

## 2021-2022 HEAP Questions and Answers

### Regular Component

- Q. If an applicant received a regular benefit under Temporary Assistance (TA) and the TA case closed, is a full HEAP Application (LDSS 3421) required when applying for the Emergency component?**
- A. Yes, completion of the HEAP Application (LDSS-3421) is required as circumstances in the household have changed.
- Q. If the income verification is missing for a categorically income eligible household after the pending period has passed, what should be budgeted, what the applicants have put on the app or what is in the SNAP budget?**
- A. The district can pend the application for income information but should not deny the application if it is not received. If income information is not received, use the SNAP budget and forward the income information to SNAP to explore further.
- Q. Can households submit a HEAP application through NYDocSubmit?**
- A. No, HEAP applications may be accepted by mail, fax, in person, or electronically on myBenefits.ny.gov (outside NYC). If a HEAP application is received through NYDocSubmit, the district should print the application and process, but advise the applicant that NYDocSubmit is not an acceptable method to apply for HEAP.
- Q. Is the completion of the Agency Use Only section (Page 6) of the HEAP Application (LDSS-3421) required?**
- A. Yes, unless the worker is processing the application in myWorkspace. If the worker is processing the application in myWorkspace, Page 6 is not required, although case comments must be stored in the case record.
- Q. Is completion of page 7 (Federal Crisis reporting section) required if the applicant is in an emergency heating situation?**
- A. Yes, unless the worker is not processing the application in myWorkspace. If processing in myWorkspace, Page 7 is built into the case processing platform.
- Q. Are districts able to use Shelter Verification forms for proof of residence as they are signed by the landlord?**
- A. If the Shelter Verification form is current and matches the information on the application and other information in file, then yes it can be used to document proof of residence.
- Q. Are capital gains considered income or a one-time lump sum payment?**

- A. Capital gains are considered a one-time lump sum payment.

## Documentation Requirements

**Q. What is considered acceptable documentation to show that an applicant is responsible for the heating bill, if the bill is not in their name?**

- A. Documentation of the heating account must be supplemented by documentation of direct responsibility for the bill. Direct responsibility must be notated in the case record and documented by one or more of the following:

- Vendor statement or collateral contact with the vendor specifying who pays the bills;
- Current receipts for payment of heating bill; or
- Cancelled checks showing payments to the vendor.

**Q. How far back do social services districts (districts) need to document that an applicant is responsible for the heating bill?**

- A. Districts need to document responsibility for the month of application.

**Q. Would a statement from the person whose name the bill is in be acceptable to verify that another person is responsible for paying their heating bill?**

- A. No, vendor relationship must be verified through a vendor statement, collateral contact, receipt, or canceled check.

**Q. When processing a Regular application and the person is under age 60, do districts need to request documentation of unearned income?**

- A. All earned and unearned income must be documented for all new applicants. Only documentation of earned income is required for most returning applicants, regardless of age.

**Q. If a household is categorically income eligible and does not provide requested documents, should they be denied?**

- A. If income documentation has been requested and the documentation is not returned, the case may be processed with the available information on file. If other required eligibility documentation is requested (e.g. identity) and the information is not returned, the case must be denied.

## Emergency

**Q. If heat is included in an applicant's rent, are they eligible for an Emergency benefit?**

- A. Eligible households with heat included in the rent that also pay a supplier directly for heat-related utility services may be eligible for a heat-related Emergency benefit if such

benefit is necessary to resolve the household's heat-related energy crisis.

**Q. How does a district verify that electric service is required to run a furnace?**

A. The applicant may attest to this, and if further verification is necessary, districts may use collateral contact with the utility provider.

**Q. If a client has a non-working furnace (e.g. kerosene), can they still get a regular kerosene benefit and a domestic emergency benefit?**

A. Working heating equipment is not an eligibility requirement for the Regular benefit component, so the household may receive a heater benefit if they are the customer of record with a kerosene vendor. If the kerosene furnace is broken and the electricity is not being used to operate the household's primary heating equipment, the household will not qualify for a domestic electric emergency benefit. Refer the household to HERR or weatherization for repair or replacement of their heating equipment.

