



HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE
PROGRAM (HEAP)

PY 2021
HEAP HANDBOOK

August 24, 2020

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	1
SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION.....	7
SECTION 2: NATIVE AMERICAN TRIBAL ORGANIZATIONS	7
A. Tribal Application Process.....	7
B. Tribal Contacts.....	8
SECTION 3: DEFINITIONS.....	9
SECTION 4: ELIGIBILITY	9
SECTION 5: HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION.....	10
SECTION 6: RESIDENCY.....	12
SECTION 7: CITIZENSHIP.....	13
SECTION 8: NONCITIZENS.....	14
SECTION 9: MIXED HOUSEHOLDS	14
A. Ineligible Members.....	14
B. Eligible Members.....	14
SECTION 10: HOME ENERGY OBLIGATION	15
SECTION 11: DWELLING UNIT	15
A. Dwelling Unit.....	15
B. Group Homes.....	16
C. Business Use.....	16
D. Motel/Hotels	16
E. Applicant Relocates.....	17
F. Temporary Living Quarters	17
SECTION 12: INCOME GUIDELINES/DEDUCTIONS.....	17
A. Income Guidelines	17
B. Income Deductions.....	17
1. Child Support.....	17
2. Medical Deductions	17
SECTION 13: APPLICATION INTAKE.....	18
SECTION 14: PERMISSION TO SHARE PERSONAL INFORMATION.....	19
SECTION 15: CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE.....	19
A. Overview.....	19
B. Monthly Reporting.....	19
SECTION 16: APPLICATION PERIOD.....	19
SECTION 17: COMPLETING THE APPLICATION.....	20
A. Changes to Application Documents.....	20
B. Documentation and Information Requirements	20

1.	HEAP Application.....	20
2.	Primary Applicant and Family Information.....	20
	<i>a. Emancipated Minors.....</i>	20
	<i>b. Social Security Numbers (SSN).....</i>	20
	<i>c. Foster Care Children</i>	21
	<i>d. Non-U.S. Citizens</i>	21
	<i>e. Primary Applicant Identity</i>	21
	<i>f. POA or Guardian.....</i>	21
	<i>g. College Students.....</i>	22
	<i>h. Mailing Address.....</i>	22
	<i>i. Primary Contact.....</i>	22
C.	Ownership Type and Ownership Information.....	22
D.	Dwelling Type and Dwelling Information	22
	1. Modular Home	23
	2. Manufactured Home.....	23
	3. Apartment and Duplex.....	23
E.	Subsidized Housing (Heat Included).....	23
	1. \$21 HEAP Benefit	23
	2. Documentation.....	23
F.	Subsidized Housing (Heat Not Included).....	23
	1. Applicant is responsible for paying all or a portion of their heating costs	23
	2. Documentation.....	24
G.	Low Income Housing Tax Credit Properties (LIHTC) and Affordable Housing Units.....	24
H.	Number of Rooms	25
I.	Utility Information	26
J.	Dwelling Not Permanently Connected or Serviced by Utility.....	26
K.	Heating Systems.....	27
	1. Heating System Priority.....	27
	<i>a. Multiple Heating Systems</i>	27
	<i>b. Inoperable Heating Systems.....</i>	28
	2. Entering Heating Systems in HEAT Cloud.....	29
L.	Energy Vendors	29
	1. More Than One Vendor	29
	<i>a. Indicate the Vendor and the Fuel Type(s):.....</i>	29
	<i>b. Secondary Heating System.....</i>	30
	2. Electricity Information	30
	3. Rent With Heat Included	30
M.	Direct Check Information.....	30
N.	Landlord Information	30
O.	Income Verification Time Period	31

P.	Signatures.....	31
Q.	Income Documentation (Proof of Income).....	31
SECTION 18:	SUBSIDIZED HOUSING WITH HEAT INCLUDED PROCESS	32
SECTION 19:	TELEPHONE APPLICATION PROCESS	34
SECTION 20:	PROCESSING TELEPHONE APPLICATIONS	35
SECTION 21:	INCOME.....	36
SECTION 22:	EXEMPTIONS FROM HOUSEHOLD INCOME.....	36
SECTION 23:	COUNTABLE INCOME.....	38
A.	Gross Wages, Salaries, and Bonuses Before any Taxes or Deductions.....	38
B.	Social Security Retirement (SS), Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Income (SSDI)	38
C.	Unemployment Compensation Benefits (State of Maine or Out-of-State Benefits).....	40
D.	Worker’s Compensation.....	40
E.	Strike Benefits From Union Funds.....	40
F.	TANF, Pass-Through, GAP, Transitional Workers Supplement (or any Other Regular Support From a Government or Private Agency).....	40
G.	Alimony, Child Support, or Mortgage/Rent Payments (in lieu of or in addition to support payments).....	40
1.	Alimony.....	40
2.	Child Support.....	41
a.	<i>Court Ordered</i>	41
b.	<i>Voluntary</i>	41
H.	Self-Employment Income	41
1.	Documented by a Federal Tax Return (including rental income):.....	41
2.	Documented by a <i>Self-Employment Worksheet</i>	43
I.	Odd Job Income.....	44
J.	Rental income	44
K.	Income from Roomers/Boarders	44
L.	Support From Person or Family Member Not Living in the Household (if received within the income verification period).....	45
M.	Interest	45
N.	Dividends, Royalties, Estates, and Trusts.....	45
O.	Government employee pensions, private pensions, and regular annuity payments.....	45
P.	Veteran’s Administration Pensions.....	46
Q.	Veteran’s Disability Benefits.....	46
R.	Military allotments (pay	46
S.	Winnings	46
T.	Other	46
SECTION 24:	CERTIFICATION	47
A.	Certifier Review and Verification Process	48
B.	Income	48

1	<i>Income Worksheet</i>	48
2.	Interest	49
3.	Court ordered child support paid by an Applicant.....	49
4.	Documentation.....	49
5.	Self-Employment and Rental Income (HEAP Cloud Data Entry):.....	49
6.	Zero Income Applicants and Household Members (HEAP Cloud Data Entry):.....	49
C.	Over Income Applications (Medical Deductions).....	49
1.	Allowable Deductions	50
2.	Unallowable Deductions	50
D.	Subsidized Housing (Heat Not Included).....	50
E.	Fuel Allowances.....	50
F.	Consumption or Design Heat Load	51
G.	When to Use DHLC.....	52
H.	Household Carried Fuel	52
I.	Landlord Requires Applicant/tenant Use Specific Vendor	52
1.	Participating Vendor	52
2.	Non-Participating Vendor	53
J.	Direct Check Vendor.....	53
K.	No Working Heating System on the Date of Application.....	54
1.	CHIP Only	54
2.	No Electrical Service.....	54
L.	Household Moves Prior to Certification	55
M.	Certifying the Application	55
1.	Benefit Notification	55
2.	Denial Notification.....	55
N.	Wood Purchase Orders	56
SECTION 25: LOW INCOME ASSISTANCE PLAN (LIAP)		56
A.	How Does a Household Get on the LIAP Report?.....	56
B.	Electric Account Not in a Household Member's Name on the Date of Application	56
C.	Subsidized Housing.....	57
SECTION 26: WEATHERIZATION ONLY CERTIFICATION		58
SECTION 27: CHIP ONLY CERTIFICATION NO WORKING HEATING SYSTEM.....		58
A.	No Working Heating System.....	58
B.	CHIP Only Certification	59
SECTION 28: APPLICATION CHANGES		60
A.	Denied Reversal.....	60
B.	Submitting a Denied Reversal Request (Making Changes to the Application).....	60
C.	Household moves before Application is Qualified/Certified.....	60
C.	Undo Certify.....	61
1.	Making Changes to an Application That Has Been Certified but NOT Paid.....	61

2.	Certified Eligible and Moves Before Payment is Issued.....	61
3.	If all Applicants Move to an Eligible Dwelling Unit.....	61
D.	Changes.....	61
SECTION 29:	BENEFITS.....	62
SECTION 30:	PAYMENT OF BENEFITS	63
A.	Weekly Payment Process.....	63
B.	Benefits Issued.....	63
1.	Vendor (Pre-Delivery)	63
2.	Direct Check	63
C.	Wood Vendor (Post-Delivery)	64
SECTION 31:	BENEFIT RETURNS	65
A.	Overarching Principles That Apply to Benefit Returns.....	65
B.	CAA Responsibilities	65
1.	CAA Must Initiate a Benefit Return Request	65
2.	CAA is Responsible For.....	66
3.	Requesting Return of Funds.....	66
4.	HEAP Cloud Updates Must be Completed.....	66
a.	<i>Change of Address</i>	66
b.	<i>Change of Vendor</i>	66
c.	<i>Change of Heating System</i>	66
C.	Vendor Responsibilities.....	67
SECTION 32:	CHANGE OF ADDRESS OR CHANGE OF PRODUCT.....	70
SECTION 33:	ENERGY CRISIS INTERVENTION PROGRAM (ECIP).....	71
A.	Crisis definition and response times	71
1.	Energy Crisis	71
2.	Life Threatening Crisis	71
B.	Maximum Benefit.....	72
1.	Remaining Benefits	72
2.	ECIP Only Applicants.....	72
C.	Allowable Expenditures.....	72
D.	Unallowable Expenditures	73
E.	Do Not Pay List	73
F.	Documenting Eligibility	73
1.	Standard HEAP Application.....	73
2.	ECIP Only Application.....	74
G.	Processing and Verifying.....	74
1.	Fuel Emergency	74
2.	Utility Disconnect (Electricity and Natural Gas)	75
3.	Heating System Emergency	76

4.	Provisional Measures (Space Heaters and Temporary Relocation).....	76
5.	Eviction Emergency.....	77
H.	HEAP Cloud Data Entry and Certification	78
1.	ECIP Only Application.....	78
2.	Certified-eligible Standard HEAP Application.....	78
I.	Denials	79
J.	Issuing the Purchase Order.....	79
1.	Fuel Delivery Purchase Order.....	79
2.	Utility Disconnect Purchase Order	79
3.	Heating System Repair Purchase Order	79
4.	Space Heater Purchase Order	80
5.	Temporary Relocation Purchase Order.....	80
6.	Rental Payment Assistance	81
K.	Reconciling Purchase Orders.....	81
1.	Fuel Delivery.....	81
2.	Heating System Repairs.....	82
3.	Utility Disconnect.....	83
4.	Space Heaters.....	83
5.	Temporary Relocation	83
L.	Space Heaters.....	83
SECTION 34:	APPEAL.....	84
1.	MaineHousing Will.....	84
2.	CAA Will.....	85
SECTION 35:	TANF SUPPLEMENTAL BENEFITS	85
SECTION 36:	RESOURCES AVAILABLE ON CAA WEB PORTAL	85
APPENDIX A:	MAINEHOUSING HEAP PROGRAM STAFF.....	86
APPENDIX B:	AVERAGE FUEL PRICES FOR USE IN PROGRAM YEAR 2020-2021	87
APPENDIX C:	INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO OBTAIN A COPY OF YOUR UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFIT HISTORY	88
APPENDIX D:	TANF SUPPLEMENTAL BENEFITS.....	89
APPENDIX E:	INFORMATION PROTECTION GUIDELINES	92
APPENDIX F:	COURT ORDERED CHILD SUPPORT DEDUCTIONS.....	94

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) Block Grant is a federally funded block grant offered through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The LIHEAP Block Grant provides funding to individual states to assist low-income families with the high cost of their home energy. The grant is administered by the Maine State Housing Authority (MaineHousing).

Community Action Agencies (CAAs) are under contract with MaineHousing as the local agencies administering HEAP. MaineHousing has designated nine (9) CAAs. A complete list of local service providers can be found on MaineHousing's website at www.mainehousing.org. Applications are accepted in person or through a telephone/mail process. CAAs are responsible for determining Applicant eligibility and for promptly responding to heating-related crises affecting Eligible Households.

The HEAP Rule – Chapter 24 (the Rule), State of Maine HEAP State Plan, and Subgrantee Agreement define the requirements, which must be met to ensure compliance and funding. The Handbook is designed to assist in the procedures for operating the program, and is to be used in conjunction with the Rule, State Plan, and Subgrantee Agreement. Documents and forms for administering the program can be found on-line at www.mainehousing.org.

Any proposed deviations from the policies/procedures outlined in the Rule, State Plan, or Handbook must be submitted for MaineHousing's consideration prior to the CAA certifying the Application. In such cases, the CAA must complete and submit a HEAP Waiver Request to liheap@mainehousing.org.

MaineHousing will provide technical assistance to CAAs, as needed or requested. A list of MaineHousing contacts can be found in Appendix A – MaineHousing HEAP Program Staff.

SECTION 2: NATIVE AMERICAN TRIBAL ORGANIZATIONS

MaineHousing has executed memoranda of understanding with Maine's Native American Tribal Organizations. The tribes receive 3.65% of the total HEAP funds allocated to the State of Maine for the administration of HEAP. Each tribe submits its own LIHEAP State Plan and receives its HEAP funding directly from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

A. Tribal Application Process

1. Tribal members living on a reservation apply for and receive HEAP assistance through their tribal organization.
2. A CAA may not process an Application for a Household living on a tribal reservation. Applications for persons living on a tribal reservation must be taken by the applicable tribal organization. In the event an Application is taken by a CAA for a Household residing on a tribal reservation, the CAA shall notify the Primary Applicant of the error and forward the Application and supporting documentation to the applicable tribal organization.
3. Tribal members who do not live on a tribal reservation may apply for HEAP through the CAA. However, the CAA must contact the applicable tribal organization prior to certification to prevent duplication of services and duplication of payment.
4. Both the tribe and the CAA shall:
 - a. Prepare and exchange lists, throughout the program year, of Native Americans they have provided HEAP services to; and

- b. Will make every effort to refer Applicants to the tribe/CAA as necessary to ensure that all Eligible Households are given the opportunity to participate in the Home Energy Assistance Program.

B. Tribal Contacts

Aroostook Band of Mic-Macs

7 Northern Road 207-764-1972
Presque Isle, Maine 04769

Houlton Band of Maliseets

88 Bell Road 207-532-4273
Littleton, Maine 04730

Indian Township Tribal Government

Passamaquoddy Tribe 207-796-2301
P.O. Box 301
9 Keibasis Road
Princeton, Maine 04668

Penobscot Nation

Penobscot Nation Tribal Administration 207-817-7349
12 Wabanaki Way
Indian Island, Maine 04468

Pleasant Point Reservation Passamaquoddy Tribe

P.O. Box 343 207-853-2600
15 Elders Way, Suite 201
Pleasant Point, Maine 04667

SECTION 3: DEFINITIONS

Capitalized terms not otherwise defined in this Handbook have the same meaning as set forth in the Rule. As used in this Handbook, the following terms have the following meanings:

1. “CAA” means a community action agency selected by MaineHousing to administer the Programs.
2. “Degree Days” means the degree-days determined by the National Weather Station in Gray, Maine, multiplied by the percentage of population.
3. “DHHS” means the State of Maine Department of Health and Human Services.
4. “Handbook” means the HEAP Handbook.
5. “Heating System” means a permanently installed system that is used to heat the Dwelling Unit. A portable space heater is not considered to be a Heating System.
6. “Primary Heating System” means the heating system that provides the majority of heat to the Applicant’s dwelling.
7. “Rule” means Chapter 24 of the Rules of the Maine State Housing Authority.
8. “Waiver” means a written request to deviate from the HEAP guidelines, as described in the HEAP Rule, State Plan, and Handbook. The CAA shall submit the Waiver request and supporting documentation justifying the request to MaineHousing for its consideration.

SECTION 4: ELIGIBILITY

Except as may be expressly provided for elsewhere in the Rule, eligibility is based on the Household and Dwelling Unit information that is valid on the Date of Application.

MaineHousing and CAAs reserve the right to ask for additional or clarifying information from the Primary Applicant, Applicant(s), or third parties to determine eligibility.

SECTION 5: HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

- (1) “Household” means any individual or group of individuals who are living together on the Date of Application as one economic unit for whom residential energy is customarily purchased in common or who make undesignated payments for energy in the form of rent.
- (2) For purposes of HEAP eligibility, persons sharing a Dwelling Unit are considered one Household, except in cases of Roomers/Boarders.
- (3) The following guidelines are not an all-inclusive list, but are major factors used to determine the persons counted as part of the Household.
- (4) A Household may consist of:
 - a. A person who lives alone.
 - b. Persons legally obligated for the support of each other, *for example*: husband and wife, parents of minor children, and custodians per court order.
 - c. Persons who share a Dwelling Unit, even if only one person in the Household pays the Household expenses (not to include a Roomer or Boarder).
 - d. Persons who share a Dwelling Unit and pool their income to pay Household expenses.
 - e. Persons who share a Dwelling Unit and Household expenses such as persons who pay a percentage of the Household expenses individually.
 - f. Minor children, who are qualified aliens, residing with ineligible noncitizens.
- (5) A person staying in a drug abuse center or hospital, public or private, may be counted as a part of a Household if they are expected to return home within ninety (90) days from the Date of Application.
- (6) A live-in care attendant will be considered part of the Household if the live-in care attendant does not meet the definition of a Live-in Care Attendant in Section 1 of the Rule.
- (7) Qualified aliens will be included/counted as members of the Household if they meet the requirements outlined in the Rule and Handbook.
- (8) A person who is away from the home part of the time will be counted as a Household member and their income will be included in the Household income unless the Primary Applicant can provide proof that the person’s primary residence is a separate Dwelling Unit.
- (9) Legal dependents or minor children living with parents/guardians who maintain separate residences can be counted as Household members in only one Household. To determine which Household, CAAs may rely on custodial parent /guardian’s declaration of legal custody/guardianship of minor children unless disputed. *See the Minor Child(ren) Primary Residency Affidavit* and instructions.
- (10) **Dispute Resolution:** If two different Applicants declare the same minor child, only the Household with the appropriate documentation will be allowed to claim the dependent(s) as a member of their Household. The following requirements pertain to only those cases where another party has disputed the declaration:

- a. In cases where a divorce decree or parental/guardianship rights document dictates shared residency, the minor child(ren) will be included in the Household where they are designated to reside the majority of the time.
- b. In cases where a divorce decree or parental/guardianship rights document dictates 50/50 shared residency, the minor child(ren) will be included in the Household that has the earliest Date of Application.
- c. If there is no divorce decree or parental rights document in place, the Applicant must provide additional documentation to verify the validity of the information being provided. Additional documentation may include, but is not limited to, verification of where the child(ren) are enrolled in school; physician's statement verifying residence on record; day care provider statements, etc. This information should be in writing or specific notes made in HEAP Cloud stating the verification source and information given.
- d. If a Benefit has been paid and the other parent/guardian subsequently challenges the declaration, the CAA will investigate. If the initial declaration was not accurate, the appropriate party will be required to repay funds to MaineHousing.

NOTE: Claiming minor children on a tax return does not constitute primary residence.

- (11) A full-time college student, up to age 23, who is a dependent of the Household and resides in the Dwelling Unit on the Date of Application, may be excluded from the Household if the Primary Applicant chooses as long as the college student is not the Primary Applicant. If excluded from the Household, his or her income would not be counted. The Applicant must provide proof of student status and enrollment at a university, vocational college, business college, or other accredited institution for twelve (12) credit hours or more per semester.
- (12) Roomers/Boarders are eligible for a Benefit if the Applicants prove that the rental arrangement giving rise to their Roomer/Boarder status was in existence for at least sixty (60) days prior to the Date of Application. At a minimum, such proof shall include verification that a reasonable market rate rent amount was paid by the Roomer/Boarder pursuant to the terms and conditions of the rental agreement for the entire sixty (60) day period. Roomers/Boarders cannot comingle funds or share expenses with lessor's Household. All utilities must be included in rental agreement.

NOTE: Roomers/Boarders cannot be related by birth, marriage or adoption to any member of the lessor's Household.

- (13) No person may be counted as part of a Household if that person:
 - a. Is a Roomer or Boarder.
 - b. Has been previously served as part of another Household in the current Program Year.
 - c. Is an unqualified alien.
 - d. Resides in one of the following facilities on the Date of Application:
 - i. A state or federally supported institution, *for example*: state psychiatric facility or federal and state Prisons.
 - ii. A school dormitory, long-term nursing home, boarding home, foster care facility, emergency shelter, or military base housing.

- iii. A substance abuse center or hospital, public or private, and the person is not expected to return to the Dwelling Unit within ninety (90) days of the Date of Application.
- e. Live-in Care Attendant. A live-in care attendant will not be counted if **both** of the following are true:
 - i. Does not contribute financially to the Household; and
 - ii. Provides needed health/supportive services to a member of the Household as documented by a qualified professional.

SECTION 6: RESIDENCY

1. The intent of HEAP is to assist people who are Maine residents and who will reside in a Dwelling Unit full-time for at least four months during the Heating Season. A Household may be eligible for a Benefit if, on the Date of Application:
 - a. it is a full-time resident of Maine and resides in the Dwelling Unit full-time for at least four (4) months during the Heating Season; and
 - b. it intends to reside in Maine through April 30.
2. If the Date of Application is on or after February 1, the Household may be eligible for a Benefit if the Household indicates that at least one Household member has been a full-time resident of Maine for at least sixty (60) days. If the Applicant provides inconsistent information or makes questionable statements, the intake/outreach worker shall ask the Primary Applicant to provide documentation to substantiate residency. Examples of documentation may include, but are not limited to, additional utility bills and a lease agreement (current/previous).

SECTION 7: CITIZENSHIP

Eligible household members must be United States (U.S.) citizens, U.S. Nationals or qualified non-U.S. citizens (aliens) (as defined by 8 U.S.C §1641(b)).

