



Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance

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General Information System (GIS) Message

Section 1

Transmittal:	21 TA/DC012 Upstate and New York City
Date:	March 08, 2021
To:	Subscribers
Suggested Distribution:	Commissioners, HEAP Coordinators, TA and SNAP Directors
From:	Jeffrey Gaskell, Deputy Commissioner Employment and Income Support Programs
Subject:	2020-2021 Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) Revised Component Closing Dates, Second Emergency Benefit, and Concurrent Issuance of Regular and Emergency HEAP Benefits
Effective Date:	Immediately
Contact Information:	HEAP Bureau: NYSHEAP@otda.ny.gov or 518-473-0332

Section 2

The purpose of this GIS is to inform social services districts (districts) of changes to the 2020-2021 Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP). The dates of operation for the Regular and Emergency benefit components will be extended from March 15, 2021 to April 30, 2021, and a second HEAP Emergency benefit for heat and heat-related emergencies will be available starting March 8, 2021.

Effective immediately, new applicants for Regular HEAP benefits who are experiencing a crisis or life-threatening emergency must also be evaluated for an Emergency HEAP benefit. If eligible, the household may receive an Emergency heat and/or heat-related HEAP benefit concurrently with their Regular HEAP benefit.

Benefit Component Extension:

The Regular benefit and Emergency benefit components are scheduled to operate through the close of business (COB) April 30, 2021, or until the funds allocated to these components are exhausted, whichever occurs first.

Districts will be notified via GIS if there are any further changes to the component closing dates. All districts and alternate certifiers must continue to accept applications for Regular and Emergency component benefits through COB April 30, 2021 unless OTDA advises otherwise. Mail-in applications postmarked, or electronic applications received on or before April 30, 2021 meet the deadline and must be processed unless OTDA advises otherwise. The functionality to submit online HEAP applications for Regular component benefits through myBenefits will be disabled at 5:00 pm on April 30, 2021 unless OTDA advises otherwise.

All HEAP applications must be processed in accordance with instructions found in the New York State [HEAP Manual](#) (revised 10/01/2015) and [20-LCM-11](#). All applications for Regular or Emergency HEAP benefits received after the deadline must be denied using CNS denial code F08 (HEAP Application Received after HEAP Program Year Closing Date) or, if needed, by using the HEAP Manual Denial Notice ([LDSS-3494B](#)).

Concurrent Issuance of Regular and Emergency Benefits:

Effective immediately, concurrent issuance of Regular and Emergency benefits is permitted for new applicants experiencing a crisis or life-threatening emergency with their primary heating source and/or heat-related utility for the remainder of the 2020-2021 Regular benefit component.

All new applicants for Regular benefits must be screened for emergency situations during the applicant interview. Returning applicants who do not require an interview must be contacted by telephone and screened for a heat or heat-related emergency. Utility web tools should be utilized to the extent possible to screen for and verify utility heat and heat-related emergencies. Districts must denote the applicant's emergency situation on page 7 of the HEAP Application ([LDSS-3421](#)).

If the applicant cannot be reached by telephone, an appointment letter for an interview may be utilized per instructions found in Chapter 2 of the [HEAP Manual](#). New applicants who do not attend their interview as required must be denied using denial code E10 – Failure to Keep/Complete Interview. HEAP Applications for returning applicants may be processed as normal for a Regular benefit if the applicant does not respond to an appointment letter for emergency screening.

If the applicant is experiencing a crisis or life-threatening emergency for their primary heating source or heat-related utility, the district must complete the Emergency Benefit Budget Worksheet (EBBW, [LDSS-3594B](#)) with the applicant and assess the household for a first Emergency HEAP benefit. Emergencies must be resolved and applications must be processed in accordance with instructions found in the New York State [HEAP Manual](#) (revised 10/01/2015) and [20-LCM-11](#). If the applicant meets the criteria for both a Regular and an Emergency benefit, a Regular HEAP benefit may be issued concurrently with a heat and/or heat-related first Emergency benefit.

A combination Benefit Type 'B – Both Regular and Emergency' HEAP budget may be stored in ABEL if Regular and Emergency benefits are issued in the same transaction. Entry of the Fuel Type and acceptable Emergency Benefit Type is required. The payment amount associated with the pay types must match the HEAP Regular and Emergency benefit amounts on the HEAP budget. The payment lines' "From Date" should be the application date. Client Notice System (CNS) support is available for these combination approval notices. Additional information on HEAP Budgeting for the 2020-2021 program year is found in [ABEL Transmittal 20-3, Section 8](#).

