vendors must not exceed \$800 per benefit.

All HEAP CAC payments are authorized by the districts through WMS or myWorkspace using payment type H2. These payments must be issued on a Case Type 60 (HEAP only) or an appropriate TA or SNAP Case Type.

As a result of changes to §179-f of the State Finance Law, HEAP vendor payments to small businesses for the Cooling Assistance Component must be paid within 15 calendar days of receipt of an invoice, excluding legal holidays. Be sure all HEAP invoices are date stamped when they are received. Please refer to GIS 16 TA/DC023 regarding the amendment to finance law 179-f for further information.

As with all vendor direct payments for districts outside New York City, HEAP CAC payments will be issued through the New York State Office of the State Comptroller (OSC)/Statewide Financial System (SFS) payment process. Any vendor wishing to refund a benefit to the districts must use the Vendor Refund form ([LDSS-5043-Attachment 6](#)). The form includes the HEAP CAC participant information, payments received by the vendor, and the amount refunded to the districts. All HEAP refunds (including local district related HEAP refunds and HEAP OSC refunds) must be processed using CAMS (Cash Management System) cash receipts.

Refer to the HEAP Manual, Chapter 22 – Payments/Statewide Financial System and the BICS Indirect Payment Processing Sub-System (IPPS) Manual - Appendix H for more information regarding the HEAP OSC/SFS Payment Process and HEAP refunds. The IPPS Manual can be found at: http://otda.state.ny.net/bfdm/finance/IPPS_Manual.asp.

L. Payment Type and System Requirements

The Payment Type used to authorize a HEAP CAC benefit is H2 and can be processed in either WMS or myWorkspace. This pay type does not require a stored ABEL budget and will **not** produce a CNS notice.

In order to write a Payment Line with an H2 Payment Type, districts must follow these rules:

- Only Case Types 11, 12, 16, 17, 31, and 60 may be used
- Payment Type H2 is valid with all Transaction Types except 03 – Denial
- Only two Methods of Payment may be used – either 02 (Vendor as Authorized) or 04 (Vendor as Bill Subject to Limit)
- Special Claiming Code H must be used
- Pay line service period covers an active HEAP season
- EMPLOYER NO/SSN appears in the BICS vendor record and must consist of nine non-equal numeric digits (for example: digits cannot be all zeroes or all nines)
- A valid Customer Account Number (cannot be blank or inactive)
- Valid SFS Vendor data

Vendor Direct Pay-line Example

| LN | ACT | Pay Typ | Meth Pay | Amount | Iss | Pay Sch | P-U Cd | Effective From | To | Ind LN | Clim Cd | Vend Id |
|--|-----|---------|----------|--------|-----|---------|--------|----------------|--------|---------------------|---------|---------|
| 01 | 2 | H2 | 02 | 800.00 | 2 | | 1 | 050117 | 093017 | | H | AC SERV |
| 02 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 03 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Energy Rst HVnd/Acct Replace LN | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | CHK/FSB | | | | LN | | | Vnd/Acct CHK/FSB | ACSERV | 1234 |

M. District Reporting Requirements

Districts are required to complete and submit HEAP Pending Reports for the Cooling Assistance Component to the HEAP Bureau via electronic reporting effective Friday, May 5, 2017. Districts must include CAC cases that fall into the following categories:

- Applications that have been received, but do not have a transaction through WMS or myWorkspace (either a payment or denial transaction)
- Cases that are waiting for an interview or documentation and/or have not had eligibility determined
- Cases where eligibility has been determined, but the WMS or myWorkspace transaction has not yet been conducted
- Applications awaiting processing at the Alternate Certifier

Districts 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.

To access the HEAP Pending Report in eReports, go to CentraPort:
<https://centraport.otda.state.nyenet/centraport>

- On the left side under Links, expand the Applications menu
- Select the HEAP Pending Case Report
- To log all pending applications select the current date from the dropdown box and click the “Find” button
- Enter the number of pending Regular, Emergency, Furnace Repair, Furnace Replacement, Supplemental, and Cooling Assistance benefit applications that are currently pending in the applicable box
- If no applications are pending in a component, please enter a “0” in that field
- Click “Submit” and then “Ok” to complete the form

Districts who fail to submit their pending applications in the HEAP Pending Case Report by COB on Fridays will receive a computer generated message on Monday reminding them to submit the report. Failure to submit the report by COB Monday will result in a computer generated email reminder on Tuesday, as well.

Districts who do not submit their HEAP Pending Case Report by COB Tuesday may email to Emily Urban with their pending numbers at: Emily.Urban@otda.ny.gov.

Each districts must have at least one person designated to submit data to the HEAP Pending Case Report and Erroneous Payment Report.

If a district 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.

N. Fair Hearings

Applicants for and recipients of CAC may seek review of their eligibility determination at an administrative fair hearing in accordance with the requirements of, and within the time limits specified in, 18 NYCRR §§358-1.1 through 358-6.5 and §393.5.

O. Forms Information

Forms used to administer the CAC have not been revised for the 2016 – 2017 program year.

No forms will be drop shipped this year. All forms should be ordered by the districts as needed. All forms are currently available to order. Districts may also access electronic forms for download and printing at: http://otda.state.nyenet/ldss_eforms/.

P. Program/Administrative Funds

A total of \$3M of program funds have been allocated to operate the 2016 – 2017 HEAP CAC. Districts will be provided with additional administrative funds to operate this component. A chart listing each district's allocation is found in Attachment 7. Administrative funds are to be used to meet staffing and operational needs of districts for the 2016 – 2017 HEAP CAC. Acceptable uses of administrative funds include, but are not limited to, staff salaries, staff overtime, temporary staff costs, fringe benefits, indirect costs, and equipment purchases to aid in the administration of the program.

As in the past, reimbursement of administrative costs in excess of your allocation cannot be guaranteed. Administrative costs incurred on and after October 1, 2016 may be charged against the 2016 – 2017 allocation. The HEAP CAC administrative

funds will be added to your 2016 – 2017 administrative allocation. These funds must be obligated by September 30, 2017 and claimed by December 31, 2017. Unclaimed funds cannot be rolled into the 2017 – 2018 administrative allocation.

Q. Phone Conference

The HEAP Bureau has scheduled two conference calls to provide districts updated information on the 2016 – 2017 HEAP CAC and to answer any questions. Information regarding these conference calls will be sent to local district HEAP Coordinators under a separate cover.

Issued By

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Title: Executive Deputy Commissioner