



## Local Commissioners Memorandum

### Section 1

<b>Transmittal:</b>	26-LCM-02
<b>To:</b>	Social Services District Commissioners
<b>Issuing Division/Office:</b>	Employment and Income Supports (EISP) Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)
<b>Date:</b>	January 14, 2026
<b>Subject:</b>	2025-2026 Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)
<b>Contact Person(s):</b>	HEAP Bureau at: (518) 473-0332 or <a href="mailto:NYSHEAP@otda.ny.gov">NYSHEAP@otda.ny.gov</a>
<b>Attachments:</b>	<a href="#">Attachment 1 - 2025-2026 HEAP Administrative Form Guide</a> <a href="#">Attachment 2 - Request for Approval of Local Equivalent Forms (OTDA-5199)</a>

### Section 2

#### I. Purpose

This Local Commissioners Memorandum (LCM) provides social services districts (districts) information about administering 2025-2026 Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) components and benefits.

#### II. Background

HEAP is a federally funded energy program intended to provide assistance to low-income households, particularly those with the lowest incomes that pay a high proportion of household income for home energy, primarily to meet 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. The New York State (NYS) [2025-2026 HEAP State Plan](#) was submitted to HHS and is available for viewing on the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) website under Laws and Policies, [HEAP State Plans](#).

#### III. Program Implications

##### A. Program Components – Dates of Operation

The HEAP components and dates of operation may be adjusted based on the amount of available federal funding. General Information System (GIS) messages will be issued to tell districts about each component's closing dates or if there are any changes to component timelines.

Client notices of eligibility determination, payments, or guarantees of benefits to HEAP vendors, including ten-day account hold requests to gas and electric utility companies must not be issued before the opening date of each program component.

### **Regular HEAP Component**

The 2025-2026 Regular HEAP heater and heat-included benefits component began December 1, 2025 and is scheduled to operate through close of business (COB) April 7, 2026, or until funding allocated to this component is exhausted, whichever comes first. Detailed component information may be found in the [NYS HEAP Manual](#).

Advanced \$21 nominal benefits continue to be available to certain newly eligible Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) households living in HEAP eligible living arrangements. Please refer to [GIS 25DC061](#) and [GIS 18 TA/DC012](#) for additional policy guidance.

### **Heating Equipment Repair and Replacement (HERR)**

The 2025-2026 HERR benefit component began December 11, 2025. Districts will be notified of the HERR component's closing date via GIS.

### **Emergency HEAP Component**

The 2025-2026 Emergency HEAP benefit component began January 2, 2026, and is scheduled to operate through COB April 7, 2026, or until funding allocated to this component is exhausted, whichever comes first. There is one Emergency HEAP benefit planned for the 2025-2026 program year. Detailed component information may be found in the [NYS HEAP Manual](#).

### **Cooling Assistance Component (CAC)**

Applications for CAC must be accepted beginning April 15, 2026 through COB June 22, 2026, or until funding allocated to this component is exhausted; whichever comes first. Additional guidance will be released via GIS prior to CAC opening.

## **B. Program Updates**

The following policy and procedural changes have been made for the 2025-2026 program year. The changes identified in this LCM supersede policy contained in the [HEAP Manual](#) and any other previously released policy documentation.

### **HEAP Clean and Tune (C&T)**

The 2025-2026 HEAP State Plan does not include funding for HEAP C&T. Districts may not issue denial notices for HEAP C&T, as there is no HEAP C&T benefit to apply for.

### **HEAP HERR**

For the 2025-2026 program year, HERR benefits will be limited to applicants aged 60 or older at the time of application. Applicants must own the home where the heating equipment that requires repair or replacement is located. If there is more than one documented homeowner, at least one must be aged 60 or older at the time of application and live in the home as their primary residence.

The HEAP HERR Screening Form (LDSS-5010) is eliminated. Districts must discontinue its use and destroy all copies of the HEAP HERR Screening Form (LDSS-5010), including any previously approved Local Equivalent (LE). This form is no longer required for HEAP applicants and screening questions may be explored during the eligibility interview as needed.

Districts will now track and report the number of pending repair and replacement applications awaiting eligibility determination separately from applications awaiting service, vendor invoice, or electronic processing.

Please refer to [25-LCM-17](#) for detailed HERR policy and procedural guidance.

### **Discontinuation of State On-Line Query (SOLQ) for HEAP**

Districts and alternate certifiers are reminded that they are not authorized and must not use SOLQ for the purposes of determining HEAP eligibility. Please refer to [25-LCM-13](#) released on October 8, 2025 for full policy guidance.