- (1) An Applicant who submits a Social Security card, issued by the Social Security Administration, will not have to submit any other kind of proof of citizenship or qualified non-U.S. Citizen Status as long as the Applicant's authorization to work in the U.S. has not expired.
- (2) To be considered an Eligible Household member, a person must be a United States (U.S.) citizen, U.S. National or qualified alien.
- (3) A United States citizen is someone born in:
 - a. One of the 50 states
 - b. The District of Columbia
 - c. Puerto Rico
 - d. Guam
 - e. The Virgin Islands
 - f. The Northern Mariana Islands
- (4) A United States National is someone born in:
 - a. America Samoa
 - b. Swain's Island
- (5) If needed, the CAA may use any of the following documents to verify a person is a U.S. Citizen or U.S. National:
 - a. Birth Certificate
 - b. U.S. Passport
 - c. Report of Birth Abroad of a Citizen of the U.S. (FS-240) issued by the U.S. Department of State
 - d. Certification of Birth (FS-545) issued by a Foreign Service post
 - e. U.S. Citizens I.D. card (I-197) issued by the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (BCIS)
 - f. Certificate of Naturalization (N-550 or N-570) issued by BCIS
 - g. Certificate of Citizenship (N-560 or N-561) issued by BCIS
 - h. Northern Marianas I.D. card (I-873) issued by BCIS
 - i. Statement provided by the U.S. consular official certifying the individual is a citizen

SECTION 8: NONCITIZENS

If an Applicant is not a U.S. citizen, the Applicant must provide non-expired documentation of their lawful status in the United States. Acceptable documentation:

- (1) Social Security card issued by the Social Security Administration. If the Social Security card includes one of the restrictions listed below, the Applicant must provide their work authorization expiration date, and the CAA must document the expiration date in case notes and in HEAP Cloud comments section (ex. “Joe Brown’s authorization to work expires on *mm/dd/yyyy*).
 - a. Not valid for employment.
 - b. Valid for work only with INS authorization.
 - c. Valid for work only with DHS authorization.
- (2) Unexpired foreign passport with a valid unexpired U.S. Visa affixed accompanied by the approved I-94 form documenting the Applicant's most recent admittance into the United States.
- (3) Permanent Resident Card (I-551).
- (4) Arrival Departure Form I-94 with “Temporary I-551” stamp and holder’s photograph affixed.
- (5) I-94 stamped with one of the following statuses: Asylee, Parolee or Parole, Refugee, Asylum, HP-humanitarian parolee, PIP-public interest parolee, or Cuban-Haitian Entrant.
- (6) Permanent resident Re-entry Permit (I-327).
- (7) Travel Document issued to Permanent Residents (I-327).
- (8) Travel Document issued to Refugees (I-571) Form.
- (9) U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Form I-797C- Notice of Action.

SECTION 9: MIXED HOUSEHOLDS

A. Ineligible Members

Persons who are not citizens or qualified non-U.S. citizens are considered ineligible Household members. Ineligible Household members living with Eligible Household members do not disqualify the Eligible Household members from receiving Benefits.

B. Eligible Members

- (1) CAAs should not deter or deny eligible Applicants who reside with ineligible individuals from applying for Benefits. An Applicant does not need to be an eligible member of a Household, but should be of legal age to apply on behalf of those members of the Household who are eligible. Accordingly, an Applicant can be either an eligible Applicant (able to receive Benefits) or an ineligible Applicant (unable to receive Benefits but applying for the eligible Household members).
- (2) All Household members must be entered into HEAP Cloud. When entering uncounted Household members into the Family section, the uncounted box must be checked.

- (3) The income of all Household members, regardless of eligibility, must be documented and entered in HEAP Cloud.

SECTION 10: HOME ENERGY OBLIGATION

- (1) A Household may be eligible for a Benefit if, on the Date of Application, it has a Direct Energy Cost or Indirect Determinable Energy Cost. An Applicant must have an obligation or responsibility to pay its Home Energy bill. Such obligation is reflected through an active account with a utility or fuel vendor, a current energy bill, and evidence that a Household member pays the vendor directly.
- (2) Applicants whose **rent includes heat** have an indirect obligation for Home Energy costs.
- (3) Applicants residing in Subsidized Housing with heat included in their rent may be eligible if the Household pays an out-of-pocket expense for a portion of their rent or utility costs. The maximum Benefit for Households residing in Subsidized Housing with heat included is \$21 per Program Year. If the subsidy pays 100% of the rent and utility costs, the Household does not have a Direct or Indirect Determinable Energy Cost; and therefore, would not be HEAP eligible.

SECTION 11: DWELLING UNIT

A. Dwelling Unit

- (1) “Dwelling Unit’ means an occupied residential housing structure with one or more rooms that is used customarily as a domicile for one or more persons, when permanently connected to the required utilities (including plumbing, electricity and Heating Systems) and contains bathroom and kitchen facilities specific to that unit. A Dwelling Unit has its own private entrance from the outside or off an enclosed hallway leading from the outside that does not pass through or offer an open access to any other unit within the structure. A Dwelling Unit does not include a Camper, boat, railroad car, bus, yurt or other structure designed and constructed to provide temporary living quarters.”
- (2) If the dwelling is not permanently connected to or serviced by the required utilities on the Date of Application, the CAA must obtain additional documentation to substantiate the Household occupies the dwelling as its primary residence on a full-time/year-round basis.
- (3) The Dwelling Unit must have a functioning Heating System. If there is no working Heating System on the Date of Application, the Household’s Application cannot be certified-eligible for Fuel Assistance, and they are not eligible to receive a Fuel Assistance Benefit. The CAA should explore other program resources to assist the Household.
 - a. If everything else about the Application is complete, all applicable documentation has been provided, and the Household is determined income eligible, the Application can be certified for “CHIP Only”.
 - b. If the lack of a functioning Heating System is due to utility disconnection, the Household is not eligible to receive a Fuel Assistance Benefit. If the CAA determines the Household meets all other HEAP-eligibility requirements (except for having a working Heating System), the CAA can provide written confirmation of the Household’s eligibility to the utility company so as to provide the Household with

access to Vendor program resources that assist in restoring the Household's utility service (ex. LIAP and/or the Arrearage Management Program).

- c. Use private funds, if available, to restore utility service or repair/replace Heating System.

B. Group Homes

(1) Applicants residing in a group home where they have their own room, but share a bathroom and/or kitchen facilities may be eligible if they are responsible for Home Energy costs through their rent. Determine if the Applicant pays a reduced rent amount due to the receipt of federal or state subsidy.

- a. If the subsidy reduces the rent amount and heat is included, they would be categorized as residing in Subsidized Housing with heat included. Therefore, they may be eligible for a \$21 Benefit.
- b. If the federal or state subsidy is exclusively for supportive services, they would be categorized as a Roomer/Boarder. Therefore, they may be eligible for a regular/full Benefit.
- c. If there is no subsidy, they would be categorized as a Roomer/Boarder. Therefore, they may be eligible for a regular/full Benefit.

(2) An Applicant who operates and resides in a licensed nursing home, boarding home, foster care facility, emergency shelter, or bed and breakfast may apply for the program. The Benefit will be determined based on the number of rooms occupied by the Household as a residence; that part of the Dwelling Unit used for business will not be included.

TIP: Group home Applicants categorized as residing in Subsidized Housing with heat included are NOT categorically income eligible. Therefore, their income must be fully documented and verified in order to determine eligibility.

C. Business Use

An Applicant who is self-employed and uses part of their Dwelling Unit for business may apply for the program. Benefits will be determined based on the number of rooms occupied and used by the Household as a residence; that part of the Dwelling Unit designated for business use will not be included.

D. Motel/Hotels

Applicants residing in a motel or hotel may be eligible for a Benefit provided Applicants document that they live in the motel or hotel; and that the terms and conditions of the contract agreement have been in effect for at least sixty (60) days prior to the Date of Application. Designate the Ownership Type as Roomer/Boarder in HEAP Cloud.

E. Applicant Relocates

If a Household's Application has been certified eligible, but all Applicants move to Subsidized Housing with heat included or an ineligible Dwelling Unit prior to the Benefit being paid, the Household may not be eligible for the entire Benefit depending on the Date of Application and Home Energy use during the current Program Year. In such cases, please notify MaineHousing.

F. Temporary Living Quarters

- (1) An Applicant who is housesitting is not eligible for HEAP.
- (2) An Applicant residing in a Camper, regardless of any and all modification(s) or length, boat, railroad car, bus, yurt or other structure designed and constructed to provide temporary living quarters is not eligible for HEAP.

SECTION 12: INCOME GUIDELINES/DEDUCTIONS

Income is the cornerstone for HEAP eligibility. Applicant income must be documented and verified before an Application can be certified eligible. Household income is determined and verified in accordance with the information provided on the Application and/or verified as part of the eligibility determination process.

A. Income Guidelines

The income guidelines for Fuel Assistance, the Energy Crisis Intervention Program (ECIP), and Assurance 16 are based on the following:

- (1) The greater of 150% of Federal poverty Guidelines or 60% of State Median Income.
- (2) The income limit for Weatherization services and the Central Heating Assistance Program (CHIP) is 200% of Federal poverty. *See [Section 26, Weatherization Certification Only](#).*

B. Income Deductions

1. Child Support

- a. For any Applicant who pays court ordered child support, the CAA will deduct paid and documented child support payments made during the income verification period from the Applicant's gross income. The Applicant must provide a copy of the court order and proof of the amounts paid during the income verification period.
- b. For self-employed Applicants whose self-employment income is documented by a Federal tax return, the amount of child support payments shall be deducted from the net profits. The maximum allowable deduction for child support shall be less than or equal to the amount of any net profits.
- c. For additional guidance on deducting court ordered child support, refer to [Appendix F](#) of this Handbook.

2. Medical Deductions

- a. If a Household is ineligible due to being over income, the CAA will deduct eligible medical expenses from the Household's gross income in an amount only enough to

make the Household income eligible. A medical expense will be considered eligible if:

- i. It was not reimbursed by insurance;
 - ii. Applicant made the payment within the income verification period; and
 - iii. It is allowable under IRS Publication 502 (ex. hospital and doctor bills, medical and dental insurance premiums, prescriptions, and the cost of transportation to and from medical appointments. For more information, refer to <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p502.pdf>).
- b. Per IRS Publication 502, medical marijuana cannot be counted as a medical deduction: “Controlled Substances – You cannot include in medical expenses amounts you pay for controlled substances (such as marijuana, laetrile, etc.), even if such substances are legalized by state law. Such substances are not legal under federal law and cannot be included in medical expenses.

SECTION 13: APPLICATION INTAKE

- (1) Applications must be taken by the CAA administering the Programs in the Service Area in which the Household resides. In the event an Application is taken by a CAA for a Household not within their Service Area, the CAA shall notify the Primary Applicant of the error and forward the Application and supporting documentation to the applicable CAA.
- (2) An Applicant may only have one certified eligible Standard HEAP Application per Program Year.
- (3) The Application must include copies of all required documentation and pertinent case notes.
- (4) If a photocopier or scanner is not available, the intake worker will use the Document Verification Form to describe the documentation that was reviewed, and to record the appropriate information (ex. type of identification, pertinent numbers, expiration date, etc.).
- (5) If any information requires further explanation or clarification, enter comments in HEAP Cloud. HEAP Cloud comments should tell the full story and be clear to anyone reviewing the Application file.

BEST PRACTICE TIP: Review the prior year’s Application, case notes and HEAP Cloud comments to get an overall understanding of the Applicant’s past situation, and how it may (or may not) be relevant to the current Application.

SECTION 14: PERMISSION TO SHARE PERSONAL INFORMATION

Applicants age 18 years and older are required to sign a Permission to Share Personal Information Form. This will permit the CAAs and MaineHousing to provide information to and obtain information from DHHS, the Maine Department of Labor, and the Social Security Administration, or other agencies as needed to determine and confirm eligibility, including the amount of Benefits received.

SECTION 15: CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE

A. Overview

- (1) The CAA is expected to be attentive to and disclose potential conflicts of interest when employees, temporary staff, volunteers, contractors, or HEAP Vendors are beneficiaries (or prospective beneficiaries of services or Benefits funded by HEAP). The aforementioned relationships are examples and do not represent an all-inclusive list of situations that could give rise to perceived partiality, an appearance of a conflict of interest, or an actual conflict of interest in connection with program services or Benefits.
2. The application file must contain case notes documenting the names and relationships of the parties involved, and notes describing how the CAA managed any potential conflict.

B. Monthly Reporting

- (1) CAA management must upload a report to MaineHousing's ShareFile, Conflict of Interest subfolder, on or no later than the twentieth of each month (or first working day following the twentieth day if the twentieth day falls on a weekend or a holiday).
- (2) The report shall be cumulative and inclusive of those who received Benefits funded by HEAP during the contract period. The report shall identify the following:
 - a. Person's name;
 - b. Person's job title or description of their affiliation with the CAA or MaineHousing; and
 - c. Program(s) involved and grant year (*i.e.*, Standard HEAP Application, ECIP-Only Application, and ECIP request on a previously certified Standard Application).

SECTION 16: APPLICATION PERIOD

- (1) For the 2020/2021 Program Year, CAAs will begin taking Applications on **August 24, 2020** and will continue taking Applications through **July 15, 2021**.
- (2) An Applicant may submit a new Application if the Household's Application was denied or withdrawn prior to the issuance of a Benefit. The new Date of Application must be on or before **July 15, 2021**.

SECTION 17: COMPLETING THE APPLICATION

All questions on the Application must be asked, and responses documented and/or entered in HEAP Cloud. If the Applicant cannot provide the required information, a *Reminder Form*, which clearly states the documentation needed to determine eligibility, must be given to the Applicant and a copy must be retained in the Application file.

A. Changes to Application Documents

If changes are made to the Application or any form that the Applicant signs, the changes must be initialed and dated by the Applicant. Once the Applicant has signed the Application and forms, subsequent changes may be initialed and dated by the appropriate CAA staff person, who will document the date they spoke with Applicant and received the Applicant's approval to make the change.

B. Documentation and Information Requirements

The following guidance is not all-inclusive, but offers clarification for the major information and documentation required.

1. HEAP Application

The HEAP Application in HEAP Cloud is divided into nine sections: (1) Comments (2) Primary Applicant, (3) Application, (4) Family, (5) Income, (6) Vendor and Consumption (7) Questions and Answers, (8) Documents, and (9) Change History.

2. Primary Applicant and Family Information

- (1) Always enter the **Primary Applicant first** and then other Applicants.
- (2) Primary Applicant must be 18 years of age or older or an emancipated minor.

a. *Emancipated Minors*

An emancipated minor must provide appropriate legal documentation to substantiate the court recognizes the Applicant as an emancipated minor. Upon receipt of said legal documentation, the CAA shall enter the Application in HEAP Cloud and click check box for Emancipated Minor.

b. *Social Security Numbers (SSN)*

- i. All Applicants two years of age or older must provide proof of their Social Security Number (SSN), unless the Applicant's SSN can be verified by using the electronic verification process established between MaineHousing and the Social Security Administration.
- ii. Individuals that do not have or refuse to furnish a SSN are considered an ineligible household member. If the Household includes a child 24 months of age or under who has not received a SSN, the Application can still be processed. However, the Applicant must provide the child's SSN for the subsequent Program Year's Application.
- iii. Any document used to prove SSN must contain all nine (9) digits and the Applicant's full name. Acceptable documents are:
 - (1) Social Security Card issued by the Social Security Administration;

- (2) SSA-1099 tax form;
- (3) Non SSA-1099 tax form;
- (4) Medicare card with card number ending in the suffix “A”;
- (5) Internal Revenue Service form 1095-C Employer-Provided Health Insurance Offer and Coverage;
- (6) Valid unexpired U.S. Military documents such as DD 214 Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty issued by the U.S. Department of Defense;
- (7) Bank tax form; or
- (8) W-2 (current wage and tax statement).

c. Foster Care Children

Social security cards are held by DHHS. The CAA or the foster parent will need to contact the DHHS caseworker to request foster care child(ren)’s social security number verification. The written verification should be included in the Application file.

d. Non-U.S. Citizens

According to the Social Security Administration, noncitizens may apply for a Social Security number if they are authorized to work in the United States by the Department of Homeland Security. SSN documentation that reads, “Authorized for work use only,” is acceptable proof of SSN.

e. Primary Applicant Identity

Primary Applicant’s identify shall be verified by requesting a government-issued photo identification card. One of the following is acceptable to establish the identity of the Primary Applicant provided it includes the Primary Applicant’s photo:

- i. Driver’s license;
- ii. State issued ID card;
- iii. Passport or passport card;
- iv. U.S. Military ID; or
- v. SNAP/EBT card with photo.

f. POA or Guardian

- i. If a guardian or Power of Attorney completes the Application, the CAA must obtain a copy of the court ordered guardianship documents or the notarized Power of Attorney documents for the file.
- ii. The CAA must ask the guardian or POA to provide a government-issued photo ID to verify their identity. The CAA should verify that the guardianship or POA documentation matches the Government ID.

g. College Students

- i. If there is a full-time college student, up to age 23, who is a dependent of the Household and resides in the Dwelling Unit on the Date of Application, the Primary Applicant may exclude them as a Household member, unless the college student is the Primary Applicant.
- ii. If the Primary Applicant chooses to exclude the college student as a Household member:
 - (1) Enter a comment in HEAP Cloud documenting the Primary Applicant's decision to exclude the college student. Include the college student's name and date of birth. Ex. College student Mary Smith, DOB *mm/dd/yyyy*, excluded from HH.
 - (2) The Primary Applicant must provide proof of the college student's status and enrollment at a university, vocational college, business college, or other accredited institution for twelve (12) credit hours or more per semester. The intake worker must include the required documentation on the *Reminder Form*.
 - (3) Do not count the excluded college student's income.
 - (4) Do not enter an excluded college student on the Application or in HEAP Cloud.

h. Mailing Address

Distinguish between a rural box number and a post office box number. Enter the apartment number, if applicable (post office may return checks if apartment number is missing).

i. Primary Contact

Enter the telephone number for the Primary Applicant. If the Primary Applicant does not have a telephone number, enter a contact or message phone number.

C. Ownership Type and Ownership Information

- (1) Select the Households Ownership Type (Own, Rent, Roomer/Boarder).
- (2) If the Households receives a subsidy towards their rent or mortgage, check the Subsidized Housing box.
- (3) If the Households heat is included in their rent, check the Heat in Rent box.
- (4) If the Households electricity is included in their rent, check the Electricity in Rent box.
- (5) If the Households rent includes all utilities, both the Heat in Rent and Electricity in Rent boxes must be checked.

D. Dwelling Type and Dwelling Information

Select the Households Dwelling Type (Stick-Built/Modular, Mobile/Manufactured, Apartment, Condo/Duplex)

1. **Modular Home**

Modular Home is designated as a single-family. A modular home is a dwelling that is built offsite, transported to the site, placed on a pre-made foundation and is permanently anchored.

2. **Manufactured Home**

Manufactured Home is designated as a mobile home. A manufactured home has a metal chassis and is considered a mobile home even if the wheels have been removed or it has been placed on a foundation. CAA should ask the Primary Applicant questions to verify that the dwelling is not a Camper.

3. **Apartment and Duplex**

If the Applicant indicates they own the apartment or duplex, CAA must ask:

- a. If they provide the heat for all or both units (one Heating System, separate Heating Systems, one tank, separate tanks). This information must be documented because it will determine if the Benefit is based on consumption or DHLIC.
- b. Applicant to provide self-employment (rental income) documentation.

E. **Subsidized Housing (Heat Included)**

1. **\$21 HEAP Benefit**

- a. Tenants living in Subsidized Housing **with heat included** may be eligible for a \$21 Benefit provided they pay a portion of their rent or utility costs.
- b. Receipt of a \$21 HEAP benefit entitles the client to the SNAP Standard Utility Allowance (SUA) provided the Benefit was paid within the twelve (12) months preceding their SNAP application or SNAP recertification date.
- c. If the subsidy pays 100% of the rent and utility costs, the tenant does not have a direct or indirect heating cost; and therefore, would not be eligible for HEAP.

2. **Documentation**

One of the following must be provided by the Applicant or obtained by the CAA:

- a. Recertification worksheet/summary or rent calculation sheet signed by property manager or subsidy housing specialist; **or**
- b. Recertification form (HUD 50058/59 or RD 3560-8); **or**
- c. MaineHousing HEAP *Subsidized Housing Form*.

F. **Subsidized Housing (Heat Not Included)**

1. **Applicant is responsible for paying all or a portion of their heating costs**

- a. Applicants living in Subsidized Housing who are responsible for their own heat may be eligible for a regular HEAP Benefit that is greater than \$21/year. The HEAP Benefit amount is based on the Household's estimated home heating cost minus subsidy received, or included in the rent/mortgage reduction calculations, to assist with home heating costs. Since the Household has a direct heating cost, their

eligibility for the SNAP Standard Utility Allowance (SUA) is NOT contingent on receiving a HEAP Benefit.

- b. Households that have a calculated heating burden of \$0 or less, are only eligible to receive a benefit in an amount that complies with Maine law to maximize benefits under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), currently a \$21 benefit.

BEST PRACTICE TIP: *Have the Applicant sign the Subsidized Housing Form. Then, CAA sends the Subsidized Housing Form directly to the housing agent. If done early in the application process, obtaining the completed form directly from the housing agent will facilitate the processing/certification of the HEAP application.*

2. Documentation

A MaineHousing HEAP *Subsidized Housing Form* must be provided by the Applicant or obtained by the CAA.

G. Low Income Housing Tax Credit Properties (LIHTC) and Affordable Housing Units

- (1) Low income housing tax credit properties (LIHTC) and Affordable housing units **when the tenant's rent is subsidized** – refer to the above guidelines for Subsidized and Subsidized with heat included.
- (2) Low income housing tax credit properties (LIHTC) and Affordable housing units **when tenant pays fixed rent amount** – the table below provides guidance on how to determine the Occupancy Type and Utility Allowance.

	Who is responsible?		Utility Allowance	HEAP Cloud	
	Heat	Electricity		Ownership Type	Monthly Allowances
a.	Tenant	Tenant	Yes	Rent	Enter Fuel Subsidy Allowance
b.	Tenant	Tenant	No	Rent	N/A
c.	Tenant	Landlord	No	Rent	N/A
d.	Tenant	Landlord	Yes	Rent	Enter Fuel Subsidy Allowance
e.	Landlord	Landlord	No	Rent with Heat	N/A
f.	Landlord	Tenant	Yes	Rent with Heat	N/A
g.	Landlord	Tenant	No	Rent with Heat	N/A

H. Number of Rooms

- (1) Enter the total number of rooms to be used in calculating the benefit (*example*: bedrooms, living room, kitchen, dining room, etc.)
- (2) Heated rooms are those used as living space. Do not include bathrooms, hallways, closets, and basement or attic areas unless the basement or attic is used as living space. A mudroom or laundry room would not be considered living space unless other activities occur in that room such as a computer/office set up in the laundry room, along with the washer/dryer.
- (3) When a **room is larger than the standard room size**, use the standard room sizes below to determine the number of rooms.