**Q. Does every Emergency benefit application require an Emergency Benefit Budget Worksheet (LDSS-3594B) be completed?**

A. Yes.

**Q. Are the 18-48 hour Emergency timeframes required when processing a Regular benefit or only once Emergency opens?**

A. The 18-48 hour processing requirements apply to Emergency HEAP benefits only. Local processes must be followed for emergencies outside of the emergency component.

**Q. Do vendors have an emergency timeframe they need to follow?**

A. Vendors are not held to the 18-48 hour timeframes, this is a district requirement. Action to resolve a household's emergency situation must be taken by the district within 18 hours from the time of the Emergency Application if the household is without heat or within 48 hours from the time of the Emergency Application if loss of heat is imminent.

## Vendors

**Q. Is a shut off notice required to issue an emergency benefit for utility emergencies?**

A. No, utility emergencies can be verified through the utility website, or collateral contact with the vendor. A shut off notice may also be used but is not required if another method of verification is used.

**Q. Are vendors allowed to use last name and first Initial for an account number?**

A. No, a customer's Personally Identifiable Information (PII) may not be used for an account number.

**Q. What is an option E vendor?**

A. Option E vendors have verified contracts with their customers and receive HEAP payments through a two-party check issued directly from the district, which is endorsed by the client and the vendor when it is received.

**Q. How should districts be using the Vendor Refund Form (LDSS-5043)?**

A. This is a mandatory form used by HEAP vendors. The vendor refund form is used to support the refund process. The form includes the HEAP participant information, payments received by the vendor, and the amount refunded to the district. The district should receive the refund form and process in Cash Management Subsystem (CAMS) as needed.

**Q. If a vendor wants to use email as a way of contact, what should districts do?**

A. The vendor should contact the NYS HEAP Bureau at (518) 473-0332 and request to have their vendor information updated via a HEAP Vendor Change Form. Any email communication with PII must not be shared via email.

**Q. What is the difference in between local county sales tax and state sales tax, and which type can vendors charge?**

A. Local county sales tax is a percentage of tax imposed by the county, and vendors may charge local county sales tax as appropriate. The district can refer to this publication for fuel tax percentages: <https://www.tax.ny.gov/pdf/publications/sales/pub718r.pdf>  
Vendors may not charge state sales tax for any service or product provided under HEAP.

**Q. What is the process if a vendor does not submit an invoice timely?**

A. HEAP Vendors sign a written agreement for each component and agree to conditions to participate in HEAP. The vendors are responsible for maintaining the agreed upon provisions.

If a vendor does not submit a timely invoice for HERR, C&T, or Cooling within the required timeframes as specified in the vendor agreement, districts are advised to contact the vendor by phone and in writing, and document all contact. If the vendor does not respond, the district should contact the HEAP Bureau for assistance.

## **HERR/C&T/Cooling**

**Q. If a household received a HEAP funded fan and moved to a home that supports an air conditioner, are they eligible for another cooling benefit before the 5 years?**

A. Yes, this is the only exception to the one in five rule for Cooling. The customer must reapply and meet all eligibility criteria.

**Q. Will applicants for the Clean and Tune benefit who received a Regular 2021-2022 benefit through the Autopay need a new HEAP Application (LDSS-3421)?**

A. If the household is eligible for a Regular benefit through the Autopay and applies for a Clean and Tune benefit after 10/1/21 they will only need to apply using the Clean and Tune Request for Benefit (LDSS-5081), not a full HEAP Application.

**Q. Are districts allowed to complete a Clean and Tune application by phone?**

A. No, 2021-2022 Clean and Tune applications may not be accepted by phone. The applicant may apply in person, by mail, or by dropping off a completed HEAP Application (LDSS-3421) and/or Heating Equipment Clean and Tune Request for Benefit (LDSS-5081).