## **C. 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, with the exception of Early Outreach applications. Early Outreach application notices must be issued within 30 business days from Regular HEAP program opening. Districts must incorporate their 6 or 13 calendar day voucher review period, as outlined in Appendix H of the [Indirect Payment Processing Sub-System Manual \(IPPS Manual\)](#), into their processing timeframe to ensure clients are provided with timely notice.

Payments for eligible cases included on the Autopay exception report must be authorized in Welfare Management System (WMS) or myWorkspace no later than January 31, 2026.

## **D. Income Guidelines**

NYS sets the income guidelines to the maximum level allowable under federal statute. Maximum income guidelines are set at 60% of State Median Income (SMI) for households with 1-13 individuals, and at 150% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) for households with 14 or more individuals. Income guideline amounts may be found in the [2025-2026 HEAP Desk Guide \(LDSS-5005\)](#).

## **E. Application Process**

### **Regular HEAP benefit**

All applicants outside of New York City (NYC) may apply for Regular HEAP benefits online through [myBenefits](#). Applicants that reside in NYC may apply for Regular HEAP benefits online through [ACCESS HRA](#). The HEAP Application for 2025-2026 has been available on [myBenefits](#) and [ACCESS HRA](#) since December 1, 2025.

Applicants outside of NYC may complete, submit, and track their Regular HEAP application online once they create a secure [myBenefits](#) account. Applicants may also

use [myBenefits](#) to submit required documentation to districts who use OTDA's Imaging and Enterprise Documentation Repository (I/EDR).

Applicants who live in a district that has implemented the NYDocSubmit Mobile Application (Mobile Application) may also submit required documentation to the district through this application. (See [NYDocSubmit](#) for participating districts) Please see [20-ADM-04](#) for additional policy guidance on the Mobile Application.

Applicants may also apply for Regular HEAP benefits statewide by submitting paper applications by mail, fax or in person at a district or alternate certifier. A list of [local district HEAP offices](#) may be found on OTDA's website. A printable HEAP Application (LDSS-3421) has been available for download on the [OTDA Website](#) since December 1, 2025.

### **Emergency HEAP, HERR, and CAC benefit**

Applicants for Emergency HEAP, HERR, and CAC should contact the district office in their county of residence for information and applications.

Districts must make reasonable accommodations for homebound applicants to apply for any HEAP benefit. This may include home visits. An authorized representative or individual with documented power of attorney may also be used to apply for all HEAP benefits

Note: If an applicant submits multiple applications for a HEAP benefit in different districts, the application submitted to the first district, regardless of method (electronic or paper), takes precedence. Subsequent applications must be acted on in a timely manner and an appropriate timely notice must be issued. Electronic or paper applications for HEAP may only be withdrawn with the applicant's written consent.

## **F. Mass Authorization (Autopay) Process for Federally Funded Public Assistance (PA) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Recipients**

The Autopay process is used as a tool to limit administrative workload and costs while maximizing HEAP outreach and accessibility and it is designed to target the highest level of assistance to the lowest income households. Please see [GIS 25DC076](#) for Autopay run dates.

## **G. Regular HEAP and Emergency HEAP Benefit Amounts**

The Regular HEAP benefit amount is based on the household's primary fuel type, income tier and the presence of a vulnerable household member, as defined by HEAP in Chapter 9 of the [HEAP Manual](#).

The Regular HEAP benefit add-on amount for Tier 1 households remains \$61 for the 2025-2026 program year. To receive the Tier 1 add-on, the household must have gross income at or below 130% of federal poverty level for the household size, or at least one adult household member must be in receipt of SNAP, federally funded TA, or Code A SSI. The add-on amount for households with a vulnerable member remains \$35. The heat included benefits remain \$50 for Tier 1 households and \$45 for Tier 2 households.

The Emergency HEAP benefit amount is based on the household's type of emergency.

See the [2025-2026 HEAP Desk Guide \(LDSS-5005\)](#) for all benefit amounts.

## H. Forms

Two forms used to administer HEAP were revised for the 2025-2026 program year:

- [2025-2026 HEAP Desk Guide \(LDSS-5005\)](#)
- [HEAP Systems Quick Reference Tool \(LDSS-5099\)](#)

The HEAP Administrative Form Guide (Attachment 1) is a reference tool that identifies form revision dates and whether the form is mandatory or optional.

All forms were made available for downloading and printing on September 19, 2025. These forms, along with any forms that were not revised, must be used for the 2025-2026 program year. Districts and alternate certifiers must discard all old versions of the revised forms.

All forms should be ordered by the districts as needed. All forms are available for electronic downloading and printing from [LDSS E-Forms](#) through the OTDA Intranet.