BEST PRACTICE TIP: CAAs should ask additional clarifying questions to ensure that number and types of rooms being entered are correct. For example: If the number of rooms increased or decreased since last year's Application, ask the Applicant what changed. Did they put an addition on the home or convert a previously unused area of the home?

Dwelling Unit Type	Standard Room Size
Stick-built/Modular	144 square feet
Manufactured Home/Mobile Home	100 square feet
Apartment	120 square feet

Divide actual square footage of the room by standard room size for the applicable dwelling type. The result equals the adjusted number of rooms. If the result is 2.4, round down to 2 rooms and if 2.5, round up to 3 rooms.

Example: Calculating the number of rooms

- (1) Mobile home with kitchen/living room located in one large room with no dividing wall. The approximate dimensions (supplied by the Primary Applicant) are 14 feet by 15 feet or 210 square feet. $210/100 = 2.1$ (the kitchen/living room area would count as 2 (two) rooms, since it is more than the room size used by the DHLC for mobile homes of 100 square feet.
 - (2) One room single-family dwelling (combined kitchen/living room/bedroom located in one room). The approximate dimensions (supplied by the Primary Applicant) are 15 feet by 18 feet or 270 square feet. $270/144 = 1.9$. This would count as 2 (two) rooms, since it is more than the room size used by the DHLC for a single-family house of 144 square feet. However, it is only two rooms, not three, since it is less than twice the DHLC amount of 288 feet (144 x 2).
- Apartment with combined dining room/living room located in one room. The approximate room dimensions (supplied by the Primary Applicant) are 10 feet by 11 feet or 110 square feet. This would count as **one** room, since it is less than the room size used by the DHLC for apartments of 120 square feet.

I. Utility Information

- (1) Households that are responsible for utilities must provide a copy of the most recent utility bill, regardless of whether or not the bill is in a Household member's name
- (2) Utility Vendor and account information must be entered in the Vendor and Consumption section of HEAP Cloud.
- (3) If the Household does not have electric heat, check the Utility Only box when entering the vendor in HEAP Cloud.

J. Dwelling Not Permanently Connected or Serviced by Utility

If the dwelling is not permanently connected to or serviced by the required utilities on the Date of Application: The CAA must obtain documentation to substantiate the Household occupies the dwelling as its primary residence on a full-time/year-round basis. The following guidelines pertain to dwelling units that are not permanently connected to the required utilities (*i.e.*, water and electricity), or if the required utilities have been disconnected or are non-functioning.

- (1) The CAA needs to understand the Applicant's housing/dwelling situation and fully document the Application file and HEAP Cloud accordingly. HEAP Cloud and the Application file must include documentation and case notes describing the situation. The following provides guidance on how to validate the legitimacy of the dwelling unit and determine eligibility Benefits.
- (2) The CAA may need to obtain more information depending on the situation or if the information provided is inconsistent or requires further clarification.
 - a. Tax bill and information from the town office, rental agreement, or Verbal Rental/Lease Agreement
 - i. What is the dwelling type? Is it a Camper? Is it a seasonal camp?
 - ii. Does the tax bill or rental agreement indicate there is a dwelling/building on the property?
 - iii. Additional information from the town office about the situation.
 - b. How is the dwelling being heated?
 - i. Home Energy vendor transaction reports showing Home Energy use/deliveries/purchases for previous twelve (12) months.
 - ii. Does usage seem reasonable and indicate that the Applicant has used/is using the dwelling as their primary residence on a full-time/year-round basis?
 - c. What if any utilities are in service (*i.e.*, electricity, natural gas, and water/sewer)?
 - i. Copies of utility bills showing usage history for prior and current Heating Season.
 - ii. Does usage seem reasonable and indicate that the Applicant has used/is using the dwelling as their primary residence on a full-time/year-round basis?

- d. Pictures of home, generator or solar energy sources may be needed only if items 1 and 2 above cannot be obtained or do not fully substantiate the legitimacy of the dwelling.

NOTE: If there are indications of potential fraud/misrepresentation, the CAA is expected to exercise due diligence to ensure the legitimacy of the Dwelling.

K. Heating Systems

- (1) Heating System information is entered into HEAP Cloud for the purposes of:
 - a. Verifying the existence of a functioning Heating System (functioning means “working well” or “not working well”); and
 - b. Documenting all Heating Systems that are permanently installed in the Dwelling Unit and their condition/usage, and priority (*i.e.*, primary, secondary, second backup or third backup).
 - c. HEAP eligibility is contingent on the Dwelling Unit having a permanently installed and functioning Heating System. The intention of this requirement is two-fold:
 - i. Validating the Dwelling Unit is a legitimate full-time residence; and
 - ii. Ensuring the Benefit can/will be used for its intended purpose, to supply a Heating System that is permanently installed.
- (2) All permanently installed Heating Systems must be entered in HEAP Cloud regardless of condition and heating capacity. *For example*, if a Household has a permanently installed wood stove or monitor heater, it would be entered in HEAP Cloud regardless of its heating capacity/adequacy. The wood stove or monitor heater would meet the intent of and requirements for HEAP eligibility even if its capacity is insufficient to heat the entire Dwelling Unit.
- (3) Portable heating devices should not be entered in HEAP Cloud. On the Date of Application if the only source of heat is a portable device, the Household is not eligible for Fuel Assistance or ECIP. In such cases, the Application can be certified for “CHIP Only” if the Household meets all eligibility criteria for HEAP, except working Heating System.
- (4) When/if a Household is referred for CHIP services, CAA housing staff would need to assess the heating situation in the Dwelling Unit in order to verify eligibility and priority for CHIP.

1. Heating System Priority

When designating Heating System priority, consider the following:

a. Multiple Heating Systems

- i. If there is more than one Heating System, the Applicant and CAA need to determine which Heating System the Applicant uses most.
- ii. If a Household uses two Heating Systems equally and both are working on the Date of Application, designation of the Primary Heating System should be based on annual fuel cost (as declared by the Primary Applicant). The Heating System with the highest total (annual) fuel cost would be designated

as the Primary Heating System. The Benefit calculation will be based on the heating fuel type with the highest total (annual cost).

Example 1: Household has a kerosene monitor heater and LP gas heater.

Both Heating Systems are being used equally. The total cost for LP gas is expected to be higher than kerosene this Heating Season. The LP gas heater would be designated as the Primary Heating System.

Example 2: Applicant has an oil Heating System, which had been previously used as their Primary Heating System.

However, this Heating Season they decided to heat their home using wood pellets, due to the rising costs of oil. Therefore, the Applicant's fuel costs for wood pellets will be higher than oil this Heating Season. The wood pellet stove would be designated as the Primary Heating System.

b. Inoperable Heating Systems

A Heating System that is "Not Working" on the Date of Application cannot be designated as the Primary Heating System if there is another Heating System that is "Working" or "Not Working Well".

Example 1: Household's only Heating System, an oil furnace, is "Not Working" on the Date of Application:

There are no other permanently installed Heating Systems in the Dwelling. The oil Heating System must be designated as the Primary Heating System. The Household is not eligible to receive a Fuel Assistance Benefit. See [Section 27: CHIP Only Certification](#).

Example 2: Household has two permanently installed Heating Systems, an oil furnace and a wood stove:

The oil furnace is "Not Working" on the Date of Application because the Household electric service has been disconnected. The wood stove must be designated as the Primary Heating System. The Benefit amount would be based on and issued for wood.

Example 3: Household has two permanently installed Heating Systems, an oil furnace and a LP gas heater.

The oil furnace is "Not Working" on the Date of Application. The LP gas heater is working and must be designated as the Primary Heating System. The Benefit amount would be based on and issued for LP gas.

GUIDANCE: If the CAA has alternative funding (non-HEAP funding) to restore the Household’s utility service, the CAA should consider the following options and what is in the best interest of the Household:

- (1) Defer issuing the wood purchase order. Once utility service has been restored and the oil Heating System is working, the CAA can change the “Requested Vendor” to the oil Vendor and issue the Benefit for oil. Do NOT make any other changes to the Heating System information (priority and condition of Heating Systems must represent the Household’s situation on the Date of Application). The wood stove must be designated as the Primary Heating System in HEAP Cloud. The condition of the oil Heating System must remain as “Not Working”. The CAA should enter a comment in HEAP Cloud to document the situation and date the utility service was restored.
- (2) Inactivate (void) the Application and have the Household reapply once utility service has been restored. If the oil Heating System is working on the new Date of Application, it could be designated as the Primary Heating System, and the Benefit could be based on and issued for oil.

2. Entering Heating Systems in HEAT Cloud

Indicate/select the following for each Heating System:

- a. *Heating System Location:* Enter the location of the heating system. **Note:** if more than one heating system is in the same location, number the heating systems. Example, Basement-1 and Basement-2.
- b. *System and Fuel Type:* Choose the appropriate Heating System and corresponding Fuel Type. If Applicant indicates they have electric heat, CAA should verify that it is not a portable space heater. A portable space heater is not considered a Heating System.
- c. *Priority:* Select the applicable priority from the dropdown list – e.g. primary, secondary, second backup, or third backup.
- d. *Condition:* Working Well, Not Working Well, or Not Working. It is important to accurately document the condition as it will determine the Household’s eligibility for Fuel Assistance, ECIP, and CHIP. If the Household does not have a working Heating System on the Date of Application, refer to [Section 27: CHIP Only Certification](#).

L. Energy Vendors

1. More Than One Vendor

Ask the Applicant if they used more than one vendor for the primary fuel type in the previous Heating Season.

a. Indicate the Vendor and the Fuel Type(s):

- i. *Fuel Vendor Name:* Choose the Vendor and corresponding fuel type
- ii. *Account Number:* Enter the Household’s account number
- iii. *First Name, Last Name:* Enter the name of the account holder OR check the Same as Applicant box, if the account is in the Primary Applicant’s name.

b. Secondary Heating System

The Applicant can choose to have their Benefit go to the fuel used for their secondary Heating System. However, the fuel type for the Primary Heating System will be used to determine the Benefit amount. If the Applicant chooses for the benefit to be issued for the Fuel Type of the secondary heating system, the secondary Vendor must be added to HEAP Cloud.

Example

If the Household uses an oil system as their Primary Heating System and a wood stove as backup, the oil system would be indicated as primary. The Primary Applicant can choose to have the Benefit go to a wood vendor. The Benefit amount would be calculated based on oil.

2. Electricity Information

Indicate/select the following for the electricity Vendor:

- a. *Fuel Vendor Name:* Choose the Vendor and corresponding fuel type
- b. *Account Number:* Enter the Households account number
- c. *First Name, Last Name:* Enter the name of the account holder OR check the “Same as Applicant” box, if the account is in the Primary Applicant’s name.
- d. *Utility Only:* Check this box only if the household does not have a permanently installed electric heating system.

3. Rent With Heat Included

Benefit can be issued to:

- a. Primary Applicant (direct check); or
- b. Electricity Vendor if the account is in a Household member’s name.

M. Direct Check Information

If the Benefits will be issued to the Primary Applicant as a direct check, a direct check Vendor with corresponding fuel type must be entered into HEAP Cloud. Indicate/select the following for the direct check Vendor:

- (1) *Fuel Vendor Name:* Choose the Vendor and corresponding fuel type
- (2) *Account Number:* Enter 0 as the Households account number.
- (3) *First Name, Last Name:* Check the Same as Applicant box to populate these fields.

NOTE FOR SUBSIDIZED HOUSING: If the Household receives a subsidy towards their rent, enter the Fuel Subsidy Allowance when entering the Vendor information.

N. Landlord Information

The following information must be obtained and entered in HEAP Cloud for all Households with an Ownership Type of Rent:

- (1) Entity Name
- (2) Telephone Number
- (3) Email address
- (4) Mailing Address, Municipality, State, and Zip

O. Income Verification Time Period

- (1) Do not automatically select a time period on behalf of the Primary Applicant. Offer and explain the time period options to the Primary Applicant. Ask the Primary Applicant to choose the time period.
 - a. Standard HEAP Application: may be based on previous 3 months or 12 months
 - b. ECIP Only Application: may be based on previous 30 calendar days or 1 month.
- (2) When explaining the options to the Applicant, it is important to take into consideration the Household's situation and if Household has had any significant changes in income over the last twelve (12) months. The CAA should keep in mind that the income verification period selected may impact not only the Household's eligibility for HEAP, but also their Benefit amount.
- (3) If a Household appears to be income-eligible and the only income is "fixed" meaning they receive the same amount each month (such as social security/SSD, SSI, or SSI-State), the Primary Applicant may want to consider choosing the previous 3 months (which will require minimal documentation). If it appears the Household may be over income but they had paid non-reimbursed medical expenses 6 months ago, the Household may want to consider choosing the previous 12 months. Explain the differences to the Primary Applicant and ask them to make the decision.

P. Signatures

- (1) Before the Primary Applicant signs the Application:
 - a. Review the completed Application with the Primary Applicant.
 - b. Make sure they read (or read to them) the entire Application to ensure the information is correct.
 - c. If changes are made to any signed documents during the face-to-face application process, have the Primary Applicant verify the change(s) and initial/date each change.
- (2) The outreach or intake worker must sign the Application and specify the Date of Application.

Q. Income Documentation (Proof of Income)

- (1) Primary Applicant must provide documentation of all Household Income. Lack of proof will cause denial of services.
- (2) CAA reviews the proof of income the Primary Applicant has provided and documents the proof of income on the *Income Worksheet*.

- (3) **Social Security Benefits:** Specify the type of Social Security benefits (ex. social security/SSD, SSI, or SSI-State).
- (4) If the Primary Applicant provided all income information and proof of income for the Household:
 - a. Fill out an *Income Worksheet*: CAAs are required to use/complete the *Income Worksheet* to document income for all Household members 18 years or older.
 - b. Attach all proof.
 - c. Fill out the appropriate worksheets such as Odd Jobs Worksheet, and/or *Self-Employment Worksheet*.
- (5) If there is missing or additional information or proof required:
 - a. Fill out the *Income Worksheet* with the information that is available.
 - b. Fill out the *Reminder Form*. Indicate what information is needed and the date it must be submitted by. Make sure the Primary Applicant signs the *Reminder Form*. The intake/outreach worker must also sign the *Reminder Form*. Give the Primary Applicant one signed copy and attach a copy to the Application.

SECTION 18: SUBSIDIZED HOUSING WITH HEAT INCLUDED PROCESS

CAA must follow the requirements outlined in this section for a face-to-face Application or telephone Application process, whichever is applicable.

- (1) Applicants living in Subsidized Housing with heat included will be considered income eligible for a HEAP Benefit in the amount of \$21 if:
 - a. The Applicant pays a portion of their rent each month, **or**
 - b. The Applicant is responsible for the electricity as outlined in the Rental/Lease Agreement. The HEAP file requires a copy of the most recent electricity bill.

NOTE: The electricity account does not have to be in a Household member's name; however, a copy of the bill must still be submitted.

- (2) Applicants residing in Subsidized Housing with heat included are NOT required to provide income documentation. However, all other documentation (*i.e.*, Permission to Share Information form, SSN documentation, government-issued identification, Lease Agreement or completed *Subsidized Housing Form* and other pertinent documentation) must be in the file.
- (3) Income eligibility for HEAP is established based on the Subsidized with heat Household's income eligibility for housing subsidy as documented by one of the following:
 - a. Recertification worksheet/summary or Rent Calculation sheet signed by property manager or subsidy housing specialist; or
 - b. Recertification form (HUD 50058/59 or RD 3560-8).
 - c. MaineHousing HEAP *Subsidized Housing Form*

NOTE: A valid lease agreement is not documentation of receiving Subsidized Housing with heat.

- (4) Enter one income record for each Household member over age 18 in HEAP Cloud.
 - a. Income Type: None
 - b. Income Amount: \$0.00
 - c. Income Frequency: Annually
- (5) In cases where there is a live-in care attendant who is not listed on the Subsidized Housing documentation, but is considered to be part of the Household according to HEAP guidelines, the income from all Household members, including the live-in care attendant, must be verified, documented, and entered in HEAP Cloud to determine the Household's income eligibility.
- (6) Group Homes: If an Applicant resides in a group home and pays a reduced rent amount due to the receipt of a federal or state subsidy, the "Ownership Type" would be designated as Rent, with the Subsidized and Heat in Rent boxes checked. In such cases, income must be verified, documented, and entered in HEAP Cloud to determine the Household's income eligibility.

SECTION 19: TELEPHONE APPLICATION PROCESS

- (1) The telephone Application process may be used for any Applicant. All information and documentation requirements are the same as the requirements for the face-to-face Application process. This includes a copy of the Primary Applicant's government-issued photo ID (if they have an unexpired photo ID).
- (2) The telephone interview is to be conducted in the same manner as face-to-face Application. It is critical that the intake/outreach worker go through all of the questions/information contained in the Application with the Primary Applicant. All information will be recorded in HEAP Cloud.
- (3) At the beginning of the telephone interview, ask the Primary Applicant for the last 4 digits of their SSN and date of birth to verify the person on the other end of the phone is the Primary Applicant.
- (4) Verify and update all information in HEAP Cloud.
- (5) Review and verify the information recorded on the Application with the Primary Applicant.
- (6) Intake/outreach worker will sign and date the Application.
- (7) CAA will mail the following to the Primary Applicant:
 - a. Application
 - b. Applicable documents/forms
 - c. *Reminder Form* listing the required documentation and the due date. The *Reminder Form* will give the Primary Applicant twenty (20) business days to return the signed *Application* and required documentation.
 - d. Instructions for completing the Application process, including:
 - i. Reviewing the entire Application
 - ii. Initialing and dating any changes to the Application
 - iii. Signing and dating the Application

BEST PRACTICE TIP: *The CAA should request income proof for the prior three (3) months plus current month or twelve (12) months plus current month. The Applicant has twenty (20) business days from the telephone application date to submit their signed Application. The receipt date of the signed Application becomes the Date of Application. In many cases, the twenty (20) business days extends into the next month (which changes the months for the income verification period).*

SECTION 20: PROCESSING TELEPHONE APPLICATIONS

- (1) The Application, signed by the Primary Applicant, must be received by the CAA within twenty (20) business days of the date of the telephone interview.
- (2) The CAA must date stamp the Application and all documents upon receipt.
 - a. The Date of Application is the date the CAA received the signed Application.
 - b. The new Date of Application must be entered in HEAP Cloud. HEAP Cloud has fields to capture Application created date and the applied date. CAAs should change the applied date in HEAP Cloud to the actual date the signed Application is received, and maintain the created date to reflect the actual date the Application was taken on. Following this process will ensure that both dates are captured and reflected in the HEAP Cloud system.

BEST PRACTICE TIP: *If the signed Application has not been received within 10 business days, call the Primary Applicant to:*

- *Confirm their receipt of the Application packet.*
- *Offer assistance and answer any questions they may have.*
- *Remind them of the deadline and encourage them to sign/date the Application and return it as soon as possible (even if they are missing supporting documentation).*

Example 1: Signed Application is received within the allowed twenty (20) business days. However, there is missing income documentation.

The CAA will date stamp the Application with the new Date of Application and send the Primary Applicant another reminder allowing twenty (20) business days from the new Date of Application.

- (1) Original Date of Application (listed on the *Reminder Form*) is November 13, 2020.
- (2) Signed Application is received by the CAA on November 20, 2020 and there is missing income documentation. CAA date stamps the Application and the new Date of Application is November 20, 2020.
- (3) A Reminder form reflecting the new Date of Application is sent to the Primary Applicant on November 21, 2020 giving the Primary Applicant an additional twenty (20) business days from the new Date of Application to submit the required documentation.

Example 2: CAA mails the Primary Applicant an Application dated January 22, 2021 with an income verification period requested of three (3) months (October, November and December).

CAA receives the signed Application on February 6, 2021; which now becomes the new Date of Application. The income verification period will be different (November, December, and January). In these instances, the CAA will need to notify the Primary Applicant of this fact and obtain documentation for the corrected income verification time period.

If the signed Application is not received within the twenty (20) business day period the Application will be inactivated. If the Primary Applicant has not signed the Application, they have not officially applied for HEAP.

- (1) CAA will need to enter the reason for inactivation (void) in HEAP Cloud as a Comment.
- (2) The CAA will need to notify the Applicant they will need to reapply. Note: this would NOT be in the form of a Denial letter. Remember whenever a Denial letter is sent to the Applicant they are granted an additional fifteen (15) business days to submit documentation and 30 calendar days to appeal a decision.

SECTION 21: INCOME

HEAP is an income based program; therefore it is important to ensure all sources of income and support have been captured.

- (1) It is the responsibility of the Primary Applicant to provide documentation of all Household income.
 - a. If the Primary Applicant is unable to provide adequate proof of income, the CAA will assist the Applicant(s) in understanding the documentation that is required.
 - b. Lack of proof may cause the application to be denied.
- (2) The Primary Applicant must be given the option to choose the income verification period that best serves them, *i.e.*, previous three (3) or twelve (12) months. When explaining the options to the Applicant, it is important to take into consideration the Household's situation and if the Household has had any significant changes in income over the last twelve (12) months. The CAA should keep in mind that the income verification period selected may impact HEAP eligibility and the Benefit amounts for some Households.
 - a. If a Household's only income is "fixed" meaning they receive the same amount each month (such as social security/SSD, SSI, or SSI-State), the Primary Applicant may want to consider choosing the previous three (3) months (which will require minimal documentation).
 - b. If it appears the Household may be over income but they had paid, non-reimbursed medical expenses six (6) months ago, the Household may want to consider choosing the previous twelve (12) months.

SECTION 22: EXEMPTIONS FROM HOUSEHOLD INCOME

In determining a Household's eligibility for HEAP certain types of income are to be excluded. The information below provides a quick review of income exemptions.

NOTE: See [Section 3\(F\)\(3\) of the Rule](#) for a complete list of income exemptions, including those federal payments and benefits excluded by law.

- (1) Adoption assistance. Financial assistance and medical coverage granted to an adoptive family to offset the short- and long-term costs of adopting an eligible child.
- (2) Assets drawn down from financial institutions provided the source of funds is not countable income. If the source of funds is countable income that was received during the income verification period, the amount withdrawn would be included in Household income.
- (3) Capital gains (for business purposes).
- (4) All income used to fulfill a Social Security Administration Program to Achieve Self-Sufficiency (PASS).
- (5) Any funds received for education from grants, loans, scholarships, and work study.
- (6) Bank loans, private loans, reverse mortgages, home equity loans.
- (7) Combat zone pay to the military.