If Regular and Emergency heater benefits are issued concurrently, the Emergency benefit must be guaranteed to the vendor using a HEAP Guarantee of Payment Letter ([LDSS-5000](#)) or utility web tool. Deliverable vendors must make a full value commodity delivery for each benefit authorized. Vendors receiving concurrent Regular and Emergency heater benefits must make one Emergency benefit delivery upon receipt of the Guarantee of Payment Letter (LDSS-5000), and the customer's account must be credited with the remaining balance upon receipt of payment. Vendors must make at least one subsequent Regular benefit delivery upon the customer's request or during the vendor's normal delivery schedule.

Utility vendors receiving concurrent Regular and Emergency heater benefits must provide 30 days of prospective service for each benefit authorized. Utility providers receiving heat-related Emergency benefits must provide 30 days of prospective service.

The HEAP Bureau will send guidance under a separate cover to participating HEAP vendors regarding concurrent Regular and Emergency HEAP benefit issuance.

Second Emergency Benefit:

A second Emergency benefit will be available to applicants from March 8, 2021 through April 30, 2021 when the Emergency component closes. The eligibility criteria for the second Emergency benefit will be the same as the first Emergency benefit. Applicants must have exhausted, or have unavailable to them, both the Regular benefit and the first Emergency benefit to be eligible for the second Emergency benefit. First and second Emergency benefits must not be issued concurrently.

Applicants must apply in their county of residence by telephone or in person and may be eligible for income deeming based on their most recently filed HEAP Application ([LDSS-3421](#)). Districts must continue to use the EBBW ([LDSS-3594B](#)) and it must be marked "Second Emergency Benefit" on the top. Households must meet resource eligibility requirements.

The second Emergency benefit amounts are the same as the first Emergency benefit amounts and are as follows:

Heating Type	Second Emergency Benefit Amount
Heat Related Domestic	\$140
Natural Gas – Heat Only	\$350
Natural Gas – Heat Combined with Heat-Related Domestic	\$490
Electric Heat	\$490
Oil, Kerosene, Propane	\$675
Wood, Pellets, Coal, Corn, Other	\$525

The payment type for second Emergency benefits is J1 (HEAP Emergency Benefit – Additional Benefit) for both heat and heat-related emergency payments.

An Emergency HEAP Budget (Benefit Type 'E – Emergency') must be stored in ABEL, with the appropriate emergency type, and the payment amount associated with the pay type must match the HEAP Emergency benefit amount on the HEAP budget. The payment line "From Date" should be the application date.

A Special Claiming Code must be entered for all HEAP payments on Screen 6 of WMS. Special Claiming Code H is required for all HEAP prevention payments. Special Claiming Code G is required for HEAP restoration payments.

CNS support is available for both approval and denial transactions. All HEAP Emergency benefits must be issued directly to a participating vendor. All district payments, except for NYC, meeting the requirement for issuance through the Office of the State Comptroller (OSC) process will be made through OSC. NYC HEAP payments are issued locally. Detailed procedures regarding HEAP payment processing are outlined in the "2020-2021 Annual HEAP Systems Letter", released August 14, 2020.

Temporary Assistance (TA) Implications:

Districts must continue to explore the availability of, and individual eligibility for, Regular, first Emergency, and/or second Emergency HEAP benefits before issuing a Family Assistance (FA), Safety Net Assistance (SNA), Emergency Assistance to Needy Families with Children (EAF), Emergency

Safety Net Assistance (ESNA) or Emergency Assistance for Adults (EAA) payment to meet a utility or non-utility energy emergency.

Additional Guidance to Districts:

Districts must continue to submit their HEAP Pending Case Report in eReports on a weekly basis, as outlined in [20-LCM-11](#). Applications for Regular benefits which are also pending a concurrent Emergency benefit must be reported under both Regular HEAP, item 1 “Number of applications received but not yet processed on WMS”, and under Emergency HEAP, item 2 “Number of applications received but not yet processed on WMS.”

Pending second Emergency benefits must be reported under Emergency HEAP, item 5: “Number of supplemental benefit applications received but not yet processed on WMS”.

The HEAP Bureau has scheduled two Webex meetings to provide technical assistance to districts with the implementation of 2020-2021 program changes. Representatives from OTDA’s HEAP Bureau will be available for questions related to the program administration. Information regarding the Webex meetings will be forthcoming under separate cover.