

## HEAP Questions and Answers

### Household Composition

- Q. A person living with, and paying rent to his sister received a \$35 benefit on the Autopay through his SNAP case. If otherwise eligible, can his sister receive a HEAP benefit if she has a heating expense and a bill in her name?**
- A. Yes, the sister can apply for the whole household and receive the balance of a regular heater's benefit in the amount of a full heater's benefit minus the heat-included benefit received by her brother.
- Q. A woman with a heating bill in her name receives HEAP due to categorical income eligibility of her boyfriend who receives SNAP. The boyfriend moves in with another friend. Is the man's new household categorically income eligible if they apply for Regular HEAP?**
- A. Yes. He moved out and was not the head of household (designated as applicant/payee relationship code 01) in the original household.
- Q. Is a college student who is still claimed as a dependent by her parents, but lives off campus with friends and has a heating bill in her name eligible for HEAP?**
- A. No. As long as the student is claimed as a dependent, she is considered part of her parents' household.
- Q. Can a client attest that another individual in the household is not a household member?**
- A. Yes, as long as the household member is over age 21, not a dependent or spouse of the head of household, and does not share any of the household living expenses.
- Q. If an applicant is living in the home of her deceased parents and there is no will granting ownership to the applicant, is the applicant the homeowner?**
- A. If there is no will or legal document that transfers ownership, and the estate is not settled, all living children are considered co-owners, regardless of whether they are living in the home or not. Resources of all living children are counted.

## **Application Processing**

- Q. Should citizenship or current alien status be verified if there is no citizenship documentation in the case file?**
- A. Applicants may attest to citizenship on the HEAP application. No further documentation is needed if the applicant checks yes.
- Q. What documentation is required for a returning applicant when applying for a Regular benefit?**
- A. Earned income, any changes since the household's last HEAP application, and any missing permanent documentation.
- Q. If an applicant loses their job in the month of application, how is their income calculated?**
- A. You must count the income earned in the month of application. If the income ends during the month, the remainder of the month can be prorated with projected \$0.
- Q. How do applicants prove resources when applying for Emergency HEAP?**
- A. Applicants can self-attest to resources for the Emergency component.
- Q. Should HEAP vouchers be adjusted to be zero in order to void the payment line?**
- A. No, void the voucher, and 9 the line. Vouchers must be voided first and the payment line must be voided using 09 in WMS.

## **Vendors**

- Q. Where can a vendor find information about a direct deposit payment?**
- A. In the NYS OSC Vendor Portal.

**Q. Who maintains the vendor agreements with HEAP vendors?**

A. OTDA HEAP Bureau

**Q. Do vendors have to deliver benefits within the emergency timeframe rules?**

A. Vendors must make a reasonable effort to deliver as soon as they can, but are not held to the 18/48 hour timeframe. If there is a delay in delivery, the applicant can choose a new vendor, or the district can provide emergency resolution in some other way such as temporary relocation (when Emergency is open), safe supplemental heat, TA, etc.

**Q. How does a district know if a wood vendor delivered the correct amount of wood?**

A. Wood vendors follow Agriculture and Market regulations and must provide a receipt for the wood to the customer to verify cost, quantity, and quality.

**Q. Can a Regular HEAP benefit be used to establish a vendor relationship?**

A. Yes.

### **Heating Equipment/Cooling**

**Q. What happens when a vendor determines that the electrical load capacity in a dwelling cannot support an air conditioner and the customer refuses a fan?**

A. The district should contact the customer to explain why an air conditioner cannot be installed. If the customer still refuses a fan, the application should be denied.

**Q. What criteria is needed for a medical note for the Cooling component?**

A. The note should be in writing from the physician's office, signed by a physician, physician's assistant, or nurse practitioner, state the medical condition, and state the need for an air conditioner.

**Q. Can a Clean and Tune service be completed on a furnace that is red tagged/inoperable/unsafe?**

A. No. The customer should be referred to the district to apply for HERR.

**Q. For HERR, what documentation is needed to prove resources?**

A. The most recent statement and/or a current printout from the financial account.

**Q. The applicant has been making land contract payments for the last 5 years for her mobile home and made her last payment 2 months ago, making her the sole homeowner. Does this applicant qualify for HERR?**

A. No, the applicant must have been the homeowner for the previous 12 months.

### **Potent Potables**

**Q. For HEAP income purposes, what is considered the “month of application?”**

A. HEAP collects either the prior four week’s income or projects the monthly income based on the income received month to date. Districts can use the timeframe that benefits the applicant.

**Q. Are “Snowbirds” eligible for HEAP?**

A. Yes, “snowbirds” are eligible for Regular HEAP benefits, as long as they are a New York State resident and the residence for which they are applying is their primary residence. These households may also be eligible for an Emergency benefit if they return to their home in NYS when the Emergency component is open and they are in a heating emergency situation.

**Q. An applicant applies for HEAP and SNAP using a combo application on 12/2 and is determined eligible for ongoing SNAP benefits first and the effective date is 12/2. Is this applicant categorically income eligible for HEAP?**

A. The applicant must be in receipt of ongoing TA or SNAP benefits when they apply for HEAP to be categorically income eligible for HEAP.

**Q. How many attempts should be made to contact a client before a document requirement notice is sent out?**

A. One. If you are able to obtain all necessary information via verbal attestation on the first attempt, a Documentation Requirement form is not necessary. If you are unable to reach the applicant on the first attempt or if the applicant must send documentation, a Documentation Requirements form must be sent at the time of initial contact so a written record of this request is on file.

**Q. Is a recreational vehicle considered an eligible living situation for HEAP benefits?**

A. Recreational vehicles that are not roadworthy or registered with the DMV are eligible, as long as it is the applicant's primary residence, and the applicant's primary heat source is not a space heater.