- (8) Credit card loans/advances.
- (9) Foster Care payments. Payments made to foster families. Types of foster care: Family Foster Care, Special Rate Foster Care, Family Shelter Care, Relative Foster Care, and Independent Living Program.
- (10) Income earned by a full-time college student who is not counted as a Household member.
- (11) Income earned by an Applicant who is a full time high school student on the Date of Application will be excluded from the Household's income. If an Applicant is an emancipated minor then that emancipated person is considered an adult, has his/her own household, and income is counted.
- (12) Income from the sale of a primary residence or personal car, or other personal property.
- (13) In-kind payments. In-kind payments to an Applicant in lieu of payment for work, including the imputed value of rent received in lieu of wages or items received in barter for rent.
- (14) Non-cash income such as General Assistance voucher payments, the bonus value of food and fuel produced and consumed on farms, and the imputed value of rent from owner-occupied farm housing.
- (15) One-time compensation for injury.
- (16) One-time insurance payments.
- (17) Reimbursement for expenses incurred in connection with employment.
- (18) Reimbursement for medical expenses.
- (19) Retroactive payments and overpayment adjustments from an entitlement program for a time period outside of the period being considered for HEAP eligibility (*i.e.*, worker's comp, Social Security Benefits, etc.).
- (20) Tax refunds.
- (21) Federal payments or benefits excluded by law as set forth in Section 3.F.3.u of the Rule.

SECTION 23: COUNTABLE INCOME

A. Gross Wages, Salaries, and Bonuses Before any Taxes or Deductions

- (1) Any income received by an Applicant age 18 or under who is NOT a full-time high school student, must be counted as part of the total Household income.
- (2) If an Applicant has wages from a job and the paystubs state the year-to-date (YTD) amount, calculate the income using the first check received and the last check received during the income verification period. Use the date of the check – not the pay week ending date.

<i>Example:</i>		
Date of Application = 09/05/2020		
Income Verification Period = 06/01/2020 to 08/31/2020		
YTD gross - 08/31/2020 paystub		\$5,000
Minus YTD gross - 06/01/2020 paystub	-	\$2,000
Subtotal	=	\$3,000
Add the gross amount paid on 06/01/2020	+	\$300
Total Wages for Income Verification Period	=	\$3,300

- (3) If the paystubs do not show YTD amounts, calculate income as follows: add all actual gross pay received for all weeks during the income verification period (*i.e.*, prior three (3) or twelve (12) calendar months).
- (4) One of the following must be included in the Application file:
 - a. copy of **all** paystubs for the income verification period;
 - b. copy of first and last paystubs for the income verification period showing YTD amounts; or
 - c. signed letter from Applicant’s employer confirming the gross wages received during the income verification period.
- (5) If a photocopier is not available, use the Document Verification Form to describe the documentation that was reviewed, and to record the dates, amounts, source, etc.

B. Social Security Retirement (SS), Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Income (SSDI)

- (1) Benefits may be verified through the State Verification and Exchange System (SVES).
- (2) If an Applicant’s benefits cannot be verified through SVES, the CAA may use the current or previous year’s SSA award letter. The CAA may need to calculate the award amount by adding or subtracting any Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) that would or would not apply to the income verification period for HEAP.

<i>Examples of award letters used to verify SS, SSI, SSDI:</i>	
Date of Application	Acceptable Award Letters
December 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2019 (calculate 2020 award amount by adding 2020 COLA); • 2020 (no adjustment needed); or • 2021 (calculate 2020 award amount by deducting 2021 COLA increase)
February 1, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2021 (no adjustment needed) • 2020 (calculate 2021 award amount by adding 2021 COLA)

- a. In some cases, the CAA may be able to use the Applicant's current 1099 tax form if it represents a full twelve (12) months.
- b. For informational purposes, the following are some facts about SSI. Additional information about SSI can be obtained from <http://www.ssa.gov/ssi/text-eligibility-ussi.htm>.
 - i. "SSI" means Supplemental Security Income. SSI pays monthly checks to persons who are aged, disabled, or blind and who have limited assets or income. It is a Federal income supplement program run by Social Security. Funding for SSI comes from general tax revenues, not Social Security taxes.
 - ii. The following persons may be eligible for SSI benefits provided they meet eligibility requirements such as income and resources:
 - (a) A person who is age 65 or older;
 - (b) A person who is age 18 or older and has a physical or mental disability, that is expected to keep the person from working for at least 12 months or is expected to result in death;
 - (c) A child who is below age 18 and has a physical or mental disability that would keep an adult from working, is expected to continue for at least 12 months, or is expected to result in death; and
 - (d) A person of any age who is blind. A person is blind if the person has 20/200 vision or worse or has a limited visual field of 20 degrees or less in the better eye with the use of eyeglasses. If a person's sight is not poor enough to be considered blindness, the person may still be eligible for SSI as a person with a disability.
 - iii. Household income may cause SSI benefits to fluctuate month to month.
- c. In addition to above, the following persons may be eligible for SSI benefits:
 - i. A citizen or national of the United States; or
 - ii. A noncitizen who meets the alien eligibility criteria under the 1996 Legislation and its amendments.

- iii. Noncitizens must meet two requirements to be eligible for SSI: noncitizen must be in a qualified alien category; and meet a condition that allows qualified aliens to get SSI benefits.
- d. For more information:

Visit: <http://www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-11011.pdf>

Write: Social Security Administration
Office of Public Inquiries
SSA Publication No. 05-11011
1100 West High Rise
6401 Security Boulevard
Baltimore, Maryland 21235

C. Unemployment Compensation Benefits (State of Maine or Out-of-State Benefits)

If an Applicant received unemployment benefits during the income verification period, the Applicant must provide the CAA with a Department of Labor benefit history report/transcript. Appendix C provides instructions for Applicants who need to obtain a DOL benefit history/transcript using.

D. Worker’s Compensation

Benefit letter, check stubs, or letter from attorney.

E. Strike Benefits From Union Funds

Check stubs or statement from union.

F. TANF, Pass-Through, GAP, Transitional Workers Supplement (or any Other Regular Support From a Government or Private Agency)

Ask if the Applicant receives TANF and child support, and if they have documentation. Applicant’s file must include proof for the income verification period or a completed Document Verification Form (if photocopier is not available).

If there are other sources of income in the Household, the amount of TANF and child support may change from month to month. It is the responsibility of the Primary Applicant to provide all proof.

G. Alimony, Child Support, or Mortgage/Rent Payments (in lieu of or in addition to support payments)

1. Alimony

Calculate the amount received during the income verification period. Applicant(s) file must include one of the following:

- a. copy of the divorce decree;
- b. photocopy of the check(s); or
- c. written statement from the individual responsible for paying the alimony.

2. Child Support

Calculate the amount received during the income verification period. Applicant(s) file must include:

a. *Court Ordered*

- i. If collected through Maine DHHS, Support Enforcement Division, include a copy of the Official Record of Child Support Disbursements Made by the Department of Health and Human Services report; and
- ii. copy of the divorce decree, parental rights document, or the *Minor Child(ren) Primary Residency Affidavit*.

b. *Voluntary*

The *Minor Child(ren) Primary Residency Affidavit* is required to document the amount of support received and substantiate residency of the child(ren).

H. Self-Employment Income

1. Documented by a Federal Tax Return (including rental income):

- a. When documented by a Federal tax return and the applicable schedules, self-employment income is defined as the total of net income (including net rental income) plus the total net gain from sales of capital goods or equipment plus depreciation.
- b. If the Household is using the three (3) month income verification period, self-employed income for the last 365 days, or annual income from tax return, will be prorated to three (3) months.
- c. Self-employed Applicants must provide a Federal tax return (Form 1040) and appropriate supporting schedules/forms for the most recent calendar year if filed. Most recent is defined as a tax return that was filed by April 15 of the current Program Year. When the Date of Application is between January 1 and April 16, 2021, the 2019 tax return would be acceptable only if the Applicant has not filed their 2020 tax return.
 - i. The tax return must be signed and have been submitted to the IRS. Electronically filed returns must be accompanied by the electronic signature page to demonstrate that the return was actually submitted to the IRS.
 - ii. If the Applicant has not filed a tax return for the most recent calendar year, the Applicant's tax return for the previous year may be used.

Sole Proprietorship	Schedule C
Capital Gains	Schedule D
Farm	Schedule F
Real Estate	Schedule E
Partnership	Form 1065
Corporation	Form 1120S

- iii. If the tax form is showing a loss (negative amount) then use zero income. Negative amounts cannot be used to reduce overall Household income.
- d. If the net profit is a loss but the equipment plus depreciation is a positive then the total income amount would be positive.

<i>Example:</i>	
Net profit is loss	-\$12,000 (counted as \$0)
Equipment plus depreciation	\$2,000
Countable income for HEAP	\$2,000

- e. If a person has two or more businesses and one business shows a profit and another shows a loss, use the amount of the profit and use zero in place of the loss. The loss cannot be deducted from the overall profit.

<i>Example:</i>	
Business A has total profit of	\$32,000
Business B has loss of	-\$12,000
Countable income for HEAP	\$32,000

- f. Calculating income for a Household with wages and self-employment earnings:

Example 1: Bill Jones is self-employed, and Mary Jones works.

Primary Applicant chooses the three (3) month income verification period.
 Documentation Required/Provided

- Mary: Paystubs used to verify 3 months wages totaling \$2,990.00
- Bill: Recently filed income tax return with the appropriate schedules shows total net (self-employment) earnings of \$7,000 (total of net income plus the total net gain from sales of capital goods or equipment plus depreciation). Bill's self-employment income for the three (3) month income verification period is calculated by dividing the total gross earnings by four (4).
 $\$7,000.00 / 4 = \$1,750.00$

The Jones' total Household income for three (3) months equals Mary's three (3) months of wages plus Bill's self-employment income.
 $\$2,990.00 + \$1,750.00 = \$4,740.00$

Example 2: Susan Brown has been self-employed for only four months, and Henry Brown works

Primary Applicant chooses the three (3) month income verification period.

- Henry: Paystubs used to verify 3 months wages totaling **\$1,500.00**
- Susan: Recently filed income tax return with appropriate schedules shows total net (self-employment) earnings of \$3,150.00 (total of net income plus the total net gain from sales of capital goods or equipment plus depreciation). Susan's total self-employment income for the three (3) month income verification period is calculated by dividing the total gross earnings by four (4). **$\$3,150/4 = \787.50**

The Brown's total Household income for three (3) months equals Henry's three (3) months of wages plus Susan's self-employment earnings.

$$\$1,500.00 + \$787.50 = \$2,287.50$$

2. Documented by a *Self-Employment Worksheet*

- a. A *Self-Employment Worksheet* must be completed if a self-employed Applicant:
 - i. Chooses not to file a tax return for self-employment income;
 - ii. Is not required to file a tax return per IRS guidelines;
 - iii. Is newly self-employed and has not yet filed a tax return for his/her business;
or
 - iv. Provides IRS documentation that is incomplete or ambiguous. In such cases, the Applicant's income would be based on the gross amount of their self-employment and/or rental earnings.
- b. A self-employed Applicant must complete the *Self-Employment Worksheet* and provide supporting documentation to substantiate self-employment income for the 365 days preceding the Date of Application if the Applicant cannot produce a current or previous year's Federal tax return.
- c. The Worksheet and instructions can be found at <http://www.mainehousing.org/partners/partner-type/community-agencies/HEAP>.
- d. The Application cannot be certified eligible until the supporting documentation is presented and verified. It is the Primary Applicant's responsibility to provide adequate proof of income. It is the CAA's responsibility to verify that all submitted documentation is accurate and complete.
- e. If the Primary Applicant chooses the three (3) month income verification period, divide the total income from the *Self-Employment Worksheet* by four (4).
- f. Calculating income for Households with wages and self-employment earnings:

Example 1: Bill Jones is self-employed, and Mary Jones works.

Primary Applicant chooses the three (3) month income verification period.

Documentation Required/Provided

- Mary: Paystubs used to verify 3 months wages totaling **\$2,990.00**
- Bill: *Self-Employment Worksheet* and documentation used to verify \$12,000.00 of gross (self-employment) earnings for the 365 days preceding the Date of Application. Bill's self-employment income for the three (3) month income verification period is calculated by dividing the total gross earnings by four (4).
 $\$12,000/4 = \$3,000$

The Jones' total Household income for three (3) months equals Mary's three (3) months of wages plus Bill's self-employment income.

$$\$2,990.00 + \$3,000.00 = \$5,990.00$$

Example 2: Susan Brown has been self-employed for only four months, and Henry Brown works.

Primary Applicant chooses the three (3) month income verification period.

Documentation Required/Provided

- Henry: Paystubs used to verify 3 months wages totaling \$1,500.00
- Susan: *Self-Employment Worksheet* and documentation used to verify her \$4,000.00 total gross (self-employment) earnings for four (4) months. Mary's total self-employment income for the three (3) month income verification period is calculated by dividing the total gross earnings by four (4). $\$4,000/4 = \$1,000$

The Brown's total Household income for three (3) months equals Henry's three (3) months of wages plus Susan's self-employment earnings.

$$\$1,500.00 + \$1,000.00 = \$2,500.00$$

I. Odd Job Income

Applicants who occasionally perform miscellaneous "odd jobs" such as mowing lawns, raking leaves, babysitting, cleaning, donating plasma, and shoveling snow must document this income by completing and signing an *Odd Jobs Income Affidavit*. The Affidavit is a self-declaration. No supporting documentation is required unless the CAA has reasons to question the information provided on the Affidavit.

J. Rental income

Rental income is categorized as self-employment income. Either the Income Tax Form 1040, with applicable schedules, or the *Self-Employment Worksheet* will be used to document rental income. If the Applicant is using the *Self-Employment Worksheet* to document rental income, the gross amount of rental income received must be counted, no deductions are allowed. See [Section 23 \(H\): Countable Income, Self-Employment Income](#).

K. Income from Roomers/Boarders

If an Applicant has a Roomer/Boarder in his/her home, the Applicant must complete the *Self-Employment Worksheet* or provide tax form 1040, with applicable schedules. If the Applicant is using the *Self-Employment Worksheet* to document roomer/boarder income, the gross amount of roomer/boarder income received must be counted, no deductions are allowed.

L. Support From Person or Family Member Not Living in the Household (if received within the income verification period)

Cash support received by the Household and payments made by others on the Household's behalf are included as income. Loans and occasional cash gifts of a personal nature, to an individual that do not represent Household support, are excluded as income.

Source of Funds	Countable Income	Documentation Required
Cash support received	Yes	Self-attestation documenting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant name; • Name of person who provided assistance; and • Date(s) assistance was provided and the amount(s) of assistance provided.
Payments made by others on Household's behalf	Yes	Self-attestation documenting the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant name; • Name of person who provided assistance; • Party/company paid; and • Date(s) paid and amount(s) paid.
Personal loans from an individual	No	Self-attestation documenting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant name; and • Individual, who provided the loan Date and amount of loan

M. Interest

- (1) Income generated by savings accounts, CDs, and other investments that pay some form of interest. All interest must be counted as income and documented on the *Income Worksheet*. Bank statements required if interest amount is over \$200.
- (2) Interest from the direct sale of property pursuant to which the Applicant(s) receives a regular direct payment from the buyer must be counted as income. The Applicant(s) must provide a copy of the agreement/contract.

N. Dividends, Royalties, Estates, and Trusts

Income from dividends, royalties, estates, and trusts.

O. Government employee pensions, private pensions, and regular annuity payments

Use the gross amount shown on the check stub. Not all pensions and retirement checks are gross. Applicant must provide a copy of the check stub or verification of gross income from the provider. A statement from a financial institution showing direct deposit is not adequate documentation.

NOTE: Fixed annuities guarantee a certain payment amount; variable annuities do not. The recipient is taxed only when they start taking distributions or if they withdraw funds from the account. A check stub or statement from the company showing gross payments is required.

P. Veteran’s Administration Pensions

Recipients receive checks on a monthly basis. There are two types of VA pensions. One type increases every December and the second type is fixed and does not change. There is no way to distinguish between the two types. If you need more information about an Applicant’s VA pension, the Primary Applicant must provide documentation from the VA.

Q. Veteran’s Disability Benefits

Recipients receive checks on a monthly basis. Benefit payment check stubs or a statement from the Veteran’s Administration are required. Disability payments increase annually every December. Benefit levels may increase/decrease if the number of dependents in the household changes or if there is a change in the disability rating/percentage.

R. Military allotments (pay

Only those military personnel who are not living in military housing are eligible for a Fuel Assistance benefit. When an active-duty military person, who lives off base, applies for Fuel Assistance benefits, include the military family allotments plus housing allowance (Basic Allowance for Quarters- BAQ).

S. Winnings

Winnings from any source of gambling or gaming is considered income including, but not limited to private gambling, lottery, horse racing, bingo, etc.

T. Other

- (1) Jury duty.
- (2) Income of person living in the Household who is a non-qualified alien and 18 years of age or older.
- (3) Difficulty of Care Payment- Stipend received from Shared Living Program.

SECTION 24: CERTIFICATION

HEAP is an income based program. It is the certifier's responsibility to review and verify the entire Application file and HEAP Cloud (not solely income). It is important to remember that the certifier is not only certifying the Household's eligibility for Fuel Assistance/ECIP benefits, but also income-eligibility for other programs such as the Weatherization Assistance Program, the Central Heating Improvement Program (CHIP), TANF Supplemental Benefits, Assurance 16, LIAP, and AMP.

- (1) An Application is not considered certified until it is certified in HEAP Cloud, the system of record. The certifier must review all information in HEAP Cloud prior to certifying the Application. "Certifying" an Application on paper is ineffective and not permitted.
- (2) Each Application must be certified eligible or denied within thirty (30) business days from the Date of Application. Once all documentation has been received, certification may occur any time before thirty (30) business days.
- (3) If an Application cannot be certified due to lack of documentation (whether the documentation is pending from the Applicant or a third party) the Application is put on hold. However, the Application must be certified eligible or denied within thirty (30) business days of the Date of Application.
- (4) Separation of duties is required and provides essential checks and balances to ensure accuracy and compliance. On any given Application, intake and certification cannot be performed by the same person, with the exception of subsidized rent with heat included (\$21 benefit) applications. Subsidized rent with heat applications can be certified by an intake worker. Additionally, the person who enters/creates the Application in HEAP Cloud cannot certify the Application.
- (5) Any deviations from the policies/procedures outlined in the Rule, State Plan, or Handbook must be approved/denied by MaineHousing prior to certifying the Application. The CAA must complete a HEAP Waiver Request.
- (6) The certifier is responsible for:
 - a. Verifying all documents are in the file. *See* [Section 13: Application Intake](#).
 - b. Reviewing the entire Application file and HEAP Cloud for accuracy and completeness
 - c. Assessing the Application file as a whole (Does it make sense? Do the case file notes and documentation tell the entire story?)
 - d. Determining if the Household income is sufficient to meet basic living expenses
 - e. Resolving any inconsistencies or errors
 - f. Verifying the benefit calculated correctly

- (7) If there are changes/corrections, each change must be initialed and dated by the Primary Applicant or the CAA. If the CAA is initialing/dating the change, the CAA will document the date they spoke with the Primary Applicant and received verification from and the consent of the Primary Applicant to make the change.
- (8) The information contained in A thru N below, highlights some key considerations the certifier should take into account when reviewing/certifying the Application file.

A. Certifier Review and Verification Process

- (1) Compare Primary Applicant's address to the landlord's address. If they are the same, additional information and documentation may be required to ensure all Household members and income have been accounted for.
- (2) **Application:** Complete, signed and dated.
- (3) **Permission to Share Information Form:** Certifier must review the form and verify all Applicants 18 or older have signed the form with no additional comments added that would negate permission.
- (4) Verify that the Primary Fuel Type is compatible with the Primary Heating System. HEAP Cloud will produce an error if the Primary Fuel Type and Primary Heating System do not match.
- (5) If the fuel tank is outside or in an unheated space, the required Fuel Type is kerosene. (With the exception of propane tanks.)
- (6) To be considered a heated space, the source of heat must be permanently installed. If the space or building is heated solely by portable heating devices such as space heaters or lights/lamps, it would be considered an unheated space or building.
- (7) **Roomer/Boarder:** By definition there must not be more than 2 rooms listed.
- (8) **College Students:** If the Primary Applicant chose to exclude a college student as a Household member, the certifier will ensure the file contains the required proof of student status and enrollment at a university, vocational college, business college, or other accredited institution for twelve (12) credit hours or more per semester.

B. Income

HEAP is an income based program. Therefore, it is critical the certifier carefully follow the instructions outlined in the **Program Forms** section on the MaineHousing website when reviewing for completeness.

1 *Income Worksheet*

- a. Income must be documented for all Household members 18 years of age or older who are not high school students, unless the person is a college student who will be excluded from Household. See [Section 5 \(11\): Household Composition](#) for more information on the criteria for excluding/including a college student's income.
- b. Income must be verified and proof must be attached to the *Income Worksheet*, except in the case where self-attestation is recognized.

2. Interest

All interest must be counted as income, recorded on the *Income Worksheet*, and entered in HEAP Cloud. Interest income must have supporting documentation unless it is under \$200 annually.

3. Court ordered child support paid by an Applicant

- a. For any Applicant who pays court ordered child support, the CAA will deduct documented child support payments made during the income verification period from the Applicant's gross income. The Applicant must provide a copy of the court order and proof of the amounts paid during the income verification period.
- b. The following guidelines pertain to self-employed Applicants who paid court ordered child support during the income verification period:
 - i. If self-employment income is documented by a **Federal tax return**, the amount of child support payments shall be deducted from the net profits. The maximum allowable deduction for child support shall be less than or equal to the amount of any net profits.

Example:

- Income verification period is January, February, and March
- Self-employed Applicant's net profit for three (3) months is \$1,500.00
- Self-employed Applicant made child support payments in January, February, and March totaling \$1,800.00.
- Maximum allowable deduction for child support is \$1,500.00.
- Applicant's self-employment income recorded in HEAP Cloud as \$0.

- ii. If self-employment income is documented by a *Self-Employment Worksheet*, the amount of child support payments made shall be deducted from the Applicant's gross self-employment earnings.

4. Documentation

Use the *Income Worksheet* to document the Applicant/Household member name and amounts of child support paid for each month during the income verification period. A copy of the court order and proof of the amounts paid must be retained in the Application file.

5. Self-Employment and Rental Income (HEAP Cloud Data Entry)

Enter an income row for the Applicant's self-employment or rental income in HEAP Cloud.

6. Zero Income Applicants and Household Members (HEAP Cloud Data Entry)

Enter a zero income row for all adult Household members who had zero income during the income verification period.

C. Over Income Applications (Medical Deductions)

The CAA shall deduct any paid and documented medical expenses not reimbursed for the income verification period. Only deduct enough expenses to make the Household eligible. The CAA will deduct only enough expenses to put the Household \$1.00 below the maximum income bracket. All documentation must be provided in order to deduct any allowable expenses.

1. Allowable Deductions

- a. Deductible medical expenses (paid) may include, but are not limited to, hospital and doctor bills, medical or dental insurance premiums, prescription drugs, and the cost of transportation to and from medical care providers.
- b. Hospital or doctor's appointments may document proof of medical transportation expenses. If the Applicant is unable to provide actual costs, the CAA may use the current MaineCare reimbursement rate per mile to calculate deductible transportation costs. The MaineCare rates can be found at <http://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/rules/10/ch101.htm> (Ch. II – Section 113 Non-Emergency Transportation Services).

2. Unallowable Deductions

Refer to the IRS Publication 502 medical deduction exclusions - <https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p502.pdf>. Per IRS guidelines, medical marijuana is a violation of federal law and not an allowable medical deduction (even if legalized by the state).

D. Subsidized Housing (Heat Not Included)

If an applicant lives in Subsidized Housing without heat included, they should always have a utility allowance. Enter the monthly Fuel Subsidy Allowance (*see* (E) [Fuel Allowances](#) for more information) amounts in HEAP Cloud provided on or calculated using the MaineHousing HEAP *Subsidized Housing Form*. The Certifier signs the MaineHousing HEAP *Subsidized Housing Form* indicating the information provided has been reviewed and entered into HEAP Cloud correctly.

E. Fuel Allowances

- (1) Applicants living in Subsidized Housing, including applicants in Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Homeownership Program (Applicant/tenant is responsible for heat) will need verification of their fuel allowance. The annual fuel allowance will be a factor in calculating the Fuel Assistance Benefit.
- (2) A MaineHousing HEAP *Subsidized Housing Form* should have been completed during the intake process and sent to the housing agent/manager. The completed form should be in the file. Any conflicting information must be verified by the CAA.
- (3) Housing agent/manager to provide:
 - a. Confirmation that Applicant lives in Subsidized Housing.
 - b. Actual monthly amount tenant pays for rent (net).
 - c. Tenant's total monthly utility allowance.
 - d. Tenant's monthly utility allowance for heating (Fuel Subsidy Allowance), if known. If this is not provided, it will be calculated by the CAA. If not provided, the Fuel Subsidy Allowance will be calculated as equal to 70% of the total utility allowance.
 - e. Primary fuel type to heat home.
- (4) Once the form is completed and returned by the housing agent/manager, the certifier enters the appropriate information in HEAP Cloud.

- (5) Examples of how the annual utility allowance factors into the Benefit calculation:

Example 1:

- (1) **Information provided by the housing agent/manager:**
 - a. \$230 = Actual monthly amount tenant pays for rent (net)
 - b. \$75 = Tenant's total monthly utility allowance
 - c. Monthly allowance for heating is unknown or blank
- (2) **CAA and HEAP Cloud calculates the annual fuel subsidy as follows:**
 - a. HEAP Cloud uses total cost to heat the residence as determined by the DHLC or actual consumption.
 - b. CAA multiplies total monthly utility Allowance by 70% ($\$75 \times 0.70 = \52.50).
 - c. CAA enters monthly Fuel Subsidy Allowance amount ($\$52.50$) in to HEAP Cloud.
 - d. HEAP Cloud then multiplies by 12 (months) to arrive at the annual Fuel subsidy Allowance for heating ($\$52.50 \times 12 = \630).
 - e. HEAP Cloud deducts calculated annual Fuel Subsidy Allowance for heating from total heating cost as determined by DHLC or actual consumption. The Applicant's Fuel Assistance Benefit is then determined based on the adjusted heating cost.

Heating Cost (DHLC or Consumption)	\$959.00
minus	\$630.00
Household's Adjusted heating cost =	\$329.00

Example 2:

- (1) **Information provided by the housing agent/manager:**
 - a. \$230 = Actual monthly amount tenant pays for rent (net)
 - b. \$75 = Tenant's total monthly utility allowance.
 - c. \$52.50 = Tenant's monthly utility allowance for heating (Fuel Subsidy Allowance)
- (2) **CAA enters the monthly utility allowance for heating (Fuel Subsidy Allowance) (\$52.50) provided by housing agent/property manager.**
 - a. HEAP Cloud will calculate the cost to heat the residence by deducting the annual Fuel Subsidy Allowance for heating from the total heating cost as determined by the DHLC or actual consumption. ($\$959.00 - \$630.00 = \$329.00$).
 - b. If the client's primary Heating System is electric and the benefit is being determined based on actual consumption, HEAP Cloud will deduct \$600 for non-heating purposes from the consumption amount. ($\$329.00 - \$600.00 = \$0.00$)

F. Consumption or Design Heat Load

Using the established criteria and information provided on the Application determines whether the household is eligible to receive a Consumption Based Benefit. Criteria for **Consumption** Based Benefit:

- (1) The Eligible Household has a Direct Energy Cost; and
- (2) An Applicant occupied the residence for the entire previous Heating Season; and
- (3) An Applicant had an eligible Application in the prior Program Year; and

- (4) The Eligible Household purchased all of their Home Energy for their Primary Heating System from a Reporting Vendor(s) for the previous Heating Season; and
- (5) Reporting Vendor(s) submitted an Annual Consumption Report to MaineHousing that provided the Eligible Household's Home Energy delivery information; and
- (6) The Eligible Household's Energy Costs, as reported by Vendor(s) to MaineHousing, is for their residence only; and
- (7) The Eligible Household's Primary Heating System does not use wood, wood pellets, corn, coal, or bio-bricks.

G. When to Use DHLC

Must use DHLC if:

- (1) Applicant does not meet **all** of the consumption criteria;
- (2) Primary Heating System was replaced in the previous 12 months (even if the Fuel Type remains the same);
- (3) Primary Heating System is different than what was designated on prior year's Application;
- (4) Applicant resides in apartment building or duplex serviced by a shared/common tank or meter for Home Energy with another Dwelling Unit(s);
- (5) Applicant is self-employed and uses part of their Dwelling Unit for business. Benefit will be determined based on the rooms occupied and used by the Applicants as a residence; that part of the Dwelling Unit designated for business use will not be included;
- (6) Dwelling Unit shares a heating system with a non-residential area such as a garage;
- (7) Household used more than one vendor for the Primary Heating System and delivery information was not reported to MaineHousing (*e.g.*, household or other organization paid for delivery).

NOTE: If a second vendor was used for an ECIP in the prior program year, this does not constitute a DHLC situation. CAA should use consumption if consumption was used to calculate initial benefit.

- (8) Household's Primary Heating System uses wood, wood pellets, corn, coal, or bio-bricks.

H. Household Carried Fuel

Did Household carry fuel? If the Primary Applicant indicates they carried fuel, the Benefit should be calculated on both DHLC and consumption. Based on the outcome, select DHLC or consumption, whichever generates the most favorable Benefit.

NOTE: CAA will not be able to determine which calculation is most favorable until dollar-per-point values have been set and uploaded in HEAP Cloud (which occurs in late October or early November).

I. Landlord Requires Applicant/tenant Use Specific Vendor

1. Participating Vendor

If Landlord requires that a specific vendor must be used, the Primary Applicant must provide documentation to substantiate the situation.

- a. A Benefit for an Applicant who resides in an apartment or duplex that shares a common tank or meter for Home Energy with another Dwelling Unit may be issued a direct check if the Applicant is responsible for heat; and Applicant's name is not on the Home Energy account and cannot be added to the account.
- b. The Benefit will be issued to the Vendor if:
 - i. Applicant is responsible for heat; and
 - ii. Tank/meter supplies Home Energy to the Applicant's Dwelling Unit only; and
 - iii. Applicant's name is on or can be added to the account.

2. **Non-Participating Vendor**

- a. If the Landlord requires that a non-participating vendor be used, the CAA will need to verify the following before the Application can be certified eligible for a direct check:
 - i. Verify Applicant's responsibility for Home Energy;
 - ii. Verify name of the vendor;
 - iii. Verify vendor has an account with the Applicant's physical address as the delivery location; and
 - iv. Obtain any other information as necessary for verification.
- b. The following are suggested approaches for obtaining the above information:
 - i. Have the landlord provide a written statement; or
 - ii. Verbally confirm the information with the landlord and document the conversation.

J. **Direct Check Vendor**

- (1) HEAP Cloud will not allow an application to be certified without vendor information in the Vendor and Consumption section. This includes issuing all Direct Checks (including \$21.00 benefits) to Applicants.
- (2) To issue a Direct Check:
 - a. CAA must enter the actual Primary Fuel Type for the Household.
 - b. CAA will select the "Direct Check Vendor" that corresponds to the Primary Fuel Type. Once Vendor is selected, enter the following:
 - i. *Fuel Vendor Name*: Choose the Vendor and corresponding fuel type
 - ii. *Account Number*: Enter 0 as the Households account number.

- iii. *First Name, Last Name*: Check the Same as Applicant box to populate these fields.
- c. CAA must enter comments to validate issuing a Direct Check to the Applicant.
- d. CAA will certify the application.

NOTE: If the Household has no Vendor that provides the Primary Fuel Type in their area, but has a secondary Heating System, the Benefit must be issued for the Secondary Fuel Type.

K. No Working Heating System on the Date of Application

1. CHIP Only

- a. The Household is not eligible to receive a Fuel Assistance Benefit. If everything else about the Application is complete, all applicable documentation has been provided, and the Household is determined income eligible, the Application can be certified for “CHIP Only”.
- b. Complete the following in HEAP Cloud to certify an Application as “CHIP Only”:
 - i. Review all Application information
 - ii. Click the “Qualify” button on the Benefits tab.
 - iii. If the only error message received is regarding the non-working Heating System, check the Denied box.
 - iv. Select the CHIP Only Denial Reason.
 - v. Document the reason for non-working Heating System in comments.

NOTE: If other errors are received when application is “Qualified”, the applicant may not be CHIP eligible.

2. No Electrical Service

- a. Household has no electrical service; therefore does not have a working Heating System on the Date of Application:
- b. If the lack of a functioning Heating System is due to a lack of electricity, the Household is not eligible to receive a Fuel Assistance Benefit. If the CAA determines the Household meets all other HEAP-eligibility requirements (except for not having a working Heating System), the CAA should consider:
 - i. Using private funds, if available, to restore electrical service; and/or
 - ii. Providing written confirmation of the Household’s eligibility to the electricity vendor so as to provide the Household with access to Vendor program resources that may assist in restoring the Household’s electrical service (ex. LIAP and/or the Arrearage Management Program).
- c. If utility service is restored within fifteen (15) business days of the denial notification, the CAA will proceed as follows:

- i. Update Application, as needed.
- ii. Enter a comment in HEAP Cloud (ex. utility service restored; oil furnace is working as of 01/10/20).
- iii. Recertify Application.

L. Household Moves Prior to Certification

- (1) If all Applicants **move to Subsidized Housing with heat included or an ineligible Dwelling Unit** prior to certification, the Household may not be eligible for the entire Benefit.
- (2) CAA will notify MaineHousing of the date of the move, prior to certifying the Application based on the information at the time of Application. MaineHousing will determine what (if any) portion of the Benefit the Applicant is entitled to. MaineHousing will prorate the Benefit amount and issue the payment accordingly.
- (3) If all Applicants **move to an eligible Dwelling Unit** prior to certification.
 - a. Add the new Heating System as a secondary or third in order to ensure the Benefit is based on the Primary Heating System chosen on the Date of Application.
 - b. Change the mailing and physical addresses in HEAP Cloud. Submit a Change of Address form to MaineHousing to update Vendor for prior year Benefits remaining.
 - c. Once updated, CAA will certify based on the information provided on the Date of Application.

M. Certifying the Application

An Application must be certified (*i.e.*, eligible or denied) within thirty (30) business days of the Date of Application.

1. Benefit Notification

- a. Standard HEAP Benefits: Benefit Notifications must be mailed to Primary Applicants on the Tuesday after the Benefit has been issued/paid.
- b. Food Stamp Benefits (Subsidized Housing with heat included): MaineHousing mails the Benefit Notifications for \$21 payments.

2. Denial Notification

- a. Original denial notification must be mailed to the Primary Applicant within three (3) business days of the date of the denial. A copy must remain in the file. The denied application must also be uploaded into HEAP Cloud.
- b. **Lack of Documentation:** list all documents needed.
- c. The Denial Notification can be used for Fuel Assistance and ECIP.

DO NOT, for any reason, issue a Reminder form that would extend the allowable time period beyond the thirty (30) business days to certify. If the CAA overlooked needed documentation, the Application would still be denied, as the Applicant(s) will have fifteen (15) business days to supply the documentation.

N. Wood Purchase Orders

- (1) Certifier will issue a purchase order to the Wood Vendor for the Benefit amount and include delivery specifics (*i.e.*, number of cords, type of wood, size of wood).
- (2) Wood Vendors have sixty (60) calendar days to contact the Household and make the delivery. If the purchase order is not returned within those sixty (60) calendar days from the date of issuance, the purchase order may be considered void. CAA or MaineHousing may grant an extension on a case-by-case basis.
- (3) In cases where the Vendor is unable to deliver the total number of cords in one delivery load, the Vendor will deliver his load capacity; and submit appropriate documentation (purchase order) for payment.

SECTION 25: LOW INCOME ASSISTANCE PLAN (LIAP)

- (1) Eligibility for LIAP is contingent on a Household being HEAP eligible. **Certification for LIAP does not mean the Household is eligible to receive a LIAP benefit**, but that they are HEAP eligible and interested in participating in the utility’s LIAP program.
- (2) Every Friday MaineHousing sends each electricity Vendor a LIAP report listing those Households that have been certified eligible. This report includes the following information:

- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------|
| • AppID | • Certification date |
| • Primary Applicant Name | • CAA |
| • Physical Address | • Homeownership type |
| • Electric account number | • Percent of Poverty |

- (3) All Applications should be certified for LIAP provided the Primary Applicant requests LIAP and the electric account is in a Household member’s name. The electricity Vendor will not issue a LIAP benefit to a Household unless the Household is listed on the LIAP report.

A. How Does a Household Get on the LIAP Report?

- (1) HEAP Application status must be “Benefit Applied”; and
- (2) “Request LIAP” box must be checked”; and
- (3) The correct Utility Vendor and account number is entered into HEAP Cloud.

B. Electric Account Not in a Household Member’s Name on the Date of Application

- (1) HEAP eligibility is determined on the basis of the Household’s information/circumstances on the Date of Application. If on the Date of Application the electric account is not in a Household member’s name, they may be certified eligible for HEAP, but **not** LIAP.
- (2) If the electricity account is subsequently placed in a Household member’s name, the Primary Applicant will inform the CAA of the situation and will provide the CAA with backup documentation. The CAA will change the account information in HEAP Cloud and the HEAP Cloud LIAP enrollment file that is sent to utility providers will reflect the change.

C. Subsidized Housing

- (1) By checking the “Request LIAP” box in HEAP Cloud, the CAA is representing that the Applicant has expressed interest in LIAP, is eligible for HEAP, and is providing information to the electricity Vendor, who will determine the Household’s eligibility for a LIAP benefit.
- (2) CAA should check the “Request LIAP” field in HEAP Cloud for all Subsidized Housing Applicants who meet all of the following criteria (even if the Household does not use oxygen/ventilator):
 - a. Primary Applicant expressed interest in LIAP; and
 - b. Household is eligible for HEAP; and
 - c. Electricity account is in a Household member’s name.

SUBSIDIZED HOUSING GUIDANCE

- If the Applicant provides the CAA with a physician’s note: The CAA will follow the standard process for confirming oxygen/ventilator use with the electricity vendor – ex. enter information into CMP/ELP system.
- If the Household does not use oxygen/ventilator or does not provide a physician’s note: The CAA will check the “Request LIAP” box provided the Household meets all of the abovementioned criteria. In such cases, the electricity Vendor will do the eligibility check for Subsidized and Subsidized with heat Households – i.e. Household will need to provide physician’s note to electricity Vendor to verify use of oxygen or ventilator.

SECTION 26: WEATHERIZATION ONLY CERTIFICATION

- (1) Income guidelines for weatherization services funded by HEAP or the Department of Energy (DOE) remain the same; up to 200% of the federal poverty level (FPL). Households may qualify for Fuel Assistance with income levels above 200% FPL. In such situations, Households may submit documentation for medical expenses paid and not reimbursed for the income period in an effort to reduce the Household's income to 200% FPL in order for the Household to be eligible for weatherization services.
- (2) If Household income exceeds 200% FPL, the CAA will deduct paid and documented medical expenses not reimbursed for the income period from the gross income in an amount only enough to make the Household eligible for weatherization.
 - a. If the Household is **eligible for HEAP** without medical deductions, no medical deductions should be entered in HEAP Cloud and the entire calculation for weatherization should be manual. Deductions used for the manual calculation should be entered in HEAP Cloud as comments. Refer to HEAP Income Guidelines on the CAA Portal.
 - b. If the Household is **not eligible for HEAP** without medical deductions, only enough deductions should be entered in HEAP Cloud to get the Household HEAP eligible. The remaining deductions should be calculated manually in order to make the Household weatherization eligible and those deductions would be entered in HEAP Cloud as comments. Refer to HEAP Income Guidelines on the CAA Portal.
- (3) The CAA will need to manually calculate the percentage of FPL after deducting the eligible medical expenses. Calculations to determine income eligibility for Households with incomes over 200% FPL are calculated manually with the information entered into HEAP Cloud comments so that the income level does not change for HEAP eligibility.
- (4) If Household is eligible for weatherization, refer the Household to the CAA's housing department for possible weatherization services.

SECTION 27: CHIP ONLY CERTIFICATION NO WORKING HEATING SYSTEM

A. No Working Heating System

- (1) If there is no working Heating System in the Dwelling Unit on the Date of Application, the Household is not eligible to receive a Benefit. Refer to Application section of this Handbook (Heating System).
- (2) If everything else about the Application is complete and all applicable documentation has been provided, the Application can be certified for "CHIP Only".

NOTE: The Applicant must comply with all HEAP Rules, and apply **no later than July 15, 2021**.

TIP: *If the Household has a Heating System that is "working well" or "not working well" on the Date of Application, the Application cannot be certified for "CHIP Only", regardless of the heating capacity of the Heating System.*

- (3) Income guidelines for CHIP services funded by HEAP are the same as for Weatherization, up to 200% of the federal poverty level (FPL). Households may qualify for Fuel Assistance with income levels above 200% FPL. In such situations, Households may submit documentation for medical expenses paid and not reimbursed for the income period in an effort to reduce the Household's income to 200% FPL in order for the Household to be eligible for CHIP services.
- (4) If Household income exceeds 200% FPL, the CAA will deduct paid and documented medical expenses not reimbursed for the income period from the gross income in an amount only enough to make the Household eligible for CHIP. CAAs must follow the same process to manually document medical expenses for CHIP income eligibility as is outlined for Weatherization in Section 26 of the Handbook.

B. CHIP Only Certification

- (1) Complete the following in HEAP Cloud to certify an Application as "CHIP Only":
 - a. Review all Application information
 - b. Click the "Qualify" button on the Benefits tab.
 - c. If the only error message received is regarding the non-working Heating System, check the Denied box.
 - d. Select the CHIP Only Denial Reason.
 - e. Document the reason for non-working Heating System in comments.
- (2) The Application will remain denied until the Heating System is replaced/repared through CHIP or by the Primary Applicant/Applicant. The no heat situation should be referred to the CHIP program.
- (3) If a "CHIP Only" Application is taken on **July 15, 2021** and denied due to any other reason than stated previously. The Primary Applicant will be afforded time allowances as documented on the Reminder form and Denial letter to provide the required information/documentation. If the Primary Applicant meets the requirements in the allotted time frame, CAA will request a reopen and certify as "CHIP Only".
- (4) The Household would not be eligible for a PY 2021 Benefit if the repair/replacement was completed on or after **July 16, 2021**. The Household did not have a working system prior to the end date of the Application period.

SECTION 28: APPLICATION CHANGES

(Denied Reversal, Undo Certify, and Change)

A. Denied Reversal

- (1) To reverse a denied Application, a “Denied Reversal” request must be submitted to MaineHousing. Before requesting a reversal, verify all documentation necessary to recertify the Application has been received and the HEAP program guidelines have been met. The request must clearly explain the reason and justification for reopening the Application.
- (2) Common reasons for Denied Reversal requests:
 - a. Missing documentation was received by the required deadline (describe missing documentation and dates received in request)
 - b. Information entered in HEAP Cloud was incorrect as of Date of Application
 - c. MaineHousing requested corrections
 - d. Medical deductions were received by the required deadline
 - e. Heating system was repaired or replaced and Application is no longer Denied-CHIP Only

B. Submitting a Denied Reversal Request (Making Changes to the Application)

- (1) Enter a comment on the Application to document the reason a Denied Reversal is being requested.
- (2) Email a request to LIHEAP@mainehousing.org using ‘Denied Reversal Client #xxxxxx’ as the subject and include details outlining the reason for the request. If this is an emergency request, add the word “**URGENT**” to the subject line.
- (3) Once MaineHousing has reversed a denied Application, the Application will be put in Pending status. CAA will update and Qualify/Certify Application as appropriate.

C. Household moves before Application is Qualified/Certified.

If all Applicants **move to an eligible Dwelling Unit** prior to Qualify/Certify:

- (1) Add the new Heating System as a secondary or third in order to ensure the Benefit is based on the Primary Heating System chosen on the Date of Application.
- (2) Change the mailing and physical addresses in HEAP Cloud.
- (3) Enter comments documenting the situation in HEAP Cloud.
- (4) The CAA will complete/submit one of the following forms:
 - a. ***Change of Address/Product Form*** if Household is keeping the same Vendor.
 - b. ***Benefit Return Form*** if Household is changing Vendor
 - i. Upload *Change of Address/Product Form* or *Benefit Return Form* to HEAP Cloud Document section.

- ii. Once updated, CAA will certify the Application. The Benefit calculation will be based on the primary fuel type designated on the Date of Application.

C. Undo Certify

1. Making Changes to an Application That Has Been Certified but NOT Paid

- a. On the Benefits tab of the Application, click “Undo Certify” button. This will put the Application back to an “Eligible, Benefit Determined” status.
- b. Make necessary changes to the Application.
- c. Enter a Comment to document that the Undo Certify feature was used and the reason.
- d. Select the appropriate allocations and click “Confirm” on the Benefits tab to re-confirm the application.

2. Certified Eligible and Moves Before Payment is Issued

- a. If all Applicants move to **Subsidized Housing with heat included or an ineligible Dwelling Unit** prior to the Benefit being paid, the Household may not be eligible for the entire Benefit depending on the Date of Application and the amount of any Home Energy deliveries made during the current Heating Season.
- b. The CAA will notify MaineHousing of the date of the move. MaineHousing will determine what (if any) portion of the Benefit the Applicant is entitled to. MaineHousing will prorate the Benefit amount and issue the payment accordingly.

3. If all Applicants Move to an Eligible Dwelling Unit

- a. Use the Undo Certify feature.
- b. Add the new Heating System as a secondary or third Heating System (if applicable).
- c. Add a new Vendor in Vendor and Consumption section of HEAP Cloud (if applicable)
- d. Change the mailing and physical addresses in HEAP Cloud.
- e. Update “Pay to Fuel Vendor” in the Vendor Selection section in Qualified Allocation grid on Benefits tab in HEAP Cloud.
- f. Enter comments documenting the situation and all related changes made in HEAP Cloud.
- g. Once updated, CAA will reconfirm the Application. The Benefit calculation will be based on the primary fuel type designated on the Date of Application.

D. Changes

- (1) Changes made to an application should only be done in the following circumstances:
 - a. Entering an ECIP.
 - b. Client has moved, changed product or Vendor.
 - c. An error was made on the application and has been paid.

- (2) Making changes to an Application that has been Confirmed **AND** paid:
 - a. Click “Change” button at the top of the Application. This will put the Application in “Change Mode” and the background will turn pink.
 - b. Make necessary changes to the Application.
 - c. Enter a Comment to document that the Change feature was used and the reason.
 - d. Click “Confirm Changes” to save changes made and close out of Change Mode.
 - e. Review the Benefits tab to verify that the benefit corrections were adjusted accordingly. If there is an overpayment, please e-mail liheap@mainehousing.org, Subject Line – App Id# -Overpayment to request guidance on how to proceed.

SECTION 29: BENEFITS

- (1) HEAP Benefits are determined so that Eligible Households with the lowest income and the highest Energy Cost receive the highest Benefits.
- (2) Applicants residing in Subsidized Housing with heat included in their rent may be eligible if the Household pays an out-of-pocket expense for a portion of their rent or utility costs. The maximum Benefit for Households residing in Subsidized Housing with heat included is \$21 per Program Year. If the subsidy pays 100% of the rent and utility costs, the Household is not eligible to receive a Benefit.
- (3) Applications are entered into HEAP Cloud, which automatically calculates the Benefit amount for an Eligible Household. A comprehensive description of the Benefit calculation can be found in the Rule. The Benefit calculation takes into account:
 - a. Household’s actual fuel consumption data collected from energy Vendors or estimated heating costs calculated by using the Design Heat Load Calculation (DHLC) formula.
 - b. Percent of Poverty, which takes into account Household income and size.
 - c. Average fuel price for the Primary Heating System (average fuel prices are based on prior Heating Season). *See* [Appendix B](#).
 - d. Climate/region – Degree Days.
 - e. Dwelling type and number of rooms (if using DHLC).

SECTION 30: PAYMENT OF BENEFITS

MaineHousing will make PY2021 payments as follows:

- (1) Subsidized Housing with heat included: \$21 Benefits will be issued beginning the first week of September 2020.
- (2) All other Eligible Households: Benefits will be issued after receipt of PY2021 grant funding (typically mid-November).

A. Weekly Payment Process

1.	<p>Tuesday:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. MaineHousing begins processing payments in HEAP Cloud. b. CAAs should not use the Change or uncertify buttons after 5:00 p.m. on Mondays, and not resume making changes or uncertifying applications until CAAs receive written confirmation from MaineHousing that payments have been processed.
2.	<p>Wednesday:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. MaineHousing prints all checks, Benefit Notification letters, and Vendor Voucher Reports. b. All payments are posted.
3.	<p>Thursday:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Federal Funds are received. b. MaineHousing mails all checks, Vendor Voucher Reports and direct check Benefit Notification letters.
4.	<p>Following Tuesday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefit Notification letters to Applicants whose payments were sent to a Vendor (except Wood Vendors) are mailed.
<p>If there is a holiday week, the payment process may move ahead/back a day depending on when the holiday is observed.</p>	

B. Benefits Issued

1. Vendor (Pre-Delivery)

Except in the case of wood, Benefits are issued to Vendors within ten (10) business days of the certification of eligibility date, or when HEAP funds are available, whichever is later.

2. Direct Check

- a. Applicant may receive a direct check if:
 - i. There's no Vendor for their designated fuel type in their area. (CAA will enter notes in HEAP Cloud); or
 - ii. Rent with heat included (Subsidized or Non-Subsidized).

- iii. The Household is responsible to pay for the heat; however, the fuel account is not in a Household member's name. CAA must obtain documentation that the Applicant is responsible for paying the heating cost.
 - iv. The Household uses a propane vendor that is not a HEAP participating Vendor. Household may only receive a direct check for one program year. Should the Household apply and be determined eligible for HEAP in subsequent program years, the Household must have the benefit issued to a HEAP participating Vendor.
 - v. The Household's dwelling has a shared heating system and/or fuel tank.
- b. A direct check will be mailed to the Primary Applicant within ten (10) business days of the certified-eligible date, or when HEAP funds are available, whichever is later.
 - c. The Primary Applicant may choose to have their Benefit applied to their electricity account if their heat is included in their Rent, unless their Rent is Subsidized.

C. Wood Vendor (Post-Delivery)

- (1) The Vendor must return a completed purchase order, including Applicant and Vendor signatures, to the CAA, within sixty (60) calendar days of the date of purchase order issuance.
- (2) CAA must review and enter the purchase order into HEAP Cloud. Any deviations from the original Purchase Order must be authorized in writing by MaineHousing prior to delivery.
- (3) If the completed Purchase Order submitted for payment has been altered in any way, the CAA must contact MaineHousing prior to entering the Purchase Order into HEAP Cloud.
- (4) Contingent on HEAP Cloud entry, MaineHousing will make payment within ten (10) business days of the signed purchase order receipt date. If the purchase order is not returned within sixty (60) calendar days of the date of issuance it may be considered void. CAA or MaineHousing will consider granting extensions on a case-by-case basis and note HEAP Cloud accordingly.

SECTION 31: BENEFIT RETURNS

A “Benefit Return” is the return of funds (to MaineHousing) for all or part of a payment made to the Vendor on behalf of a Household. Benefit Returns can be initiated by MaineHousing, the CAA or the Vendor. In processing Benefit Returns, MaineHousing will make the final determination as to when funds can and cannot be reissued as directed by federal guidelines.

A. Overarching Principles That Apply to Benefit Returns

- (1) Benefits are available for use during the Program Year of receipt and up until April 30th of the following Program Year.
 - a. Benefits issued prior to PY2019 have expired and cannot be reissued to the Household or Vendor.
 - b. PY2019 Benefits expired as of May 1, 2020 and must be returned to MaineHousing. These funds cannot be reissued to the Household or Vendor.
 - c. PY2020 Benefits may be applied to eligible deliveries made between October 1, 2019 and April 30, 2021. Any remaining Benefits as of May 1, 2021 must be returned to MaineHousing and are not eligible for reissue.
 - d. PY2021 Benefits may be applied to unpaid eligible deliveries made between October 1, 2020 and April 30, 2022.
- (2) A Household may not receive more than one standard HEAP Benefit in a Program Year.
- (3) If there is a change in Household composition, the Benefit will stay with the original Dwelling Unit. If all Household members move, the benefit will follow the Primary Applicant.
- (4) Benefits can only be reissued to Households residing in an eligible Dwelling Unit.
- (5) Benefit Returns require documentation to substantiate the continued eligibility of a Household. If for any reason the required documentation is not provided, it may delay the reissuance and/or result in forfeiture of Benefits.

B. CAA Responsibilities

1. CAA Must Initiate a Benefit Return Request

- a. If CAA becomes aware that the sole member of an Eligible Household has deceased.
- b. Upon written notice from the Applicant that they no longer desire to receive services from the Vendor.
- c. Upon written notice from the Applicant that they have moved and will be using a different Vendor.
- d. Upon written notice from the Applicant that they have moved and are no longer eligible to use the Benefit.
- e. If CAA becomes aware of an Overpayment.
- f. If CAA becomes aware that a Benefit was issued to the wrong Vendor.

2. CAA is Responsible For

- a. Obtaining and reviewing the necessary documentation from the Applicant.
- b. Updating HEAP Cloud.
- c. Sending the *Benefit Return Form* to Vendor (the “CAA or MaineHousing Use Only” section must be left blank on the Vendor’s copy).
- d. Complete the “CAA or MaineHousing Use Only” section of the *Benefit Return Form* and send the form to MaineHousing.

3. Requesting Return of Funds

Prior to Requesting the Return of Funds, the CAA must obtain a signed letter from the Primary Applicant for the HEAP file prior to requesting the return of funds. The letter should include the applicable information listed below:

- a. Primary Applicant’s name;
- b. Previous address;
- c. Current address;
- d. Current phone number;
- e. Current electricity Vendor, name on account, and account number (copy of bill required);
- f. Heating System;
- g. Home Energy type;
- h. Location of oil tank and Heating System;
- i. New Name on account;
- j. New Home Energy Vendor name, address, and account number; and
- k. Primary Applicant’s signature and date submitted.

4. HEAP Cloud Updates Must be Completed

a. Change of Address

Update the mailing and physical addresses in HEAP Cloud.

b. Change of Vendor

Add the new Vendor to the Vendor and Consumption section in HEAP Cloud.

c. Change of Heating System

If the Heating System is replaced or Household moves and has a different Heating System the CAA:

- i. Adds the new Heating System in HEAP Cloud as a secondary or third system, thus ensuring the Benefit amount remains unchanged;
- ii. Updates former Heating System to reflect as ‘Retired’ if changed;
- iii. Adds the new Vendor information with the new Fuel Type; and
- iv. Enter a comment to document the new fuel tank information as needed (*i.e.*, size and location).

C. Vendor Responsibilities

- (1) Upon receipt of a HEAP *Benefit Return Request*, the Vendor will:
 - a. Reconcile and verify the amount of HEAP funds remaining on the Applicant’s account compared to the requested amount.
 - b. Return funds, transaction history and HEAP *Benefit Return Form* to MaineHousing by the date indicated on the HEAP *Benefit Return Form*.
 - c. If there are no funds to be returned then a copy of the benefit return or a transaction history should be sent to MaineHousing and indicate that there are no funds to be returned.
- (2) The following are Benefit Return examples:

Example 1: The Primary Applicant and all Applicant(s) move and change Vendors.
 The Vendor must return the unused funds to MaineHousing. The Primary Applicant or an Applicant must provide the CAA with a change of address and a change of Vendor in writing. The funds will be re-issued to the new Vendor.

Example 2: The Primary Applicant and Applicant(s) move from a residence with direct heating costs to a residence with heat included in their rent.
 The Vendor must return the unused funds to MaineHousing. The Primary Applicant or Applicant must provide the CAA, in writing, with a change of address and a notification of the change of Heating Systems (if applicable). The Primary Applicant or Applicant is then offered a choice of having their benefit re-issued directly to them or re-issued to their electricity Vendor provided the electricity account is in an Applicant’s name. The Primary Applicant or Applicant is strongly encouraged to apply these benefits to their electricity account, but has the option of having the Benefits reissued as a direct check.

Example 3: All Household members, listed on the Application, move from the Dwelling Unit.
 The Vendor must return the unused funds to MaineHousing. The Benefit would follow the Primary Applicant. The Primary Applicant must provide the CAA with a change of address and change of Vendor or change of living situation. The Benefits would be re-issued to the Primary Applicant’s new heating Vendor, electricity Vendor, or directly to the Primary Applicant.

Example 4: The Primary Applicant is deceased or moves out of state.
 If any Applicant on the original application still lives in the Dwelling Unit the Benefit stays with the Dwelling Unit.
 If the Primary Applicant was the sole Household member on the original Application, the Vendor must return the funds to MaineHousing. The funds will be returned to the program, and are not available to be reissued for this Application.

Example 5: The Primary Applicant or Applicant(s) decease, and the surviving Applicant moves into another person's household that is not on the original Application and is not HEAP approved.

The Vendor must return any unused funds to MaineHousing. The surviving Applicant must provide the CAA a change of address and a change of Vendor. The surviving Applicant must add their name to the existing fuel account for the new address, or open a fuel account in their name for that address.

Example 6: The Primary Applicant or Applicant committed or is suspected of committing fraud.

If the CAA becomes aware of potential program abuse/fraud, the CAA should immediately notify MaineHousing's Program Compliance Officer. The Compliance Officer will investigate and submit a Benefit Return Request to the Vendor or put the Benefit on hold.

Example 7: The Applicant has no activity on his/her account for a period of twelve (12) consecutive months.

The Vendor must return the unused funds to MaineHousing. MaineHousing will attempt to locate the Primary Applicant or Applicant(s) to determine the Household's status.

Example 8: The Primary Applicant's permanent residence changes to a nursing home or long term care facility, and there are no Applicant(s) remaining in the Dwelling Unit.

The Vendor must return any unused Benefits to MaineHousing. Benefits will be returned to program.

Example 9: All Applicants move to Subsidized Housing with heat included after Benefits have been paid.

Benefits may be applied to eligible deliveries if the deliveries occurred on or after October 1st of the Program Year for which it was issued, and before the date the Applicant(s) moved to Subsidized Housing with heat included. If there are remaining funds after applying Benefits to eligible deliveries, Benefits will be returned to program.

Example 10: All Applicants move to Subsidized Housing after Benefits have been paid. The Primary Applicant or Applicant(s) are responsible for paying the heating costs in the new Dwelling Unit.

Primary Applicant is eligible to have the Benefit reissued to the new fuel Vendor.

Example 11: Household received a Benefit in the current Program Year. All Applicants move into a Household that was also served in the current Program Year.

Primary Applicant or Applicant(s) is not eligible to have their current Program Year Benefit reissued to the new location as a Household cannot be served twice in one program year.

Example 12: Household received a Benefit in the prior Program Year. All Applicants move into a Household that was also served in the prior Program Year.

Primary Applicant or Applicant(s) is not eligible to have their prior Program Year Benefit reissued to the new location as a Household cannot be served twice in one program year.

Example 13: All Applicants moved into a Household that was served in the prior Program Year, but not the current Program Year. The Applicant wants their remaining prior AND current Program Year Benefits reissued to the new location

Primary Applicant or Applicant(s) is not eligible to have their prior Program Year Benefit reissued to the new location as a Household cannot be served twice in one Program Year. However the current Program Year Benefit can be reissued since the new location has not been served in the current Program Year.

For Example:

John and Mary Smith:

- Resided at 5 Ash Street, Portland on the Date of Application
- PY2021 Benefit paid on 01/05/2021
- Have a remaining PY 2020 Benefit on account with Vendor
- On 02/01/2021 moved in with Susan Jones at 10 Tree Street, Portland
- Susan Jones:
- Received a PY2020 Benefit
- Did not receive a PY2021 Benefit

The Smith's PY2021 Benefit may be reissued. However, the Smith's remaining PY2020 Benefit cannot be reissued and Ms. Jones is not eligible to receive another PY2021 benefit.

Example 14: Primary Applicant or Applicant(s) received a Benefit in the prior Program Year. The current Program Year Application was denied (or they did not apply) because they have moved into a camper.

Primary Applicant or Applicant(s) is not eligible to have the funds reissued because they reside in a non-eligible Dwelling (regardless of the Program Year).

Example 15: The Primary Applicant or Applicant(s) pays for the heat; however, the fuel account is not in a Household member's name.

Primary Applicant or Applicant(s) will receive a direct check. The Primary Applicant or Applicant(s) must submit documentation proving they are responsible for the heat and explaining the reason the account is not in Household member's name.

Example 16: The Primary Applicant or Applicant(s) uses a propane vendor that is not a participating vendor.

Primary Applicant or Applicant(s) may receive a direct check with instructions that the funds are to be used to pay for heating expenses. The **Primary Applicant or Applicant(s)** should also be informed that they will need to select a participating Vendor should they decide to apply the following Heating Season.

Example 17: Current Program Year Benefit is returned and new Fuel Type is wood.

MaineHousing will notify CAA of funds. The CAA will enter the wood Fuel Type and Vendor information into HEAP Cloud. The CAA will issue a purchase order to the selected wood Vendor.

Example 18: Prior Program Year Benefit is returned and new Fuel Type is wood.

MaineHousing will issue and process a manual purchase order to the selected wood Vendor.

Example 19: Applicant moves from an eligible Dwelling Unit to a Roomer/Boarder situation.

Any remaining Benefit cannot be reissued until such time as the Applicant can demonstrate they have been a Roomer/Boarder for 60 days.

SECTION 32: CHANGE OF ADDRESS OR CHANGE OF PRODUCT

If an Applicant has moved or wants to change fuel type, but is keeping the same Vendor:

- (1) CAA to confirm which Household members (if any) will continue to reside at the original address.
- (2) CAA to obtain all of the necessary information/documentation to determine if the Benefit is still eligible for use.
- (3) HEAP Cloud updates to be completed when there is a:
 - a. **Change of Address:** Update the mailing and physical addresses in HEAP Cloud.
 - b. **Change of Heating System:** When a client moves and the new Dwelling Unit has a different Heating System(s) than the previously approved system, the CAA updates HEAP Cloud as needed.
 - i. Add the new Heating System in HEAP Cloud as a secondary or third system, thus ensuring the Benefit amount remains unchanged.
 - ii. Updates former Heating System to reflect as 'Retired' if changed;
 - iii. Adds the new Vendor information with the new Fuel Type; and
 - iv. Enter a comment to document the new fuel tank information as needed (*i.e.*, size and location).
- (4) Once all information is received, the CAA must submit a completed COA/COP form to MaineHousing. MaineHousing will provide the Vendor with written authorization to deliver to the new address and/or new fuel type.
- (5) **DO NOT** send the *Change of Address/Change of Product* form to the Vendor. The contractual relationship is between MaineHousing and the Vendor. CAAs do not have the authority to approve such changes with the Vendor.

Example 1: The Primary Applicant and all Applicant(s) move but continue with same Vendor:

The Vendor does not have to send back the Benefit. The Primary Applicant or Applicant must provide the change of address in writing to the CAA. The CAA will submit the COA/COP form to MaineHousing. MaineHousing will notify the Vendor of the address change in writing to authorize delivery to the new address and the appropriate fuel type.

Example 2: The Primary Applicant moves out of the Dwelling Unit but an Applicant(s) remains in the Dwelling Unit; or an Applicant(s) moves out of the Dwelling Unit but the Primary Applicant remains in the Dwelling Unit:

The Benefit stays with the Dwelling Unit. If the fuel account is the Primary Applicant's name, the Vendor may choose to return the Benefit. The Vendor is not required to return the Benefit as long as an Applicant is listed on the original application and remains at the address listed on the Vendor Voucher Report. CAA will need to confirm this information to avoid any potential conflict between Primary Applicant and Applicant(s). If the Vendor does return the Benefit, the Applicant would be notified to open an account with a contracted Vendor of their choice, supply that change in writing to MaineHousing, and MaineHousing would reissue the Benefit.

Example 3: The Primary Applicant changes the type of fuel used for heating the Dwelling Unit

Primary Applicant or Applicant(s) must provide the information on the new fuel type and new Vendor (if there is one) to the CAA in writing. The CAA will submit a COA/COP form to MaineHousing. MaineHousing will notify the Vendor, in writing, authorizing the change in fuel type.

SECTION 33: ENERGY CRISIS INTERVENTION PROGRAM (ECIP)

- (1) A Household may be eligible for ECIP if a Household member’s health and safety is threatened by an Energy or Life Threatening Crisis and the Household does not have the financial means to avert the energy crisis.
- (2) The ECIP timeframe is November 1st through April 30th. CAAs are required to budget their ECIP allocations to ensure funds are available through April 30th.
- (3) ECIP Applications or requests must be given priority at all intake and processing steps. When possible and appropriate, consider coordinating services with other sources of assistance, *e.g.*, General Assistance or other state, federal, and local sources that are immediately available.

A. Crisis definition and response times

The federal LIHEAP Statute requires timely and effective intervention of energy related crises. Pursuant Section 2604 (c)(1) of the Statute, some form of assistance must be provided to resolve a Life Threatening Crisis (household with no heat) within 18 hours, and an Energy Crisis (imminent risk of no heat) within 48 hours. The CAA is responsible for determining and verifying the type of crisis the Household is experiencing. Each CAA must have established procedures to ensure crises are addressed within the required timeframes outlined below:

1. Energy Crisis

A weather-related and supply shortage emergency and other Household energy-related emergencies. Conditioned on the availability of ECIP funds, the CAA must provide some form of assistance that will resolve the Energy Crisis, if Household is eligible to receive such benefits, will be provided within forty eight (48) hours after Household has been certified eligible for ECIP.

2. Life Threatening Crisis

The Household is currently without heat or utility service to operate a Heating System or Heating Source. Heating Source means any device, including space heaters, designed to provide heat to a Dwelling Unit. Conditioned on the availability of ECIP funds, some form of assistance that will resolve the Life Threatening Crisis, if Household is eligible to receive such benefits, will be provided within eighteen (18) hours after a Household has been certified eligible for ECIP.

NOTE: CAAs must communicate to Applicants that if the Household is found not to be in a Crisis situation as defined above, the Applicant may be required to repay the ECIP benefit. For example, if the Household is not able to take a full 100 gallon fuel delivery with a 275 gallon fuel tank, the Household would not have been in a Crisis situation and may be required to repay the benefit.

B. Maximum Benefit

For Program Year 2021, the maximum ECIP benefit per Household is \$400.00. An Eligible Household may receive more than one ECIP benefit provided their total ECIP benefits do not exceed the Program Year maximum of \$400.00. In order to fully resolve the crisis, it may be necessary to use private/donated funding or other state, federal or local sources to cover costs in excess of the \$400.00 maximum or for services that are outside the scope of ECIP.

1. Remaining Benefits

Any remaining Fuel Assistance Benefits or TANF Supplemental credits on the Household's account with the Vendor must be exhausted.

- a. When determining the ECIP benefit amount, the CAA must take into account the amount of any remaining HEAP Benefits and/or TANF Supplemental credits on the Household's account with the Vendor. Any remaining HEAP Benefits and/or TANF Supplemental credits must be used to cover part or all of the emergency Home Energy delivery.
- b. If the Vendor, who has the remaining Benefits/credits on account, cannot make the ECIP delivery within the required timeframe, the CAA will use another Vendor to make the ECIP delivery. In such cases, the CAA must fully document the situation and reason for not using the remaining Benefits/credits on account with the Household's Vendor of record. The Application file and HEAP Cloud Comments must document the situation and provide justification for making the exception. The Comments must be entered (*i.e.*, date stamped by HEAP Cloud) on or before the date of the ECIP certification. The CAA is not required to submit a Waiver for MaineHousing's review/approval.

2. ECIP Only Applicants

A Household may only have one certified-eligible ECIP Only Application in a Program Year. Therefore, a Household whose eligibility was based on an ECIP Only Application would not be eligible for a subsequent ECIP Only benefit (even if their previous ECIP benefit was less than \$400.00). However, if the Household has subsequently completed a Standard HEAP Application and it has been certified-eligible, the Household may be eligible for an additional ECIP benefit provided their total ECIP benefits will not exceed the Program Year maximum of \$400.00.

C. Allowable Expenditures

Allowable expenditures must be related to averting an Energy or Life Threatening Crisis and may include:

- (1) Home Energy deliveries provided the Eligible Household has exhausted any remaining Fuel Assistance Benefits and TANF Supplemental credits previously issued to a Vendor on behalf of the Eligible Household.
- (2) If required, the costs of delivery or restart/safety check charges may be added to the ECIP benefit amount provided the Household's total ECIP benefits will not exceed \$400 for a given Program Year.
- (3) Surcharges, reconnection charges, or penalties related to a final utility disconnect notice. Utility costs must be directly related to the operation of the Heating System.
- (4) Heating System Repair.

- (5) Provisional Measures. If the crisis cannot be averted by one of the above measures within the required timeframe (*i.e.*, 18 or 48 hours), the CAA will take steps to ensure the Household's safety. The following interim measures may be covered by ECIP benefits and provide CAAs with other means to address an Eligible Household's immediate needs until other arrangements, such as a Home Energy delivery or repair/replacement of Heating System, can be made to assure their safety.
- a. Space heaters must meet the following minimum requirements:
 - i. U.L. Certified
 - ii. Wattage output: 1500 watts
 - iii. Power: electric
 - iv. Safety features: auto shutoff/overheat protection
 - b. Temporary Relocation. Use of ECIP funds to provide temporary relocation if the Eligible Household is experiencing a Life Threatening Crisis that cannot be averted within 18 hours by one of the measures listed in 3 (a-e.i) above. Rent with heat or Subsidized with heat included tenants would not be eligible for temporary relocation.
- (6) Rental Payment Assistance. An Eligible Household whose rent includes heat and who is facing eviction within 72 hours due to nonpayment of rent may be eligible for an ECIP benefit. Subsidized with heat tenants are not eligible for rental payment assistance.
- (7) Deliver charges associated with having an Upfront delivery made to address the crisis situation.

D. Unallowable Expenditures

- (1) ECIP funds cannot be used if the Household has any other Heating System that is safe, operable and is capable of heating the Dwelling adequately during severe cold weather, and has a supply of product for that Heating System.
- (2) ECIP funds cannot be used to pay for surcharges, reconnection charges, or penalties related to a final utility disconnect when that utility is not required for the operation of the primary Heating System.
- (3) ECIP funds cannot be used to pay for Home Energy deliveries or Heating System repairs if the Applicant lives in Subsidized Housing with heat included or a Rental Unit with heat included.

E. Do Not Pay List

CAAs must refer to the most recent version of the Do Not Pay List issued by MaineHousing to confirm ECIP eligibility. An Applicant with an Overpayment balance is not eligible for ECIP benefits unless they have entered into and are in compliance with the terms of a repayment agreement with MaineHousing.

F. Documenting Eligibility

The eligibility determination must be based on one of the following:

1. Standard HEAP Application

If the Household has previously completed a Standard HEAP Application and has been certified eligible in the current Program Year, the CAA must complete an *ECIP Emergency Worksheet* over the telephone or in person to assess and document the crisis situation.

2. ECIP Only Application

- a. If the Household's pending Standard HEAP Application is missing documentation or the Household has not yet applied, an ECIP Only Application and *ECIP Emergency Worksheet* will need to be completed and appropriately documented. For an ECIP Only Application, the Household's income-eligibility for ECIP will be based on one of the following verification periods, whichever allows eligibility:
 - a. The calendar month immediately preceding the Date of Application for ECIP; or
 - b. The thirty (30) days immediately preceding the Date of Application for ECIP.
- b. An Application certified for ECIP must include all of the documentation required for a standard HEAP application.
- c. If a Household has a pending Standard HEAP Application when applying for ECIP Only, it is important to process and fully document the ECIP Only Application separately from the Household's Standard HEAP Application. Therefore, each file must contain the appropriate documentation to substantiate the Household's eligibility for ECIP Only and regular fuel assistance Benefits.
 - i. The income verification periods must be based on the Dates of Application corresponding to the ECIP Only and Standard HEAP Applications.
 - ii. All documents must be signed and dated such that they are consistent with the distinct Dates of Application for the ECIP Only and Standard HEAP Applications.

G. Processing and Verifying

A completed *ECIP Emergency Worksheet* is required to document the Household's situation and eligibility for ECIP benefits. Detailed instructions for the Worksheet can be found at <http://www.mainehousing.org/partners/partner-type/community-agencies/HEAP>. The information contained in 1-5 below outlines the requirements for processing and verifying requests for ECIP services.

1. Fuel Emergency

- a. Household has less than or equal to a 3-day supply of Home Energy, and does not have the financial means to secure a Home Energy delivery.
 - i. Reading of 1/8 tank or less on a standard 275 gallon heating oil tank.
 - ii. Reading of 25% or less on a propane tank.
 - iii. 3-day or less supply guideline applies to other Home Energy types (*e.g.*, firewood, wood pellets).
- b. ***ECIP Emergency Worksheet***: Fully complete the appropriate sections of the Worksheet to assess and document the Household's situation and eligibility for ECIP.

- c. **Verifications:** The CAA will need to verify the following with the Vendor and document the *ECIP Emergency Worksheet* as needed:
- i. The dates of the last deliveries for the primary and secondary Heating Systems, number of units delivered or purchased (*e.g.*, gallons, bags, cords, etc.), and size of the tank(s) (if applicable).
 - ii. The amount of any remaining Fuel Assistance Benefits on account or TANF Supplemental credits. These funds must be used to cover all or a part of the emergency delivery.
 - iii. If the Vendor can make the delivery within the required timeframe – *i.e.*, 18 or 48 hours.
 - iv. If the Vendor is willing to do an upfront delivery. To effect an upfront delivery:
 - (1) The Household’s Standard HEAP Application must be appropriately certified-eligible in HEAP Cloud.
 - (2) Prior to delivery, the CAA must provide the Vendor with written confirmation of the Primary Applicant’s name, delivery address, approved fuel type, amount, and delivery timeframe requirements.
 - v. If there will be any delivery charges incurred for the emergency delivery and the amount.
 - vi. Cash price per unit/gallon of the fuel type being authorized.

2. Utility Disconnect (Electricity and Natural Gas)

- a. Household’s heat-related utility service is scheduled for disconnection or has been disconnected. This includes heat-related electric and natural gas disconnects. A Household may be eligible for ECIP if all of the following are true:
 - i. Household’s Heating System requires electricity or natural gas to operate;
 - ii. Utility account is in Household member’s name; and
 - iii. Household has exhausted its ability to negotiate and pay the terms of a reasonable payment arrangement.
- b. **Subsidized With Heat Included Or Rent With Heat Included:** Household may be eligible for ECIP if all of the following are true:
 - i. Primary Applicant has stated that their rental/lease agreement indicates a Household member is responsible for the electricity;
 - ii. Electricity account is in a Household member’s name;
 - iii. Heating System relies on electricity to operate and electricity account that is in a Household member’s name provides the service to operate the Heating System;
 - iv. CAA has secured a written or verbal statement from the landlord confirming the electrical service that operates the Heating System is the tenant’s

responsibility not the landlord's. If the landlord's confirmation is verbal, the intake worker will document the file and HEAP Cloud with the specifics of the conversation; and

- v. Household has exhausted its ability to negotiate and pay the terms of a reasonable payment arrangement.
- c. Obtain a copy of the disconnect notice to determine if it is a notice for a past due amount or a broken payment arrangement.
- d. ***ECIP Emergency Worksheet:*** Fully complete the appropriate sections of the Worksheet to assess and document the Household's situation and eligibility for ECIP.
- e. **Verifications:** The CAA will need to verify the following with the Vendor and document the *ECIP Emergency Worksheet* and HEAP Cloud as needed:
 - i. Amount of the current month's charges listed on the most recent bill.
 - ii. If the Household has a payment arrangement and the terms of payment arrangement.
 - iii. If the Applicant has exhausted their ability to comply with the terms of a reasonable payment arrangement.
 - iv. The amount necessary to prevent disconnection. If paid, what will be the amount of and the due date for the next payment? If it is obvious that the Household cannot make the next payment, reassess whether the ECIP benefits are adequate and if alternative resources are necessary.

3. Heating System Emergency

- a. Household has a dysfunctional or unsafe Primary Heating System and no secondary Heating System that is capable of adequately heating the Dwelling during severe cold weather.
- b. ***ECIP Emergency Worksheet:*** Fully complete the appropriate sections of the Worksheet to assess and document the Household's situation and eligibility for ECIP.
- c. The CAA will need to contact a Vendor to determine if the Vendor is able to make a service call within the required timeframe – *i.e.*, 18 or 48 hours.

NOTE: In order to fully resolve the crisis, it may be necessary to refer an Eligible Household to the Central Heating Improvement Program (CHIP) or other state, federal or local sources to cover costs that are outside the scope of ECIP or exceed the \$400.00 ECIP maximum.

4. Provisional Measures (Space Heaters and Temporary Relocation)

- a. The CAA may provide an ECIP-eligible Household with:
 - i. Space heaters if the crisis cannot be averted by a Home Energy delivery or repairing the Heating System within the required 18- or 48-hour timeframe.

- ii. Temporary relocation if the Household is facing a Life Threatening Crisis that cannot be averted within 18 hours by a Home Energy delivery or repairing the Heating System.
- b. These measures offer a short-term solution until the crisis can be more fully resolved. In order to fully resolve the crisis, it may be necessary to use private/donated funding or other state, federal or local sources to cover costs that are outside the scope of ECIP or exceed the \$400.00 ECIP maximum.
- c. ECIP may be used to pay solely for space heaters and temporary relocation provided the Application file and HEAP Cloud includes case notes identifying the other funding sources used to cover the Home Energy delivery, vendor name, the date/time of delivery, the number of units delivered, the type of Home Energy delivered, the amount of repair services, and the date service was performed.
- d. ***ECIP Emergency Worksheet.*** Fully complete the appropriate sections of the Worksheet as you would for a Fuel Emergency or Heating System Emergency. Additionally, complete the applicable information in the Space Heaters or Temporary Relocation sections of the Worksheet.
- e. **Verifications:**
 - i. Contact the fuel Vendor to verify information as you would for a Fuel Emergency or Heating System Emergency (*See [Section G\(1\)\(c\)](#) and/or [Section G\(3\)\(c\)](#)*).
 - ii. **Space Heaters.** Contact the store/company to determine:
 - (1) Availability and model number of space heater that will meet the minimum requirements, and cost. *See [Section 33\(C\).Allowable Expenditures](#)*.
 - (2) Cost of space heater.
- f. **Temporary Relocation:** Contact the hotel/motel to:
 - i. Determine room availability.
 - ii. Cost.
 - iii. Obtain reservation/confirmation number.

5. Eviction Emergency

- a. An Eligible Household whose rent includes heat and who is facing eviction within 72 hours due to nonpayment of rent may be eligible for rental payment assistance. Subsidized with heat included tenants are not eligible for rental payment assistance.
- b. Obtain the following:
 - i. A copy of the legal notice of eviction, to verify:
 - ii. Notice was issued to Applicant.
 - iii. Eviction date/time.

- iv. Sole cause for eviction is due to non-payment of rent.
 - v. Payment amount required to prevent eviction.
 - vi. Landlord's name and contact information.
 - vii. The lease agreement or Landlord Affidavit.
- c. Verify that the tenant's name and address listed on the eviction notice are consistent with HEAP Cloud. If there are any inconsistencies, the CAA will need to obtain additional documentation to validate the rental situation and landlord information.
- d. ***ECIP Emergency Worksheet.*** Fully complete the appropriate sections of the Worksheet to assess and document the Household's situation and eligibility for ECIP.
- e. **Verifications:** The CAA will need to contact the landlord/property manager to verify:
- i. If the situation has changed since the eviction notice was issued. Have there been any payments made? Is the Applicant still living in the Rental Unit?
 - ii. The amount necessary to prevent eviction. If paid, what will be the amount of and the due date for the next rent payment? If it is evident that the Household cannot make the next payment, reassess whether the ECIP benefits are adequate and if alternative resources are necessary.
 - iii. In order to avert the eviction, it may be necessary to use additional funding from private/donated funding or other state, federal or local sources to cover costs that are outside the scope of ECIP or exceed the \$400.00 ECIP maximum. The Application file and HEAP Cloud must include case notes identifying the other funding sources used to avert the eviction.
- f. **Agreement To Stop Eviction Process:** Prior to certifying the Applicant's/tenant's eligibility for rental payment assistance, the CAA must obtain a completed *Agreement To Stop Eviction Process* document signed by the Applicant/tenant and landlord. Detailed instructions for completing the *Agreement To Stop Eviction Process* document can be found at <http://www.mainehousing.org/partners/partner-type/community-agencies/HEAP>.

H. HEAP Cloud Data Entry and Certification

1. ECIP Only Application

- a. Enter the Application information as you would a Standard HEAP Application.
- b. The Application should be documented with the income for the applicable income verification period.

2. Certified-eligible Standard HEAP Application.

- i. If the ECIP Vendor is different than the "Primary Fuel Type Vendor" add the ECIP Vendor in the Vendor and Consumption section.

- ii. If any information requires further explanation or clarification, enter a Comment in HEAP Cloud.

I. Denials

The CAA will provide the Primary Applicant immediate verbal notice of the ECIP denial and written notice of the denial within three (3) business days. CAAs should refer Applicants who are ineligible for ECIP benefits to community organizations, 211 or other programs that may be able to assist.

J. Issuing the Purchase Order

1. Fuel Delivery Purchase Order

After certification, CAA will email or fax the purchase order to the Vendor. The HEAP Cloud purchase order shall include the:

- a. Purchase order number.
- b. Vendor name.
- c. Primary Applicant name, delivery address, and telephone number.
- d. Type of fuel.
- e. Dollar amount to be covered by ECIP. List the specific costs that will be covered by ECIP – *i.e.*, units to be delivered, unit price, and any delivery or restart/safety-check charges.
- f. CAA name and address. Also, include the name and telephone number of the CAA staff person authorizing the purchase order.
- g. Required timeframe for the fuel delivery. This would be within 18 or 48 hours of the date/time of certification for ECIP.

2. Utility Disconnect Purchase Order

After certification, CAA will generate a purchase order and will fax or email the purchase order to the Vendor. The purchase order shall specify the following:

- a. Primary Applicant name.
- b. Name on utility account (if different than Primary Applicant).
- c. Utility account number.
- d. Delivery address (*i.e.*, service location).
- e. Home Energy type.
- f. Amount of ECIP benefit including any fees.
- g. Required timeframe for crisis resolution. This would be within 18 or 48 hours of the date/time of certification for ECIP.

3. Heating System Repair Purchase Order

After certification, CAA will generate a manual purchase order (use HEAP Cloud PO #). The purchase order will be emailed or faxed to the Vendor. The CAA shall include the following information/instructions on the purchase order:

- a. HEAP Cloud purchase order number.
- b. Date purchase order issued.
- c. Vendor name.
- d. Primary Applicant's name, delivery address, and telephone number.
- e. CAA contact name and telephone number.
- f. Required timeframe for the service call. This would be within 18 or 48 hours of the date/time of certification for ECIP.
- g. Maximum dollar amount authorized for CTE and repair services.

4. Space Heater Purchase Order

After certification, CAA will generate a manual purchase order (use the HEAP Cloud PO #). The purchase order will be emailed or faxed to the store who will fulfill the order or given to the CAA staff person who will issue the space heater from the CAA's inventory. The purchase order will include:

- a. HEAP Cloud purchase order number.
- b. Date purchase order issued.
- c. Company name and address.
- d. Primary Applicant's name, address, and telephone number.
- e. CAA's address, contact name, and telephone number.
- f. Model number of space heater.
- g. Number of space heaters and total costs.

5. Temporary Relocation Purchase Order

After certification, CAA will generate a manual purchase order (use HEAP Cloud PO #). The purchase order will be emailed or faxed to hotel/motel. The purchase order will include:

- a. HEAP Cloud purchase order number.
- b. Date purchase order issued.
- c. Hotel/motel name and address.
- d. Primary Applicant's name, address, and telephone number.
- e. CAA's address, contact name, and telephone number.
- f. Reservation/confirmation number.

- g. Check-in/Check-out dates.
- h. Total dollar amount authorized.

6. Rental Payment Assistance

Prior to certification, the CAA will complete the *Agreement To Stop Eviction Process* document and obtain the landlord's and Applicant's/tenant's signatures. After certification, the certifier:

- a. Generates and prints a HEAP Cloud purchase order for the file. Do not send the order to the landlord.
- b. Notates the HEAP Cloud PO number on the executed *Agreement To Stop Eviction Process* document.
- c. Signs, prints name, and dates the *Agreement To Stop Eviction Process* document.
- d. Issues payment and sends copy of the fully executed *Agreement To Stop Eviction Process* document to landlord.

K. Reconciling Purchase Orders

- (1) It is important that the CAA verify and process completed purchase orders in a timely manner so as not to delay payment to a Vendor or reimbursements to CAAs.
- (2) The CAA must obtain additional documentation from the Vendor as needed to reconcile any discrepancies between the invoice and metered delivery ticket, and the purchase order.
- (3) In rare instances, it may be appropriate to enter/approve an amount that is greater than the original purchase order amount. In such cases, the CAA would need to assess whether extenuating circumstances occurred and whether those circumstances warrant paying the greater amount being invoiced (provided there are enough ECIP funds to cover the cost). The CAA should exercise reasonable judgement and the situation should be fully documented in the Application file/HEAP Cloud to explain the reasoning for covering more than the original purchase order amount.
- (4) The information contained in 1-5 below outlines the requirements for reconciling purchase orders for payment.

1. Fuel Delivery

- a. Once the delivery has been made, the Vendor must submit the following to the CAA:
 - i. Metered delivery ticket required for oil/kerosene and propane or invoice required for all other fuel types must document the following:
 - (1) Customer's name.
 - (2) Delivery address.
 - (3) Date of delivery or pickup.
 - (4) Type of fuel delivered or picked up.
 - (5) Units delivered or picked up.

- (6) Price per unit (this must be Vendor's cash price).
 - (7) Total.
 - ii. If the total amount on the delivery ticket is greater than the ECIP purchase order amount, **Vendor must provide an invoice, or the following must be notated and signed/dated on the delivery ticket:**
 - (1) Dollar amount to be paid by ECIP.
 - (2) Dollar amount to be paid by HEAP (if applicable).
 - (3) Dollar amount to be paid by TANF Supplemental Benefits (if applicable).
 - (4) Dollar amount to be paid by client, another party or organization (if applicable)
 - iii. Invoice is required if the delivery ticket does not document all of the charges that were approved on the purchase order (ex. delivery fee, safety check, start-up fee).
- b. The CAA reconciles the Vendor's delivery ticket/invoice to the purchase order to ensure:
 - i. Client name and address is printed on the delivery ticket and/or invoice, and matches the purchase order.
 - ii. Delivery date on the metered ticket/invoice was within the required timeframe.
 - iii. Correct fuel type was delivered.
 - iv. The units delivered and the unit price are consistent with the purchase order.
 - v. Dollar amount on the metered delivery ticket or invoice is correct.

NOTE: The CAA must forward a copy of the ECIP file to MaineHousing immediately if the Household's tank did not accept the full ECIP delivery. If a Household receives ECIP and it is subsequently determined that the Household was not eligible, MaineHousing will require the Household to repay the amount of ECIP.

2. Heating System Repairs

- a. Vendor must submit to the CAA an Invoice indicating the Primary Applicant's name and physical address, date services performed, description of the services performed, and amount being invoiced.
- b. The CAA reconciles the Vendor's invoice to the purchase order to ensure:
 - i. Client name and address is printed on the invoice and matches the purchase order.
 - ii. Service date on the invoice was within the required timeframe.
 - iii. Dollar amount on invoice is equal to or less than purchase order amount.

3. Utility Disconnect

- a. Utility Vendor shall submit to the CAA written confirmation of the date and time the utility service was restored or the disconnect order was removed from the Household's account.
- b. The CAA reviews the Vendor's documentation to verify:
 - i. Utility service was restored or the disconnect order was removed from the Applicant's account within the required timeframe.
 - ii. Dollar amount to restore service or prevent disconnection is equal to or less than the purchase order amount.

4. Space Heaters

- a. Vendor shall submit the following to CAA:
 - i. Invoice indicating the Primary Applicant's name and address, date space heater was picked up or delivered.
 - ii. Number of space heaters and model numbers.
- b. The CAA reviews the Vendor's documentation to verify:
 - i. Client name and address is printed on the invoice and matches the purchase order.
 - ii. Date picked up or delivered is within the required timeframe.
 - iii. Dollar amount on invoice is equal to or less than purchase order amount.

5. Temporary Relocation

- a. Vendor shall submit to the CAA an Invoice indicating the Primary Applicant's name and address and check-in/check-out dates.
- b. The CAA reviews the Vendor's documentation to verify:
 - i. Client name and address is printed on the invoice and matches the purchase order.
 - ii. Check-in date was within the required timeframe.
 - iii. Dollar amount on invoice is equal to or less than purchase order amount.

