

## INDEPENDENT AGENCIES

## MAINE STATE HOUSING AUTHORITY

## CHAPTER 24

## Home Energy Assistance Program Rule

Summary: The Rule establishes standards for the Home Energy Assistance Program for the State of Maine as administered by the Maine State Housing Authority. The Home Energy Assistance Program provides Fuel Assistance and Energy Crisis Intervention Programs to income Eligible Households. The Rule also establishes standards for the HEAP Weatherization, Central Heating Improvement Program, Heat Pump Program, and Supplemental Benefits funded by TANF funds.

## 1. Definitions.

- A. “Act” means the Maine Housing Authorities Act, [30-A M.R.S. § 4701](#) et seq., as it may be amended from time to time.
- B. “Annual Consumption Report” means the annual report Vendors must submit to MaineHousing to report their HEAP customers’ Home Energy deliveries from May 1st through April 30th.
- C. “Applicant” means a person who signs the completed Application.
- D. “Application” means forms and documents completed, signed, and provided by Applicant to determine eligibility for a Benefit and ECIP.
- E. “Application Date” means the date an Application is taken with the Applicant by Subgrantee personnel both online or not online.
- F. “Benefit” means the dollar amount of Fuel Assistance an Eligible Household receives.
- G. “Benefit Return” means a Benefit, partial or whole, returned to MaineHousing.
- H. “Categorical Income Eligibility” means Household Members who are included on a Maine Department of Health and Human Services (“Maine DHHS”) Notice of Decision for TANF or SNAP assistance will be considered income eligible for HEAP, as the Household Members’ incomes have already been vetted. Household Members who are not included on the Notice of Decision must provide income documentation as outlined in this Rule and the HEAP Guide.
- I. “CHIP” means the Central Heating Improvement Program.
- J. “Citizenship Attestation Form” means an attestation form prescribed by MaineHousing in the HEAP Guide.
- K. “Contractor” means a provider of materials or services to EligibleHouseholds.
- L. “Application Received Date” means the date a signed Application is received by the Subgrantee.
- M. “Direct Energy Cost” means an Energy Cost that is directly paid by the Household.
- N. “Dwelling Unit” means an occupied residential housing structure with one or more rooms that

was originally constructed and designed as permanent living quarters 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, trailer, semitrailer, truck camper, motor home, boat, railroad car, bus, yurt or other structure designed and constructed to provide temporary living quarters.

- O. “ECIP” means the Energy Crisis Intervention Program.
- P. “Eligible Household” means a Household that satisfies all eligibility and income requirements of the HEAP Act and requirements of this Rule.
- Q. “Energy Cost” means cost of energy used for heating a Dwelling Unit or Rental Unit.
- R. “Energy Crisis” shall have the same meaning as set forth in [42 U.S.C. §8622\(3\)](#), as same may be amended from time to time.
- S. “Errors and Program Abuse” means the act of applying for or obtaining assistance to which one is not entitled by means of submitting false statements or withholding information pertinent to the determination of eligibility or benefits.
- T. “Fuel Assistance” means the component of HEAP that assists Eligible Households with their Home Energy Costs.
- U. “Functioning Heating System” means a Heating System that is working safely.
- V. “HEAP” means the Home Energy Assistance Program established pursuant to the HEAP Act and the Act.
- W. “HEAP Act” means [42 U.S.C. §8621 et seq.](#), and the regulations promulgated there under, including [45 C.F.R. § 96.1](#) through 96.68 and [45 C.F.R. § 96.80 et seq.](#), all as may be amended from time to time.
- X. “HEAP Guide” means the program guide in effect for a Program Year that is used as a resource and guide for the administration of HEAP.
- Y. “HEAP Weatherization” means the weatherization component of HEAP that provides Low- cost/no-cost Weatherization Activities, as defined by [10 C.F.R. §440.20](#), and other cost-effective energy-related home repairs or installations.
- Z. “Heating Season” means the period of time beginning October 1 and ending April 30.
- AA. “Heating Source” means any device used to provide heat to a Dwelling Unit.
- BB. “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.
- CC. “Home Energy” means a source of heating or cooling in residential dwellings as set forth in [42 U.S.C. §8622\(6\)](#), as same may be amended from time to time.
- DD. “Household” means any individual or group of individuals who are living together 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 as set forth in [42 U.S.C. §8622\(5\)](#), as same may be amended from time to time.

- EE. “Household Income” means the total income from all sources before taxes and deductions as further defined in this Rule.
- FF. “Household Member” or “Household Members” means those individuals who are part of the Household.
- GG. “Incidental Costs” means costs of services billed to a Household by a Vendor related to the use or delivery of Home Energy including, but not limited to: surcharges, penalty charges, reconnection charges, clean and repair service charges, security deposits, and insurance.
- HH. “Indirect Determinable Energy Cost” means a cost for Home Energy that is not directly paid for by the Household but is a cost to the Household, such as heat that is included in rent.
- II. “Life Threatening Crisis” means the household is currently without heat or utility service to operate a Heating Source or a Heating System.
- JJ. “MaineHousing” means the Maine State Housing Authority.
- KK. “Manufactured/Mobile Home” means a residence that is constructed at a manufacturing facility on a permanent chassis (i.e. the wheel assembly necessary to transport the residence is removable, but the steel undercarriage remains intact as a necessary structural component), was originally constructed and designed as permanent living quarters, and is transportable in one or more sections, which in traveling mode is 12 body feet or more in width and as erected on site is 600 or more square feet.
- LL. “Modular” means a residence that is constructed at a manufacturing facility, but not constructed on a permanent chassis, was originally constructed and designed as permanent living quarters, and is transportable in one or more sections on an independent chassis such as a truck or train.
- MM. “Overpayment” means any HEAP benefits paid to, or on behalf of, any Applicant or Household that exceeds the amount the Applicant or Household was eligible to receive.
- NN. “Person with a Disability” means a person with a physical or mental disability as defined pursuant to 5 M.R.S. § 4553-A.
- OO. “Programs” means Fuel Assistance, Energy Self Sufficiency, ECIP, CHIP, and HEAP Weatherization.
- PP. “Program Year” means the period of time beginning October 1 and ending September 30.
- QQ. “Rental Unit” means a Dwelling Unit that is rented.
- RR. “Roomer” means a person who qualifies as a separate Household and pursuant to a rental agreement rents no more than two rooms in a Dwelling Unit occupied as separate living quarters and who may, depending upon the rental agreement, be granted privileges to use, but not reside in, other rooms located in the same Dwelling Unit. A Roomer cannot be related by birth, marriage or adoption to any member of the lessor’s Household. A Roomer also includes a boarder (meaning a Roomer who is provided meals).
- SS. “Service Area” means the geographic area, as defined by MaineHousing, within which the Subgrantee operates and administers the Programs and the Vendor provides services.
- TT. “State” means the State of Maine.
- UU. “Subgrantee” means a public or private nonprofit agency, or municipality, selected by MaineHousing to administer the Programs.

- VV. “Subsidized Housing” means Households whose rent is based on their income or the subsidy pays for any portion of their mortgage. Housing in which a tax credit or federal/state loan is applied to reduce debt burden on the property is not considered Subsidized Housing. A resident of a residential housing facility including without limitation group homes, homeless shelters, and residential care facilities or a Tenant who pays below market rent or no rent due to the landlord receiving a federal or state subsidy for rent is living in Subsidized Housing.
- WW. “Supplemental Benefits” means the benefits that are funded with supplemental HEAP funds.
- XX. “Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)” means the nutrition assistance program administered by the United States Department of Agriculture.
- YY. “TANF” means payments under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program as defined in [22 M.R.S., Chapter 1053-B, § 3762 et seq.](#), as the same may be amended from time to time.
- ZZ. “TANF Fuel Supplemental Benefits” means the benefits that are funded with TANF funds pursuant to [22 M.R.S., Chapter 1053-B, § 3769-E.](#)
- AAA. “Tenant” means an Applicant who resides in a Rental Unit.
- BBB. “Vendor” means an energy supplier that has entered into an agreement (“Vendor Agreement”) with MaineHousing to provide Home Energy to Eligible Households.

