

Home Energy Assistance Program

CAA Training for PY2025



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WELCOME

THANK YOU FOR JOINING US



Today's Agenda

Tuesday	Presenter
Welcome and Opening Remarks	Dan Brennan
Agenda Overview	Sarah Johnson
Impact of HEAP Video – other programs that become available with approved HEAP	
HEAP Game	Anne Lambert/Laura James
The Roles of Intake Workers and Certifiers	Emily Sparrow
Changes for PY2025 HEAP	Sarah Johnson
Asylum Seekers/Refugee/Immigrant Overview	Claude Rwaganje
Eligibility Documentation	Jimmy Puckett/Ashley Carson
Program Eligibility – Uncounted HH Members and College Students	Emily Sparrow
Categorical Income Eligibility	Emily Sparrow
Income Verification Period / Zero Income Form	Sarah Johnson
Benefit Matrix	Sarah Johnson
Identifying Heating Systems and Fuel Types	Lori McPherson
Waiver Policy	Sarah Johnson
Denials	Zach O'Ben
Informal Reviews, Fair Hearings, and Fraud	Zach O'Ben/Anne Lambert
Questions and Answer – Open Discussion	All



Impact of HEAP



**How well do you
know HEAP?**



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Roles of Intake Workers and Certifiers



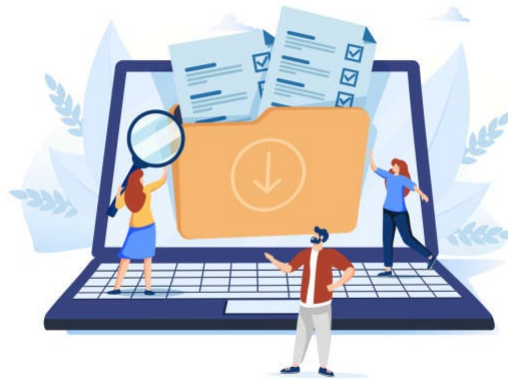
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What is your Role?



Application Intake

The process of completing an Application appointment with an Applicant (in person or by phone).



Role of Intake

- Review prior year comments
- Create Household
- Create New Application
- Interview Applicant
- Enter data in system of record
- Enter Clarifying Comments
- Gather Documents
- Prepare Forms
- Client Education



Client Education

Including but not limited to:

- Uncounted Household members & college students
- LIAP process
- Vendor selection
- Monitoring fuel levels
- Tank location and corresponding fuel type
- Next steps for Application



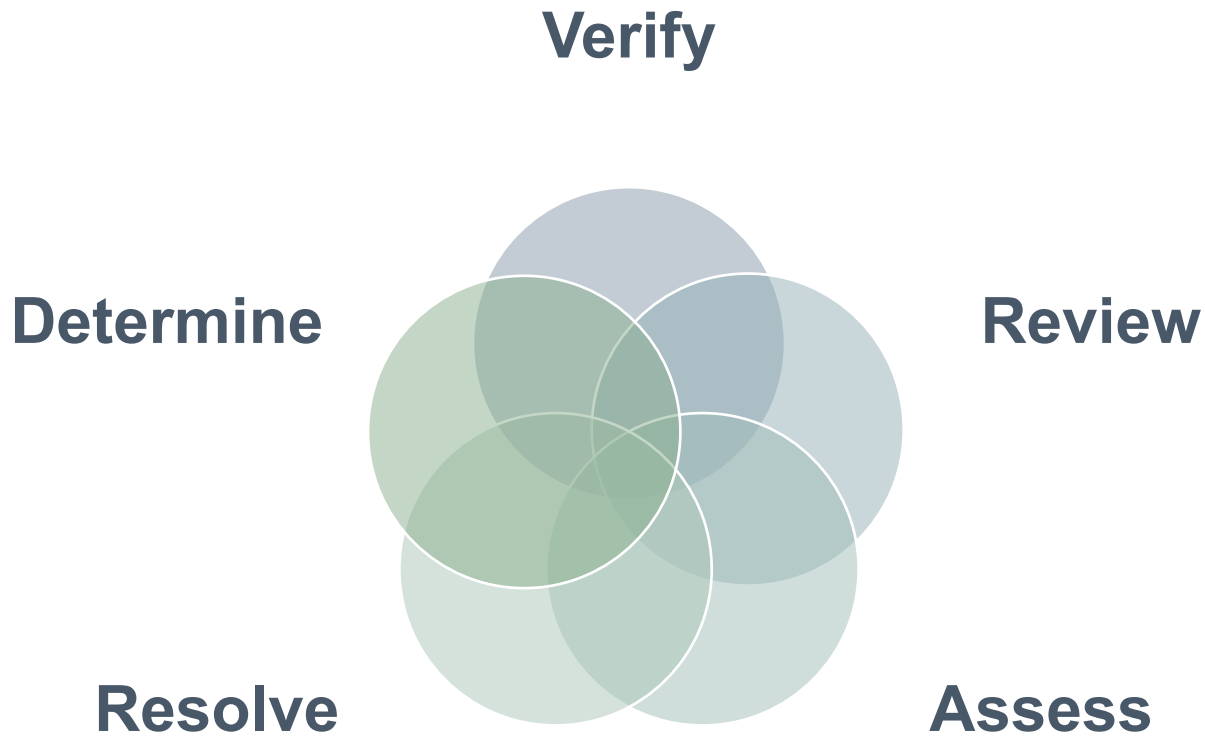
Certifying a HEAP Application

The process of determining an Application Eligible or Ineligible

- Must be Certified within 30 business days
- Must be Certified in ECOS



Role of Certifier



VERIFY



- Are all the documents in the application file?
- Are all the documents signed by appropriate persons?



REVIEW

- Application file
- Forms
- Income documentation
- HEAP System of Record



ASSESS

Application File and ECOS

- Does it make sense?
- Do Comments and documentation tell the entire story?
- Is Income sufficient to meet Basic Living Expenses?
- Is all Household Income accounted for?