L. Space Heaters

- (1) CAA pays the Vendor and submits the required documentation to MaineHousing for reimbursement. MaineHousing reviews the documentation and approves the purchase order in HEAP Cloud.
 - a. Store shall submit the following to CAA:
 - i. Copy of purchase order signed and dated by Applicant at time of pickup.
 - ii. Invoice with Primary Applicant's name, date of pickup, model number, model number, and invoice amount.

NOTE: For space heaters being issued from the CAA’s inventory, the purchase order should be signed/dated by the staff person pulling the space heater from inventory, or the Applicant at time of pickup:

- b. Reconciling for payment: CAA reviews the vendor’s invoice to ensure it is consistent with the purchase order.
 - i. Client name and address is printed on the invoice, and matches the purchase order.
 - ii. Purchase order is signed/dated by Applicant.
 - iii. Invoice amount and model number is consistent with the purchase order.
 - c. Payment: CAA submits the following to MaineHousing:
 - i. Copy of purchase order signed/dated by CAA or Applicant at time of delivery or pickup.
 - ii. CAA or store invoice with Applicant name, date of pickup/delivery, model number, and invoice amount.
 - iii. *ECIP Emergency Worksheet*.
- (2) **ECIP Payment:** MaineHousing will issue payment within ten (10) business days of the approval of the purchase order in HEAP Cloud. Payments will be issued to the:
- a. Vendor for fuel deliveries, utility disconnects, and Heating System repairs; or
 - b. CAA for space heaters, temporary relocation, and rental payment assistance.

SECTION 34: APPEAL

- (1) The appeals process allows the Applicant an opportunity to disagree with a denial determination; disagree with the benefit amount; or dispute the length of time to process an Application. Federal regulations require the Applicant be informed of their rights to an appeal at the time of Application.
- (2) CAA intake and certification staff are expected to be familiar with when and how an Applicant can file for an appeal. For more information *see* [Section 16 of the Rule](#).
- (3) The Income Information, Confidentiality Waiver, and Penalty Provision document includes information about an Applicant’s rights. The intake person must notify the Applicant of their rights by actually going over this information with the Applicant at the time of Application.
- (4) The following outlines responsibilities and steps for processing an Applicant’s request for appeal:
 - 1. **MaineHousing Will**
 - a. Review Applicant’s file for errors.
 - b. Work with the CAA to resolve all errors (if applicable).
 - c. Communicate with the Applicant to resolve the issue.

- d. Schedule a fair hearing date and notify the Applicant of their rights if the issue cannot be resolved to the Applicant's satisfaction.
- e. Conduct the scheduled fair hearing with the Applicant, Fair Hearing Officer, and MaineHousing staff.
- f. Render a final decision based on the recommendation of the Fair Hearing Officer.

2. CAA Will

- a. Provide the Application file, case notes, and required documentation to MaineHousing.
- b. Work with MaineHousing to correct all errors (if applicable).
- c. Participate in the fair hearing upon MaineHousing's request.

SECTION 35: TANF SUPPLEMENTAL BENEFITS

- (1) The Maine Department of Health and Human Services will provide MaineHousing with TANF funding to supplement Fuel Assistance Benefits for HEAP-eligible Households with children.
- (2) Except as may be expressly provided for in the HEAP Rule, the use and administration of TANF Supplemental Benefits are subject to the same standards for HEAP Benefits set forth in the Rule.
- (3) Appendix D provides answers to some of the frequently asked questions about TANF Supplemental Benefits. For additional information, please email MaineHousing at liheap@mainehousing.org.

SECTION 36: RESOURCES AVAILABLE ON CAA WEB PORTAL

MaineHousing's "CAA portal" provides Community Action Agencies with online access to program forms, manuals, and other tools needed to administer Fuel Assistance and ECIP. Visit <http://www.mainehousing.org/partners/partner-type/community-agencies/HEAP> to access the following:

- (1) CAA HEAP Handbook;
- (2) PDF fillable forms for Application intake and instructions for completing the forms;
- (3) "How To" documents for select HEAP Cloud processes.
- (4) HEAP Rule – Chapter 24; and
- (5) HEAP State Plan.

APPENDIX A: MAINEHOUSING HEAP PROGRAM STAFF

Manager of HEAP: Troy Fullmer

Manages/oversees program components funded by HEAP grant, including Fuel Assistance, Energy Crisis Intervention Program (ECIP), Central Heating Improvement Program (CHIP), and Assurance 16 activities.

Phone: 207-624-5720

Email: tfullmer@mainehousing.org

HEAP Program Officer: Laura James

Processes Fuel Assistance and ECIP Benefit payments. Reviews/processes requests for reopens and waivers. Serves as a consultative resource for CAA intake and certification staff.

Phone: 207-626-4651

Email: ljames@mainehousing.org

HEAP Program Compliance Officers: Emily Morang and Vanessa Taylor

Conduct onsite monitoring of CAA intake/certification processes to ensure compliance with Fuel Assistance/ECIP/LIAP guidelines. Provide training and technical assistance. Investigate potential program abuse/fraud, review appeal requests, and work on fair hearing cases.

Emily Morang

Vanessa Taylor

Phone: 207-624-5700

Phone: 207-624-5756

Email: emorang@mainehousing.org

Email: vtaylor@mainehousing.org

HEAP Vendor Compliance Officers: Lori McPherson and Casey Erlebach

Monitor vendor use of Fuel Assistance/ECIP/TANF Supplemental Benefits. Perform closeout audits for vendor contract terminations. Address vendor compliance issues and provide training and technical assistance to vendors. Process requests from prospective/new vendors. Investigate potential (vendor) program abuse/fraud.

Lori McPherson

Casey Erlebach

Phone: 207-624-5711

Phone: 207-624-5796

Email: lmcperson@mainehousing.org

Email: cerlebach@mainehousing.org

HEAP Program Assistant: Angie Desrochers

Processes benefit returns and change of address/change of product requests. Processes TANF Supplemental Benefit payments. Coordinates the (vendor) Annual Consumption Report process. Reviews and processes vendor contracts.

Phone: 207- 624-5765

Email: adesrochers@mainehousing.org

EHS Application Specialist: Rob Harvey

Provides support and technical assistance for HEAP Cloud and other application systems and data sets used in the Energy and Housing Services (EHS) department. Creates reports.

Phone: 207- 624-5726

Email: rharvey@mainehousing.org

APPENDIX B: AVERAGE FUEL PRICES FOR USE IN PROGRAM YEAR 2020-2021

Fuel Type	AVERAGE PRICE	CONVERSION FACTOR	COST PER MBTU*	EFFICIENCY RANGE	ADJUSTED COST PER MBTU
Firewood	\$254.37 per cord	21 MBTU's/cord	\$12.11	50%	\$24.23
Heating Oil	\$2.62 per gallon	0.139 MBTU's/gal	\$18.85	65%	\$29.00
Natural Gas	\$1.13 per therm	0.1 MBTU's therm	\$11.30	65%	\$17.38
Kerosene	\$3.18per gallon	0.136 MBTU's/gal	\$23.38	65%	\$35.97
Propane	\$2.49 per gallon	0.0915 MBTU's/gal	\$27.21	65%	\$41.87
Electricity	\$0.15 per kWh	003412 MBTU's/kWh	\$43.96	100%	\$43.96
Coal	\$322.44 per ton	25 MBTU's/ton	\$12.90	60%	\$21.50
Corn	\$433.00 per ton	25 MBTU's/ton	\$17.32	60%	\$28.87
Wood Pellets	\$247.16 per ton	15.5 MBTU's/ton	\$15.95	80%	\$19.93
Bio-Bricks	\$308.00 per ton	15.5 MBTU's/ton	\$19.9887	80%	\$24.84

*MBTU = 1 million BTU's

(Supporting documentation for fuel type Oil, Kerosene, and Propane Gas are obtainable at the Governor's Office of Energy Independence and Security (OEIS))

All other fuel type average prices are based on representative surveys.

APPENDIX C: INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO OBTAIN A COPY OF YOUR UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFIT HISTORY

Through the Unemployment Insurance (UI) Web Portal

Individuals who have a current Maine Department of Labor portal account:

- Log onto www.maine.gov/online/laborui
- Log into the Maine Department of Labor web portal with your email address and password
- Select the Benefit History Summary tab at the top of the page
- You will be asked to verify your social security number and PIN# (if you have received unemployment benefits in the previous 18 months), hit continue
- Your benefit history will be displayed and available to print (be sure to print the PDF copy of the history).

Individuals who DO NOT have a current Maine Department of Labor portal account:

- Log onto www.maine.gov/online/laborui
- On the home page select create an account
- You will be required to enter an email account and your social security number to create a new portal account (if you have received unemployment benefits in the previous 18 months, you will be required to enter the PIN#)

Username (email address): _____

Password: _____

Answer to Security Question One: _____

Answer to Security Question Two: _____

- Once the application is completed, you will receive an email with a link to activate your account, **YOU MUST LOGIN TO YOUR EMAIL ACCOUNT AND OPEN THE ACTIVATION EMAIL TO COMPLETE YOUR PORTAL ACCOUNT.**
- Once the portal account is activated, you will Log onto www.maine.gov/online/laborui
- Log into the Maine Department of Labor web portal with your email address and password
- Select the Benefit History Summary tab at the top of the page
- You will be asked to enter your social security number and PIN# (If you have filed for Unemployment Insurance benefits in the previous 18 months), hit continue
- Your benefit history will be displayed and available to print (be sure to print the PDF copy of the history).

NOTE: User's do not need to have an active Maine Job Bank account to obtain a copy of their benefit history transcript report.

APPENDIX D: TANF SUPPLEMENTAL BENEFITS

The Maine Department of Health and Human Services provides MaineHousing with TANF funding to supplement Fuel Assistance Benefits for HEAP-eligible Households with children.

Except as may be expressly provided for in the HEAP Rule, the use and administration of TANF Supplemental Benefits are subject to the same standards for HEAP Benefits set forth in the HEAP Rule – Chapter 24.

The following provides answers to some of the frequently asked questions about TANF Supplemental Benefits. For additional information, please email MaineHousing at liheap@mainehousing.org.

Q1:	What is the source of funding and the amount awarded to MaineHousing?
A1:	As required by State of Maine legislation, 22 M.R.S. § 3769-E, the Department of Health and Human Services shall provide \$3,000,000 annually in TANF funds to MaineHousing. These funds must be used to provide supplemental fuel assistance to low-income families with children.
Q2:	Who is eligible for TANF Supplemental Benefits?
A2:	A Household will be eligible to receive a TANF Supplemental Benefit if the: a. Household's Standard HEAP Application has been certified-eligible in the current Program Year; b. Household includes at least one member who is under the age of eighteen (18) on the Date of Application for HEAP; and c. Household does not reside in Subsidized Housing with heat included.
Q3:	What is the benefit amount per household?
A3:	Subject to the availability of funding, the TANF Supplemental Benefit per Eligible Household per Program Year shall be determined each program year by MaineHousing based on the projected number of eligible households.
Q4:	Who is the point of contact for questions about TANF Supplemental Benefits?
A4:	Questions about TANF supplemental benefits should be directed to MaineHousing. Email liheap@mainehousing.org or call 1-800-452-4668.
Q5:	Do HEAP rules and guidelines apply to TANF Supplemental Benefits?
A5:	Except as expressly outlined in the Rule, the use and administration of TANF Supplemental Benefits are subject to the same requirements and guidelines as set forth for HEAP Benefits in the HEAP Rule – Chapter 24 and HEAP Vendor Handbook.
Q6:	When are TANF Supplemental Benefits be processed?
A6:	TANF Supplemental Benefits will be processed separately from regular HEAP Benefits. TANF Supplemental Benefit payments or Credit Notification Reports will be issued following issuance of the Household's regular HEAP/Fuel Assistance Benefit.

Q7: How are TANF Supplemental Benefits issued/paid?	
A7: Except in the case of firewood, TANF Supplemental Benefits will be issued in accordance with the information recorded in HEAP Cloud – <i>i.e.</i> , designated Vendor or direct check. MaineHousing will issue/pay TANF Supplemental Benefits as follows:	
Designated Vendor/Fuel Type in HEAP Cloud:	
Electricity or natural gas	MaineHousing will issue a Vendor Voucher Report and make payment to utility vendor.
Firewood	If the Household’s regular HEAP/Fuel Assistance Benefit was issued for firewood, the TANF Supplemental Benefit will be issued to the electricity Vendor provided the electricity account is in a Household member’s name. If the Household has a secondary heating system, the TANF Supplemental Benefit may be issued to an approved Vendor that supplies the fuel type for the secondary heating system. A direct check will be issued if the Household does not have electricity or the account is not in a Household member’s name or does not have the TANF Supplemental Benefit issued for fuel for a secondary heating system.
All Other Fuel Types (excluding electricity/natural gas and firewood)	MaineHousing will issue a Credit Notification Report to the Vendor guaranteeing payment for eligible deliveries made to the Household. TANF Supplemental Benefits will be paid to non-utility Vendors on a post-delivery basis. Vendor must submit a delivery ticket/invoice and a transaction history report to MaineHousing. Payment will be issued to Vendor within ten (10) days from MaineHousing’s receipt and approval of the above-mentioned documentation.
No Designated Vendor (rent with heat, no participating vendor)	MaineHousing will issue a direct check to the Primary Applicant.

Q8: How are clients notified of their eligibility for TANF Supplemental Benefits?	
A8: Client benefit notification letters will be mailed on the third business day following the date the Vendor Voucher Report or Credit Notification Report was mailed to the vendor.	

Q9: How will TANF Supplemental Benefits be documented in HEAP Cloud?	
A9: TANF Supplemental Benefit payments will be recorded on the benefits tab in HEAP Cloud as a TANF Allocation.	
Q10: What if the account information, physical address, or fuel type listed on the Credit Notification Report or Vendor Voucher Report differs from the Vendor’s (account) records?	
A10: Vendor must contact MaineHousing immediately at 1-800-452-4668. Any deviations from the Vendor Voucher Report or Credit Notification Report must be approved in writing by MaineHousing prior to delivery. CAAs are not authorized to approve deviations.	

Q11: Which funds/benefits must be used first?

A11: A Household’s regular HEAP/Fuel Assistance Benefit must be exhausted before using TANF Supplemental Benefits. If the Household receives a PY2021 regular HEAP/Fuel Assistance Benefit and has a remaining credit balance of PY2020 TANF Supplemental Benefits, the Vendor must use the PY2020 TANF Supplemental Benefits first. Benefits/funds must be used in the following order:

1. PY2020 HEAP funds
2. PY2020 TANF Supplemental funds
3. PY2021 HEAP funds
4. PY2021 TANF Supplemental funds

Q12: Do TANF Supplemental Benefits expire?

A12: Yes. Like regular HEAP/Fuel Assistance Benefits, TANF Supplemental Benefits are available for use during the program year of issue and up until April 30th of the program year immediately following.

Program Year	Delivery must occur between:	Benefit cannot be used on or after:
PY2020	Oct. 1, 2019 and Apr. 30, 2021	May 1, 2021
PY2021	Oct. 1, 2020 and Apr. 30, 2022	May 1, 2022

Q13: How are partial deliveries handled (i.e., amount delivered is less than Household’s remaining TANF Supplemental Benefit)?

A13: Non-utility vendors may make multiple deliveries against the Household’s TANF Supplemental Benefit. MaineHousing will pay the Vendor for each (partial) delivery within ten (10) business days of its receipt and approval of the Vendor’s delivery ticket/invoice and transaction history report.

Q14: How do TANF Supplemental Benefits impact a Household’s eligibility for Energy Crisis Intervention Program (ECIP) services?

A14: Any remaining TANF Supplemental Benefit funds or credits must be used in conjunction with or in lieu of ECIP funds. The CAA will need to contact the vendor or MaineHousing to confirm the amount of remaining TANF Supplemental Benefit funds or credits. ECIP amount will be equal to the fuel cost, plus delivery fee, minus remaining HEAP funds, minus remaining TANF Supplemental credits.

In the case of electricity, any remaining Low Income Assistance Program (LIAP/ELP) benefits must also be used in conjunction with or in lieu of ECIP funds.

Q15: What if the Household moves and/or requests a fuel type or Vendor change?

A15: The TANF Supplemental Benefit notification letter instructs the Primary Applicant to notify CAA, in writing, if they move and/or wish to change vendors or fuel types.

APPENDIX E: INFORMATION PROTECTION GUIDELINES



INFORMATION PROTECTION GUIDELINES

MaineHousing and its business partners rely on computer technology that is powerful and far-reaching to facilitate our ability to serve clients throughout the state of Maine. Every day, information systems process, store, and transmit confidential client information and sensitive data. Keeping protected information secure is an obligation mandated by state and federal laws, along with contractual agreements between MaineHousing and its partners – and it's the right thing to do.

PERSONALLY IDENTIFIABLE INFORMATION

Personally Identifiable Information (PII) is any information about an individual that can be used to distinguish or trace an individual's identity. PII is also any other information that is linked (or linkable) to an individual, such as medical or financial information.

Examples of PII include, but are not limited to:

- **any** information provided by applicants or participants in MaineHousing programs (includes information provided by third parties working on behalf of an applicant/participant).
- personal identification numbers, such as social security number (SSN), passport number, driver's license number.
- financial account or credit card information, including account numbers, card numbers, expiration dates, cardholder name, or service codes.
- healthcare / medical information disclosed to MaineHousing.
- names and addresses of clients participating in MaineHousing programs or on waiting lists.
- the address of a shelter or other living accommodations for victims of domestic violence.

The format that the information is in **does not** matter! Paper records, electronic files, and email can all contain protected information.

INFORMATION PROTECTION MEASURES

- **Encrypt all Personally Identifiable Information contained on computers, laptops, and portable electronic devices, such as CD's and USB drives.**
 - Encryption converts the contents of a file to make them unreadable to others, unless they have the correct password. There are many file and disk encryption options available, such as Bitlocker for Windows, or several free/open-source options that are fairly easy to use.
- **Send e-mails or e-mail attachments with Personally Identifiable Information through an email encryption server or application.**
 - If you don't have access to an application that encrypts e-mail, request that your MaineHousing contact send you a secure e-mail. You will receive an encrypted e-mail notification that will allow you to access MaineHousing's email encryption service. You can securely reply to the encrypted message by using the reply function through the secure email portal. Alternatively, MaineHousing can provide access to Sharefile for securely sending documents back and forth to MaineHousing.

- **Put measures in place to prevent the loss, theft, misappropriation or inadvertent disclosure of Personally Identifiable Information. These could include data loss prevention (DLP), data access governance, secure file transfers, or audit logging applications / services.**
 - Remove documents that contain PII from printers or fax machines, do not leave paperwork containing PII on desks or other work areas unattended, place paperwork containing PII in a locked file at the end of the business day, and shred documents containing PII that are no longer needed.
 - Securely dispose of any computer equipment or storage media containing PII. Destroy or securely erase hard drives.

If you suspect or become aware of a failure to protect Personally Identifiable Information, notify your contact at MaineHousing *immediately*.

APPENDIX F: COURT ORDERED CHILD SUPPORT DEDUCTIONS

For any Applicant who pays court ordered child support, the CAA will deduct paid and documented child support payments made during the income period from the Applicant’s gross income.

1. Required Documentation:
 - a. Copy of the court order
 - b. Proof of the amounts due and paid during the income verification period. Acceptable documents are:
 - i. State of Maine DHHS Official Record of Child Support Disbursements report;
 - ii. Paystub, if the child support is deducted through employer;
 - iii. Bank statement;
 - iv. Cancelled check;
 - v. Money order receipt.

2. HEAP Cloud - Guidelines for entering Applicant Income:

<i>Example 1: Deduct only the amount paid during the income verification period.</i>											
Date of Application:	November 12, 2020										
Income Verification Period:	3 Months										
Income Verification Months:	August, September and October										
Applicant’s 3 Month Income:	\$3,526.58										
Applicant’s Monthly Child Support Obligation as documented on the court order.		\$425.00									
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Paid Child Support:</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Monthly Amount Paid</td> <td style="padding: 5px; text-align: right;">\$425.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Multiplied by 3 Months</td> <td style="padding: 5px; text-align: right;">3</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Total Child Support Paid</td> <td style="padding: 5px; text-align: right;">\$1,275.00</td> </tr> </table>			Paid Child Support:	Monthly Amount Paid	\$425.00		Multiplied by 3 Months	3		Total Child Support Paid	\$1,275.00
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	Child Support	(\$1,275.00)									
	Total Income	\$2,251.58									

Example 2: In this example, the amount of the child support payments exceeds the Household's total income for the income verification period.

Date of Application: January 16, 2021
Income Verification Period: 3 Months
Income Verification Months: October, November and December
Applicant's three (3) Month Income: \$1,500.00
Applicant's Monthly Child Support Obligation (as documented on the court order): \$575.00

Paid Child Support:	Monthly Amount Paid	\$575.00
	Multiplied by 3 Months	x 3
	Total Child Support Paid	\$1,725.00

Countable Income	3 Months Income	\$1,500.00
	Minus 3 Month Child Support Paid	(\$1,725.00)
Total Income (Result is a negative)		(\$225.00)

HEAP Cloud Data Entry:	Gross Income	\$1,500.00
	Child Support	(\$1,500.00)
	Total Income	\$0.00

The child support deduction is more than the Household's income. Enter enough child support to bring the total Household income to \$0.00 and enter case file notes.

Example 3: Applicant paid lump sum child support arrearage in the income verification period

Date of Application April 11, 2021
Income Verification Period 3 Months
Income Verification Months January, February and March
Applicant's 3 Month Income \$3,000.00
Applicant's Monthly Child Support Obligation (as documented on the court order) \$400.00
Paid a lump sum Child Support Arrearage in March (in addition to monthly obligation) \$1,500.00

3	Paid Child Support:	Monthly Amount Paid	\$400.00
		Multiplied by 3 Months	x 3
		Total Obligated Child Support Paid	\$1,200.00

Countable Income	3 Months Income	\$3,000.00
	Minus 3 Month Child Support Paid	\$1,200.00
Total Income (Entered in HEAP Cloud)		\$1,800.00

Lump sum arrearage payment of \$1,500.00 is not deductible, even though it was paid during the income verification period.

HEAP Cloud Data Entry:	Gross Income	\$3,000.00
	Child Support	(\$1,200.00)
	Total Income	\$1,800.00

Lump sum payment made for arrears cannot be deducted from income.