**Q. How long does a vendor have to provide a clean & tune, cooling or HERR service after the application is approved?**

A. HERR Work is completed within five business days of authorization received from the district. Vendor(s) will notify the district when this timeframe cannot be met. Cooling vendors are required 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 district.

**Q. What if a district receives an old version of the Clean and Tune form after 10/1/21? How long can the older version be used for?**

A. Effective 10/1/2021, the new Clean and Tune Request for Benefit (LDSS-5081) must be used. The district must pend the application and provide a current version of the form to be completed.

**Q. Does a doctor's statement for cooling need to specify that the medical condition is "exacerbated by heat"?**

A. All applicants must provide medical documentation for the household member with a medical condition exacerbated by extreme heat, unless the household contains a vulnerable household member based on their age (age 60 or older or under age 6). The medical documentation must be in writing from a physician, physician's assistant or nurse practitioner and must clearly state the health condition, and that the individual would benefit from the establishment of a cooling room or fan.

**Q. Can a co-owner who is not present attest to not having resources for HERR?**

- A. Applicants who have a documented instance of domestic violence with the co-owner are not required to provide proof of the co-owner's resources. In all other cases, documentation is required, and an attestation cannot be accepted.
- Q. When a client has excess resources after deductions for HERR, do they have to provide proof that they paid that amount towards the cost of the repair or replacement?**
- A. Yes, it must be documented and verified that the client and/or co-owner(s) share of the cost has been guaranteed, paid or that the client has made satisfactory payment arrangements for the repair or replacement before the HEAP payment is authorized. A receipt or confirmation from the vendor that the payment has been made or a payment arrangement has been made is sufficient.
- Q. Does a household have to have a no heat emergency in order to have their system repaired or can they receive a repair even if the system still runs?**
- A. If the system is running, but is a health and safety issue, the household may be eligible for a HERR benefit. Health and safety issues are identified and documented by a participating HEAP vendor.
- Q. What happens if the applicant runs out of oil and the sludge at the bottom of the tank is being sucked up, making the furnace unable to be restarted? What option is there for the homeowner?**
- A. The household should apply for a Clean and Tune benefit first, and if unable to be performed, the applicant should be referred to apply for HERR.
- Q. Can districts duplicate the WAP #37 form digitally or is use of the carbon version required?**
- A. Due to COVID-19 photocopies of the WAP #37 form is acceptable at this time.

## **Alternate Certifiers**

- Q. Are there any restrictions to an alternate certifier contacting a vendor directly to verify an account?**
- A. This is at the discretion of the local district and should be incorporated into the Agreement between the district and the Alternate Certifier. The alternate certifier should verify with the district if this allowed locally.
- Q. How long do alternate certifiers have to store HEAP files?**
- A. Applications and documentation, including notices must be retained for a period of six program years, including the current program year for Regular, Emergency, Cooling, and Clean and Tune. Files for HERR benefits must be maintained for ten years.

File retention specific to alternate certifiers is at the discretion of the local district and should be incorporated into the Agreement between the district and the Alternate Certifier. The alternate certifier should verify file retention requirements with the district.

**Q. How do alternate certifiers access training space?**

A. All users may access HEAP online trainings at the following address: <https://trainingspace.ny.gov/>. Please contact your district Staff Development Coordinator for assistance.

**Q. How can an alternate certifier get access to complete HEAP Applications online in myWorkspace?**

A. The district would need to contact their LAN administrator to request access for the alternate certifier.

## **myWorkspace**

**Q. Why must the district sync myWorkspace and Welfare Management System (WMS) in order for alternate certifiers to perform eligibility determinations?**

A. The data in myWorkspace must be synced with WMS. If changes are made in WMS, the changes must be synced to MyWorkspace.

**Q. Where in myWorkspace can you make comments?**

A. Comments can be made through the case comments button and in the comments section on the bottom of each eligibility tab in myWorkspace

**Q. Is the code that applicants use to access early outreach applications on myWorkspace their Client Identification Number (CIN)?**

A. No, it is a unique access code.