RESOLVE

- Inconsistencies and errors
- Outstanding questions



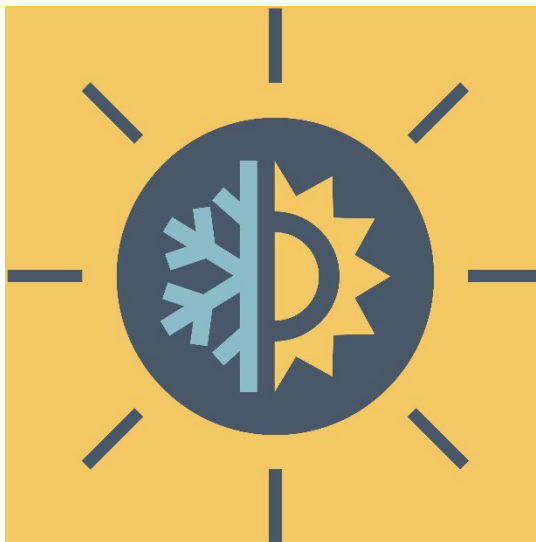
DETERMINE

- Is the file complete?
- Is income calculated correctly?
- Is the paper file consistent with ECOS?
- Can the Application be determined eligible?
- Should the Application be denied?



Questions?





What's New in PY2025?



Changes in PY2025

- New Software
- Benefit Matrix
- Categorical Income
- Self-Employment verification
- Sub-Housing Form

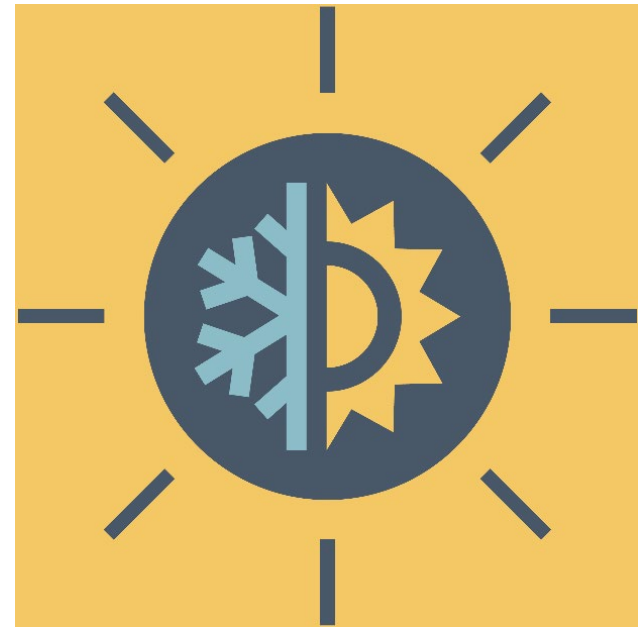


Changes in PY2025

- No Abbreviated Applications
- Medical Deductions will no longer be on the denial letter
- Getting rid of: Minor Child Verification Form and the Zero Income Form



Asylum Seekers/ Refugee/Immigrant overview



Claude Rwaganje



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HEAP Training

Mandatory Eligibility Requirements

Jimmy Puckette & Ashley Carson



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LIHEAP Requirements

Mandatory Federal Requirements

- Citizenship/Legal Status Verification
- Identity Verification
- Income Verification

Discretionary Federal Requirements

- Social Security Number Verification



Chapter 24 HEAP Rule Mandatory Requirements

Verification of:

1. Citizenship/Legal Status
2. Identity
3. Income
4. Social Security Number



Ways to Verify Citizenship/Legal Status

U.S. Citizenship or U.S. Non-Citizen National status may be verified using one of the following:

U.S. Passport

Maine Real ID

Certificate of Naturalization (N-550/N-570)

Certificate of Citizenship (N-560/N-561)

U.S. Birth Certificate

Document from federally recognized Indian Tribe

- A Tribal enrollment card
- A Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood
- A Tribal census document
- Documents on Tribal letterhead signed by a Tribal official



Alternative Documentation

If the Applicant or any Household Member is unable to provide one of the documents listed on the previous slide, U.S. Citizenship or U.S. Non-Citizen National status may be verified by providing one document from each of the lists below.

List A

Social Security Card and Citizenship Attestation Form

Consular Report of Birth Abroad (FS-545)

U.S. Citizen Identification Card (I-197)

Northern Mariana Card (I-873)

Military record showing a U.S. place of birth

U.S. life, health or other insurance record showing U.S. place of birth

Religious record showing U.S. place of birth recorded in the U.S.

School record showing the child's name and U.S. place of birth

Federal or State census record showing U.S. citizenship or U.S. place of birth

Final adoption decree showing the person's name and U.S. place of birth

Documentation of a foreign-born adopted child who received automatic U.S. Citizenship (IR3 or IH3)

List B

Driver's license issued by a U.S. State or Territory

Identification card issued by the Federal, state, or local government

School identification card

A clinic, doctor, hospital, or school record, including preschool or day care records (for children under 19 years old)

U.S. Military card or draft record or Military dependent's identification card

U.S. Coast Guard Merchant Mariner card

Voter Registration Card

Two other documents that prove your identity, like employer identification cards, high school or college diplomas, marriage certificates, divorce decrees, property deeds or titles



Qualified Alien Status

Qualified Alien status may be verified using ONE of the following documents:

Alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence:	Permanent Resident Card, "Green Card" (I-551); OR Unexpired Temporary I-551 stamp in foreign passport or on INS Form I-94
Asylee	INS Form I-94 annotated with stamp showing grant of asylum under Section 208 of the INA; INS Form I-688B (Employment Authorization Card) annotated "274a.12(a)(5)"; INS Form I-766 (Employment Authorization Document) annotated "A5"; Grant letter from the Asylum Office or INS; OR Order of an immigration judge granting asylum
Refugee	INS Form I-94 annotated with stamp showing admission under § 207 of the INA; INS Form I-688B (Employment Authorization Card) annotated "274a.12(a)(3)"; INS Form I-766 (Employment Authorization Document) annotated "A3"; OR INS Form I-571 (Refugee Travel Document)
Alien Paroled into the U.S. for at least one year	INS Form I-94 with stamp showing admission for at least one year under section 212(d)(5) of the INA. (Cannot aggregate period of admission for less than one year to meet the one-year requirement)
Alien whose deportation or removal was withheld	INS Form I-688B (Employment Authorization Card) annotated "274a.12(a)(10)"; INS Form I-766 (Employment Authorization Document) annotated "A10"; OR Order from an immigration judge showing deportation withheld under § 243(h) of the INA as in effect prior to April 1, 1997, or removal withheld under § 241(b)(3) of the INA
Alien Granted Conditional Entry	INS Form I-94 with stamp showing admission under § 203(a)(7) of the INA; INS Form I-688B (Employment Authorization Card) annotated "274a.12(a)(3)"; OR INS Form I-766 (Employment Authorization Document) annotated "A3"
Cuban/Haitian Entrant	INS Form I-551 (Alien Registration Receipt Card, commonly known as a "green card") with the code CU6, CU7, or CH6; Unexpired temporary I-551 stamp in foreign passport or on *INS Form I-94 with the code CU6 or CU7; OR INS Form I-94 with stamp showing parole as "Cuba/Haitian Entrant" under Section 212(d)(5) of the INA



Examples

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
U.S. Customs and Border Protection

ASYLUM STATUS
Granted Indefinitely
Section 208
Immigration and Nationality Act

Departure Record

Address Number
[REDACTED] 33

MAR 24 2021

335 ZSF

440468

Country of Citizenship
NIGERIA

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATION CARD

The person identified is authorized to work in the U.S. for the validity of this card.

NAME VOID, VOID V
Joe W. Cristofani

AB 000-000-002
CARD # WAC0000000002

Birthdate 01/01/83 Category AS Sex **

Country of Birth El Salvador

Terminated conditions None

NOT VALID FOR REENTRY TO U.S.

CARD VALID FROM 01/01/50 EXPIRES 01/01/50

ALIEN REGISTRATION NUMBER

CARD NUMBER

CATEGORY CODE

EXPIRATION DATE



Ways to Verify Identity

If the documentation provided by the Applicant to verify citizenship or legal status bears a photograph of the Applicant, this will be acceptable to verify identity.

OR

ONE of the following documents:

Driver's
license

State
issued
ID card

Passport or
passport
card

SNAP electronic
benefit transfer
(EBT) card with
photo

U.S.
Military
ID



Ways to Verify Identity

Or TWO of the following documents:

Adoption
Decree

Employer
Identification
Card

Marriage
Certificate

Social
Security
Card

Birth
Certificate

Foreign School
Record that
contains a
photograph

Notice from a
Public
Benefits
Agency

Union or
Worker's Center
Identification
Card

Divorce Decree

High School or
College Diploma

Property Deed or
Title Document

Voter
Registration
Card



Ways to Verify Social Security Numbers

Bank tax form

Non SSA-1099 tax form

SSA-1099 tax form

W-2 (wage and tax statement)

Medicare card with number ending with the suffix "A"

Social Security Card issued by the Social Security Administration

Valid unexpired U.S. Military documents



Alternative Ways to Verify Social Security Numbers

Two recent paystubs (within the last sixty (60) days) showing Household Member's full SSN

Notice of Decision issued by a Public Benefits Agency that shows the Household member's full SSN

Recent (within the last year) Social Security Administration letter or notice showing Household Member's full SSN

Most recent (within the last two years) full Federal Tax Return showing Household member's full SSN and confirmation of filing

Income Withholding Order/Notice for Support showing Household Member's full SSN



What Happens if the Mandatory Requirements Cannot be Met?

Citizenship/Legal Status

- If the Applicant or any Household Member does not meet the requirements they must be excluded from the total number of Household Members when calculating a Benefit

Verify Identity

- If the Applicant cannot verify their identity they are not eligible for a Benefit
- If the Applicant is applying on behalf of other eligible Household Members, at least one of the eligible Household Members must provide the required identity documentation



What Happens if the Mandatory Requirements Cannot be Met?

Social Security

- If the Applicant or any Household Member does not meet the requirements they must be excluded from the total number of Household Members when calculating a Benefit

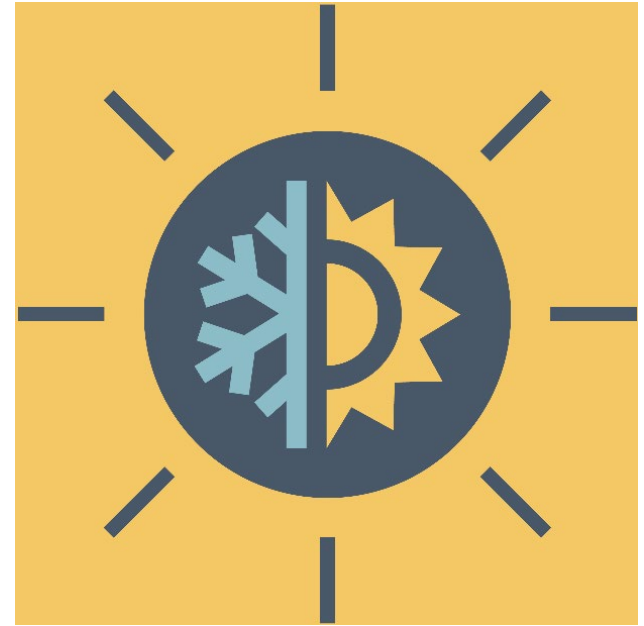


Questions?