### **How to order forms:**

All forms with LDSS or PUB numbers are produced by OTDA. All OTDA HEAP forms may be ordered, with the exception of the 2025-2026 HEAP Desk Guide (LDSS-5005) and HEAP Systems Quick Reference Tool (LDSS-5099).

When ordering any HEAP forms, be sure to order sufficient quantities for the entire HEAP year. Districts must also take into consideration the form supply needs of Alternate Certifiers when placing orders. Please check the current supply at the district prior to placing an order. Please allow for up to 4-6 weeks for processing and receiving of all requested documents. No forms are drop shipped.

HEAP forms are available on the OTDA Intranet [LDSS E-Forms](#) page and are available for download by local districts for reproduction locally, depending on print specifications. All publications in languages other than English and Spanish are available via the intranet only.

Requests for printed copies can be placed by either completing and emailing the ordering form, or through the online ordering system via the OTDA Intranet [LDSS EForms](#) page.

Email ordering request:

Requests for printed copies should be submitted to OTDA by completing the [OTDA876](#) form and emailing it to: [forms.orders@otda.ny.gov](mailto:forms.orders@otda.ny.gov).

Online ordering request:

Publications and LDSS forms can also be ordered online by accessing the Bureau of Management Services' Electronic Forms and Publications Online Ordering System at: <https://formorders.otda.ny.gov/>. If presented with a Login prompt, enter your HSEN ID and password.

This system provides users the ability to order forms, envelopes, and publications over the OTDA intranet. Once the order is submitted, the user can view the status of their order and will receive system generated emails when their order is processed and shipped.

Questions concerning ordering forms should be directed to the Bureau of Management Services (BMS) Document Services at (518) 474-9489.

### **How to request a Local Equivalent Form:**

To make changes to a state mandated LDSS form, districts must submit a written request to the OTDA Bureau of Management Services (BMS) using the Request for Approval of Local Equivalent Forms (OTDA-5199) found in Attachment 2.

Districts are encouraged to work with the HEAP Bureau prior to submitting their official request for approval of a local equivalent form to ensure forms contain all required elements. For more information on this procedure districts should consult [16-ADM-03](#) for additional policy guidance on the local equivalent process.

## **I. Case Supervisory Review Process**

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

Each district that 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 as needed. To maintain accuracy standards, cases chosen for review must receive a thorough 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 as required.

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

All applications from district employees or known relatives of any district employee require two levels of review. Written district guidelines that provide for stricter protocol take precedence over this OTDA requirement.



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 and approval. Districts must identify areas or types of cases that should be targeted for 100% review. For example:
  - Error prone areas (e.g., earned income cases),
  - New applications, new workers' cases, or
  - Emergency application cases from an alternate certifier.
2. The minimum number of 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 improve accuracy.
4. A description of how alternate certifiers assist with HEAP and work with the district.

Note: Alternate certifiers must not perform final review of cases or approve HEAP benefits for eligible households they assist.

CSR plans must be submitted to:

HEAP Bureau  
Employment and Income Support Programs  
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 district's plan and approve the plan in whole or in part within 60 days of the date of submission by the district. 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 district must take to rectify the plan. Once a plan is approved by OTDA, a district does not need to submit subsequent plans, unless or until a revision to the approved plan is needed.

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 district's designated HEAP Coordinator perform the review and sign-off on all HERR benefit applications unless the HEAP Coordinator has determined eligibility. In that case, a supervisor one level up must review and provide the final sign off/approval.

## **J. Pending Report Information**

Districts are required to complete and submit HEAP Pending Reports for all applications that have been received but do not have an approval or denial transaction through WMS or myWorkspace. Districts must report any pending applications for the 2025-2026

program through [eReports](#) on Centraport and continue to report the number of pending cases for each program component year-round, on a weekly basis.

Districts with no pending cases for a specific component, must enter “0” in that field. Districts must designate at least one individual to report the number of pending applications weekly to OTDA, and it is recommended that districts designate at least one alternate user. 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; and (d) phone number. This information can be e-mailed to Anna Vitolins at: [Anna.Vitolins@otda.ny.gov](mailto:Anna.Vitolins@otda.ny.gov) and Rachel Kerr at: [Rachel.Kerr@otda.ny.gov](mailto:Rachel.Kerr@otda.ny.gov).

#### **K. HEAP Participating Vendor List**

The database for participating HEAP vendors is available through the OTDA Website under HEAP, and select “Locate Your Local HEAP Vendor” for the [Participating Vendor List](#). Each district has a unique password for the HEAP [Participating Vendor List](#). These passwords will remain unchanged unless a district requests a new password. Districts must contact their OTDA HEAP Bureau liaison if the current password is unknown or if a new password is required.

This list is updated daily and must be provided to applicants who need to choose a participating vendor. Districts must check the participating vendor list when processing applications to ensure that only participating vendors in their county are issued benefits.