## 2. Application.

- A. An Applicant may have only one certified eligible Application per Program Year. Household Members may not submit an Application for a given Program Year if they were included on a certified eligible Application for that Program Year.
- B. An Applicant may resubmit a new Application if the Applicant’s Application has been denied for any reason at any time prior to the issuance of a Benefit.
- C. Subgrantees will process Applications in accordance with the requirements of this Section and the HEAP Guide:
  - 1. Applications will be taken as prescribed by MaineHousing each Program Year and will continue to be taken until the last working day of May of the Program Year or until otherwise prescribed by MaineHousing, whichever occurs sooner.
  - 2. The Application forms provided or approved by MaineHousing must be used to administer the Programs and will be reviewed annually prior to the commencement of taking Applications each Program Year.
  - 3. All Applicants need to return the signed Application within thirty (30) business days of the interview with the Subgrantee. If the Applicant does not return the signed Application within the prescribed period, the Application will be voided. If the Applicant returns the signed Application after the thirty (30) business days, the Subgrantee may reopen the Application at any time during the current application period.

4. Subgrantee will make all reasonable efforts during the first ninety (90) days Applications are taken to process and serve returning Households that have a Direct Energy Cost and a member in the Household who (i) is 60 years of age or older, (ii) has a disability, or (ii) is 6 years or younger.
5. Subgrantees must comply with MaineHousing's Equal Access Handbook to assist Households with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and must make reasonable accommodations for a Person with a Disability.
6. Subgrantee must certify or deny an Application within thirty (30) business days from the Application Received Date. Written notification of eligibility must be sent to the Applicant within ten (10) calendar days of the Benefit issuance. Written notification of denial must be sent to the Applicant within three (3) business days.
  - a. **Written notification of eligibility.** The written notification of eligibility must state the Benefit amount, the date the Benefit or credit notification was sent to the Vendor, the approved Home Energy type and the manner by which the Applicant can request an Informal Review or Fair Hearing, if applicable.
  - b. **Written notification of denial.** The written notification of denial must state the facts surrounding the decision, the reason for the decision and the manner by which the Applicant can request an Informal Review or Fair Hearing.
    - i. 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.
7. The Subgrantee must verify citizenship or legal status, income and Social Security Numbers of all Household Members as well as the identity of the Applicant as prescribed by the HEAP Guide and this Rule.

### 3. Eligibility.

Except as may be expressly provided for elsewhere in this Rule, eligibility shall be determined on the basis of information submitted by the Applicant as of the Application Date. MaineHousing and Subgrantees reserve the right to ask for additional or clarifying information from Applicant, Household Members, or third parties to determine eligibility.

#### A. Household Eligibility.

1. The Applicant and each additional Household Member must be one of the following: (1) a U.S. Citizen; (2) a U.S. Non-Citizen National; or (3) a Qualified Alien. If the Applicant or any Household Member does not meet this requirement they must be excluded from the total number of Household Members when calculating a Benefit. All documentation must be valid. Expired or absent documentation is not acceptable.

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

- a. U.S. Passport or U.S. Passport Card
- b. Real ID issued by any U.S. State
- c. Certificate of Naturalization (N-550/N-570)
- d. Certificate of Citizenship (N-560/N-561)

- e. U.S. Birth Certificate
- f. Document from federally recognized Indian Tribe that includes your name and the name of the federally recognized Indian Tribe that issued the document, and shows your membership, enrollment, or affiliation with the tribe. Documents that can be provided:
  - i. A Tribal enrollment card;
  - ii. A Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood;
  - iii. A Tribal census document;
  - iv. Documents on Tribal letterhead signed by a Tribal official

If the documentation listed above is unavailable for an Applicant or any Household Member, then Subgrantee may accept ONE document from each of the two lists (List A & List B) below to show U.S. Citizenship or U.S. Non-Citizen National status.

<b>LIST A</b>	<b>LIST B</b>
Social Security Card and Citizenship Attestation Form	Driver's license issued by a U.S. State or Territory
Consular Report of Birth Abroad (DS-1350)	Identification card issued by the Federal, state or local government
Certification of Birth Abroad (FS-545)	School identification card
U.S. Citizen Identification Card (I-197)	
Northern Mariana Card (I-873)	U.S. Military card or draft record or Military dependent's identification card
Military record showing a U.S. place of birth	U.S. Coast Guard Merchant Mariner card
U.S. medical record from a clinic, hospital, physician, midwife or institution showing a U.S. place of birth	Voter Registration Card
U.S. life, health or other insurance record showing U.S. place of birth	Two other documents that prove your identity, like employer identification cards, high school or college diplomas, marriage certificates, divorce decrees, property deeds or titles
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 or Record of Birth After Adoption showing the person's name and U.S. place of birth	
Certificate or Record of Birth showing the person's name, date of birth, and U.S. place of birth	
Documentation of a foreign-born adopted child who received automatic U.S. Citizenship (IR3 or IH3)	

<b>Qualified Alien status may be verified using ONE of the following documents:</b>	
<i>Alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence:</i>	Permanent Resident Card, “Green Card” (I-551); OR  Unexpired Temporary I-551 stamp in foreign passport or on INS Form I-94
<i>Asylee</i>	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
<i>Refugee</i>	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)
<i>Alien Paroled into the U.S. for at least one year</i>	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)
<i>Alien whose deportation or removal was withheld</i>	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
<i>Alien Granted Conditional Entry</i>	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)”;  INS Form I-766 (Employment Authorization Document) annotated “A3”
<i>Cuban/Haitian Entrant</i>	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

2. The Applicant must also verify their identity. All documentation must be valid. Expired or absent documentation is not acceptable. 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. Otherwise, ONE of the following documents will be acceptable:

Driver's license	SNAP electronic benefit transfer (EBT) card with photo
State issued ID card	U.S. Military ID
U.S. Passport or U.S. Passport card	

If the documentation listed above is unavailable for the Applicant the Subgrantee may allow the Applicant to verify identity by providing TWO of the following documents:

Adoption Decree	Birth Certificate	Divorce Decree
Employer Identification Card	Foreign School Record that contains a photograph	High School or College Diploma
Marriage Certificate	Notice from a Public Benefits Agency (i.e. Notice of Decision from DHHS, Social Security Benefit Award Letter, MaineCare Award Letter)	Property Deed or Title Document
Social Security Card	Union or Worker's Center Identification Card	Voter Registration Card

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.

3. All Household Members 24 months of age or older must provide proof of their Social Security Number (SSN) in order to be counted as part of the Household. One of the following documents is acceptable provided it contains all nine digits of the Applicant's SSN and the Household Member's full name:

Bank tax form	Medicare card with number ending with the suffix "A"
Non SSA-1099 tax form	Social Security Card issued by the Social Security Administration
SSA 1099 tax form	Valid unexpired U.S. Military documents such as DD Form 214 Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty issued by the U.S. Department of Defense
W-2 (wage and tax statement)	

If the documentation listed above is unavailable for any Household Member the Subgrantee may allow the Household Member to provide one of the following documents:

Two recent paystubs (within the last sixty (60) days) 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
A Notice of Decision issued by a Public Benefits Agency that shows the Household member's full SSN	An Income Withholding Order/Notice for Support showing Household Member's full SSN
A recent (within the last year) Social Security Administration letter or notice showing Household Member's full SSN	



If the Household includes a foster child, an official statement from DHHS confirming the nine digit social security number of the foster child is acceptable documentation.

If the Household includes a child under the age of 24 months old who has not received a SSN, the Application is processed. However, the Applicant must provide the child's SSN for subsequent Program Year Applications, after the child reaches the age of 24 months old.

4. On the Application Date, all Household Members must be full-time residents of the State and reside in the Dwelling for which they will receive benefits during the Program Year's Heating Season and have a Direct Energy Cost or Indirect Determinable Energy Cost.
5. As part of the application process all Household Members 18 years of age or older must sign a release to grant permission to share their personal information between the Maine Department of Health and Human Services, the Maine Department of Labor, the Social Security Administration, Subgrantee and other organizations designated on the permission to share form and MaineHousing to determine eligibility for Benefits as well as eligibility for other programs administered by State, Federal and local agencies.
6. A Household's eligibility to receive benefits from Programs is contingent on the resolution of any Overpayment as described in Section 13, Errors and Program Abuse. During repayment a Household will be eligible for ECIP if they enter into and are in compliance with the terms of the repayment agreement. The Household will not be eligible under the HEAP Weatherization and the Department of Energy Weatherization Assistance Program, CHIP, or the Heat Pump Program until repayment is complete.
7. Roomers may be eligible Households if the Applicant can show a rental agreement that was in existence for at least sixty (60) days prior to the Application Date and the Roomers meet all of the other eligibility criteria. The Roomers cannot commingle funds or share expenses with the lessor's Household and must show proof that a reasonable market rate rent has been paid under the rental agreement for the entire sixty (60) day period prior to the Application Date.
8. A member of the Household who is away from the Dwelling Unit part of the time must be included as a Household Member unless the member is a full-time college student as described below in Section 3(9).
9. A full-time college student, up to age 23 years old, or more than 23 years of age if permanently or totally disabled, who is a dependent of the Household may be excluded from the Household if the Applicant chooses as long as the student is not the Applicant.
10. A Live-In-Care Attendant who (i) provides needed health/supportive services to a member of the Household as documented by a qualified professional; (ii) would not be living in the unit except to provide the necessary supportive services; and (iii) does not contribute financially to the Household, will not be considered part of the Household. If an individual does not meet this definition, they must be included as a Household Member.
11. TANF Fuel Supplemental Benefits. A Household may be eligible for TANF Fuel Supplemental Benefits if its Application for HEAP has been certified eligible in the current Program Year and on the Application Date the Household included at least one member who was under the age of eighteen (18) and the Dwelling Unit was not considered Subsidized Housing with heat included.

12. Any eligibility documentation with mismatched names requires additional verification in accordance with the procedures set forth in the HEAP Guide.

B. Dwelling Unit Eligibility.

1. The Dwelling Unit must:
  - a. Have a Functioning Heating System;
  - b. Be occupied by the Household as its primary residence on a full-time/year-round basis;
  - c. Be permanently connected to or serviced by standard utilities such as electricity and water unless the Household can provide supporting documentation to show the Household occupies the Dwelling Unit as its primary residence on a full-time/year-round basis; and
  - d. Be a residential housing structure with one or more rooms that was originally constructed and designed as permanent living quarters.
2. A Dwelling Unit does not include a camper, trailer, semitrailer, truck camper, motor home, boat, railroad car, bus, yurt or any other structure designed and constructed to provide temporary living quarters, regardless of any and all modification(s) or length. For Fuel Assistance only, a Dwelling Unit may include a hotel or motel if the Household provides documentation showing that the hotel/motel has been their permanent residence for at least sixty (60) days prior to the Application Date.
3. A Dwelling Unit that is considered Subsidized Housing may be eligible for Fuel Assistance if the heat is included in the rent and the Household pays a portion of their rent or utility costs.
4. Dwelling Units that are used partially for business activity are eligible.

C. Income Eligibility

Income Eligibility is based on documented Household Income or Categorical Income Eligibility. MaineHousing uses the federal Poverty Income Guidelines and State Median Income Guidelines as reported annually by the United States Department of Health and Human Services. MaineHousing reserves the right to manage the Programs within those guidelines when determining benefits.

1. Household Income is determined and verified in accordance with the information provided on the Application. Household Income means the total combined income of all Household Members over the age of 18, unless otherwise excluded from all sources before taxes and deductions and is verified in accordance with the guidelines in the HEAP Guide. Household Income includes, but is not limited to, the following:
  - a. Wages, salaries, commissions, tips, and bonuses before any taxes or deductions;
  - b. Self-employment income;
  - c. Social Security Retirement (SS), Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Benefits, including medicare deductions;

- d. Unemployment Insurance and worker's compensation and/or strike benefits from union funds;
- e. Spousal support or alimony received by a Household Member, or mortgage/rent payments in lieu of or in addition to payments;
- f. Court ordered or voluntary child support payments received by a Household Member, or mortgage/rent payments in lieu of or in addition to support payments;
- g. Veteran's Administration (VA) Benefits;
- h. Cash gifts from an absent family member or someone not living in the Household excluding loans;
- i. Government employee pensions, private pensions, and regular annuity payments;
- j. Income from dividends, , royalties, estates, trusts, and interest.;
- k. Rental income, including funds received from Roomers;
- l. Contract Income;
- m. Payments from mortgage or sales contracts;

Household Income does not include:

- a. Assets drawn down from financial institutions;
- b. Foster care payments;
- c. Adoption assistance;
- d. Capital gains (except for business purposes);
- e. Income from the sale of a primary residence, personal car, or other personal property, excluding mortgage or sales contracts;
- f. Tax refunds;
- g. One-time insurance payments;
- h. One-time compensation for injury;
- i. Non-cash income such as General Assistance voucher payments;
- j. Reimbursement for expenses incurred in connection with employment;
- k. Reimbursement for medical expenses;

- l. Any funds received for education from grants, loans and scholarships, and work study;
- m. Retroactive payments and overpayment adjustments from an entitlement program (i.e. worker's comp, social security benefits, etc.);
- n. Income earned by a Household Member who is a full time high school student, unless they are the Applicant;
- o. Income earned by a full-time college student who is not counted as a Household Member in accordance with this Rule;
- p. Combat zone pay from the military;
- q. All income used to fulfill a Social Security Administration Program to Achieve Self-Sufficiency (PASS);
- r. Federal payments or benefits excluded by law as set forth below:
  - i. Payments received under Title II of the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (84 Stat. 1902, [42 U.S.C. 4636](#)).
  - ii. Payments of land settlement judgments distributed to or held in trust for members of certain Indian Tribes under Public Laws [92-254](#), [93-134](#), [93-531](#), [94-114](#), [94-540](#), [97-458](#), [98-64](#), [98-123](#) and [98-124](#).
  - iii. Funds available or distributed pursuant to [Public Law 96-420](#), the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act of 1980 ([25 U.S.C. 1721 et. seq.](#)) to members of the Passamaquoddy Tribe, the Penobscot Nation and the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians.
  - iv. The value of the allotment provided a household under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program ([7 U.S.C.A. 51](#)).
  - v. The value of assistance to children as excluded under the National School Lunch Act ([42 U.S.C. 1760\(e\)](#)) and under the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 ([42 U.S.C. 1780\(b\)](#)).
  - vi. The value of commodities distributed under the Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Act of 1983 ([Public Law. 98-8](#), [7 U.S.C. 612c](#)).
  - vii. Allowances, earnings and payments to individuals participating in programs under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act <https://www.congress.gov/113/bills/hr803/BILLS-113hr803enr.pdf>
  - viii. Program benefits received under the Older Americans Act of 1965 ([42 U.S.C. sub-section 3020\(a\)\(b\)](#)) as wages under the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP).
  - ix. Payments to volunteers under the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973 ([Public Law 93-113](#), [42 U.S.C. 5044](#)).
  - x. The value of any assistance paid with respect to a dwelling unit under the United States Housing Act of 1937, the National Housing Act, Section 101 of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1965, or Title V of the Housing Act of 1949.
  - xi. The tax-exempt portions of payments made pursuant to the provisions of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act ([Public Law 92-203](#), [43](#)

[U.S.C. 1620\(a\).](#)

- xii. Payments for supportive services or reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses made to individual volunteers serving as foster grandparents, senior health aides, or senior companions, and to persons serving in the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) and Active Corps of Executives (ACE) and any other programs under Titles II and III, pursuant to Section 418 of [Public Law 93-113](#).
- xiii. Any wages, allowances or reimbursement for transportation and attendant care costs, unless accepted on a case-by-case basis, when received by an eligible handicapped individual employed in a project under Title VI of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended by Title II of [Public Law No. 95-602](#).
- xiv. All student financial assistance including the following programs funded under Title IV of the Higher Education Act as amended:
  - 1) Pell Grants;
  - 2) Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants;
  - 3) Grants to States for State Student Incentives;
  - 4) Special Programs for Students from Disadvantaged Backgrounds;
  - 5) Special Programs for Students Whose Families are Engaged in Migrant and Seasonal Farm work;
  - 6) Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship Program;
  - 7) Assistance to Institutions of Higher Education;
  - 8) Veterans Education Outreach Program;
  - 9) Special Child Care Services for Disadvantaged College Students;
  - 10) Payments to veterans for Aid and Attendance benefits.

An adjustment to a Household's gross income may be made if the Household is over income and has documented medical expenses that were paid during the income period. The amount of medical expenses deducted will be equal to only the amount necessary to make the Household eligible. Medical expenses are defined by Internal Revenue Service Publication 502, as the same may be amended from time to time.

The income of Household Members who do not meet the citizenship or legal status requirements must be included in the Household's income.

- 2. Categorical Income Eligibility. Household Members who are included on a Maine DHHS Notice of Decision or similar document containing the same information, as determined acceptable by the Subgrantee, for TANF or SNAP assistance will have Categorical Income Eligibility for HEAP. Household Members with Categorical Income Eligibility may have their income determined at a pre-established percentage of the federal poverty level, or using actual vetted income if provided by Maine DHHS. Household Members who are not

included in the Notice of Decision must provide income documentation as outlined in this Rule and HEAP Guide.

4. Benefit Determination.

Benefits are determined to ensure that the highest level of assistance will be furnished to Eligible Households which have the lowest incomes and the highest Energy Costs or needs. Benefit availability is based on HEAP funding availability.

- A. MaineHousing, or the Subgrantee as allowed by MaineHousing, will assign a number of points to an Eligible Household that correlates to their Energy Costs. The number of points will be adjusted by an assigned percentage that correlates to the Eligible Household's poverty level and prorated based on any ineligible Household Members. The adjusted number of points will then be multiplied by a dollar value.

MaineHousing will announce the actual dollar value of points no later than the fifteen (15) calendar days following receipt of the federal HEAP grant award.

The number of points assigned to an Eligible Household will be determined pursuant to the following:

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

<b>Residing County</b>	<b>Points</b>
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

<b>Fuel Type</b>	<b>Points</b>
Electricity	14
LP Gas	10
Kerosene	8
Oil	7
Bio-Fuel including Bio-Bricks	6

Coal	5
Wood Pellets	5
Corn	5
Natural Gas	5
Wood	4

<b>Subsidized Household</b>	<b>Points</b>
Responsible for Heating	-9

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

<b>Poverty Level as Calculated under the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines (FPIG)</b>	<b>Percentage of Points</b>
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%.	

All final point results that are fractional will be rounded up to the nearest whole number.

- B. TANF Fuel Supplemental Benefits are determined each Program Year by MaineHousing based on the projected number of Households eligible for TANF Fuel Supplemental Benefits and available funding.
- C. Tenants residing in Subsidized Housing with heat included in their rent, who pay a portion of their rent or utility costs, are only eligible to receive a Benefit in an amount to maximize benefits under SNAP.

5. Payment of Benefits.

- A. An Applicant shall select a Vendor that will deliver Home Energy to the Eligible Household. Payment of Benefits and TANF Fuel Supplemental Benefits will be made directly to the Vendor, unless otherwise specified, by the methods prescribed below:
  - 1. For payment prior to delivery, MaineHousing, or a Subgrantee as allowed by MaineHousing, will pay a Benefit to the Vendor within ten (10) business days of the date the Application is certified eligible or when HEAP grant funds are available, whichever is later.
  - 2. For payment post-delivery, MaineHousing, or a Subgrantee as allowed by MaineHousing, will provide a Credit Notification Report within ten (10) business days of the date the Application

is certified eligible or when HEAP grant funds are available, whichever is later. The Credit Notification Report will list the Applicant's name, address, Home Energy type, account information and, as applicable, Benefit or TANF Fuel Supplemental Benefit. MaineHousing will make payment for Benefits after the Vendor makes delivery as authorized by MaineHousing.

3. For payment for Applicants that heat with Wood, Wood Pellets, Coal, Corn, or Bio-Fuel-, MaineHousing, or a Subgrantee as allowed by MaineHousing, will make payment for a Benefit by direct check to the Applicant .

For Applicants with no available Vendors serving the area where the Household resides, MaineHousing, or the Subgrantee as allowed by MaineHousing, may pay Benefits directly to the Applicant upon receipt of a signed Attestation from the Applicant attesting the Benefit received will be used for its intended purpose.

- B. Payment of Benefits may be made directly to Applicants with an Indirect Determinable Energy Cost.

#### 6. Benefit Returns and Transfer:

- A. Program benefits may not be sold, transferred, released or otherwise conveyed by the Eligible Household or the Vendor without written authorization from MaineHousing. MaineHousing will only authorize such conveyances when it is in the best interest of the Eligible Household and is consistent with the intent of the HEAP Act. Examples of situations where MaineHousing may authorize such conveyances include, but are not limited to:

1. Relocation of all Household Members within the State;
2. Change in Vendor by Household;
3. Change in Home Energy vendors available to Household;
4. Relocation from a Dwelling Unit with a Direct Energy Cost to a Dwelling Unit with Indirect Determinable Energy Cost (not including Subsidized Housing);
5. Relocation to Subsidized Housing with Direct Energy Cost;
6. Change in Home Energy type; and
7. Applicant passes away and surviving Household Members remain in the Household.

Program benefits will only be available for reissue or transfer during the Program Year of issue up until March 31<sup>st</sup> of the Program Year immediately following.

- B. In order to reissue or transfer a Benefit MaineHousing may require the Household to provide an Application update form bearing the Applicant's signature and date. Failure to provide the information may result in delay or forfeiture of the Benefit.
- C. Program Benefits may not be eligible for reissue or transfer if the Applicant committed Errors and Program Abuse when completing the Application, there was an Overpayment, the Applicant's primary residence changes to a nursing home or long term care facility and there are no remaining Household Members, the Household moves to Subsidized Housing with heat included, the Applicant moves into another Household that received a Benefit in the current



Program Year, the Household moves into an ineligible Dwelling Unit, the Program Benefit was not reissued before the deadline, the Applicant passes away and there are no surviving Household Members or the Household moves out of State.

- D. Vendors that receive a Benefit return form requesting the return of Benefits paid to Vendor on behalf of Eligible Households, shall return such Benefits to MaineHousing within fifteen (15) business days of date of Benefit return form. Once the funds are received, MaineHousing will process the reissue or transfer as appropriate within fifteen (15) calendar days of receiving all required documentation.

## 7. Energy Crisis Intervention Program (ECIP).

All ECIP services will be conducted by Subgrantees within their Service Area, unless otherwise authorized by MaineHousing, and will be subject to the availability of ECIP funds

- A. A Household may be eligible for ECIP if a Household Member's health and safety is threatened by an Energy Crisis situation and the Household does not have the financial means to avert the Energy Crisis. The Household will not be eligible if: they have any other Heating System that is safe and operable and has a supply of product; they reside in Subsidized Housing with heat included or a Rental Unit with heat included (with the exception that if the Household has a utility disconnection notice that relates to the operation of the Heating System, they may receive ECIP to restore the utility); or they have an Overpayment balance and have not entered into or complied with a repayment agreement. An Eligible Household under HEAP is income eligible for ECIP.

- B. An Energy Crisis includes:

- 1. Reading of 1/4 tank or less on a standard 275 gallon heating oil tank;
- 2. Reading of 25% or less on a propane tank;
- 3. 7-day or less supply for other delivered Home Energy types; and
- 4. A utility disconnection notice that relates to the operation of the Heating System,

- C. Allowable expenditures may include:

- 1. Home Energy deliveries provided the Eligible Household has exhausted any remaining Benefits previously issued;
- 2. Delivery charges associated with fuel deliveries under ECIP;
- 3. Surcharges, reconnection charges, or penalties related to a final utility disconnect notice;
- 4. Heating System repair, including restart fees;
- 5. Purchase of space heaters;
- 6. Temporary relocation provided the Eligible Household is experiencing a Life Threatening Crisis that cannot be averted within 18 hours by one of the above measures.

- D. ECIP will be administered pursuant to HEAP between November 1 and April 30. Conditioned

on the availability of ECIP funds Energy Crisis benefits will be provided within 48 hours of the Household being certified eligible and Life Threatening Crisis funds will be provided within 18 hours of the Household being certified eligible.

- E. ECIP benefits are determined each Program Year by MaineHousing based on Home Energy costs, economic conditions, and available funding.
- F. Any denial of ECIP benefits will be provided to the Applicant within three (3) business days.
- G. ECIP Payments.
  - 1. Payment will be made after the vendor makes delivery and returns documentation required by MaineHousing to Subgrantee. MaineHousing will make payment within ten (10) business days of Subgrantee entering required information into the MaineHousing database.

8. Central Heating Improvement Program (CHIP).

All CHIP services will be conducted by Subgrantees within their Service Area, unless otherwise authorized by MaineHousing, and will be subject to the availability of HEAP funds.

A. Eligibility.

1. Household Eligibility.

- a. A Household may be eligible for CHIP if the Household is eligible for HEAP, has an eligible Application that was certified within the preceding twelve (12) months, and does not have a more recent Application that has been certified-denied.
- b. Eligible Households shall be served on a first-come, first-served basis with respect to each level of priority listed below, except when the Subgrantee is providing weatherization services to a Dwelling Unit in which case the Subgrantee can serve Eligible Households that allow the Subgrantee to leverage CHIP funds first. Subgrantees may prioritize within the priority levels listed below by Households that have a Household Member that (i) is 60 years of age or older, (ii) has a disability, or (ii) is 6 years of age or younger.
  - i. Eligible Households experiencing an Energy Crisis caused by Heating System malfunction or failure.
  - ii. Preventative cleaning, tuning, evaluation and minor repairs on a non-emergency basis (owner-occupied dwelling units only). Date of the last cleaning, tuning and evaluation by a licensed technician must be more than twelve (12) months prior to the initiation of services date.

B. Dwelling Unit Eligibility.

- 1. Ownership will be verified for all Dwelling Units and Rental Units and additional documentation or written permission may be required for life estates and life leases or tenants.
  - a. A Dwelling Unit that has a life estate or life lease interest may be eligible if the

document conferring the Applicant rights of the life estate or life lease is recorded in the appropriate registry of deeds and states that the Applicant is responsible for maintaining the Dwelling Unit or is silent as to who is responsible for maintenance.

2. A Dwelling Unit will not be eligible under CHIP if: it is a Rental Unit that has reached the life-time maximum benefit, it has been designated for acquisition or clearance by a federal, state or local program or order, it is in foreclosure, for sale, vacant, uninhabitable, it is in poor structural condition making CHIP services impractical, ineffective or impossible, it has been damaged by fire, flood or an act of God and insurance will cover the damage, there are discrepancies on the Household's Application, there is evidence that the Heating System was not properly maintained or the Household applied for services for more than one Dwelling Unit and did not provide the required information.
- C. Heating System Replacement Eligibility. A Household may be eligible for assistance to replace a Heating System if the Household meets the eligibility requirements for CHIP. The amount of assistance shall be determined by subtracting the sum of the contributions towards the Heating System replacement cost by the Household and any person who shares a legal ownership interest in the Dwelling Unit, but does not reside in the Dwelling Unit ("Non-occupying Co-owner").
1. Contributions. The Household and Non-occupying Co-owner (if applicable) will be required to contribute toward the cost of replacing the Heating System if there are Countable Assets in excess of \$5,000, or \$50,000 if a member of the Household or the Non-occupying Co-owner is 60 years of age or older. Countable Assets include cash, funds on prepaid debit cards, money in a checking or savings account (health savings accounts, educational funds, and burial accounts are excluded), stocks or bonds, U.S. Treasury bills, money market funds and retirement accounts (provided there are no penalties for withdrawals). The amount of the contribution is determined for the Household and the Non-occupying Co-owner separately by subtracting either \$5,000 or \$50,000 (as applicable) from total Countable Assets and multiplying that number by the percentage of ownership. All contributions are subtracted from the total Heating System replacement cost to determine the CHIP benefit amount.
- D. CHIP Uses.
1. CHIP allowable uses include cleaning, tuning and evaluating oil, gas or solid fuel systems, repairs determined to be necessary for proper operation by a licensed heating technician, measures to bring a Heating System in compliance with applicable laws and codes or to correct measures that pose an immediate health or safety threat.
  2. CHIP may not be used as reimbursement or payment for costs incurred by the Applicant, replacement of a Heating System that was previously replaced by CHIP unless the Heating System has reached its useful life as defined by: [https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/EUL\\_FOR\\_CNA\\_E\\_TOOL.PDF](https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/EUL_FOR_CNA_E_TOOL.PDF), or for fuel switching.
- E. CHIP Benefit Maximums
1. Single-Family Owner-Occupied Dwelling Units. There is no life-time maximum benefit amount for an Eligible Household.

2. Single-Family Rental Units occupied by an Eligible Household. There is a life-time maximum benefit of \$600.
3. Multi-Family Rental Units. The maximum benefit is the lesser of \$600 times the number of Heating Systems that provide heat to Eligible Households or \$2,400.

F. Subgrantee Responsibilities.

1. Subgrantees are responsible for performing final inspections on all CHIP services for heating replacement jobs. The inspections will evaluate compliance with all applicable codes, confirm the work performed was authorized and determine the combustion efficiency level of the Heating System where technically feasible.
2. Subgrantees are responsible for procuring all services, including materials, equipment and services from specialized trades, such as electricians, masons and oil burner repairman, and shall follow the procedures below:

Amount	Requirements	Notes
\$10,000 or less	Solicit two price quotes by phone, email, vendor website, catalog, or price list, or similar means.	Choose the lowest quote or bid while taking into consideration the Contractor's performance record and other relevant factors.
Over \$10,000	Perform a price survey by making every reasonable attempt to receive price quotations or bids from at least three (3) Contractors.	Choose the lowest quote or bid while taking into consideration the Contractor's performance record and other relevant factors.

3. Subgrantees are also responsible for procuring Contractors and shall follow the procedures below:
  - a. Prepare an Invitation to Bid or a Request for Proposal that identifies all requirements and factors to be considered including a due date for bids;
  - b. Mail, fax or email the Invitation to Bid or Request for Proposal to at least three (3) contractors; and
  - c. Receive by mail, fax or email by the due date all bids and keep bids in a secure location to be reviewed and tabulated.
4. Sole Source Procurement. A Subgrantee may solicit a proposal from only one source if the following circumstances are met:
  - a. Emergency or Urgent Need. An emergency situation or other urgent need exists and only one known source can provide the required goods or services within the time needed.
  - b. Uniqueness. The item or service is available from only one source, based on a

reasonable, good faith review of the market for the type of item or service needed.

- c. Inadequate Competitive Proposals. After evaluation of all proposals submitted in a competitive procurement, all proposals are determined to be inadequate.

Subgrantee shall submit a written statement justifying the sole source procurement for any procurement over \$10,000 to MaineHousing prior to the installation of services.

5. Records. Copies of all procurement records, including sole source procurement documents, correspondence, factors considered and the basis for selection must be kept in the Subgrantee's files.

## 9. HEAP Weatherization.

Weatherization measures must be installed in accordance with the Maine Weatherization Standards. When HEAP Weatherization is used in conjunction with U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) funds, [10 C.F.R. Part 440](#), will govern with the exception to variations listed and approved in the LIHEAP State Model Plan Weatherization Assistance Section.

All HEAP Weatherization services will be conducted by Subgrantees within their Service Area, unless otherwise authorized by MaineHousing, and will be subject to the availability of HEAP funds.

### A. Eligibility.

1. Household Eligibility. A Household may be eligible for HEAP Weatherization if the Household is eligible for HEAP, has an eligible Application that was certified within the preceding twelve (12) months, and does not have a more recent Application that has been certified-denied.
2. Dwelling Unit Eligibility. Ownership will be verified for all Dwelling Units and Rental Units and additional documentation or written permission may be required for life estates and life leases or tenants.
  - a. A Dwelling Unit that has a life estate or life lease interest may be eligible if the document conferring the Applicant rights of the life estate or life lease is recorded in the appropriate registry of deeds and states that the Applicant is responsible for maintaining the Dwelling Unit or is silent as to who is responsible for maintenance.
  - b. A Dwelling Unit will not be eligible under HEAP Weatherization if the Dwelling Unit received weatherization services under HEAP Weatherization or another MaineHousing program within fifteen (15) years of the certification date, it has been designated for acquisition or clearance by a federal state or local program or order, it is in foreclosure, for sale, vacant, uninhabitable, it is in poor structural condition making HEAP Weatherization services impractical, ineffective or impossible, it has been damaged by fire, flood or an act of God and insurance will cover the damage, or there are discrepancies on the Household's Application.
  - c. A Dwelling Unit that was previously weatherized may be reopened if the reopening occurs within six (6) months of completion of the original

weatherization service and reopening is required because the previous services are the proximate cause of an immediate threat to the health and safety of the occupants or the quality of the weatherization material or installation is deficient as determined by MaineHousing.

B. HEAP Weatherization Uses:

1. HEAP Weatherization allowable uses include: Weatherization needs assessments/audits; air sealing and insulation, storm windows, Heating System modifications/repairs/replacements, Heating System cleaning, tuning and evaluating, LED lighting, energy related roof repairs, major appliance repairs/replacements, including water heaters, up to two appliances, with one being a water heater, incidental repairs, health and safety measures, replacement windows and doors after all reasonable repair options are considered.

C. Subgrantee Responsibilities.

1. Subgrantees must conduct a public bid process to secure weatherization contractors at least annually as prescribed by MaineHousing.

10. Administration of the Programs.

A. MaineHousing's Responsibilities.

1. MaineHousing will prepare and submit to the Secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services an annual State Plan for HEAP in conformity with the provisions of the HEAP Act after conducting a public hearing for the purpose of taking comments.
2. MaineHousing will maintain this Rule, the HEAP Guide and any other guidance and documents that relate to the administration of the Programs.
3. MaineHousing will contract with Subgrantees and other entities to administer the Programs and may, at its discretion, make payments to Eligible Households or Vendors or provide Supplemental Benefits to the extent available. MaineHousing will assign at least one Subgrantee to each Service Area to administer the Programs and will select Subgrantees annually based on applications received by June 1<sup>st</sup> outlining the Subgrantee's: experience in administering the Programs or similar programs; capacity; availability of other qualified entities within a Service Area; cost efficiency; ability to enhance accessibility to the Programs; schedule for taking Applications; and ability to perform outreach and serve homebound Applicants.
4. MaineHousing will determine the annual allocation of HEAP funds to each Subgrantee, not including any amount allocated to MaineHousing to pay Benefits.
5. MaineHousing will conduct program and fiscal monitoring of Subgrantees and Vendors to ensure compliance with all rules, regulations and laws applicable to this Rule.

B. Subgrantee, Vendor and Contractor Responsibilities.

1. Subgrantees, Vendors and Contractors are responsible for the following:
  - a. Conflict of Interest. No employee, officer, board member, agent, consultant or other representative of Subgrantee, Vendor, or Contractor who exercises or has exercised any function or responsibility with respect to Programs' activities or who is in a position to participate in a decision-making process or gain inside

information with regard to these activities, may obtain a financial interest or benefit from Programs' activities or have an interest in any contract, subcontract or agreement regarding the Programs' activities, or the proceeds there under, which benefits him or her or any person with whom he or she has business or family ties. Subgrantees, Vendors, and Contractors shall notify MaineHousing of any potential conflict of interest.

- b. Confidentiality. Subgrantees, Vendors, Contractors, and their employees and agents shall keep confidential Applicant or Household information obtained in the administration of the Programs, including without limitation, an individual's name, address and phone number, household income, assets or other financial information, and benefits received ("Confidential Information") and shall safeguard and protect from disclosure at all times Confidential Information.
  - c. Prohibited Discrimination. Subgrantees, Vendors, Contractors, and their employees and agents are prohibited from discriminating against any Household applying for or receiving goods or services in accordance with this Rule.
2. Subgrantees responsibilities also include, but are not limited to, the following as further defined in the annual Subgrant Agreement between MaineHousing and Subgrantees and in accordance with the HEAP Act and this Rule:
- a. Conduct outreach, accept and verify Applications, determine Household eligibility, pay Benefits, coordinate with MaineHousing on denials and requests for Informal Review and Fair Hearing, use MaineHousing's database software and equipment, address emergencies, cost effectively administer and operate the Programs, prioritize Eligible Households where required, coordinate services between Programs, submit production schedules, work plans, budgets, monthly status reports, and billing information to MaineHousing, use forms provided by MaineHousing, make reasonable accommodations upon request for a Person with a Disability, follow procurement requirements as may be required by 45 C.F.R. §§ 75.327 – 75.335 and 45 C.F.R. §§ 75.316-753.23, and inform Applicants of their rights to request an Informal Review and Fair Hearing;
  - b. Maintain comprehensive, accurate and separate documentation, payroll reports, financial statements, and other records in connection with its administration of the Programs including at a minimum, the amount and disposition of the Programs' funds received by the Subgrantee and the total cost necessary to administer the Programs and provide MaineHousing with copies of any such records as requested and maintain such records for a minimum of three (3) years from the end of the relevant contract period or a longer period as prescribed by MaineHousing. In cases of litigation, other claims, audits, or other disputes the Subgrantee will retain all relevant records for at least one (1) year after the final disposition thereof;
  - c. Provide an annual budget prior to each Program Year and within ninety (90) calendar days of the close of Subgrantee's fiscal year furnish to MaineHousing an annual financial statement prepared by an independent certified public accountant in accordance with 45 C.F.R. Part 75, Subpart F.

C. Administrative and Program Expenses. Subgrantees shall be permitted administrative and program expenses necessary to carry out their responsibilities under this Rule and the Programs.

Such expenses will be allowed in a manner consistent with the provisions of the HEAP Act and must be reasonable in amount as determined by MaineHousing. Administrative expenses for the Program Year may be spent only between October 1 and the following September 30 of the applicable Program Year, unless otherwise authorized. Allowable administrative and program expenses for each of the Programs are listed below. Other expenses may be allowed if authorized by MaineHousing before the expenses are incurred.

<b>Fuel Assistance and ECIP</b>	<b>Expense Category</b>
Salary and fringe benefit costs for the actual time an individual performs intake, processing, or eligibility determination functions associated with an active Application	Program
Salary and fringe benefit costs for the actual time an individual participates in administering Fuel Assistance or ECIP and is not performing functions associated with an active Application	Program
Salary and fringe benefits and other related and reasonable costs for specific HEAP and ECIP training and professional development of individuals performing intake, application processing, eligibility determination, and administration of HEAP fuel assistance and ECIP	Program
Space costs/rent, telephone, copier/printing, office supplies, postage, transportation/travel, data processing/computer costs, equipment repairs and maintenance, equipment purchase/lease, and consultants/professional services associated with the above referenced activities.	Program
Indirect costs	Administrative
Salary and fringe benefits and other related and reasonable costs for specific HEAP and ECIP training and professional development for individuals whose salary and fringe benefits are budgeted directly to Administrative Costs or for whom salary and fringe are included in the agency's Indirect Rate	Administrative
Salary and fringe costs, space costs, rent, telephone, copying, printing, office supplies, postage, transportation, travel, data processing, computer costs, equipment repairs and maintenance, equipment purchase or lease, consultant fees and professional services associated with the administration of HEAP not included in the agency's Indirect Rate or allowable from program funding	Administrative
<b>HEAP Weatherization, CHIP, and Heat Pump Program</b>	<b>Expense Category</b>
Material/labor costs for Heating system repairs/replacements and measures installed as part of weatherization	Program
Either salary and fringe benefit costs for the actual time staff participates in administering HEAP Weatherization, CHIP, Heat Pump Program or a program management fee established by MaineHousing.	Program
Space costs/rent, telephone, copier/printing, office supplies, postage, transportation/travel, equipment purchase/lease, liability insurance, pollution occurrence insurance, and consultants/professional services.	Program
Indirect costs	Administrative
<b>Energy Self Sufficiency Services</b>	<b>Expense Category</b>



Salary and fringe benefit costs for staff providing direct services and the direct administrative costs associated with providing the services, such as the costs for supplies, equipment, travel, postage, utilities, rental and maintenance of office space	Program
Indirect costs	Administrative

1. Energy Self Sufficiency Activities. Subgrantees may submit annual proposals, for MaineHousing's consideration, describing their planned activities and expenses associated with providing services to Applicants pursuant to Energy Self Sufficiency of the HEAP Act. Administration of Energy Self Sufficiency Activities will be conditioned on the availability of HEAP funds.

#### D. Vendors.

1. Eligibility. In order to participate in the Programs Vendors must demonstrate the capacity and stability of their business and supply a credit report and business plan to MaineHousing's satisfaction. MaineHousing reserves the right to exclude Vendors in certain situations, including but not limited to, bankruptcies or judgments, prior Program terminations, violations and defaults, and in situations where the Vendor has been in business for less than a year.
2. Enrollment. Upon approval of a Vendor, Vendors must enter into a Vendor Agreement during the time period as prescribed by MaineHousing. Returning Vendors must reenroll each Program Year or as prescribed by MaineHousing contingent upon performance and compliance in previous Program Years.
3. Use of Benefits. Benefits may not:
  - a. Be sold, released, transferred or otherwise conveyed without written authorization from MaineHousing;
  - b. Be used to pay Incidental Costs Benefits;
  - c. Be used to deliver a different Home Energy product than the one authorized by MaineHousing or
  - d. Be used to deliver Home Energy products to a Household that is moving, has a Heating System experiencing mechanical difficulties or has storage tanks that need replacement or do not meet code.

For electricity and natural gas, Vendors may apply Benefits to past due charges for Home Energy deliveries with the oldest charges being paid first.

4. Annual Consumption Report. As part of the Annual Consumption Report process, Vendors must review Eligible Household accounts and identify any remaining Benefits that were issued in or prior to the preceding Program Year. All such unused Benefits must be returned to MaineHousing no later than June 30.
5. Return of Payments. Upon receipt of a Benefit Return form Vendor shall return such Benefits to MaineHousing or Subgrantee within fifteen (15) business days of the date of the Benefit Return form. If any of the following events occur, Vendor shall within fifteen (15) business days of becoming aware, submit to MaineHousing a completed Benefit Return form and return any Benefits paid to Vendor:
  - a. Death of an individual who is a sole member of an Eligible Household;

- b. Institutionalization of an individual who was the sole member of an Eligible Household;
- c. Vendor's receipt of a written notice from an Eligible Household that it no longer desires to receive Home Energy deliveries from Vendor in future Program Years;
- d. An Eligible Household has not received deliveries of Home Energy for twelve (12) consecutive months;
- e. An Eligible Household has moved out of Vendor's Service Area;
- f. An Eligible Household has moved out of State;
- g. Vendor has been paid an excessive Benefit on behalf of the Eligible Household.

For Benefits with a balance of less than \$25, Vendors may aggregate remaining Benefits and return the balance to MaineHousing when the Annual Consumption Report is submitted.

All Benefit Return forms should be accompanied by documentation evidencing: the name and address of the Vendor, the name and address of the Eligible Household; the Eligible Household's account number; the Benefit amount being returned; a concise explanation for the return of funds; a detailed account history showing delivery activity and payment from May 1<sup>st</sup> preceding the Program Year of the Benefits being returned; and any other documentation requested by MaineHousing.

#### E. Noncompliance.

1. MaineHousing shall have the right to terminate or suspend in whole or in part the Subgrantee Agreement in its sole discretion if it determines the Subgrantee has failed to comply with any provision of this Rule, the Subgrantee Agreement, the HEAP Guide, or the provisions of other applicable law. A written notice will be sent to Subgrantee and shall set forth as applicable, the reason for termination, the specific violations and any suspensions. For non-compliance not resulting in termination or suspension a written notice setting forth the specific violation and cure period will be provided to Subgrantee. In situations of malfeasance or misfeasance MaineHousing may bar a Subgrantee's participation in the Programs.
2. MaineHousing shall have the right to terminate a Vendor for failure to comply with the terms of the Vendor Agreement, State law concerning consumer home heating rights as prescribed by the Office of the Maine Attorney General, documentation, audit/investigation requirements and the requirements of this Rule. In situations of malfeasance or misfeasance MaineHousing may bar a Vendor's participation in the Programs and pursue any other remedies available under the law. MaineHousing may also choose to place the Vendor on a watch list and monitor Vendor's performance.

#### 11. Native American Tribal Organizations.

Native American Tribal Organizations means the Penobscot Indian Nation, the Passamaquoddy Indian Tribe and the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians as defined in the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act, [30 M.R.S. §6201 et seq.](#), and the Mi'kmaq Nation as defined in the Micmac Settlement Act, [30 M.R.S. §7201 et seq.](#)

- A. Direct Allocation to Native American Tribal Organizations. Native American Tribal Organizations may receive a direct allocation of HEAP funds from the Secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services pursuant to the HEAP Act. The amount of the direct allocation is determined by the percentage of Maine's total annual LIHEAP award that

MaineHousing indicates will be awarded to Maine's Native American Tribal Organizations. In its determination MaineHousing will consider the number of Eligible Households during the previous Program Year that include Household Members who are members of the Native American Tribal Organization, when that information is available.

- B. Agreements with Native American Tribal Organizations. When a Native American Tribal Organization receives a direct allocation of Fuel Assistance and ECIP, MaineHousing will enter into an agreement with the Native American Tribal Organization that, at a minimum, provides for the coordination of services and administration of the Fuel Assistance and ECIP by the Native American Tribal Organization and Subgrantees to prevent duplication of services.

## 12. Informal Review and Fair Hearing.

- A. Informal Review. For any dispute other than a dispute regarding TANF Fuel Supplemental Benefits (which are not subject to Informal Review), the Applicant must submit a written request for an Informal Review no later than:
  - 1. Thirty (30) calendar days from the postmarked date of the denial notification or the benefit notification;
  - 2. Ninety (90) calendar days from the Application Received Date, 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.

Written requests for Informal Review may be mailed to MaineHousing, 26 Edison Drive, Augusta, Maine 04330; or emailed to [LIHEAPcompliance@mainehousing.org](mailto:LIHEAPcompliance@mainehousing.org). The Informal Review will be conducted by a person other than the one who made or approved the decision under review. MaineHousing will review the file, conduct necessary research, and give the Applicant an opportunity to present written or oral objections. In rendering a decision MaineHousing will evaluate the accuracy of the calculations, the level of documentation provided by the Applicant, and the accuracy of the decision. MaineHousing will communicate the results of the research/review to the Applicant. 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: the Applicant's claim for assistance was denied or not acted upon with reasonable promptness (meaning it was not certified or denied within the required time-frame outline in this Rule or as approved by waiver); the Applicant disputes the criteria used to calculate the amount of their Benefit; or the Applicant is required to refund an Overpayment.

### B. Fair Hearing.

- 1. Pursuant to the HEAP Act, [42 U.S.C. §8624\(b\)\(13\)](#), MaineHousing will provide an Applicant an opportunity for a fair administrative hearing. Fair hearings shall be conducted in accordance with the Maine Administrative Procedures Act, Title 5, Chapter 375 by the Director of MaineHousing (or their designee) or such other contractor selected by MaineHousing. The parties may receive a transcript of the hearing upon payment of the reasonable cost for the production thereof.
- 2. Within thirty (30) calendar days of the hearing's conclusion the hearing officer will prepare a recommended hearing decision. Copies of the recommended decision will be provided to the Applicant.
- 3. A final decision and order will be made by the Director of MaineHousing in writing within sixty (60) calendar days of receipt of the hearing officer's recommendation. In

the event the Director of MaineHousing presides over a hearing, they shall render their decision and order within sixty (60) calendar days of the hearing's conclusion or sixty (60) calendar days of the recommended decision. The Director's decision and order shall include findings of fact sufficient to apprise the parties of its basis. A copy of the decision and order will be provided promptly to each party to the proceeding or their representative of record. Written notice of the party's right to appeal the decision and other relevant information will be provided to the parties at the time of the decision and order. The decision and order will be implemented by the Subgrantee no later than ten (10) calendar days after receipt if it is in the Applicant's favor and otherwise forty-five (45) calendar days unless stayed on appeal.

### 13. Errors and Program Abuse.

- A. Reporting Errors and Program Abuse. Subgrantees are required to report any suspected or alleged Errors or Program Abuse. Any individual may also report suspected Errors or Program Abuse by telephone 1-800-452-4668 or (207) 626-4600, in writing to MaineHousing, Attn: HEAP Errors and Program Abuse, 26 Edison Drive, Augusta, ME 04330 or by email at [LIHEAPcompliance@mainehousing.org](mailto:LIHEAPcompliance@mainehousing.org). Any report should include at minimum, the name and address of the person being reported and any details of the suspected Errors and Program Abuse.
- B. Investigation. MaineHousing will investigate all reported and alleged Errors and Program Abuse and may investigate the previous three (3) Program Years and may place Benefits on hold during the investigation. Applicants will be notified and given the opportunity to respond and provide additional documentation. MaineHousing will make a determination on the appropriate action, based on the response. If an Applicant fails to respond or fails to provide the documentation requested, the Applicant may be subject to denial, an Overpayment or other actions available under the law. If Errors and Program Abuse are confirmed or Applicant fails to respond, Applicant will receive a written notification outlining the facts of the decision, the reason for the decision, the Overpayment due (if applicable), and any avenue available to request an Informal Review or Fair Hearing. If MaineHousing determines the Errors were at no fault of the Applicant, MaineHousing will not require an Overpayment from the Applicant.
- C. Overpayments. If an Applicant is required to pay an Overpayment (including any Overpayments due from the previous three (3) Program Years) the Applicant may pay the full amount of the Overpayment, enter into an agreeable payment arrangement and/or be subject to recoupment by MaineHousing.

### 14. Waivers of the Rule and HEAP Guide.

MaineHousing will only grant waivers of the Rule and/or HEAP Guide in very limited circumstances. The below is a list of the only provisions that will be considered for a waiver. Consideration does not mean the waiver will be granted. Any grant of a waiver is at MaineHousing's discretion.

- A. Subgrantee must certify or deny an Application within thirty (30) business days from the Application Received Date.
  - 1. **MaineHousing will consider providing a waiver up to forty-five (45) business days.**
- B. Program benefits will only be available for reissue or transfer during the Program Year of issue up until March 31<sup>st</sup> of the Program Year immediately following.
  - 1. **MaineHousing will consider extending the deadline to April 15<sup>th</sup> for good cause.**

- C. ECIP will be administered pursuant to HEAP between November 1 and April 30.
1. **Depending on the availability of funds and other factors MaineHousing may extend the April 30<sup>th</sup> ECIP end date.**
- D. 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.
1. **MaineHousing will consider extending the deadline to twenty-five (25) business days.**
- E. CHIP may not be used as reimbursement or payment for costs incurred by the Applicant, replacement of a Heating System that was previously replaced by CHIP unless the Heating System has reached its useful life as defined by:  
[https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/EUL\\_FOR\\_CNA\\_E\\_TOOL.PDF](https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/EUL_FOR_CNA_E_TOOL.PDF), or for fuel switching.
1. **In the case of replacing a Heating System before the end of its useful life or fuel switching, in limited circumstances, MaineHousing may consider a waiver on a case-by-case basis review.**
- F. HEAP Weatherization does not allow fuel switching when replacing a Heating System.
1. **MaineHousing may consider a waiver on a case-by-case basis review.**

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: 30-A M.R.S. §§4722(1)(W), 4741(1) and (15), and 4991 et seq.; 42 U.S.C. §§8621, et seq.

**BASIS STATEMENT:** This replacement rule repeals and replaces in its entirety the current Home Energy Assistance Program Rule. The rule establishes standards for administering fuel assistance, emergency fuel assistance, TANF Fuel Supplemental Benefits, weatherization, and heating system repair and replacement funds to income eligible households in the State of Maine. This replacement rule: changes the ECIP component to one benefit instance per program year, makes minor changes to documentation requirements for citizenship, identity and social security number verification, increases the allowable time to return documentation for an application, updates income documentation and incorporates language to provide clarity and continuity between the rule and the State Plan, adds direct checks for clients that use Wood Pellets, Corn, and Bio-Bricks, and adds a quality control requirement for the direct checks, edits the CHIP uses language to eliminate specific repairs, adds clarification for the solicitation and use of price quotes for CHIP repairs, and makes minor formatting and grammar edits.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

##### *Process:*

Notice of Agency Rule-making Proposal (MAPA-3) was submitted to the Secretary of State for publication in the April 30, 2025 edition of the appropriate newspapers. Additionally, MaineHousing sent the proposed rule to Interested Parties on April 29, 2025 and published the proposed rule on its website on April 30, 2025. MaineHousing held a public hearing on May 20, 2025. The comment period was held open until May 30, 2025 at 11:59 PM.

##### *Summary of Comments and Responses to Comments:*

**Comment:** Christina Link, Energy Programs Director for The Opportunity Alliance provided testimony at the public hearing. Christina thanked MaineHousing's Energy and Housing Services team for their efforts to streamline the application process for program year 2025 making the process less overwhelming.

**Response:** MaineHousing appreciates the support.

**Comment:** Christina Link said the online HEAP application was a challenge for program year 2025, as each online applicant had to be contacted by a community action agency staff person, usually through email, to collect the signed permission to share form. This required permission to share form proved problematic as many applicants did not frequently check their email despite needing one to apply. Christina said she can see the benefits of a completely online application, but more improvements need to be made to make it a user-friendly experience for the applicant.

**Response:** MaineHousing recognizes the limitations of the online application and the inability to sign documents within the application portal. We are continuing to improve the online application and are working to streamline the process to allow electronic signatures. MaineHousing is updating the HEAP landing page to include required documents for download, an instructional video, and more comprehensive consumer information.

**Comment:** Christina Link was happy with the change of adding a direct check benefit to applicants who heat with wood for program year 2025. The direct check benefit gave applicants more options in choosing a vendor. In relation, Christina endorses the proposed change for program year 2026 that applicants that heat with wood pellets, biofuels, etc. are also eligible to receive a direct check benefit. She is strongly in favor of this change to allow applicants to have control over their vendor choice.

**Response:** MaineHousing appreciates the support.

**Comment:** Christina Link endorsed the proposed move to a one-time ECIP benefit. In recent years agencies have seen an increase in demand for ECIP. Moving it to a one-time benefit eliminates delays and allows more applicants to receive funds.

**Response:** MaineHousing appreciates the support.

**Comment:** Christina Link commented that a delivery for ECIP should be allowed to exceed 100 gallons as long as it remains under the \$500 benefit amount.

**Response:** With the change to a one-time benefit, MaineHousing will not limit the number of gallons that may be delivered for ECIP.

**Comment:** Christina Link commented that she would like to see MaineHousing provide additional applicant education regarding any ECIP changes to manage the expectations of clients in program year 2026.

**Response:** MaineHousing is reviewing options for client education in July. We will ensure that the changes to ECIP are clearly explained.

**FISCAL IMPACT NOTE:** The replacement HEAP Rule will not impose any cost on municipalities or counties for implementation or compliance.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** JULY 1, 2025