Program Eligibility

Uncounted Household
Members and College Students



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Uncounted Household Members

Why would a Household Member be uncounted?

- Unable to provide Citizenship/legal status verification
- Unable to provide SSN verification
- Unable to verify identity
- Already counted in a different Household for the same Program Year



What does it mean to be 'uncounted'?

- Uncounted person is not counted in the total number of Household Members on the Application.
- Uncounted person's income IS countable on the Application.



Example:

Three (3) adults live together at 123 Main Street:

- All three work part-time, each making \$10,000 annually
- One is unable to verify their SSN

Application will reflect:

- Two countable household members
- Three incomes



Determining Poverty Level:

Household size: 2

Total Income: \$30,000 annually (\$10,000 x 3)

Poverty Level	Household Size									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1 MONTH	\$2,945	\$3,851	\$4,757	\$5,663	\$6,569	\$7,475	\$7,645	\$7,815	\$7,985	\$8,155
3 MONTHS	\$8,834	\$11,552	\$14,271	\$16,989	\$19,707	\$22,425	\$22,935	\$23,445	\$23,954	\$24,464
12 MONTHS	\$35,336	\$46,209	\$57,082	\$67,955	\$78,827	\$89,700	\$91,739	\$93,777	\$95,816	\$97,855

FPL for 2 countable Household members: 146%

FPL for 3 countable Household members: 116%



Determining Benefit:

FPL for 2 countable Household members: 146%

FPL for 3 countable Household members: 116%

Poverty Level as Calculated under the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines (FPIG)	Percentage of Points
0%-25%	130%
26%-50%	120%
51%-75%	110%
76%-100%	100%
101%-125%	90%
126%-150%	80%
>than 150% FPIG but not exceeding the maximum of the greater of 150% FPIG or 60% state median income	70%

Calculated poverty level amounts falling between brackets will be rounded to the next higher or lower amount. For example: income at 75.1% will be rounded to 75%; income at 100.6% will be rounded to 101%.



Client Education

How does the information and documentation provided by a Household effect the application?



Client Education

Verifications: No Choice

- Household may be over income
- Household may still be income eligible but have a higher FPL which could product a lower Benefit
- Use uncounted checkbox

College Students: Choice

- Will Household benefit from including college student?
- Will Household benefit from excluding college student?
- Do not use uncounted checkbox



College Students

College Student A:

- Works full-time
- Attends school full-time

College Student B:

- Does not work; has zero income
- Attends school full-time

Outcomes, if included:

College Student A:

- Would increase countable household members
- Would increase total household income

College Student B:

- Would increase countable household members
- Would not increase total household income



Questions



Categorical Income Eligibility



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Who is considered Categorically Income Eligible?

An Applicant or Household Member who provides a TANF or SNAP Notice of Decision listing their name as eligible will be considered Categorically Income Eligible for HEAP.



What does it mean to be considered Categorically Income Eligible?

An Applicant or Household Member who is considered Categorically Income Eligible for HEAP:

- must provide income information but **does not** need to provide income documentation; and
- may have the Household's Poverty Level set at a pre-determined amount if all Household Members receive TANF or SNAP.



How is Categorical Income Eligibility calculated?

- Households in which all members receive TANF will have their HEAP benefit determined at 0-25% FPL.
- Households in which all members receive SNAP will have their HEAP benefit determined at 101-125% FPL.



What if a Household's actual income is less than the pre-determined amount/poverty level for Categorical Income Eligibility?

- Household may provide income documentation and the Categorical Income Eligibility override will not be used.



- Applicants and Household Members who do not provide a TANF or SNAP Notice of Decision listing their name as eligible will not be considered Categorically Income Eligible and **must** provide Income Documentation.
- If any member of a Household is not considered categorically income eligible, the Household cannot use the pre-determined poverty level and all Household income will be used to determine the Household's actual poverty level.



Mixed Households

What if some Household members are considered Categorically Income Eligible and some are not?

- Income amounts for all Household members must be entered in HEAP system of record.
- Only Household members who are not considered Categorically Income Eligible must provide income documentation.
- Household's actual income will be used to determine the Household's poverty level.



HEAP Application

- CAA must upload TANF or SNAP Notice of Decision to the HEAP system of record if any Household Member is considered Categorically Income Eligible and does not provide income documentation.
- CAA will add a note in the comments section of the HEAP system of record.
- If a Household states they are TANF or SNAP eligible but does not provide documentation, they must provide income documentation and cannot be considered Categorically Income Eligible.



Questions?



Income Verification



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Income Verification



- Simplified Income Verification Period (IVP)
- 28 Days –
 - 1 Benefit statement if monthly
 - 2 paystubs if paid bi-weekly
 - 4 paystubs if paid weekly



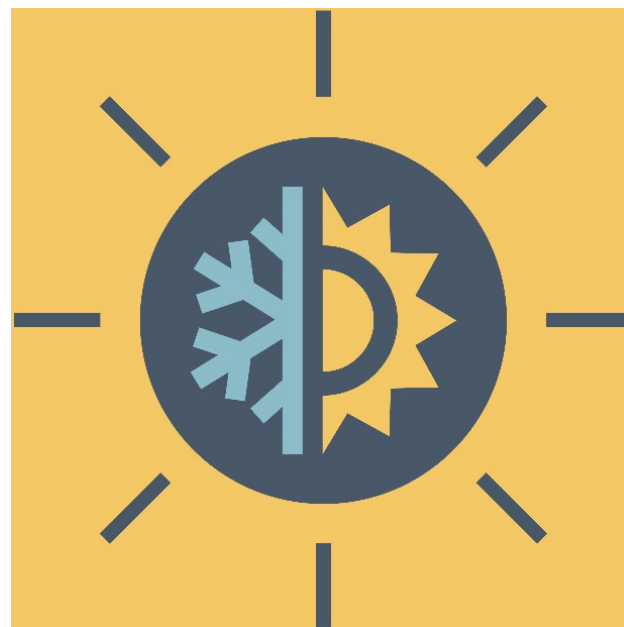
Income Verification



- Zero Income
- No separate form – fill out the information in the income screen in ECOS



Benefit Matrix



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BENEFIT MATRIX

About
the
dwelling

Dwelling Type	Points
Stick-built/Modular	9
Mobile/Manufactured	8
Condo/Duplex	6
Apartment	6

About
the
location
of the
dwelling

Residing County	Points
Aroostook	7
Somerset	6
Franklin	6
Piscataquis	6
Oxford	5
Penobscot	5
Androscoggin	4
Hancock	4
Waldo	3
Cumberland	3
Lincoln	3
Knox	3
York	3
Washington	2
Kennebec	2
Sagadahoc	2



BENEFIT MATRIX

About
the fuel
type



Fuel Type	Points
Electricity	14
LP Gas	10
Kerosene	8
Oil	7
Bio-Fuel	6
Coal	5
Wood Pellets	5
Corn	5
Natural Gas	5
Wood	4
Heating Subsidized	-9

Priority
Points



Priority Determination	Points
60+, Disabled or child 6 and under	5
or	
Child 7-17	3



BENEFIT MATRIX

Poverty
Level



Poverty Level as Calculated under the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines (FPIG)	Percentage of Points
0%-25%	130%
26%-50%	120%
51%-75%	110%
76%-100%	100%
101%-125%	90%
126%-150%	80%
>than 150% FPIG but not exceeding the maximum of the greater of 150% FPIG or 60% state median income	70%
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BENEFIT MATRIX SCENARIOS



Household of 1

- Dwelling Type is a Mobile Home
- Residing County is Aroostook
- Fuel Type is Kerosene
- Applicant is Age 78
- Income Type is SS. Poverty Level is 136.3.%

Benefit Matrix Points

Dwelling Type (Mobile Home) = 8

Residing County (Aroostook) = 7

Fuel Type (Kerosene) = 8

60+ Disabled or child 6 and under = 5

Total Points = 28

Benefit Matrix Calculation

Total Points x Poverty Level Percentage in Decimal = Total Point

Calculation Dollar Per Point (\$22.00)

$28 \times 0.8 = 22.40$ Round up to the nearest whole number, which is 23

$23 \times \$22.00 = \mathbf{\$506.00}$ **HEAP Benefit**



Household of 4

- Dwelling Type is an Apartment
- Residing County is Kennebec
- Fuel Type is LP
- One Child is 15 years old
- Income Type is Wages. Poverty Level is 150%

Benefit Matrix Points

Dwelling Type (Apartment) = 6

Residing County (Kennebec) = 2

Fuel Type (LP) = 10

60+ Disabled or child 6 and under = 3

Total Points = 21

Benefit Matrix Calculation

Total Points x Poverty Level Percentage in Decimal = Total Point

Calculation Dollar Per Point (\$22.00)

$21 \times 0.7 = 14.70$ Round up to the nearest whole number, which is 15

$15 \times \$22.00 = \mathbf{\$330.00}$ **HEAP Benefit**



Household of 2

- Dwelling Type is a Duplex
- Residing County is Hancock
- Fuel Type is Wood
- Income Type is Wages. Poverty Level is 120.%

Benefit Matrix Points

Dwelling Type (Duplex) = 6

Residing County (Hancock) = 4

Fuel Type (Wood) = 4

Total Points = 14

Benefit Matrix Calculation

Total Points x Poverty Level Percentage in Decimal = Total Point

Calculation Dollar Per Point (\$22.00)

$14 \times 1.2 = 16.80$ Round up to the nearest whole number, which is 17

$17 \times \$22.00 = \mathbf{\$374.00}$ **HEAP Benefit**





Identifying Heating Systems





Heating Systems

Definition

Permanently installed system that is designed to heat all or a significant portion of the Dwelling Unit. A portable space heater is not considered a Heating system.



IMPORTANT

Identifying Heating Systems

Why is it important to identify the correct Heating System?

- **HEAP Application must be accurate**
- **CHIP Services**





Heating System Types



Boiler



- Jackets could be any color, except red
- **Silver** and **blue** jackets are the most popular colors



Boiler



- A boiler can deliver hot water through baseboards that would run throughout the home **OR**



Boiler



- Steam boilers would typically work through radiators



Boiler



- Wall hung
- Hot water baseboard throughout the home



Furnace



- Have duct work throughout the home
- Air grates are installed



Furnace



- In ceilings



Furnace



- In walls



Furnace



- Floors



Monitor Heater



- “Room Heaters”
- Free standing
- Hot air blows directly out of the unit



Laser Heater



- Similar to a “Monitor Heater”
- Free standing
- Hot air blows directly out of the unit



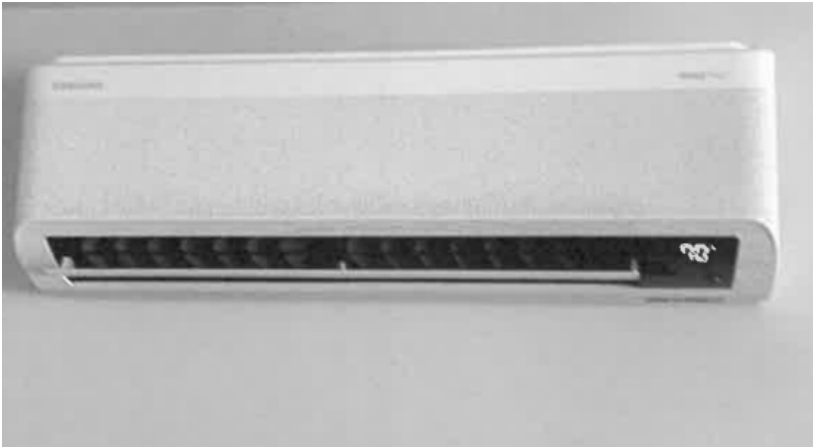
Heat Pump



- Outside Unit



Heat Pump



- Inside Unit



Wood Stove



- A heater or stove that is fueled by wood



Pellet Stove



- A stove used to burn pellets made of wood or other organic materials



Electric Baseboard



- Installed along the floor of homes, typically under windows
- They use electricity to heat the metal element fitted into the metal pipes of the heater
- They use zone heating to control temperature in each room individually.





Identifying Location of Fuel Tanks



Outside Tank



- If tank is outside of the home and exposed to the elements, it is considered an outside tank.
- Kerosene must be the requested fuel type



Inside Tank



- If tank is in the basement with the furnace, the tank is considered a heated space
- The fuel is not at risk of gelling
- Requested Fuel Type can be Oil



Tank - Unheated Space



- If tank is in a shed, garage, or crawl space where the exposure to the elements is minimal. This is considered that the tank is in an unheated space.
- Requested Fuel Type can be Oil



Tank - Propane



- Different Sizes of Propane tanks
- Located outside
- Propane must be delivered by a Vendor.



Questions?



Waiver Policy



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Waiver Policy

The waiver policy has changed. MaineHousing will consider granting waivers in the following limited circumstances.

- Subgrantee must certify or deny an Application within thirty (30) business days from the Date of Application.
 - **MaineHousing will consider providing a waiver up to forty-five (45) business days.**
- Program benefits will only be available for reissue or transfer during the Program Year of issue up until March 31st of the Program Year immediately following.
 - **MaineHousing will consider extending the deadline to April 15th for good cause.**
- ECIP will be administered pursuant to HEAP between November 1 and April 30.
 - **Depending on the availability of funds and other factors MaineHousing may extend the April 30th ECIP end date.**

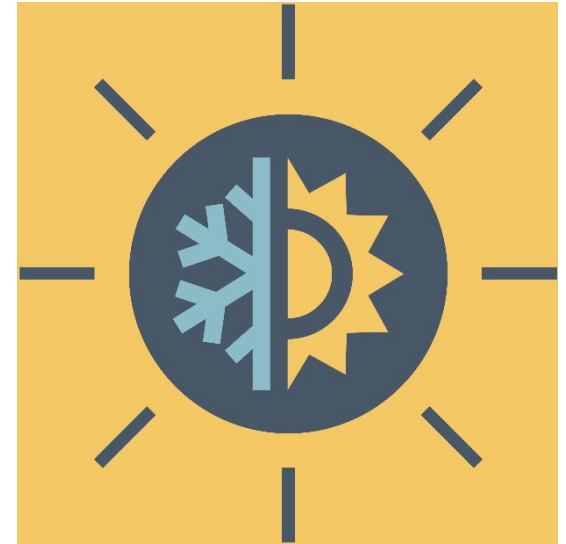


Waiver Policy

- Applications will be voided in the HEAP System of Record if the signed application is not received within 20 business days of the date of the interview with the Subgrantee
 - **MaineHousing will consider providing a waiver up to thirty (30) business days.**
- A denial for missing information will be rescinded if the required information is received by the Subgrantee within (15) fifteen business days from the date of written notification of denial.
 - **MaineHousing will consider extending the deadline to twenty-five (25) business days.**



Denial Notifications
Denial Reversals
Medical Expenses
Denial Reversal Log



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Reasons for Denials

A household may be denied for many reasons, including but not limited to;

- **Missing information**
- **Over income limits**
- **No direct or indirect heating cost**
- **Non-working heating system**
- **Household does not meet all HEAP-eligibility requirements**
- **Signed Application not received (Void)**



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CAA Responsibility

Written notification (Denial Letter) of denial must be sent to the Applicant within (3) three business days whether funding is available or not. The denial notification shall:

- **State the reason(s) for the decision;**
- **State the facts surrounding the decision;**
- **State the manner by which the Applicant can request an appeal.**

A denial for missing information or over income will be reversed if the required information is received by the Subgrantee within (15) fifteen business days from the date of the denial notification.



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Denial Letter- What's Changing



- **Denial Notification letters will be generated in ECOS**
- **Denial Notification letters will no longer provide Medical/Dental expense information**



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Denial Reversals

Denial may be reversed if:

- **Applicant submits missing documentation within 15 business days of the denial**
- **There was an error in certification that must be corrected**
- **Applicant submits paid medical expenses totaling \$1.00 more than the amount they are over income monthly or annually**



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Medical Expenses

A medical expense will be considered eligible if:

1. It was not reimbursed by insurance or other organizations;
2. A Household Member made the payment within the income verification period for monthly income OR the 12-calendar month period prior to the Created Date for annual income; **and**
2. 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>.



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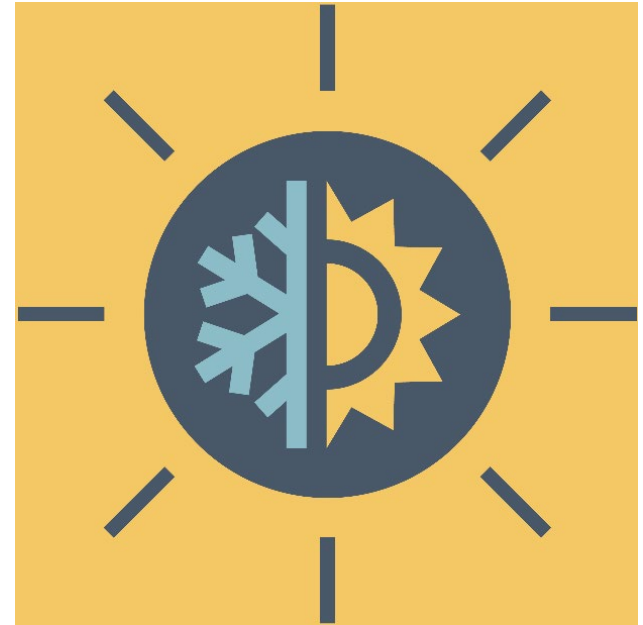
CAA Name	Community Action Agency
CAA Contact	Peter Parker
CAA Phone	(207) 777-7777
Month of Log	June

*Denial Reversal Tracking Form is to be uploaded to ShareFile the 2nd Monday of every month.

	Client #	Denial Date	Date Documentation Received From Applicant	Date of Denial Reversal	Completed By
1.	12344321	6/5/2024	6/9/2024	6/10/2024	Eddie Brock
2.	987321	6/7/2024	6/12/2024	6/12/2024	Jonah Jameson
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					
7.					
8.					
9.					
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11.					
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13.					
14.					

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- July
- August
- September
- October
- November
- December
- January
- February
- March
- May
- June

Informal Reviews, Fair Hearings and Fraud



MaineHousing
MAINE STATE HOUSING AUTHORITY

Appeal Rights

An applicant has the right to appeal and to receive an informal review, and in limited circumstances, a Fair Hearing. An applicant must submit a written appeal request for an informal review no later than:



- 1) Thirty (30) calendar days from the postmarked date of the benefit or denial notification;
- 2) Ninety (90) calendar days from the date of application, if the application has not been approved or denied; or
- 3) Ninety (90) calendar days from the postmarked date of the request for refund of an overpayment.

Benefit Notifications, Denial Letters, and Notice of Overpayment letters all detail where to send written requests for an appeal or fair hearing.



Reasons for an Appeal

- Disagrees with denial determination
- Disputes the length of time to process the application
- Disputes the criteria used to calculate Benefit amount
- Having to refund an Overpayment



Informal Review Process



Applicant must submit a written request for an Informal Review by the deadline.



Informal Review will be conducted by a MaineHousing HEAP Program Officer.



Applicant will get opportunity to present written or oral objections.



MaineHousing will communicate the results of the informal review.

Written requests for Informal Review mailed to MaineHousing 26 Edison Drive, Augusta, Maine 04330 or emailed to LIHEAPcompliance@mainehousing.org



CAA Responsibility



- **Work with MaineHousing during the informal review process**
- **Participate in Fair Hearing**



MaineHousing Responsibility

- Review file for errors
- Work with CAA to fix errors
- Communicate with applicant to resolve
- Schedule a Fair Hearing
- Conduct the scheduled Fair Hearing
- Render final decision



When can a Fair Hearing be Requested?

If the Applicant does not agree with the results of the Informal Review the Applicant may submit a written request for a Fair Hearing, but **only** in the following limited circumstances:

1. Applicant's claim for assistance was denied or not acted upon with reasonable promptness.
2. Applicant disputes the criteria used to calculate the amount of their Benefit.
3. Applicant is required to refund an Overpayment.



Fair Hearing Process

Applicant submits a written request for a Fair Hearing.



MaineHousing will provide an Applicant an opportunity for a fair administrative hearing.



Within thirty (30) calendar days of the hearing's conclusion the hearing officer will prepare a recommended hearing decision.



A final decision and order will be made by the Director of MaineHousing in writing within sixty (60) calendar days of receipt of hearing officer's recommendation.



Key Points

- Applicant must meet the Mandatory Requirements for the Benefits.
- Informal Reviews are for any disputes other than a dispute regarding TANF Fuel Supplemental Benefits
- Following the Informal Review process, in very limited circumstances, Applicants have a right to a Fair Hearing.



Fraud

Fraud is an intentional act to deceive or mislead; it is NOT 'unintentional misinformation' or 'misunderstanding'.



CAA Responsibility

If the CAA becomes aware of possible fraud they should:

- Document date, time, and details of initial report/discovery
- If the discovery is within the current program year:
 - The CAA will initiate contact with the client to ask clarifying questions
 - Give the client an opportunity to amend the application
 - Client is responsible to obtain and validate the information (refute or support allegation)



CAA Responsibility

Evaluate the information provided by the client and/or external sources



If information conflicts with the current year application:

- Make applicable changes to current year application
- Notify the client of changes to the current application
- Notify MaineHousing if an overpayment has been made



Refer to MaineHousing for further investigation if:



- The information conflicts with previous program year applications
- The client has received services from CHIP and/or Weatherization
- There is strong reason to believe there is fraud being committed



MaineHousing Fraud Process

Once suspected fraudulent activity is reported to MaineHousing an investigation will begin and the client will be notified.

An investigation starts by collecting information about the Household and comparing current and past Program Year applications. Depending on the nature of the claim, some of the additional documentation MaineHousing gathers may include;

- Property tax or registry information
- Transaction histories from fuel and utility vendors
- Complete filed tax returns
- Comments made in the Applicant's electronic file



MaineHousing Fraud Process

After MaineHousing conducts the investigation we determine if there is enough evidence to prove fraud. If there is no evidence of fraud, MaineHousing will close the investigation and inform the Applicant.



If fraud is determined, MaineHousing will send the Applicant a letter to notify them of overpayment. This letter offers an opportunity to submit any information that would refute our findings. If the Applicant is unable to provide sufficient documentation to disprove the claim or fails to respond, a repayment agreement letter is sent to the Applicant.



Identifying Fraud

Sometimes fraud can be difficult to identify, after all, the intent is to be deceiving or misleading. Thankfully, there are some red flags that you can look out for.

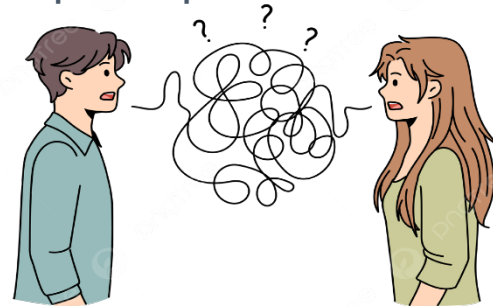
- ▶ Inconsistent or changing information
- ▶ Changes on a new Program Year application that cannot be clearly explained by the applicant
- ▶ Names of people who are not already on the application or different addresses than what was provided at intake on documents received from the client



Identifying Fraud

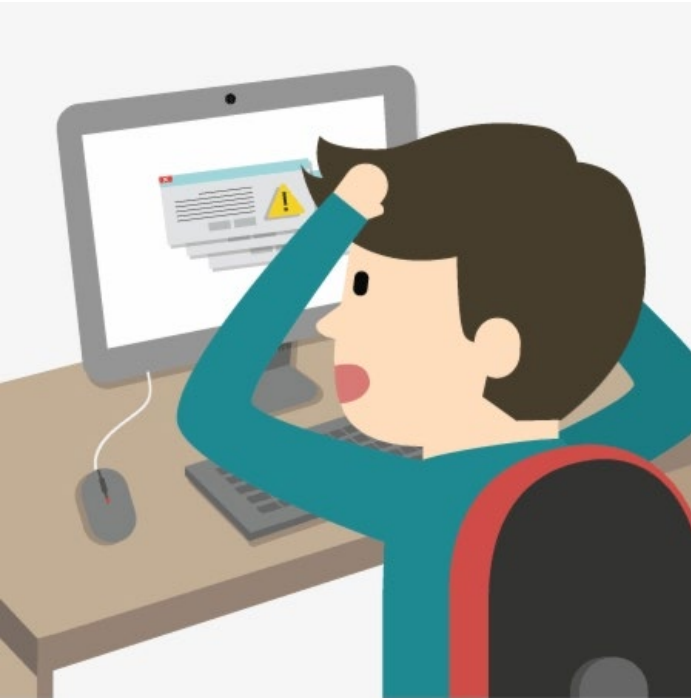
Unintentional misinformation or misunderstanding of the program rules is not an act of fraud. It is important to be clear when communicating with Applicants. Knowing the right questions to ask for clarification will avoid misinformation. Some examples of common unintentional misinformation or misunderstanding of the program rules include:

- Dwelling type - An applicant that resides in a mobile home, during intake the Applicant states they live in a “single-family home” because they are the only family that lives in the dwelling
- Fuel type – Sometimes clients provide the wrong fuel type because they are not aware of Program Rules that require specific fuels based on fuel tank location



Scenario

During an intake appointment with a client, you ask for the Social Security Numbers for all Household members. Once the Social Security Numbers are entered and saved to the application, you are met with an error message that states that the minor children in the household are already a part of another HEAP Application.



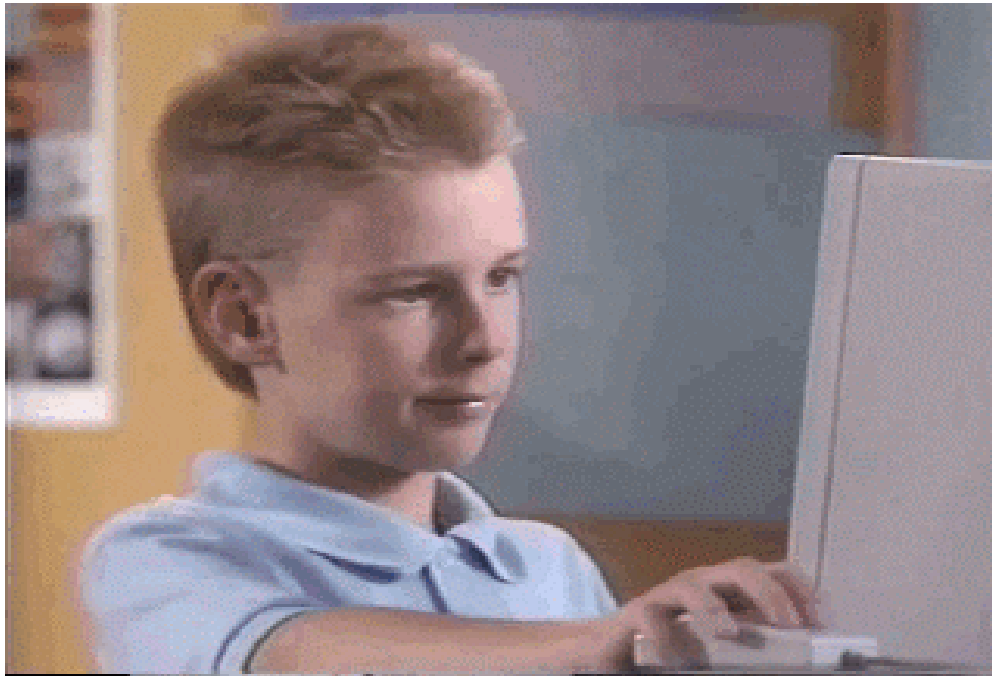
Do you...

- a) Refer to MaineHousing immediately
- b) Deny the application on the spot or;
- c) Refer to Section 5: Household Composition in the Handbook for guidance.



Scenario

If you chose option C, you've found the guidance in the HEAP Handbook for this type of situation.



Questions?





Maine State Housing Authority (“MaineHousing”) does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identify or expression, marital status, national origin, ancestry, physical or mental disability, age, familial status or receipt of public assistance in the admission or access to or treatment in its programs and activities. In employment, MaineHousing does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identify or expression, national origin, ancestry, age, physical or mental disability or genetic information. MaineHousing will provide appropriate communication auxiliary aids and services upon sufficient notice. MaineHousing will also provide this document in alternative formats upon sufficient notice. MaineHousing has designated the following person responsible for coordinating compliance with applicable federal and state nondiscrimination requirements and addressing grievances: Lauren Bustard, Maine State Housing Authority, 26 Edison Drive, Augusta, Maine 04330-6046, Telephone Number 1-800-452-4668 (voice in state only). (207) 626-4600 (voice) or Maine Relay 711.