#### **L. Notice Production**

Use of the Client Notice System (CNS) is required for applicant eligibility notices. Manual notices must only be used when CNS does not support the action taken.

Approval notices will be produced through CNS when the payment file is sent to the Office of the State Comptroller (OSC) or when the district sets the HEAP Benefit Issuance Control System (BICS) locks to “U” for Unlocked to produce Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) payments and locally issued two party checks.

Notices of Eligibility Decision (approvals or denials) must not be issued prior to program opening.

#### **M. Subscription to Policy Directives**

District staff, as appropriate, should subscribe to receive Administrative Directives (ADM); Information Letters (INF); LCM; and GIS messages via e-mail.

Use the following link to subscribe to OTDA policy directives (ADM, LCM, INF): <https://intranet.otda.ny.gov/directives/listserve.asp>.

Use the following link to subscribe to EISP mailing lists (GIS messages): <https://intranet.otda.ny.gov/dta/resources/subscribe.asp>.

Please see the [June 26, 2018 WMS-CNS Coordinator Guidance Letter](#) for more information.



## **N. Systems**

Detailed information regarding the current WMS implications for the 2025-2026 HEAP year may be found in the November 20, 2025, WMS-CNS Coordinator guidance letter, [WCL112025](#).

It is strongly suggested that districts use myWorkspace as the primary computer application to complete eligibility processing for Regular applications submitted through myBenefits.

The Local Area Network (LAN) Administrator or systems administrator is responsible for granting entitlements and setting up Lightweight Directory Access Protocol (LDAP) accounts to all users including alternate certifiers. Instructions for LAN Administrators may be found in [GIS 17TA/myB006](#).

### **Alternate Certifier Access to myWorkspace**

The Alternate Certifier's roles 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. The 'Remote Access End User Guide' can be accessed from the myWorkspace 'Resources' link on the [OTDA Intranet](#) website under Reference Materials, select HEAP Information and then [Remote Access End User Guide](#).

The district identifies the Alternate Certifier role that works best for their operations and is responsible to communicate the roles and responsibilities to the Alternate Certifier. Districts may grant one of two levels of entitlements in myWorkspace; either an Alternate Certifier worker or an Alternate Certifier supervisor. A listing of the worker and supervisor functionality in myWorkspace can be accessed from the myWorkspace "Resources" link in the myWorkspace External Links toolbar or on the [OTDA Intranet](#) website under Program Areas, EISP, and Resources and Data Reference Materials, select [myWorkspace User Roles](#).

Alternate Certifier staff experiencing problems accessing myWorkspace and/or having HEAP policy questions must contact and work with the district HEAP Coordinator to resolve any issues.

### **myWorkspace Problem Solving**

District HEAP coordinators experiencing problems accessing myWorkspace must contact their LAN or Systems Administrator.

District 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, districts should include as much information as possible, including at a minimum the registry/case number, and any error number and message received.

## O. HEAP Mass Closing

The HEAP Mass Closing (“HEAP Auto Close”) of Rest of State, all districts outside of the 5 boroughs of New York City, (ROS) is a process that will automatically close HEAP cases (Case Type 60) that have had no activity since September 30, 2024. These cases have been assigned the unique authorization number ‘25HEAPCL.’

Reports of successfully closed cases are available for viewing in the Cognos HEAP Reports folder. The reports can be viewed by selecting the following folder sequence in Cognos: Team Content > Global Reports > OTDA > HEAP Reports > Annual Reports > HEAP Auto Close Reports > Auto Close FFY2025.

## P. OSC Vouchers

Detailed information regarding the authorization of HEAP payments through BICS; including using EBT and the OSC Statewide Financial System (SFS) payment process is available in the [Indirect Payment Processing System \(IPPS\) Manual](#).

During the voucher review period, there are only two actions that districts may perform on a HEAP OSC voucher that is in “OSC-Issued” status: correcting the customer account number or voiding the voucher. A HEAP OSC voucher that is in “OSC-Sent” status is unable to be voided or canceled.

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 \$0.00 on OSC vouchers.

For additional information on HEAP vouchers, refer to [GIS 25DC079](#), [GIS 25DC086](#), and [GIS 25DC087](#).

## Q. Fair Hearings

Applicants for and recipients of HEAP benefits 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 §358.5](#) and [18 NYCRR §393.5](#).

## R. District Allocations

All districts receive administrative funds to support HEAP’s administration. Additionally, ROS districts receive program allocations for locally issued payments.

Districts will receive administrative and program allocations under separate cover.

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### Issued By:

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**Title:** Deputy Commissioner

**Division/Office:** Employment and Income Support Programs / Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance