



# Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)

## PY 2025 HEAP Handbook

# DRAFT



July 22, 2024

[mainehousing.org](http://mainehousing.org) | 207-624-5743

# PY2025 HEAP Handbook Revisions

Note: Edits are highlighted in Yellow

Updates made for August 2, 2024

Updated all sections to change “Created Date” to Application Date

Updated all sections to change “Application Date” to Application Received Date

## SECTION 7: Residency

Updated, A Household may be eligible for a Benefit if **all** Household members on the Date of Application are a full-time resident of Maine and resides or have resided in a Dwelling Unit full-time for at least four (4) months during a Heating Season and have a Direct Energy Cost or Indirect Determinable Energy Cost.

## SECTION 8: Eligibility

Updated to reflect Eligibility from HEAP Rule - Chapter 24.

## SECTION 13: Application Intake

Updated 4., removed “If a photocopier or scanner is not available, the intake worker will use the *Document Verification Form* to describe the documentation that was reviewed, and to record the appropriate information (ex. type of identification, pertinent numbers, expiration date, etc.). A new *Document Verification Form* must be completed each program year.”

## SECTION 16: Completing the Application

Updated E.2., to reflect acceptable documentation for Subsidized Housing (Heat Included)

Updated N.2., removed ‘intake worker must sign the Application’

## SECTION 17: Subsidized Housing with Heat Included Process

Updated 2. Households residing in Subsidized Housing with heat included are NOT required to provide income documentation. However, all other documentation (*i.e.*, *Permission to Share Information* form, SSN, **Citizenship, Identity Documentation, current lease or copy of current electric bill**, and other pertinent documentation) must be in the file.

Updated 3. removed “Income eligibility for HEAP is established based on the Subsidized with heat Household’s income eligibility for housing subsidy as documented by one of the following:

- a. Recertification worksheet/summary or Rent Calculation sheet signed by property manager or subsidy housing specialist; or
- b. Recertification form (HUD 50058/59, RD 3560-8, or RD Renewal Voucher Obligation Form)”

## SECTION 19: Income

Updated to add Income figures must match what is shown on related income documentation and cannot be rounded **with the exception of adding COLA to benefits paid by the Social Security Administration which will always round down to nearest dollar.**

### **SECTION 21: Countable Income**

Updated A.5, removed ‘If a photocopier is not available, use the *Document Verification Form* to describe the documentation that was reviewed, and to record the dates, amounts, source, etc.’

### **SECTION 22: Certification**

Updated B. If a Household reports zero or minimal income, documentation of how the Household is meeting their basic living expenses **is not required.**

**Updates made for August 5, 2024**

### **SECTION 20: Exemptions from Household Income**

Updated 24 to add, ~~Worker’s Compensation Benefits~~  
Added back to countable income 8/6/24.

### **SECTION 21: Countable Income**

Updated entire section to align with the countable income listed in the HEAP State Model Plan.

### **SECTION 29: Change of Vendor (Benefit Returns)**

Added, a. 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.

**Updates made for August 7, 2024**

### **SECTION 20: Exemptions from Household Income**

Removed 24, Worker’s Compensation Benefits  
Removed Worker’s Compensation Benefits from Exemptions from Household Income and added back to countable income.

### **SECTION 20: Exemptions from Household Income**

Updated “NOTE: *See* Section 3(C) of the Rule for a complete list of income exemptions” to remove hyperlink.

### **SECTION 21: Countable Income**

Updated E,-Unemployment Insurance and **Worker’s Compensation Benefits**  
Removed Worker’s Compensation Benefits from Exemptions from Household Income and added back to countable income.

### **SECTION 21: Countable Income**

Updated N, Child Support or Mortgage/Rent Payments (in lieu of or in addition to support payments) to correct error in listing of documentation needed.

### **SECTION 29: Change of Vendor (Benefit Return)**

Updated to state “If the Application changes are due to changes in the Household’s situation after the **Application Date**”.

Updated examples throughout to remove 'Income Verification Month'.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

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PY2025 HEAP Handbook Revisions.....	1
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>SECTION 2: RESOURCES AVAILABLE ON CAA WEB PORTAL.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>SECTION 3: NATIVE AMERICAN TRIBAL ORGANIZATIONS .....</b>	<b>9</b>
A. Tribal Application Process .....	9
B. Tribal Contacts.....	9
<b>SECTION 4: DEFINITIONS.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>SECTION 5: OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>SECTION 6: HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>SECTION 7: RESIDENCY.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>SECTION 8: ELIGIBILITY .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>SECTION 9: MIXED HOUSEHOLDS.....</b>	<b>22</b>
A. Eligible Members.....	22
<b>SECTION 10: HOME ENERGY OBLIGATION.....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>SECTION 11: DWELLING UNIT .....</b>	<b>24</b>
A. Dwelling Unit.....	24
B. Group Homes .....	24
C. Business Use.....	25
E. Household Relocates.....	25
F. Temporary Living Quarters.....	25
<b>SECTION 12: INCOME GUIDELINES/DEDUCTIONS .....</b>	<b>26</b>
A. Income Guidelines .....	26
B. Income Deductions .....	27
<b>SECTION 13: APPLICATION INTAKE .....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>SECTION 14: CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE .....</b>	<b>33</b>
A. Overview.....	33
B. Monthly Reporting.....	33
<b>SECTION 15: APPLICATION PERIOD .....</b>	<b>34</b>

<b>SECTION 16: COMPLETING THE APPLICATION .....</b>	<b>35</b>
A. Changes to Application Documents.....	35
B. Documentation and Information Requirements .....	35
C. Ownership Type and Ownership Information .....	37
D. Dwelling Type and Dwelling Information .....	37
E. Subsidized Housing (Heat Included) .....	37
F. Subsidized Housing (Heat Not Included) .....	38
G. Low Income Housing Tax Credit Properties (LIHTC) and Affordable Housing Units 38	
H. Utility Information.....	38
I. Dwelling Not Permanently Connected to or Serviced by Utility.....	38
J. Heating Systems .....	40
K. Energy Vendors .....	42
L. Direct Check Information.....	43
M. Income Verification Time Period .....	44
N. Signatures.....	44
O. Income Documentation (Proof of Income).....	44
<b>SECTION 18: APPLICATION PROCESS TELEPHONE APPLICATION PROCESS .....</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>SECTION 19: INCOME .....</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>SECTION 20: EXEMPTIONS FROM HOUSEHOLD INCOME.....</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>SECTION 21: COUNTABLE INCOME.....</b>	<b>53</b>
A. Gross Wages, Salaries, and Bonuses Before any Taxes or Deductions.....	53
B. Benefits paid by the Social Security Administration: Social Security Retirement (SS), Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Income (SSDI).....	53
C. Unemployment Compensation Benefits (State of Maine or Out-of-State Benefits).....	55
D. Worker's Compensation.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
E. Strike Benefits from Union Funds .....	55
F. Difficulty of Care Payment- Stipend received from Shared Living Program.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
G. Alimony, Child Support, or Mortgage/Rent Payments (in lieu of or in addition to support payments).....	57
H. Self-Employment Income.....	58
I. Odd Job Income .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
J. Rental Income.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
K. Income from Roomers .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
L. Support From Person or Family Member Not Living in the Household (if received within the income verification period) .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
M. Interest.....	58

N. Dividends, Royalties, Estates, and Trusts.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
O. Government employee pensions, private pensions, and regular annuity payments <b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>	
P. Veteran’s Administration Pensions .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Q. Veteran’s Disability Benefits.....	58
R. Military allotments (pay) .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
S. Military Retirement.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
T. Winnings .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
U. Other .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
<b>SECTION 22: CERTIFICATION .....</b>	<b>59</b>
A. Certifier Review and Verification Process .....	60
B. Income.....	60
C. Over Income Applications (Medical Deductions).....	61
D. Landlord Requires Applicant/Tenant Use Specific Vendor.....	62
E. Direct Check Vendor .....	63
F. No Working Heating System .....	63
G. Household Moves Prior to Certification .....	64
H. Certification and Benefit Notification.....	65
NOTES:.....	66
<b>SECTION 23: LOW INCOME ASSISTANCE PLAN (LIAP) .....</b>	<b>67</b>
A. How Does a Household Get on the LIAP Report? .....	67
B. Electric Account Not in a Household Member’s Name .....	67
C. Subsidized Housing .....	68
SUBSIDIZED HOUSING GUIDANCE.....	68
A. No Working Heating System.....	69
B. CHIP Only Certification.....	69
<b>SECTION 25: DENIAL REVERSALS .....</b>	<b>70</b>
A. Common reasons for Denial Reversal:.....	70
B. Prior to Processing a Denial Reversal.....	70
<b>SECTION 26: BENEFITS .....</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>SECTION 27: PAYMENT OF BENEFITS .....</b>	<b>71</b>
A. Weekly Payment Process .....	71
B. Benefits Issued .....	72
<b>SECTION 28: APPLICATION CHANGES .....</b>	<b>74</b>
A. Applications that have a status of Certified Eligible-Payable:.....	74
B. Applications that have a status of Certified Eligible-Paid:.....	76
<b>SECTION 29: CHANGE OF VENDOR (BENEFIT RETURN).....</b>	<b>77</b>

A. Overarching Principles That Apply to Benefit Returns.....	77
B. CAA Responsibilities.....	78
C. MaineHousing Responsibilities:.....	79
D. Vendor Responsibilities.....	79
<b>SECTION 30: CHANGE OF ADDRESS OR CHANGE OF PRODUCT .....</b>	<b>81</b>
A. Overarching Principles of a Change of Address/Change of Product.....	81
B. CAA Responsibilities.....	81
C. MaineHousing Responsibilities.....	83
SECTION 31: EXAMPLES OF APPLICATION UPDATE SITUATIONS.....	84
SECTION 32: APPEAL.....	88
SECTION 33: TANF SUPPLEMENTAL BENEFITS.....	89
APPENDIX A: INFORMATION PROTECTION GUIDELINES .....	92
APPENDIX B: COURT ORDERED CHILD SUPPORT DEDUCTIONS.....	94

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## SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

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

Community Action Agencies (CAAs) and other subgrantees are under contract with MaineHousing as the local agencies administering HEAP. MaineHousing has entered into such contracts with ten (10) CAAs. A complete list of local service providers can be found on MaineHousing's website at [www.mainehousing.org](http://www.mainehousing.org). Applications are accepted in person or through a telephone/mail process. CAAs are responsible for determining Household eligibility and for promptly responding to heating- related crises affecting Eligible Households.

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

In the event of a deviation from policy as set forth in the Rule (Chapter 24), a HEAP Waiver request must be submitted for consideration prior to certification of the HEAP Application. In such cases, the CAA must submit the request to [liheap@mainehousing.org](mailto:liheap@mainehousing.org).

MaineHousing will provide technical assistance to CAAs, as needed or requested.



## **SECTION 2: RESOURCES AVAILABLE ON CAA WEB PORTAL**

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

1. CAA HEAP Handbook;
2. PDF fillable forms for Application intake and instructions for completing the forms;
3. “How To” documents for select System of Record processes.
4. HEAP Rule – Chapter 24; and
5. HEAP State Plan.

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## **SECTION 3: NATIVE AMERICAN TRIBAL ORGANIZATIONS**

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

### **A. Tribal Application Process**

1. Tribal members living on a reservation apply for and receive HEAP assistance through their tribal organization.
2. A CAA may not process an Application for a Household living on a tribal reservation. Applications for persons living on a tribal reservation must be taken by the applicable Tribe. In the event an Application is taken by a CAA for a Household residing on a tribal reservation, the CAA shall notify the Applicant of the error and forward the Application and supporting documentation to the applicable Tribe.
3. Tribal members who do not live on a tribal reservation may apply for HEAP through the CAA. However, the CAA must contact the applicable tribal organization prior to certification to prevent duplication of services and duplication of payment.
4. Both the Tribe and the CAA shall:
  - a. Prepare and exchange lists, throughout the program year, of tribal members they have provided HEAP services to; and
  - b. Will make every effort to refer Households to the Tribe/CAA as necessary to ensure that all Eligible Households are given the opportunity to participate in the Home Energy Assistance Program.

### **B. Tribal Contacts**

**Aroostook Band of Mic-Macs**

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

**Houlton Band of Maliseets**

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

**Indian Township Tribal Government**

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

**Penobscot Nation**

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

**Pleasant Point Reservation Passamaquoddy Tribe**

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

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## SECTION 4: DEFINITIONS

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

1. “CAA” means a community action agency or other subgrantee selected by MaineHousing to administer the Programs.
2. “DHHS” means the State of Maine Department of Health and Human Services.
3. “Handbook” means the HEAP Handbook.
4. “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.
5. “Primary Heating System” means the heating system that provides the majority of heat to the Household’s dwelling.
6. “Rule” means Chapter 24 of the Rules of the Maine State Housing Authority.
7. “Waiver” means a written request to deviate from the HEAP guidelines, as described in the HEAP Rule. The CAA shall submit the Waiver request and supporting documentation justifying the request to MaineHousing for its consideration.

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## SECTION 5: OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES

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

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

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

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## SECTION 6: HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

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1. “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.
2. For purposes of HEAP eligibility, persons sharing a Dwelling Unit are considered one Household, except in cases of a Roomer.
3. The following guidelines are not an all-inclusive list, but are major factors used to determine the persons counted as part of the Household.
4. A Household may consist of:
  - a. A person who lives alone.
  - b. Persons legally obligated for the support of each other, *for example*: husband and wife, parents of minor children, and custodians per court order.
  - c. Persons who share a Dwelling Unit, even if only one person in the Household pays the Household expenses (not to include a Roomer).
  - d. Persons who share a Dwelling Unit and pool their income to pay Household expenses.
  - e. Persons who share a Dwelling Unit and Household expenses such as persons who pay a percentage of the Household expenses individually.
  - f. Minor children, who are qualified aliens, residing with ineligible non-citizens.
5. A person staying in a drug abuse hospital or center, public or private, may be counted as a part of a Household if they are expected to return home within ninety (90) days.
6. A live-in care attendant will be considered part of the Household if the live-in care attendant does not meet the definition of a Live-in Care Attendant in Section 1 of the Rule.
7. Qualified Aliens will be included/counted as members of the Household if they meet the requirements outlined in the Rule and Handbook.
8. A person who is away from the home part of the time will be counted as a Household Member and their income will be included in the Household income unless the Applicant can provide proof that the person’s primary residence is a separate Dwelling Unit.
9. Legal dependents or minor children living with parents/guardians who maintain separate residences can be counted as Household Members in only one Household. To determine which Household, CAAs may rely on custodial parent /guardian’s declaration of legal custody/guardianship of minor children unless disputed.

**Dispute Resolution:** If two different Applicants declare the same minor child, only the Household with the appropriate documentation will be allowed to claim the dependent(s) as

a member of their Household. The following requirements pertain to only those cases where another party has disputed the declaration:

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

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

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

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

12. No person may be counted as part of a Household if that person:
  - a. Is a Roomer.
  - b. Has been previously served as part of another Household in the current Program Year.
  - c. Is an unqualified alien.

- d. Resides in one of the following facilities:
  - i. A state or federally supported institution, *for example*: state psychiatric facility or federal and state prisons.
  - ii. A long-term nursing home, boarding home, foster care facility, emergency shelter, or military base housing.
  - iii. A substance abuse hospital or center, public or private, and the person is not expected to return to the Dwelling Unit within ninety (90) days.
- e. Live-in Care Attendant. A live-in care attendant will not be counted if **both** of the following are true:
  - i. Does not contribute financially to the Household; and
  - ii. Provides needed health/supportive services to a member of the Household as documented by a qualified professional.

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## SECTION 7: RESIDENCY

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The intent of HEAP is to assist people who are Maine residents and who reside, intend to reside, or have resided in a Dwelling Unit full-time for at least four months during a Heating Season. On the Date of Application, all Household Members must be full-time residents of the State and reside, intend to reside, or have resided in a Dwelling full-time for at least four (4) months during a Heating Season and have a Direct Energy Cost or Indirect Determinable Energy Cost.

**NOTE:** If the Applicant provides inconsistent information or makes questionable statements, the intake/outreach worker shall ask the Applicant to provide documentation to substantiate residency. Examples of documentation may include, but are not limited to, additional utility bills and a lease agreement (current/previous).

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## SECTION 8: ELIGIBILITY

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
- b. Maine Real ID
- 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.

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

<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)"; OR  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

	<p>I-94 with the code CU6 or CU7; OR</p> <p>INS Form I-94 with stamp showing parole as “Cuba/Haitian Entrant” under Section 212(d)(5) of the INA</p>
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1. 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
Passport or 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.

2. All Household Members two years of age or older must provide proof of their Social Security Number (SSN). 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 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.

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## SECTION 9: MIXED HOUSEHOLDS

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### A. Eligible Members

1. CAAs should not deter or deny eligible Applicants who reside with ineligible individuals from applying for Benefits. An Applicant does not need to be an eligible member of a Household but should be of legal age to apply on behalf of those members of the Household who are eligible. Accordingly, an Applicant can be either an eligible Household Member (able to receive Benefits) or an ineligible Household Member (unable to receive Benefits but applying for the eligible Household Members).
2. All Household Members must be entered into the System of Record. When entering uncounted Household Members into the Family section, the uncounted box must be checked.
3. The income of all Household Members, regardless of eligibility, must be documented and entered in the System of Record.

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## SECTION 10: HOME ENERGY OBLIGATION

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1. A Household may be eligible for a Benefit if, it has a Direct Energy Cost or Indirect Determinable Energy Cost. A Household must have an obligation or responsibility to pay its Home Energy bill. Such obligation is reflected through an active account with a utility or fuel vendor, a current energy bill, and evidence that a Household Member pays the vendor directly.
2. Households whose **rent includes heat** have an indirect obligation for Home Energy costs.
3. Households residing in Subsidized Housing with heat included in their rent may be eligible if the Household pays an out-of-pocket expense for a portion of their rent or utility costs. The maximum Benefit for Households residing in Subsidized Housing with heat included is \$21 per Program Year.

***NOTE:** If the subsidy pays 100% of the rent and utility costs, the Household does not have a Direct or Indirect Determinable Energy Cost; and therefore, would not be HEAP eligible.*

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## SECTION 11: DWELLING UNIT

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### A. Dwelling Unit

1. “Dwelling Unit’ means an occupied residential housing structure with one or more rooms that is used customarily as a domicile for one or more persons, when permanently connected to the required utilities (including plumbing, electricity and Heating Systems) and contains bathroom and kitchen facilities specific to that unit. A Dwelling Unit has its own private entrance from the outside or off an enclosed hallway leading from the outside that does not pass through or offer an open access to any other unit within the structure. A Dwelling Unit does not include a camper, trailer, semitrailer, truck camper, motor home, boat, railroad car, bus, yurt or other structure designed and constructed to provide temporary living quarters.”
2. If the dwelling is not permanently connected to or serviced by the required utilities the CAA must obtain additional documentation to substantiate the Household occupies the dwelling as its primary residence on a full-time/year-round basis. The Dwelling Unit status must be verified on a yearly basis.
3. The Dwelling Unit must have a functioning Heating System. If there is no working Heating System the Household’s Application cannot be certified-eligible for Fuel Assistance, and they are not eligible to receive a Fuel Assistance Benefit. The CAA should explore other program resources to assist the Household.
  - a. If everything else about the Application is complete, all applicable documentation has been provided, and the Household is determined income eligible, the Application can be certified for “CHIP Only”.
  - b. If the lack of a functioning Heating System is due to utility disconnection, the Household is not eligible to receive a Fuel Assistance Benefit. If the CAA determines the Household meets all other HEAP-eligibility requirements (except for having a working Heating System), the CAA should:
    - i. Explore the use of private funds, if available, to restore utility service or repair/replace Heating System.
    - ii. If the Application is taken during ECIP timeframe, CAA may explore using ECIP funds for the utility disconnect.
    - iii. If options 1 and 2 above do not yield the desired result, CAA should consider submitting a waiver.

### B. Group Homes

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

- a. If the subsidy reduces the rent amount and heat is included, they would be categorized as residing in Subsidized Housing with heat included. Therefore, they may be eligible for a \$21 Benefit.
  - b. If the federal or state subsidy is exclusively for supportive services, they would be categorized as a Roomer. Therefore, they may be eligible for a regular/full Benefit.
  - c. If there is no subsidy, they would be categorized as a Roomer. Therefore, they may be eligible for a regular/full Benefit.
2. An individual who operates and resides in a licensed nursing home, boarding home, foster care facility, emergency shelter, or bed and breakfast may apply for the program.

### **C. Business Use**

An individual who is self-employed and uses part of their Dwelling Unit for business may apply for the program.

### **D. Motel/Hotels**

Individuals residing in a motel or hotel may be eligible for a Benefit provided it is documented that they live in the motel or hotel; and that the terms and conditions of the contract agreement have been in effect for at least sixty (60) days.

Designate the Ownership Type as Roomer in the System of Record.

### **E. Household Relocates**

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

### **F. Temporary Living Quarters**

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

## SECTION 12: INCOME GUIDELINES/DEDUCTIONS

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

### A. Income Guidelines

The income guidelines for Fuel Assistance, the Energy Crisis Intervention Program (ECIP), Assurance 16, Weatherization services and the Central Heating Improvement Program (CHIP) are based on the greater of 150% of Federal poverty Guidelines or 60% of State Median Income.

### HEAP INCOME GUIDELINES 2024-2025 (Revised 6/11/2024)

FAMILY SIZE	25% of FPL 130% of Points			50% of FPL 120% of Points			75% of FPL 110% of Points		
	1 MONTH	3 MONTHS	12 MONTHS	1 MONTH	3 MONTHS	12 MONTHS	1 MONTH	3 MONTHS	12 MONTHS
1	314	941	3,765	628	1,883	7,530	941	2,824	11,295
2	426	1,278	5,110	852	2,555	10,220	1,278	3,833	15,330
3	538	1,614	6,455	1,076	3,228	12,910	1,614	4,841	19,365
4	650	1,950	7,800	1,300	3,900	15,600	1,950	5,850	23,400
5	762	2,286	9,145	1,524	4,573	18,290	2,286	6,859	27,435
6	874	2,623	10,490	1,748	5,245	20,980	2,623	7,868	31,470
7	986	2,959	11,835	1,973	5,918	23,670	2,959	8,876	35,505
8	1,098	3,295	13,180	2,197	6,590	26,360	3,295	9,885	39,540
9	1,210	3,631	14,525	2,421	7,263	29,050	3,631	10,894	43,575
10	1,323	3,968	15,870	2,645	7,935	31,740	3,968	11,903	47,610
11	1,435	4,304	17,215	2,869	8,608	34,430	4,304	12,911	51,645

FOR EACH ADDITIONAL FAMILY MEMBER ADD:

112	336	1,345	224	673	2,690	336	1,009	4,035
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FAMILY SIZE	100% of FPL 100% of Points			125% FPL 90% of Points			150% of FPL 80% of Points		
	1 MONTH	3 MONTHS	12 MONTHS	1 MONTH	3 MONTHS	12 MONTHS	1 MONTH	3 MONTHS	12 MONTHS
1	1,255	3,765	15,060	1,569	4,706	18,825	1,883	5,648	22,590
2	1,703	5,110	20,440	2,129	6,388	25,550	2,555	7,665	30,660
3	2,152	6,455	25,820	2,690	8,069	32,275	3,228	9,683	38,730
4	2,600	7,800	31,200	3,250	9,750	39,000	3,900	11,700	46,800
5	3,048	9,145	36,580	3,810	11,431	45,725	4,573	13,718	54,870
6	3,497	10,490	41,960	4,371	13,113	52,450	5,245	15,735	62,940
7	3,945	11,835	47,340	4,931	14,794	59,175	5,918	17,753	71,010
8	4,393	13,180	52,720	5,492	16,475	65,900	6,590	19,770	79,080
9	4,842	14,525	58,100	6,052	18,156	72,625	7,263	21,788	87,150
10	5,290	15,870	63,480	6,613	19,838	79,350	7,935	23,805	95,220
11	5,738	17,215	68,860	7,173	21,519	86,075	8,608	25,823	103,290

**FOR EACH ADDITIONAL FAMILY MEMBER ADD:**

<b>448</b>	<b>1,345</b>	<b>5,380</b>	<b>560</b>	<b>1,681</b>	<b>6,725</b>	<b>673</b>	<b>2,018</b>	<b>8,070</b>
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<b>FAMILY SIZE</b>	<b>60% of SMI 70% of Points</b>		
	<b>1 MONTH</b>	<b>3 MONTHS</b>	<b>12 MONTHS</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>2,945</b>	<b>8,834</b>	<b>35,336</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>3,851</b>	<b>11,552</b>	<b>46,209</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>4,757</b>	<b>14,271</b>	<b>57,082</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>5,663</b>	<b>16,989</b>	<b>67,955</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>6,569</b>	<b>19,707</b>	<b>78,827</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>7,475</b>	<b>22,425</b>	<b>89,700</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>7,645</b>	<b>22,935</b>	<b>91,739</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>7,815</b>	<b>23,445</b>	<b>93,777</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>7,985</b>	<b>23,954</b>	<b>95,816</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>8,155</b>	<b>24,464</b>	<b>97,855</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>8,325</b>	<b>24,974</b>	<b>99,893</b>

All numbers are derivatives of 100% of Poverty for twelve months, or 60% of State Median Income for twelve months, as promulgated by the US Department of Health & Human Services.

**B. Income Deductions**

**1. Child Support**

- a. For any Household Member who pays court ordered child support, the CAA will deduct paid and documented child support payments made during the income verification period from the Applicant’s gross income. The Household Member must provide a copy of the court order and proof of the amounts paid during the income verification period.
- b. For self-employed Household Members whose self-employment income is documented by a Federal tax return, the amount of child support payments shall be deducted from the net profits. The maximum allowable deduction for child support shall be less than or equal to the amount of any net profits.
- c. Required Documentation:
  - i. Copy of the court order; **and**
  - ii. Proof of the amounts due and paid during the income verification period.  
Acceptable documents are:
  - iii. State of Maine DHHS Official Record of Child Support Disbursements report;
  - iv. Paystub, if the child support is deducted through employer;
  - v. Bank statement;

- vi. Cancelled check;
  - vii. Money order receipt.
- d. System of Record - Guidelines for entering Income:

<b><i>Example 1: Deduct only the amount paid during the income verification period.</i></b>		
<b>Application Date:</b>	November 12, 2024	
<b>Income Verification Period:</b>	Prior 28 calendar days	
<b>Household Member's One (1)</b>	\$1,625.00	
<b>Month Income:</b>		
<b>Household Member's Monthly Child Support Obligation as documented on the court order.</b>		\$200.00
<b>Paid Child Support:</b>	Monthly Amount Paid	\$200.00
	Multiplied by 1 Month	1
	<b>Total Child Support Paid</b>	<b>\$ \$200.00</b>
<b>System of Record Data Entry:</b>	Gross Income	\$1,625.00
	Child Support	(\$200.00)
	<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$1,425.00</b>

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

<b>Application Date:</b>	January 16, 2024	
<b>Income Verification Period:</b>	Prior 28 calendar days	
<b>Household Member's One (1) Month Income:</b>	\$500.00	
<b>Household Member's Monthly Child Support Obligation (as documented on the court order):</b>		\$575.00
<b>Paid Child Support:</b>	Monthly Amount Paid	\$575.00
	Multiplied by 1 Month	x 1
	<u>Total Child Support Paid</u>	<u>\$575.00</u>
<b>Countable Income</b>	1 Month Income	\$500.00
	Minus 1 Month Child Support Paid	(\$575.00)
	<b>Total Income (Result is a negative)</b>	<b>(\$75.00)</b>
<b>System of Record Data Entry:</b>	Gross Income	\$500.00
	Child Support	(\$500.00)
	<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
The child support deduction is more than the Household's income. Enter enough child support to bring the total Household income to \$0.00 and enter case file notes.		

<b>Example 3: Household Member paid lump sum child support arrearage in the income verification period.</b>		
<b>Application Date:</b>	April 11, 2024	
<b>Income Verification Period:</b>	Prior 28 calendar days	
<b>Household Member's One (1) Month Income:</b>	\$1,500.00	
<b>Household Member's Monthly Child Support Obligation:</b> (as documented on the court order)	\$200.00	
<b>Paid a lump sum Child Support Arrearage in March</b> (in addition to monthly obligation)	\$400.00	
<b>Paid Child Support:</b>	Monthly Amount Paid	\$200.00
	Multiplied by 1 Month	x 1
	<b>Total Obligated Child Support Paid</b>	\$200.00
<b>Countable Income</b>	1 Month Income	\$1,500.00
	Minus 1 Month Child Support Paid	\$200.00
	<b>Total Income (Entered in HEAP Cloud)</b>	<b>\$1,300.00</b>
Lump sum arrearage payment of \$400.00 is <b>not</b> deductible, even though it was paid during the income verification period.		
<b>System of Record Data Entry:</b>	Gross Income	\$1,500.00
	Child Support	(\$200.00)
	<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$1,300.00</b>
Lump sum payment made for arrears cannot be deducted from income.		

## 2. Medical Deductions

- a. If a Household is ineligible due to being over income, the CAA will deduct eligible medical expenses from the Household's gross income in an amount only enough to make the Household income eligible. A medical expense will be considered eligible if:
  - i. It was not reimbursed by insurance or other organizations;
  - ii. A Household Member made the payment within the income verification period **OR** the 12 calendar month period prior to the Application Date for annual income; and
  - iii. It is allowable under IRS Publication 502 (ex. hospital and doctor bills, medical and dental insurance premiums, prescriptions, and the cost of transportation to and from medical appointments). For more information, refer to <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p502.pdf>.

Household's Gross Income-Monthly :	\$4,731.50
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Household's Gross Income-Annually :	\$56,778.00
FPL Income limit for HH of 3 in System of Record:	\$52,778.00 Annually
Over Income By:	\$4,000.00 Annually <b>OR</b> \$333.33 Monthly

- b Per IRS Publication 502, medical marijuana cannot be counted as a medical deduction: “Controlled Substances – You cannot include in medical expenses amounts you pay for controlled substances (such as marijuana, laetrile, etc.), even if such substances are legalized by state law. Such substances are not legal under federal law and cannot be included in medical expenses.

**Example for a Household of 3:**

Household must provide either:

- \$4,001.00 in paid medical expenses for the 12 calendar month period prior to the Application Date; **OR**
- \$334.33 in paid medical expenses for the income verification period



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## SECTION 13: APPLICATION INTAKE

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1. Applications must be taken by the CAA administering the Programs in the Service Area in which the Household resides. In the event an Application is taken by a CAA for a Household not within their Service Area, the CAA shall notify the Applicant of the error and forward the Application and supporting documentation to the applicable CAA. CAA must notify MaineHousing to determine next steps.
2. An individual may only be a counted Household Member on one certified eligible HEAP Application per Program Year.
3. The Application must include copies of all documentation.
4. If intake determines that the address, fuel type or Vendor have changed since the prior year, CAA must process a Change of Address, Change of Product or Benefit Return (Change of Vendor).
  - i. A signed application for the current Program Year may be used in place of an Application Update Form as both include all details needed to process a Change of Address, Change of Product or Benefit Return (Change of Vendor).

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## SECTION 14: CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE

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### A. Overview

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

### B. Monthly Reporting

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

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## SECTION 15: APPLICATION PERIOD

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1. For the 2024/2025 Program Year, CAAs will begin taking Applications on **July 22, 2024** and will continue taking Applications through **the last working day of May, 2025**.
2. An individual may submit a new Application if the Household's Application was denied or withdrawn prior to the issuance of a Benefit. The new Application Date must be on or before **the last working day of May, 2025**.

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## SECTION 16: COMPLETING THE APPLICATION

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All questions on the Application must be asked, and responses documented and/or entered in the System of Record. If the Applicant cannot provide the required information, a *Reminder Form*, which clearly states the documentation needed to determine eligibility, must be given to the Applicant and a copy must be retained in the Application file. The signed Application and required documentation must be received by the CAA within twenty (20) business days.

### A. Changes to Application Documents

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

### B. Documentation and Information Requirements

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

#### 1. HEAP Application

The HEAP Application in the System of Record is divided into eight sections: (1) Summary (2) Application Members (3) Dwelling (4) Heating/Cooling Systems (5) Utility Billing Data (6) Income (7) Eligibility (8) Files (9) Case Notes (10) Benefit History and (11) Application History.

#### 2. Applicant and Family Information

- i Always enter the **Applicant first** and then other Household Members.
- i Applicant must be 18 years of age or older or an emancipated minor.

#### 3. Emancipated Minors

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

#### 4. Foster Care Children

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

## 5. POA or Guardian

- i. If a guardian or Power of Attorney completes the Application, the CAA must obtain a copy of the court ordered guardianship documents or the notarized Power of Attorney documents for the file.
  - 1) Durable (Financial) Power of Attorney would be acceptable to complete a HEAP Application.
  - 2) General (Financial) Power of Attorney *may* be acceptable to complete a HEAP Application depending on the language detailed in the document.
  - 3) Medical Power of Attorney documentation cannot be accepted to complete a HEAP Application.
- ii. The CAA must ask the guardian or POA to provide a government-issued photo ID to verify their identity. The CAA should verify that the guardianship or POA documentation matches the Government ID.

## 6. College Students

- iii. If there is a full-time college student, up to age 23 years of age, or more than 23 years of age if permanently and totally disabled, who is a dependent and a member of the Household, they may be excluded from the Household if the Applicant chooses as long as the student is not the Applicant.
- iv. If the Applicant chooses to exclude the college student as a Household Member:
  - 1) Enter a comment in the System of Record documenting the Applicant's decision to exclude the college student and include the student's name. Ex. College student Mary Smith excluded from Household.
  - 2) The Applicant must provide proof of the college student's status and enrollment at a university, vocational college, business college, or other accredited institution for twelve (12) credit hours or more per semester. The intake worker must include the required documentation on the *Reminder Form*.
  - 3) Do not count the excluded college student's income.
  - 4) Do not enter an excluded college student on the Application or in the System of Record.

## 7. Mailing Address

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

## 8. Primary Contact

Enter the primary phone number, alternate phone number, and email address for the Applicant. If the Applicant does not have a telephone number, enter a contact or message phone number in the alternate phone number field and add a comment indicating who the contact person is (name/relationship).

### C. Ownership Type and Ownership Information

1. Select the Household's Ownership Type (Own, Own-Subsidized, Rent, Rent-Subsidized, Rent with Heat included, Rent-Subsidized with heat included, Rent with Heat and Electricity included, Rent -Subsidized with Heat and Electricity included, Rent with Electricity included, Rent-Subsidized with Electricity included, Life Estate, and Roomer.
2. If the Household receives a subsidy towards their rent or mortgage, select the appropriate rent or own Subsidized option.
3. If the Household's heat is included in their rent, select Rent with Heat Included.
4. If the Household's electricity is included in their rent, select Electricity in Rent.
5. If the Household's rent includes both the Heat in Rent and Electricity in Rent, select Rent with heat and Electricity included.

### D. Dwelling Type and Dwelling Information

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

#### 1. Modular Home

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

#### 2. Manufactured Home

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

#### 3. Apartment and Duplex

This housing type includes owner-occupied, multi-unit buildings. If the Applicant indicates a Household Member own the apartment or duplex, self-employment (rental income) documentation must be provided.

### E. Subsidized Housing (Heat Included)

#### 1. \$21 HEAP Benefit

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

## 2. Documentation

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

- Copy of current lease **OR**
- Current electric bill

## F. Subsidized Housing (Heat Not Included)

### 1. Household is responsible for paying all or a portion of their heating costs

- a. Households living in Subsidized Housing who are responsible for their own heat may be eligible for a regular HEAP Benefit that is greater than \$21/year. The HEAP Benefit amount is based on the Household's estimated home heating cost minus subsidy received, or included in the rent/mortgage reduction calculations, to assist with home heating costs. Since the Household has a direct heating cost, their eligibility for the SNAP Standard Utility Allowance (SUA) is NOT contingent on receiving a HEAP Benefit.

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

LIHTC Properties differ from subsidized housing units in that the amount of the tenant's rent is not directly related to their income. While tenants must meet income guidelines, the amount the tenant pays is fixed based on a percentage of the Area Median Income. For more information regarding affordable housing units.

## H. Utility Information

1. Households that are responsible for utilities **must** provide a copy of the most recent utility bill, regardless of whether or not the bill is in a Household Member's name.
2. Service address on utility bill should match service address in the System of Record. If there is a discrepancy, CAA **must** clarify the situation and add comment in the System of Record. **Note:** If bill is marked as "final bill", additional clarifying questions must be asked.
3. Utility Vendor and account information must be entered in the appropriate section of the System of Record.

## I. Dwelling Not Permanently Connected to or Serviced by Utility

If the dwelling is not permanently connected to or serviced by the required utilities (*i.e.*, water and electricity) The CAA must obtain documentation to substantiate the Household occupies the dwelling as its primary residence on a full-time/year-round basis.

The following guidelines pertain to dwelling units that are not permanently connected to the required utilities, or if the required utilities have been disconnected or are non-functioning.

1. The CAA needs to understand the Household's housing/dwelling situation and fully document the Application file and the System of Record accordingly. The System of Record and the Application file must include documentation and comments describing the situation. The following provides guidance on how to validate the legitimacy of the dwelling unit and determine eligibility Benefits.

2. The CAA may need to obtain more information depending on the situation or if the information provided is inconsistent or requires further clarification.
  - a. Tax bill and information from the town office, rental agreement, or Landlord Affidavit.
    - i. What is the dwelling type? Is it a Camper? Is it a seasonal camp?
    - ii. Does the tax bill or rental agreement indicate there is a dwelling/building on the property?
    - iii. Additional information from the town office about the situation.
  - b. How is the dwelling being heated?
    - i. Home Energy vendor transaction reports showing Home Energy use/deliveries/purchases for previous twelve (12) months.
    - ii. Does usage seem reasonable and indicate that the Household has used/is using the dwelling as their primary residence on a full-time/year-round basis?
  - c. What if any utilities are in service (*i.e.*, electricity, natural gas, and water/sewer)?
    - i. Copies of utility bills showing usage history for prior and current Heating Season.

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- ii. Does usage seem reasonable and indicate that the Household has used/is using the dwelling as their primary residence on a full-time/year-round basis?
- d. Pictures of home, generator or solar energy sources may be needed only if items 1 and 2 above cannot be obtained or do not fully substantiate the legitimacy of the dwelling.

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

## J. Heating Systems

1. Heating System information is entered into the System of Record for the purposes of:
  - a. Verifying the existence of a functioning Heating System (functioning means “working well” or “not working well”); and
  - b. Documenting all Heating Systems that are permanently installed in the Dwelling Unit and their condition/usage, and priority (*i.e.*, primary, secondary, second backup or third backup).
  - c. HEAP eligibility is contingent on the Dwelling Unit having a permanently installed and functioning Heating System. The intention of this requirement is two-fold:
    - i. Validating the Dwelling Unit is a legitimate full-time residence; and
    - ii. Ensuring the Benefit can/will be used for its intended purpose, to supply a Heating System that is permanently installed.

**NOTE:** If CAA becomes aware of a Household’s tank being in poor condition, CAA should ask additional questions and refer for CHIP services.

2. All permanently installed Heating Systems must be entered into the System of Record regardless of condition, heating capacity, or Household Member’s medical condition. *Examples*, (i) if a Household has a permanently installed wood stove or monitor heater, it would be entered in the System of Record regardless of its heating capacity/adequacy. The wood stove or monitor heater would meet the intent of and requirements for HEAP eligibility even if its capacity is insufficient to heat the entire Dwelling Unit; (ii) if Household has a wood stove and a member has a medical condition that prohibits the use of the stove, the stove must still be listed on the Application
3. Portable heating devices should not be entered in the System of Record. If the only source of heat is a portable device, the Household is not eligible for Fuel Assistance or ECIP. In such cases, the Application can be certified for “CHIP Only” if the Household meets all eligibility criteria for HEAP, except working Heating System.
4. When/if a Household is referred for CHIP services, CAA housing staff would need to assess the heating situation in the Dwelling Unit in order to verify eligibility and priority for CHIP.

## 5. Heating System Priority

When designating Heating System priority, consider the following:

### a. Multiple Heating Systems

- i. If there is more than one Heating System, the Applicant and CAA need to determine which Heating System the Household uses most.
- ii. If a Household uses two Heating Systems equally and both are working, designation of the Primary Heating System should be based on annual fuel cost (as declared by the Applicant). The Heating System with the highest total (annual) fuel cost would be designated as the Primary Heating System.
- iii. If a Household resides in subsidized housing, the primary heating system listed must match the system for which the household receives the utility allowance.

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

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

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

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

### b. Inoperable Heating Systems

A Heating System that is “Not Working” cannot be designated as the Primary Heating System if there is another Heating System that is “Working” or “Not Working Well”, regardless of capacity to adequately heat the Dwelling.

***Example 1: Household's only Heating System, an oil furnace, is “Not Working”:***

There are no other permanently installed Heating Systems in the Dwelling. The oil Heating System must be designated as the Primary Heating System. The Household is not eligible to receive a Fuel Assistance Benefit. *See [Section 26: CHIP Only Certification](#).*

**Example 2: Household has two permanently installed Heating Systems, an oil furnace and a LP gas heater.**

The oil furnace is “Not Working”. The LP gas heater is working and must be designated as the Primary Heating System.

**Example 3: Household has two permanently installed Heating Systems, an oil furnace and a wood stove:**

The oil furnace is “Not Working” because the Household electric service has been disconnected. The wood stove must be designated as the Primary Heating System.

### c. Entering Heating Systems in the System of Record

Indicate/select the following for each Heating System:

1. *System and Fuel Type:* Choose the appropriate Heating System and corresponding Fuel Type. If Applicant indicates they have electric heat, CAA should verify that it is not a portable space heater. A portable space heater is not considered a Heating System.
2. *Priority:* Select the applicable priority from the dropdown list – e.g. primary, secondary, second backup, or third backup.
3. *Condition:* Working Well, Not Working Well, or Not Working. It is important to accurately document the condition as it will determine the Household’s eligibility for Fuel Assistance, ECIP, and CHIP. If the Household does not have a working Heating System, refer to [Section 26: CHIP Only Certification](#).

### d. Requested Fuel Type

4. Based on identified working Heating Systems, Applicant selects fuel type for which they want their benefit to be determined on and benefit issued to. If Household has a kerosene Heating System (outside tank), oil cannot be a requested fuel type.
5. Households living in subsidized housing who receive a fuel subsidy allowance (utility allowance), the requested fuel type for benefit determination must be the same as the fuel type for which the Household receives the Utility Allowance.
6. Applicants cannot select a fuel type for benefit determination for a non-working Heating System.

## K. Energy Vendors

### 1. Requested Fuel Type Vendor

Indicate the following for the Requested Fuel Type:

- a. Fuel Vendor Name: Choose the Vendor corresponding fuel type.

- b. *Account Number*: Enter the Household’s account number (Household must have an established account with the vendor in order for a benefit to be issued).
- c. *First Name, Last Name*: Enter the name of the account holder OR check the “Same as Applicant” box, if the account is in the Applicant’s name. Household Member’s name must be on the fuel vendor account for the requested fuel type in order for the benefit to be issued to the vendor.

## 2. Electricity Vendor

Indicate the following for the electricity Vendor:

- a. *Fuel Vendor Name*: Choose the Vendor and corresponding fuel type
- b. *Account Number*: Enter the Household’s account number
- c. If the requested fuel type is electricity, a Household Member’s name must be on the electricity vendor account in order for the benefit to be issued to the vendor.

## 3. Rent With Heat Included

Benefit can be issued to:

- a. Applicant (direct check); or
- b. Electricity Vendor if the account is in a Household Member’s name (upon the request of the Applicant and note must be entered in Comments section of the System of Record).

## L. Direct Check Information

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

- 1. *Fuel Vendor Name*: Choose the Vendor and corresponding fuel type.
- 2. *Account Number*: Enter 0 as the Households account number.

## M. Income Verification Time Period

Household income is based on the prior 28 calendar days.

**NOTE:** Household Members who are self-employed must submit a copy of their federal tax return for the most recent calendar year if filed as outlined in Section 23- Countable Income or complete a *Self-Employment Worksheet*.

## N. Signatures

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

## O. Income Documentation (Proof of Income)

1. Applicant must provide documentation of all Household Income. Lack of proof will result in denial of services.
2. Categorical Income Eligibility. Household Members who are included on a Maine DHHS Notice of Decision for TANF or SNAP assistance will have Categorical Income Eligibility for HEAP. Household Members who are considered Categorically Income Eligible must provide income amounts, but do not need to provide income documentation.

If all members of a Household have Categorical Income Eligibility the Household may have their income determined at a pre-established percentage of the federal poverty level (0- 25% FPL for TANF, and 101-125% of FPL for SNAP) or using actual vetted income if provided by Maine DHHS.

Household Members who are not included on the Notice of Decision are **not** considered Categorically Income Eligible and **must** provide income documentation as outlined in the Rule and HEAP Handbook.

If documentation of receiving TANF or SNAP assistance is not provided by the Applicant and the Application is certified eligible using the Household's actual or vetted income, the Household cannot then submit the missing TANF or SNAP documentation for the Application to be updated in order to receive a higher benefit.

If Household does not provide proof of TANF or SNAP assistance or income documentation, the application will be denied, and the Applicant will have 15 business days to submit the missing documentation.

3. CAA reviews the proof of income the Applicant has provided and will check the Income verification check box in the system of record.
4. **Benefits paid by the Social Security Administration:** Specify the type of benefits (ex. social security/SSD, SSI, or SSI-State).
5. If the Applicant provided all income information and proof of income for the Household:
  - a. Enter CAAs are required to enter the *income* for all Household Members 18 years or older in the system of record.
  - b. Upload all proof to the system of record.
6. Fill out the *Self-Employment Worksheet* and upload to the system of record if there is missing or additional information or proof required:
  - a. Fill out the *Reminder Form*. Indicate what information is needed and the date it must be submitted by. For in-person intake, make sure the Applicant signs the *Reminder Form*. The intake/outreach worker must always sign the *Reminder Form*. For all Application intake types, give the Applicant one signed copy and attach a copy to the Application file.

**NOTE:** Indicate specific paid dates for which income documentation must be provided.

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## SECTION 17: SUBSIDIZED HOUSING WITH HEAT INCLUDED PROCESS

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

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

**NOTE:** The electricity account is not required to be in a Household Member's name; however, a copy of the bill must still be submitted if the Household is responsible for payment.

2. Households residing in Subsidized Housing with heat included are NOT required to provide income documentation. However, all other documentation (*i.e.*, *Permission to Share Information* form, SSN, Citizenship, Identity Documentation, current lease or copy of current electric bill, and other pertinent documentation) must be in the file.

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

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

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## **SECTION 18: APPLICATION PROCESS TELEPHONE APPLICATION PROCESS**

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

## PROCESSING TELEPHONE APPLICATIONS

1. The Application, signed by the Applicant, must be received by the CAA within twenty (20) business days of the date of the telephone interview.
2. Applications must be Denied in the System of Record if the signed Application is not received within twenty (20) business days of the date of the telephone interview. The CAA must enter a comment in the System of Record when an Application is Denied.
3. The CAA must date stamp the Application and all documents upon receipt.
  - a. Application Received Date is the date the CAA received the signed Application.
  - b. The new Date of Application must be entered in the System of Record. The System of Record records the Application Date in the Application History and the applied date. CAAs should change the applied date in the System of Record to the actual date the signed Application is received and maintain the Application Date to reflect the actual date the Application was taken on. Following this process will ensure that both dates are captured and reflected in the System of Record system.
  - c. If required documentation is received after the twenty (20) business day period but is postmarked within the twenty (20) business day timeframe CAAs should accept the documentation. CAAs should scan the envelope (showing postmark) into the System of Record.

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

- *Confirm their receipt of the Application packet.*
- *Offer assistance and answer any questions they may have.*
- *Remind them of the deadline and encourage them to sign/date the Application and return it within the 20 business day deadline (even if they are missing supporting documentation).*
- ***Capture/document follow-up calls in comments section.***

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## SECTION 19: INCOME

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HEAP is an income-based program; therefore, it is important to ensure all sources of income and support have been captured and entered properly in the application software system. Income figures must match what is shown on related income documentation and cannot be rounded with the exception of adding COLA to benefits paid by the Social Security Administration which will always round down to nearest dollar.

1. It is the responsibility of the Applicant to provide documentation of all Household income.
  - a. If the Applicant is unable to provide adequate proof of income, the CAA will assist the Applicant(s) in understanding the documentation that is required.
  - b. Lack of proof may cause the Application to be denied.
  
2. 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 Categorically 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 the Rule and the HEAP Handbook
  - a. Household Members who are considered Categorically Income Eligible must provide income amounts but are not required to provide other income documentation.
  - b. If all members of a Household have Categorical Income Eligibility the Household may have their income determined at a pre-established percentage (0- 25% of federal poverty level (FPL) for TANF, and 101-125% of FPL for SNAP) or using actual vetted income if provided by Maine DHHS.
  - c. Household Members who are not included on the Notice of Decision are not considered Categorically Income Eligible and must provide income documentation as outlined in the Rule and HEAP Handbook.
  - d. If documentation of receiving TANF or SNAP assistance is not provided by the Applicant, the Applicant must provide income documentation as outlined in this section.
  - e. If documentation of receiving TANF or SNAP assistance is not provided by the Applicant and the Application is certified eligible using the Household’s actual or vetted income, the Household cannot then submit the missing TANF or SNAP documentation for the Application to be updated in order to receive a higher benefit.
  - f. If Household does not provide proof of TANF or SNAP assistance or income documentation, the application will be denied, and the Applicant will have 15 business days to submit the missing documentation.

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## SECTION 20: EXEMPTIONS FROM HOUSEHOLD INCOME

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

**NOTE:** See Section 3(C) of the Rule for a complete list of income exemptions, including those federal payments and benefits excluded by law.

1. Adoption assistance. Financial assistance and medical coverage granted to an adoptive family to offset the short- and long-term costs of adopting an eligible child.
2. Assets drawn down from financial institutions provided the source of funds is not countable income. If the source of funds is countable income that was received during the income verification period, the amount withdrawn would be included in Household income.
3. All income used to fulfill a Social Security Administration Program to Achieve Self-Sufficiency (PASS).
4. Any funds received for education from grants, loans, scholarships, and work study.
5. Bank loans, private loans, reverse mortgages, home equity loans.
6. Capital gains (except for business purposes).
7. Combat zone pay to the military.
8. Credit card loans/advances.
9. Federal payments or benefits excluded by law as set forth in Section 3.C.u. of the Rule.
10. Foster Care payments. Types of foster care: Family Foster Care, Special Rate Foster Care, Family Shelter Care, Relative Foster Care, and Independent Living Program.
11. Income earned by a full-time college student who is not counted as a Household Member.
12. Income earned by an Applicant who is a full-time high school student will be excluded from the Household's income. If an Applicant is an emancipated minor, then that emancipated person is considered an adult, has his/her own household, and income is counted.
13. Income from the sale of a primary residence or personal car, or other personal property.
14. In-kind payments. In-kind payments to an Applicant in lieu of payment for work, including the imputed value of rent received in lieu of wages or items received in barter for rent.
15. Non-cash income such as General Assistance voucher payments, the bonus value of food and fuel produced and consumed on farms, and the imputed value of rent from owner-occupied farm housing.
16. One-time compensation for injury or retroactive compensation for injury.
17. One-time insurance payments.

18. Reimbursement for expenses incurred in connection with employment.
19. Reimbursement for medical expenses.
20. Retroactive payments and overpayment adjustments from an entitlement program for a time period outside of the period being considered for HEAP eligibility (*i.e.*, Social Security Benefits, etc.).
21. TANF.
22. Tax refunds
23. (Tribal) Eligible Band Member General Welfare Assistance Program funds.

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## SECTION 21: COUNTABLE INCOME

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

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

<i>Example:</i>		
<b>Application Date = 08/29/2024</b>		
<b>Income Verification Period = 08/01/2024 to 08/28/2024</b>		
YTD gross - 08/27/2024 paystub		\$10,000
Minus YTD gross - 08/06/2024 paystub	-	\$9,000
Subtotal	=	\$1,000
Add the gross amount paid on 08/06/2024	+	\$300
Total Wages for Income Verification Period	=	\$1,300

3. If the paystubs do not show YTD amounts, calculate income as follows: add all actual gross pay received for all weeks during the income verification period.
4. One of the following must be included in the Application file:
  - a. copy of **all** paystubs for the income verification period;
  - b. copy of first and last paystubs for the income verification period showing YTD amounts;  
or
  - c. signed letter from Applicant's employer confirming the gross wages received during the income verification period.

### B. Self-Employment Income

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

- a. When documented by a Federal tax return and the applicable schedules, self-employment income is defined as the total of net income (including net rental income) plus the total net gain from sales of capital goods or equipment.
- b. For the Household to use the income verification period, self-employment income for the last twelve (12) months or annual income from tax return will be prorated.
- c. Self-employed Applicants must provide a Federal tax return (Form 1040) and Schedule 1 for the most recent calendar year if filed.

Most recent is defined as a tax return that was filed by April 15 of the current year. When the Application Date is between January 1 and April 15, 2025, the 2023 tax return would be acceptable only if the Applicant has not filed their 2024 tax return.

- i The tax return must be signed and have been submitted to the IRS. Electronically filed returns must be accompanied by Form 8879 (IRS e-file Signature Authorization) to demonstrate that the return was submitted to the IRS.
  - ii If the Applicant has not filed a tax return for the most recent calendar year as identified above, the applicant will need to complete a *Self-Employment Worksheet* and provide supporting documentation.
- d. If the tax form shows a loss (negative amount) zero income will be used. Negative amounts cannot be used to reduce overall Household income.
- e. If a person has two or more businesses and one business shows a profit and another shows a loss, use the amount of the profit and use zero in place of the loss. The loss cannot be deducted from the overall profit.

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

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

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

Documentation Required/Provided

- Mary: Paystubs used to verify prior 28 calendar days wages totaling \$990.00.
- Bill: Recently filed income tax return with the appropriate schedules shows total net (self-employment) earnings of \$7,000 (total net income plus the total net gain from sales of capital goods or equipment). Bill's self-employment income for the one (1) month income verification period is calculated by dividing the total gross earnings by twelve (12).  

$$\mathbf{\$7,000.00/12 = \$583.33}$$

The Jones' total Household income for income verification period equals Mary's wages plus Bill's self-employment income.

$$\mathbf{\$990.00 + \$583.33 = \$1,573.33}$$

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

- Henry: Paystubs used to verify prior 28 calendar days wages totaling **\$500.00**
- Susan: Recently filed income tax return with appropriate schedules shows total net (self-employment) earnings of \$7,800.00 (total net income plus the total net gain from sales of capital goods or equipment). Susan's total self-employment income for the income verification period is calculated by dividing the total gross earnings by twelve (12).  **$\$7,800/12 = \$650.00$**

The Brown's total Household income for income verification period equals Henry's wages plus Susan's self-employment earnings.

$$\$500.00 + \$650.00 = \$1,150.00$$

**C. Contract Income**

**D. Payment from Mortgage or Sales Contract**

**E. Unemployment Insurance and Worker's Compensation Benefits**

If an Applicant received unemployment benefits during the income verification period, the Applicant must provide the CAA with a Department of Labor benefit history report/transcript. Instructions for Applicants who need to obtain a DOL benefit history/transcript are available at <http://www.maine.gov/reemploye>.

**F. Strike Pay**

Check stubs or statements from the union.

**G. Benefits paid by the Social Security Administration: Social Security Retirement (SS), Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Income (SSDI).**

1. For first year or non-consecutive year applicants, the CAA must use the current or previous year's SSA award letter. The CAA may need to calculate the award amount by adding or subtracting any Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) that would or would not apply to the income verification period for HEAP.



<i>Examples of award letters used to verify SS, SSI, SSDI:</i>	
Application Date	Acceptable Award Letters
February 1, 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2025 (no adjustment needed)</li> <li>• 2024 (calculate 2025 award amount by adding 2025 COLA increase)</li> </ul>

2. For returning applicants, the SSA award letter does not have to be for the current or previous year. The CAA can calculate the award amount by adding or subtracting any COLA to an existing SSA award letter on file.
  - a. In some cases, the CAA may be able to use the Applicant's current 1099 tax form if it represents a full twelve (12) months.
  - b. For informational purposes, the following are some facts about SSI. Additional information about SSI can be obtained from <http://www.ssa.gov/ssi/text-eligibility-ussi.htm>.
    - i. "SSI" means Supplemental Security Income. SSI pays monthly checks to persons who are aged, disabled, or blind and who have limited assets or income. It is a federal income supplement program run by Social Security. Funding for SSI comes from general tax revenues, not Social Security taxes.
    - ii. The following persons may be eligible for SSI benefits provided they meet eligibility requirements such as income and resources:
      - 1) A person who is age 65 or older.
      - 2) A person who is age 18 or older and has a physical or mental disability, that is expected to keep the person from working for at least 12 months or is expected to result in death.
      - 3) A child who is below age 18 and has a physical or mental disability that would keep an adult from working, is expected to continue for at least 12 months, or is expected to result in death.
      - 4) A person of any age who is blind. A person is blind if the person has 20/200 vision or worse or has a limited visual field of 20 degrees or less in the better eye with the use of eyeglasses. If a person's sight is not poor enough to be considered blindness, the person may still be eligible for SSI as a person with a disability.
    - iii. Household income may cause SSI benefits to fluctuate month to month.
    - iv. State SSI payment provides cash payments to aged, blind, or disabled people who get SSI, or would be eligible for SSI except for income or due to citizenship rules.
  - c. In addition to above, the following persons may be eligible for SSI benefits:
    - i. A citizen or national of the United States; or

- ii. A non-citizen who meets the alien eligibility criteria under the 1996 Legislation and its amendments.
  - iii. Non-citizens must meet two requirements to be eligible for SSI: non-citizen must be in a qualified alien category; and meet a condition that allows qualified aliens to get SSI benefits.
- d. For more information:

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

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

## H. Retirement and Pensions

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

## I. Cash Gifts

Cash support received by the Household is included as income.

## J. One-time Lump Sum Payments

Including but not limited to:

- a. Rebates or credits
- b. Winnings from lotteries
- c. Refund deposits

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

## K. Jury Duty Compensation

## L. Rental Income

Rental income is categorized as self-employment income. Either the Income Tax Form 1040 and Schedule 1, or the *Self-Employment Worksheet* will be used to document rental income. If the Applicant is using the *Self-Employment Worksheet* to document rental income, the gross amount of rental income received must be counted, no deductions are allowed. See [Section 23 \(H\): Countable Income, Self-Employment Income](#).

## M. Alimony or Mortgage/Rent Payments (in lieu of or in addition to support payments)

Calculate the amount received during the income verification period. Alimony income is a self-attestation.

**N. Child Support or Mortgage/Rent Payments (in lieu of or in addition to support payments)**

Calculate the amount received during the income verification period. Child Support income is a self-attestation.

**O. Interest, Dividends, Estates, Trusts and Royalties**

1. Interest income generated by savings accounts, CDs, and other investments that pay some form of interest. All interest earned during the income verification period must be counted as income.
2. Interest from the direct sale of property pursuant to which the Applicant(s) receives a regular direct payment from the buyer must be counted as income. The Applicant(s) must provide a copy of the agreement/contract.
3. Income from dividends, estates, trusts and royalties.

**P. Veterans Administration (VA) Benefits**

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

**Q. Income of person living in the Household who is an uncounted Household Member and 18 years of age or older.**

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## SECTION 22: CERTIFICATION

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

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

the date they spoke with the Applicant and received verification from and the consent of the Applicant to make the change.

8. The information contained below highlights some key considerations the certifier should take into account when reviewing/certifying the Application file.

#### A. Certifier Review and Verification Process

1. **Application:** Complete, signed and dated.
2. **Permission to Share Information Form:** Certifier must review the form and verify all Applicants 18 years or older have signed the form with no additional comments added that would negate permission.
3. Verify that the Requested Fuel Type is compatible with an identified working Heating System.
4. If the oil/kerosene system fuel tank is in a heated space, the Fuel Type should be oil.

If the oil/kerosene system fuel tank is outside, the Fuel Type **must** be kerosene.

If the oil/kerosene system fuel tank is in an unheated space, the recommended Fuel Type is kerosene.

To be considered a heated space, the source of heat must be permanently installed. A tank that is located in an unheated basement but has the Heating System located near it would be considered a heated space. If the space or building is heated solely by portable heating devices such as space heaters or lights/lamps, it would be considered an unheated space or building.

5. **Roomer:** By definition, there must not be more than 2 rooms listed, and all utilities must be included. Landlord and Roomer cannot comingle any expenses or funds.
6. **College Students:** If the Primary Applicant chose to exclude a college student as a Household Member, the certifier will ensure the file contains the required proof of student status and enrollment at a university, vocational college, business college, or other accredited institution for twelve (12) credit hours or more per semester.

#### B. Income

HEAP is an income-based program. Therefore, when reviewing an Application for certification, it is critical that the certifier carefully review and verify income.

If a Household reports zero or minimal income, documentation of how the Household is meeting their basic living expenses is not required.

Court ordered child support paid by an Applicant

- i. For any Applicant who pays court ordered child support, the CAA will deduct documented child support payments made during the income verification period from the Applicant's gross income. The Applicant must provide a copy of the court order and proof of the amounts paid during the income verification period.
- ii. The following guidelines pertain to self-employed Applicants who paid court ordered

child support during the income verification period:

- 1) If self-employment income is documented by a Self-Employment Worksheet, the amount of child support payments made shall be deducted from the Applicant's gross self-employment earnings.
- 2) If self-employment income is documented by a **Federal tax return**, the amount of child support payments shall be deducted from the net profits. The maximum allowable deduction for child support shall be less than or equal to the amount of any net profits.

***Example:***

- Self-employed Applicant's net profit for income verification period is \$500.00.
- Self-employed Applicant made child support payments during income verification period in the amount of \$600.00.
- The maximum allowable deduction for child support is \$500.00.
- Applicant's self-employment income recorded in the System of Record as \$0.

### **C. Over Income Applications (Medical Deductions)**

The CAA shall deduct any paid and documented medical expenses, **not** reimbursed by insurance or other organizations, for the income verification period for monthly income OR the 12-calendar month period prior to the Application Date. Only deduct enough expenses to make the Household eligible. The CAA will deduct only enough expenses to put the Household \$1.00 below the maximum income bracket. All documentation must be provided in order to deduct any allowable expenses.

#### **1. Allowable Deductions**

- a. Deductible medical expenses (paid) may include, but are not limited to, hospital and doctor bills, medical or dental insurance premiums, prescription drugs, and the cost of

transportation to and from medical care providers. For complete listing, refer to the IRS Publication 502 medical deduction inclusion- <https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p502.pdf>

- b. Documentation of hospital or doctor's appointments may be used as proof of medical transportation expenses. If the Applicant is unable to provide actual costs, the CAA may use the current MaineCare reimbursement rate per mile to calculate deductible transportation costs. The MaineCare rates can be found at <http://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/rules/10/ch101.htm> (Ch. II – Section 113 Non-Emergency Transportation Services).

## 2. Unallowable Deductions

- b. Refer to the IRS Publication 502 medical deduction exclusions - <https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p502.pdf>. Per IRS guidelines, medical marijuana is a violation of federal law and not an allowable medical deduction (even if legalized by the state).
- c. Household's that provide a previous year's SS Award Letter as income verification must provide the current year's SS Award Letter in order to deduct medical expenses listed on the document.

## D. Landlord Requires Applicant/Tenant Use Specific Vendor

If Household is responsible for heat and Landlord requires that a specific vendor must be used, the Primary Applicant must provide documentation to substantiate the situation and CAA must make related notes in the comment section of the System of Record and upload related documentation.

### 1. Participating Vendor

The Benefit will be issued as a direct check if:

- a. Household resides in a Dwelling Unit that shares a tank or meter for Home Energy with another Dwelling Unit; or
- b. Household Member's name is not on the Home Energy account.

The Benefit will be issued to the Vendor if:

- a. tank/meter supplies Home Energy to the Household's Dwelling Unit only; and
- b. Household Member's name is on the Home Energy account.

### 2. Non-Participating Vendor

- c. If the Landlord requires that a non-participating vendor be used a direct check will be issued. The CAA will need to verify the following before the Application can be certified eligible:

- i. Verify Household’s responsibility for Home Energy;
  - ii. Verify name of the Vendor;
  - iii. Verify vendor has an account with the Household’s physical address as the delivery location; and
  - iv. Obtain any other information as necessary for verification.
- d. The following are suggested approaches for obtaining the above information:
- i. Have the landlord provide a written statement; or
  - ii. Verbally confirm the information with the landlord and document details of the conversation in the System of Record.

**E. Direct Check Vendor**

1. The System of Record will not allow an Application to be certified without vendor information in the Vendor and Consumption section. This includes issuing all Direct Checks (including \$21.00 benefits) to Applicants.
2. To issue a Direct Check:
  - a. CAA must enter the actual requested Fuel Type for the Household.
  - b. CAA will select the “Direct Check Vendor” that corresponds to the requested Fuel Type. Once Vendor is selected, enter the following:
    - i. *Fuel Vendor Name*: Choose the Vendor and corresponding fuel type
    - ii. *Account Number*: Enter 0 as the Households account number.
3. CAA must enter comments in the System of Record to validate issuing a Direct Check to the Applicant.
4. CAA will certify the Application.

**F. No Working Heating System**

**1. CHIP Only**

- a. If an Application is complete, all applicable documentation has been provided, the Household is determined income eligible, and they do not have any working heating system(s) the Application must be certified for “CHIP Only”. See Section 26-CHIP Only Certification- non working Heating System.
- b. If upon Qualifying in the System of Record, the only error message received is regarding the non-working Heating System, select the CHIP Only Denied reason and document the reason for the non-working Heating System in the System of Record comments.



**NOTE:** If other error messages are received when the Application is “Qualified”, the Household may not be CHIP eligible. Research reason for error message and take applicable follow-up steps.

## 2. No Electrical Service

Household has no electrical service; therefore, does not have a working Heating System:

- c. If the lack of a functioning Heating System is due to a lack of electricity, the Household is not eligible to receive a Fuel Assistance Benefit.
- d. If the CAA determines the Household meets all other HEAP-eligibility requirements (except for not having a working Heating System), the CAA should consider using private funds, if available, to restore electrical service.
- e. If Application is taken during ECIP timeframe, CAA may explore using ECIP funds for the utility disconnect. In order for the Application to be certified eligible and use ECIP funds for a utility disconnect, CAA must be able to remedy the disconnect and restore power either by using ECIP funds or a combination of ECIP funds and non-HEAP funds.
- f. If utility service is restored within fifteen (15) business days of the denial notification, the CAA will proceed as follows:
  - i. Update Application, as needed.
  - ii. Enter a comment in System of Record (ex. utility service restored; oil furnace is working as of 01/10/24).
  - iii. Recertify Application.

## G. Household Moves Prior to Certification

1. If all Applicants **move to Subsidized Housing with heat included or an ineligible Dwelling Unit** prior to certification, the Household may not be eligible for the entire Benefit.
2. CAA will notify MaineHousing of the date of the move prior to certifying the Application based on the Household’s situation on the Application Date. MaineHousing will determine what (if any) portion of the Benefit the Applicant is entitled to. MaineHousing will prorate the Benefit amount and issue the payment accordingly.
3. If all Applicants **move to an eligible Dwelling Unit** prior to certification.
  - a. CAA will certify based on the information provided on the.
  - b. The HEAP Application Update form must be completed.
  - c. Current Application and the prior year Application must be updated in the System of Record. Follow all instructions for the HEAP Application Update form.

- d. Document any changes in the System of Record comments.

## H. Certification and Benefit Notification

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

### 1. Upfront Requests to Vendors (Non-Emergency)

If the CAA is made aware that it is in the Household's best interest to complete an Upfront Delivery Request for a non-emergency situation (e.g., vendor has limited delivery in service area), the CAA must take the following steps prior to submitting the Upfront Delivery Request Form to the Vendor:

- a. Certify the Application.
- b. Contact and verify with the Vendor, if there are any HEAP, Supplemental or TANF Credits available. If so, these must be used or in conjunction with the *Upfront Delivery Request* form.
- c. Verify with the Vendor when the next scheduled delivery date is to ensure that the delivery will meet the purpose of doing a non-emergency Upfront request.
- d. Complete *Upfront Delivery Request* Form per the instructions.
- e. Send the Upfront request to the Vendor.
- f. Upload the Upfront request to the Applicant's Application.
- g. Enter a comment in the System of Record about the Upfront request.

### 2. Benefit Notifications

MaineHousing mails all benefit notifications.

- h. Benefit notifications are mailed to Applicants on the Tuesday after the Benefit has been issued/paid to the Vendor.
- i. For benefits paid as direct checks, both the check and benefit notification letter will be mailed to Applicants on Thursdays.

### 3. Denial Notification

- j. Original denial notification must be mailed to the Applicant within three business days of the date of the denial.
- k. A copy must remain in the file. The denied Application **must be uploaded** into the System of Record.
- l. **Lack of Documentation:** list all documents needed.

If an Application has been denied, the Applicant has fifteen (15) business days to submit missing documentation, information, or documentation of medical expenses (if over

income). If documentation/information is received within the required timeframe, CAAs may complete a Denial Reversal in order to put the Application back into a pending status in order to make updates/corrections to and recertify the Application.

#### NOTES:

- **DO NOT**, for any reason, issue a Reminder form that would extend the allowable time period beyond the thirty (30) business days to certify. If the CAA overlooked needed documentation, the Application would still be denied, as the Applicant(s) will have fifteen (15) business days to supply the documentation.
- If missing documentation is received after the fifteen (15) business day period but is postmarked within the fifteen (15) business day timeframe CAAs should accept the documentation. CAAs should scan the envelope (showing postmark) into the System of Record.

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## SECTION 23: LOW INCOME ASSISTANCE PLAN (LIAP)

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Eligibility for LIAP is contingent on a Household being HEAP eligible. **Certification for LIAP does not mean the Household is eligible to receive a LIAP benefit**, but that they are HEAP eligible and interested in participating in the utility’s LIAP program. Each utility company has additional criteria that the Applicant must meet to receive a LIAP benefit.

Every Friday MaineHousing sends each electricity Vendor a LIAP report listing those Households that have been certified eligible. This report includes the following information:

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

All Applications should be certified for LIAP provided the Applicant requests LIAP and the electric account is in a Household Member’s name. The electricity Vendor will not issue a LIAP benefit to a Household unless the Household is listed on the LIAP report. If the CAA can obtain written confirmation from the utility Vendor that the Applicant is an authorized user on the account, they may request LIAP.

CAAs must ensure that the name on the utility bill or authorized user confirmation matches what is entered into the System of Record in the Vendor and Consumption section.

***Note:** LIAP is the acronym used to describe the state-wide plan. With the exception of Central Maine Power, all MaineHousing contracted electricity providers call their low- income assistance program LIAP. Central Maine Power refers to their program as the Electricity Lifeline Program or ELP.*

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

1. HEAP Application status must be “Certified Eligible-Payable ”; and
2. “Request LIAP/ELP” box must be checked”; and
3. The correct Utility Vendor and account number is entered into the System of Record.

### B. Electric Account Not in a Household Member’s Name

1. HEAP eligibility is determined on the basis of the Household’s information/circumstances on the Application Date. If on the Application Date, the electric account is not in a Household Member’s name, they may be certified eligible for HEAP, but **not** LIAP. In these situations, **do not** check the “Request LIAP/ELP” box.
2. If the electricity account is subsequently placed in a Household Member’s name, the Primary Applicant will inform the CAA of the situation and will provide the CAA with backup documentation. The CAA will change the account information and check the “Request LIAP/ELP” box in the System of Record. The succeeding System of Record LIAP enrollment file that is sent to utility providers will reflect the change.

### C. Subsidized Housing

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

**NOTE:** Checking the “Request LIAP/ELP” on the System of Record Application serves two important functions:

1. If eligible, the client will be enrolled in the LIAP program; and
2. Regardless of LIAP eligibility, the utility company will be notified that the Applicant was determined HEAP eligible. Without this notification, the Applicant may have difficulty accessing other low income assistance programs such as AMP (Arrearage Management Program).

#### SUBSIDIZED HOUSING GUIDANCE

If the Applicant provides the CAA with a physician’s note: The CAA will follow the standard process for confirming oxygen/ventilator use with the electricity vendor – ex. enter information into CMP/ELP system.

If the Household does not use oxygen/ventilator or does not provide a physician’s note: The CAA will check the “Request LIAP/ELP” box provided the Household meets all of the above-mentioned criteria. In such cases, the electricity Vendor will do the eligibility check for Subsidized and Subsidized with heat Households – i.e. Household will need to provide physician’s note to electricity Vendor to verify use of oxygen or ventilator.

**NOTE:** CAA’s must leave a comment in the System of Record after a client has been entered in the CMP ELP Portal

*Example: ELP entered on MM/DD/YY*

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## SECTION 24: CHIP ONLY CERTIFICATION NO WORKING HEATING SYSTEM

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### A. No Working Heating System

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

***TIP:** If the Household has a Heating System that is operating in any capacity (“working well” or “not working well”), the Application cannot be certified denied as “CHIP Only”.*

**NOTE:** The Applicant must comply with all HEAP Rules, and apply **no later than the last working day of May 2025.**

### B. CHIP Only Certification

1. Complete the following in the System of Record to certify an Application as “CHIP Only”:
  - a. Review all Application information.
  - b. Click the “Qualify” button on the Benefits tab.
  - c. If the only error message received is regarding the non-working Heating System, select the CHIP Only Denial Reason.
  - d. Document the reason for non-working Heating System in comments.
2. The Application will remain denied until the Heating System is replaced/repaired through CHIP or by the Household. The no heat situation should be referred to the CAA’s CHIP Department.
3. If a “CHIP Only” Application is taken on **the last working day of May, 2025** and denied due to any other reason than a non-working heating system, the Applicant will be afforded time allowances as documented on the *Reminder Form* and a denial letter to provide the required information/documentation. If the Applicant meets the requirements in the allotted time frame, CAA will request a denial reversal and certify as “CHIP Only”.
4. The Household would not be eligible for a PY 2025 Benefit if the repair/replacement was completed on or after **June 1, 2025**. The Household did not have a working system prior to the end date of the Application period.

**NOTE:** If the CAA becomes aware that a Vendor will not deliver product to a client due to fuel tank code issues, the CAA should note the situation in the Comments section of the System of Record, email [liheap@mainehousing.org](mailto:liheap@mainehousing.org) and inform the CAA’s CHIP Department. CAAs should not process a benefit return to request funds be issued to a different vendor that will deliver to a tank with code issues.

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## SECTION 25: DENIAL REVERSALS

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If an Application has been denied, the Applicant has fifteen (15) business days to submit missing documentation, information, or documentation of medical expenses (if over income). If documentation/information is received within the required timeframe, CAAs may complete a Denial Reversal in order to put the Application back into a pending status in order to make updates/corrections to and recertify the Application.

### A. Common reasons for Denial Reversal:

1. Missing documentation was received by the required deadline.
2. Information entered in the System of Record was incorrect.
3. MaineHousing requested corrections.
4. Medical deductions were received by the required deadline.
5. CHIP Only Applications: Heating system was repaired or replaced.

#### NOTE:

If missing documentation is received after the fifteen (15) business day period, but is postmarked within the fifteen (15) business day timeframe CAAs should accept the documentation. CAAs should scan the envelope (showing postmark) into System of Record.

### B. Prior to Processing a Denial Reversal

1. Verify all documentation necessary to recertify or correct the Application has been received and HEAP guidelines have been met.
2. Complete the Denial Reversal in the System of Record.
3. Make any changes to the Application that are necessary. When confirming the changes, the Application status will be updated to "Application Pending- Reversed".
4. Enter a comment on the Application to clearly explain the reason and justification for processing a denial reversal. The comment must include dates, documents received, action taken, errors that were corrected, etc.
5. CAA will update Qualify/Certify the Application as appropriate.
6. Record the Denial Reversal on the *Denial Reversal Tracking Form*.

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## SECTION 26: BENEFITS

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1. HEAP Benefits are determined so that Eligible Households with the lowest income and the highest Energy Cost receive the highest Benefits.
2. Applicants residing in Subsidized Housing with heat included in their rent may be eligible if the Household pays an out-of-pocket expense for a portion of their rent or utility costs. The maximum Benefit for Households residing in Subsidized Housing with heat included is \$21 per Program Year. If the subsidy pays 100% of the rent and utility costs, the Household is not eligible to receive a Benefit.
3. Applications are entered into the System of Record, which automatically calculates the Benefit amount for an Eligible Household. A comprehensive description of the Benefit calculation can be found in the Rule. The Benefit calculation takes into account:
  - a. Dwelling Type
  - b. Percent of Poverty (determined by Household income and size)
  - c. Fuel Type
  - d. Climate/region – Degree Days
  - e. Priority Determination

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## SECTION 27: PAYMENT OF BENEFITS

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### A. Weekly Payment Process

1.	<p><b>Tuesday:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MaineHousing begins processing payments in the System of Record.</li> </ul>
2.	<p><b>Wednesday:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. MaineHousing prints all checks, Benefit Notification letters, and Vendor Voucher Reports.</li> <li>b. All payments are posted in the System of Record (post-dated to the next day, Thursday).</li> </ol>
3.	<p><b>Thursday:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Federal Funds are received.</li> <li>b. MaineHousing mails all checks, Vendor Voucher Reports and direct check Benefit Notification letters.</li> </ol>
4.	<p><b>Following Tuesday:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Benefit Notification letters to Applicants whose payments were sent to a Vendor are mailed.</li> </ul>



If there is a holiday week, the payment process may move ahead/back a day depending on when the holiday is observed.

## **B. Benefits Issued**

### **1. Vendor (Pre-Delivery)**

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

**NOTE:** Benefits cannot be issued to a Vendor account that is not in a Household Member's name.

### **2. Direct Check**

a. Applicant may receive a direct check if:

- i. There's no Vendor for their designated fuel type in their area. (CAA will enter notes in the System of Record).
- ii. Household's requested fuel type is wood.
- iii. Rent with heat included (Subsidized or Non-Subsidized).
- iv. The Household is responsible to pay for the heat; however, the fuel account is not in a Household Member's name. CAA must obtain documentation that the Applicant is responsible for paying the heating cost.

- v. The Household uses a propane vendor that is not a HEAP participating Vendor and does not own their own tank.
- vi. The Household's dwelling has a shared heating system and/or fuel tank.
- b. A direct check will be mailed to the Applicant within ten (10) business days of the certified-eligible date, or when HEAP funds are available, whichever is later.
- c. The Applicant may choose to have their Benefit applied to their electricity account if their heat is included in their Rent, unless their Rent is Subsidized.
- d. All \$21 benefits are issued as direct checks (Subsidized with heat included).

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## SECTION 28: APPLICATION CHANGES

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Application updates may be necessary for a variety of reasons. **The updates required will depend on the current status of the Application and the reason updates are needed.**

If there are changes for a Household after the Application Date, the Benefit calculation must still be based off the Household's situation as of the Application Date.

The only time information used in the Benefit calculation should be changed/updated is if the information was due to an error at intake or certify and the Application does not accurately represent the Household on the Application Date.

If the Application changes are due to changes in the Household's situation after the Application Date, do not make changes to any other sections or fields other than those outlined in the actions listed below.

**A. Applications that have a status of Certified Eligible-Payable:**

**1. Applicant Moves to an Eligible Dwelling Unit, Changes Product or Changes Vendor**

- a. Click "Change" button. This will put the Application in "Change Mode" and the background will turn pink.
- b. Enter a Comment to document the Application changes.
- c. Add the new Heating System as a secondary or third Heating System (if applicable).
- d. Enter Retired next to the Heating System location that was designated as the Primary on the Application Date (if applicable).
- e. Add the new Vendor in Vendor and Consumption section of the System of Record (if applicable)
- f. Update utility Vendor account number (if applicable).
- g. Change the mailing and physical addresses in the System of Record. County **must** remain in the system as it was entered .
- h. Update "Vendor" for each eligible allocation in the Vendor section in Qualified Allocation grid on Benefits tab in the System of Record.
- i. Select the appropriate allocations and click "Confirm Changes" to save changes made and close out of 'Change Mode'.

**NOTE:** The Benefit calculation will be based on the requested fuel type and Household's situation designated on the Application Date.

## 2. All Applicants Relocate to Subsidized Housing with Heat Included or Ineligible Dwelling

Household may not be eligible for the entire Benefit depending on the date the Household relocated and the amount of any Home Energy deliveries made during the current Heating Season.

- a. The CAA will notify MaineHousing (at [liweap@mainehousing.org](mailto:liweap@mainehousing.org)) of the date of the move. MaineHousing will determine what (if any) portion of the Benefit the Applicant is entitled to. MaineHousing will prorate the Benefit amount and issue the payment accordingly.
- b. Click “Change” button. This will put the Application in “Change Mode” and the background will turn pink.
- c. Enter a Comment to document the Application changes.
- d. Add the new Heating System as a secondary or third Heating System (if applicable).
- e. Enter Retired next to the Heating System location that was designated as the Primary. (if applicable).
- f. Add the new Vendor in Vendor and Consumption section of the System of Record (if applicable).
- g. Update utility Vendor account number (if applicable).
- h. Change the mailing and physical addresses in the System of Record. County must remain in the system as it was entered on the Application Date.
- i. Update “Vendor” for each eligible allocation in the Vendor section in Qualified Allocation grid on Benefits tab in the System of Record.
- j. Select the appropriate allocations and click “Confirm Changes” to save changes made and close out of ‘Change Mode’.

**NOTE:** The Benefit calculation will be based on the requested fuel type and Household’s situation designated on the Application Date.

## 3. Application Error

- a. Click “Change” button. This will put the Application in “Change Mode” and the background will turn pink.
- b. Enter a Comment to document the Application changes.
- c. Make applicable Application corrections.
- d. Click “Confirm Changes” to save changes made and close out of ‘Change Mode’.

#### 4. Applicant Moves to an Eligible Dwelling Unit, Changes Product or Changes Vendor

- a. Refer to guidance in Section 32: Change of Vendor (Benefit Return) and/or Section 33: Change of Address or Change of Product to make only the necessary Application updates.
- b. Enter a Comment to document the situation and action taken.

#### 5. All Applicants Move to Subsidized Housing with Heat Included or Ineligible Dwelling

- a. Refer to guidance in Section 32: Change of Vendor (Benefit Return) to make only the necessary Application updates.
- b. Enter a Comment to document the situation and action taken.

### B. Applications that have a status of **Certified Eligible-Paid**:

#### 1. Application Error

- a. Click “Change” button at the top of the Application. This will put the Application in “Change Mode” and the background will turn pink.
- b. Make necessary corrections to the Application and the System of Record to reflect the situation as it was on the Application Date
- c. Enter a Comment to document that the Change feature was used and the reason.
- d. Click “Confirm Changes” to save changes made and close out of Change Mode.
- e. Review the Benefits tab to verify that the benefit corrections were adjusted accordingly.
  - i. If the benefit amount increased, an additional balance will have populated on the benefits tab. Ensure correct Vendor is listed on the Vendor line.
  - ii. If the Benefit amount decreased resulting in an overpayment, **CAA must complete a Benefit Return Form** and e-mail [liheap@mainehousing.org](mailto:liheap@mainehousing.org), Subject Line: Client Number-Overpayment, to request guidance on how to proceed.

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## SECTION 29: CHANGE OF VENDOR (BENEFIT RETURN)

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

If the Application changes are due to changes in the Household’s situation after the Application Date, do not make changes to any other sections or fields other than those outlined in the actions listed below.

### A. Overarching Principles That Apply to Benefit Returns

1. Benefits are generally available for use during the Program Year of receipt and up until April 30th of the following Program Year.
  - a. 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. Benefits issued for PY2023 and prior have expired and cannot be reissued to the Household or Vendor.
  - c. PY2024 Benefits may be applied to unpaid eligible deliveries made between October 1, 2023 and April 30, 2025.
  - d. PY2025 Benefits may be applied to unpaid eligible deliveries made between October 1, 2024 and April 30, 2026.
2. A Household may not receive more than one standard HEAP Benefit in a Program Year.
3. If there is a change in Household composition, the Benefit will stay with the original Dwelling Unit. If all Household Members move, the benefit will follow the Applicant.
4. An Applicant may not be a counted member of a Household on more than one Application in a Program Year.
5. Benefits can only be reissued to Households residing in an eligible Dwelling Unit.
6. Benefit Returns require documentation to substantiate the continued eligibility of a Household. If for any reason the required documentation is not provided, it may delay the reissuance and/or result in forfeiture of Benefits.
7. Change of Vendor requests are only allowable if a Household moves and their Vendor does not serve their new area with the applicable fuel type; or if a Vendor refuses to serve a Household. CAAs must inform applicants of this protocol during the intake process.

## B. CAA Responsibilities

### 1. CAA Must Initiate a Benefit Return Request:

- a. If Household's requested Vendor is different on a new Application compared to the prior year's Application.
- b. If CAA becomes aware that the sole member of an Eligible Household is deceased.
- c. Upon written notice from the Applicant that they can no longer receive services from the Vendor.
- d. Upon written notice from the Applicant that they have moved and will be using a different Vendor.
- e. Upon written notice from the Applicant that they have moved and are no longer eligible to use the Benefit.
- f. If CAA becomes aware of an Overpayment.
- g. If CAA becomes aware that a Benefit was issued to the wrong Vendor.

### 2. CAA must:

- a. Obtain the necessary documentation from the Applicant.
- b. Review, approve and sign the HEAP Application Update Form.
  - i. CAA must determine which (if any) Household Members reside at the original address.
  - ii. CAA must determine under the new circumstances if the Benefit remains eligible for use.
- c. Update the Application in the System of Record. See point 4 below for details.
- d. Complete the *Benefit Return Form*.
- e. Upload the completed forms to the Document section in the System of Record.
- f. Enter a comment detailing the situation and Change of Vendor request.
- g. Email MaineHousing at [liheap@mainehousing.org](mailto:liheap@mainehousing.org) with "BR" and the client number in the subject line.

### 3. HEAP Application Update Form

CAA must obtain a signed *HEAP Application Update form* prior to requesting the return of funds. Application Update form must be fully completed and include a copy of the Household's utility bill if they are responsible for payment.

#### 4. System of Record Updates Must be Completed

##### a. Change of Address

Update the mailing and physical addresses in the System of Record. County must remain in the system as it was entered on the Application Date.

##### b. Changes to Vendor and Consumption Section (Heating System and Vendor)

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

- i. Adds the new Heating System in the System of Record as a secondary or third system, thus ensuring the Benefit amount remains unchanged;
- ii. Updates former Heating System to reflect as 'Retired'; except for Utility Vendors
- iii. Updates former Vendor to reflect as "Retired" in account number field if changed (excluding Utility Vendors);
- iv. Updates utility account number, if applicable;
- v. Adds the new utility Vendor information, if applicable;
- vi. Adds the new Vendor information with the new Fuel Type;
- vii. When the requested fuel type remains the same, DHLC data must mirror the original Vendor; and
- viii. Enters a comment to document the new fuel tank information as needed (*i.e.*, size and location).

#### C. MaineHousing Responsibilities:

1. Review Application updates in the System of Record.
2. Send Benefit Return request to Vendor.
3. Track outstanding Benefit Return requests.

#### D. Vendor Responsibilities

1. Upon receipt of a HEAP *Benefit Return Form* sent by MaineHousing, the Vendor will:
  - a. Reconcile and verify the amount of HEAP funds remaining on the Applicant's account.
  - b. Return funds, transaction history and HEAP *Benefit Return Form* to MaineHousing by the date indicated on the HEAP *Benefit Return Form*.
  - c. If there are no funds to be returned, then a copy of the *Benefit Return Form* and a transaction history must be sent to MaineHousing to indicate that there are no funds to be returned.



**NOTE:** CAA should **not** send the *Benefit Return* form to the Vendor. The contractual relationship is between MaineHousing and the Vendor. CAAs do not have the authority to approve such changes with the Vendor.

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## **SECTION 30: CHANGE OF ADDRESS OR CHANGE OF PRODUCT**

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A Change of Address/Change of Product is the change of approved address or fuel type for which a Benefit is eligible for use. In processing Change of Address/Change of Product requests, MaineHousing will make the final determination as to when changes can and cannot be made as directed by federal guidelines.

If the Application changes are due to changes in the Household's situation after the Application Date, **do not** make changes to any other sections or fields other than those outlined in the actions listed below.

### **A. Overarching Principles of a Change of Address/Change of Product**

1. A Household may not receive more than one standard HEAP Benefit in a Program Year.
2. A Household may not have Benefits on account with more than one Vendor or for more than one fuel type.
3. If there is a change in Household composition, the Benefit will stay with the original Dwelling Unit. If all Household Members move, the benefit will follow the Applicant.
4. Benefits can only be reissued/transferred to Households residing in an eligible Dwelling Unit.
5. A Change of Address/Change of Product requires documentation to substantiate the continued eligibility of a Household. If for any reason the required documentation is not provided, it may delay the transfer or update and/or result in forfeiture of Benefits.
6. Change of Vendor requests are only allowable if a Household moves and their Vendor does not serve their new area with the applicable fuel type; or if a Vendor refuses to serve a Household. CAAs must inform applicants of this protocol during the intake process.

### **B. CAA Responsibilities**

#### **1. CAA Must Initiate a Change of Address/Change of Product:**

- a. Upon notice from the Applicant that they have moved or changed product and will be using the same Vendor.
- b. If CAA becomes aware that a Benefit was issued for the wrong product or address.

#### **2. CAA must:**

- a. Obtain the necessary documentation from the Applicant.
- b. Review and approve the *HEAP Application Update* Form.
  - i. CAA must determine which (if any) Household Members reside at the original address.

- ii. CAA must determine under the new circumstances if the Benefit remains eligible for use.
- c. Update the Application in the System of Record.
- d. Upload the completed form to the Document section in the System of Record.
- e. Enter a comment detailing the situation and Change of Address/Change of Product request.
- f. Email MaineHousing at [liheap@mainehousing.org](mailto:liheap@mainehousing.org) with “COA or COP” and the client number in the subject line.

### 3. HEAP Application Update Form

CAA must obtain a signed *HEAP Application Update* form prior to requesting the Change of Address/Change of Product. *HEAP Application Update* form must be fully completed and include a copy of the Household’s most recent utility bill or utility account verification letter from the utility company if they are responsible for payment.

### 4. System of Record Updates Must be Completed

#### a. Change of Address

Update the mailing and physical addresses in the System of Record. County **must** remain in the system as it was entered on the Application Date. The new address will need to be verified using the “Verify Address” button in the System of Record.

#### b. Changes to Vendor and Consumption Section (Heating System and Vendor)

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

- i. Adds the new Heating System in the System of Record as a secondary or third system, thus ensuring the Benefit amount remains unchanged;
- ii. Updates former Heating System location to reflect as ‘Retired’;
- iii. Updates former Vendor to reflect as “Retired” in account number field if changed (excluding Utility Vendors);
- iv. Updates utility account number, if applicable;
- v. Adds the new utility Vendor information, if applicable;
- vi. Adds the new Vendor information with the new Fuel Type;
- vii. When the requested fuel type remains the same, DHLC data must mirror the original Vendor Usage Method; and
- viii. Enters a comment to document the new fuel tank information as needed (*i.e.*, size and location).

### C. MaineHousing Responsibilities

1. Review Application updates in the System of Record.
2. Send Change of Address/Change of Product authorization to Vendor.

**NOTE:** CAA should **not** send the *HEAP Application Update* form to the Vendor. The contractual relationship is between MaineHousing and the Vendor. CAAs do not have the authority to approve such changes with the Vendor.

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## SECTION 31: EXAMPLES OF APPLICATION UPDATE SITUATIONS

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In any instance where a Household situation changes (e.g. change of address/product/vendor), the Household must complete the HEAP Application Update form.

**NOTE:** For a change of vendor or product, the Applicant must have experienced a change in circumstances that justify the change. Switching vendors in an effort to save on fuel costs due to vendor pricing is not adequate justification to make a change. Households may not switch fuel types after benefit has been issued without ample justification and approval from MaineHousing.

***Example 1: All Household Members move and must change Vendors.***

The Vendor must return the unused funds to MaineHousing. A Household Member must provide the CAA with a completed *HEAP Application Update Form*. The funds will be re-issued to the new Vendor.

***Example 2: All Household Members move but can continue with same Vendor.***

The Vendor does not have to send back the Benefit. A Household Member must submit the *HEAP Application Update Form* to the CAA.

***Example 3: All Household Members move from a residence with direct heating costs to a residence with heat included in their rent.***

The Vendor must return the unused funds to MaineHousing. A Household Member must provide the CAA a completed *Application Update Form*. The Household is then offered the choice of having their benefit re-issued as a direct check or re-issued to their electricity Vendor provided the electricity account is in a Household Member's name.

***Example 4: The Applicant moves out of the Dwelling Unit but a Household Member remains in the Dwelling Unit; or a Household Member moves out of the Dwelling Unit but the Applicant remains in the Dwelling Unit:***

If any member of the original Household remains in the Dwelling Unit, the Benefit stays with the Dwelling Unit.

***Example 5: The Household encounters a situation in which they must change the type of fuel used for heating the Dwelling Unit.***

A Household Member must provide the information and justification for the new fuel type to the CAA using the *HEAP Application Update form*.

***Example 6: All Household Members move from the Dwelling Unit into separate Dwelling Units.***

The Benefit would follow the Applicant. The Applicant must provide the CAA with a completed *HEAP Application Update form*.

**Example 7: The Applicant is deceased or moves out of state.**

If any Household Member on the original Application still lives in the Dwelling Unit the Benefit stays with the Dwelling Unit.

**Example 8: A Household Member passes away after the Application Date, and a surviving Household Member moves into another person's household that is not on the original Application and is not HEAP eligible.**

The surviving Household Member must provide the CAA a completed *HEAP Application Update Form*. The surviving Household Member must add their name to the existing fuel account for the new address or open a fuel account in their name for that address.

**Example 9: The Household is suspected of committing fraud.**

If the CAA becomes aware of potential program abuse/fraud, the CAA should follow related protocols, including notifying MaineHousing's Program Compliance Officer as needed. The CAA or Compliance Officer will investigate and submit a *Benefit Return Form* if necessary.

**Example 10: The Household's home energy vendor account is inactive or closed.**

The Vendor must return the unused funds to MaineHousing. MaineHousing will work with the CAA as needed to attempt to locate the Household to determine their status.

**Example 11: The Applicant is the sole member of a Household and their permanent residence changes to a nursing home or long-term care facility.**

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

**Example 12: All Household Members move to Subsidized Housing with heat included after Benefits have been paid.**

Benefits may be applied to eligible deliveries if the deliveries occurred on or after October 1<sup>st</sup> of the Program Year for which it was issued, and before the date the Household moved to Subsidized Housing with heat included. If there are remaining funds after applying Benefits to eligible deliveries, Benefits will be returned to program. If the entire Benefit remains, MaineHousing will issue the Household a \$21 benefit.

**Example 13: All Household Members move to Subsidized Housing after Benefits have been paid. The Household is responsible for paying the heating costs in the new Dwelling Unit.**

The Household is eligible to utilize the Benefit at the new address.

**Example 14: Household A received a Benefit in the current Program Year. All Household A members move into Household B that was also served in the current Program Year.**

Household A is not eligible to have their current Program Year Benefit reissued to the new location as a Household cannot be served twice in one program year from the same allocation.

**Example 15: Household A received a Benefit in the prior Program Year. All Household A members move into Household B that was also served in the prior Program Year.**

Household A is not eligible to have their prior Program Year Benefit reissued to the new location as a Household cannot be served twice in one program year from the same allocation.

**Example 16: All Household Members moved into a Household that was served in the prior Program Year, but not the current Program Year. The Household wants their remaining prior AND current Program Year Benefits reissued to the new location.**

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

**For Example:**

John and Mary Smith:

- Resided at 5 Ash Street, Portland on the Application Date
- PY2025 Benefit paid on 01/05/2025
- Have a remaining PY2024 Benefit on account with Vendor
- On 02/01/2025 moved in with Susan Jones at 10 Tree Street, Portland

Susan Jones:

- Received a PY2024 Benefit
- Did not receive a PY2025 Benefit

The Smith's PY2025 Benefit may be reissued. However, the Smith's remaining PY2024 Benefit cannot be reissued and Ms. Jones is not eligible to receive another PY2025 benefit.

**Example 17: The Household received a Benefit in the prior Program Year. The current Program Year Application was denied (or they did not apply) because they have moved into an ineligible Dwelling.**

The Household is not eligible to have the funds reissued because they reside in an ineligible Dwelling (regardless of the Program Year).

**Example 18: A member of a Household was previously served as part of another Household in the same Program Year.**

The Household Member will be included on the Application but will be uncounted. The Household Member's income must be included.

***Example 19: The Household pays for the heat; however, the fuel account is not in a Household Member's name.***

The Household will receive a direct check. The Household must submit documentation proving they are responsible for the heat and explaining the reason the account is not in Household Member's name, and CAA must document situation in Comments section of the System of Record.

***Example 20: The Household uses a propane vendor that is not a participating vendor.***

The Household may receive a direct check with instructions that the funds are to be used to pay for heating expenses, if they do not own their own tank(s).

***Example 21: Benefit is returned and Household's new Fuel Type is wood.***

Household is eligible to have their Benefit reissued as a direct check.

***Example 22: Applicant moves from an eligible Dwelling Unit to a Roomer situation.***

Benefit can be reissued provided the Applicant demonstrates they are in a Roomer situation.

***Example 23: Household moves out of current CAA's service area.***

CAA that certified the initial Application, must maintain the Application for the duration of the program year, including Application updates and subsequent ECIP requests.

***Example 24: Household moves to eligible dwelling prior to Certification.***

CAA must notify MaineHousing of the date of move prior to certifying the Application based on the Household's situation **on** the Application Date. MaineHousing will determine what (if any) portion of the Benefit the Applicant is entitled to. MaineHousing will prorate the Benefit amount and issue the payment accordingly

***Example 25: Household's Vendor A has determined that the fuel tank does not meet code. However, Vendor B has inspected the tank and approves that the fuel tank does meet code.***

CAA must initiate a Benefit Return with Vendor A and obtain a written statement from Vendor B indicating that the tank has been inspected and does meet code. If the Household does not have Vendor B set up, then any remaining benefits will be returned to program.

***Example 26: Household has moved into Sub with Heat Included.***

CAA must initiate a Benefit Return with Vendor. Once benefits have been returned, if Household has used any of the benefit, MH will not reissue. If Household has not used any of the of the benefit, then MH will reissue \$21.00 benefit.



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## SECTION 32: APPEAL

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- 1) The appeals process allows the Applicant an opportunity to disagree with a denial determination; dispute the length of time to process an Application; dispute the criteria used to calculate Benefit amount; or having to refund an overpayment. Federal regulations require the Applicant be informed of their rights to an appeal at the time of Application.
- 2) CAA intake and certification staff are expected to be familiar with when and how an Applicant can file for an appeal. For more information *see* Section 13 of the Rule.
- 3) The following outlines responsibilities and steps for processing an Applicant's request for appeal:

### 1. MaineHousing Will

- a. Review Applicant's file for errors.
- b. Work with the CAA to resolve all errors (if applicable).
- c. Communicate with the Applicant to resolve the issue.
- d. Schedule a fair hearing date and notify the Applicant of their rights if the issue cannot be resolved to the Applicant's satisfaction.
- e. Conduct the scheduled fair hearing with the Applicant, Fair Hearing Officer, and MaineHousing staff.
- f. Render a final decision based on the recommendation of the Fair Hearing Officer.

### 2. CAA Will

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

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## SECTION 33: TANF SUPPLEMENTAL BENEFITS

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

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

The following provides answers to some of the frequently asked questions about TANF Supplemental Benefits. For additional information, please email MaineHousing at [liweap@mainehousing.org](mailto:liweap@mainehousing.org).

Q1: What is the source of funding and the amount awarded to MaineHousing?
A1: As required by State of Maine legislation, 22 M.R.S. § 3769-E, the Department of Health and Human Services shall provide \$3,000,000 annually in TANF funds to MaineHousing. These funds must be used to provide supplemental fuel assistance to low-income families with children.
Q2: Who is eligible for TANF Supplemental Benefits?
A2: A Household will be eligible to receive a TANF Supplemental Benefit if the: a. Household’s HEAP Application has been certified-eligible in the current Program Year; <b>and</b> b. Household includes at least one member who is under the age of eighteen (18) on the Application Date for HEAP; <b>and</b> c. Household has a direct or indirect heating burden (\$21 benefit recipients are not eligible for the TANF Supplemental Benefit).
Q3: What is the benefit amount per household?
A3: Subject to the availability of funding, the TANF Supplemental Benefit per Eligible Household per Program Year shall be determined each program year by MaineHousing based on the projected number of eligible households.
Q4: Who is the point of contact for questions about TANF Supplemental Benefits?
A4: Questions about TANF supplemental benefits should be directed to MaineHousing. Email <a href="mailto:liweap@mainehousing.org">liweap@mainehousing.org</a> or call 1-800-452-4668.
Q5: Do HEAP rules and guidelines apply to TANF Supplemental Benefits?
A5: Except as expressly outlined in the Rule, the use and administration of TANF Supplemental Benefits are subject to the same requirements and guidelines as set forth for HEAP Benefits in the HEAP Rule – Chapter 24 and HEAP Vendor Handbook.

Q6:	When are TANF Supplemental Benefits be processed?
A6:	TANF Supplemental Benefits will be processed separately from regular HEAP Benefits. TANF Supplemental Benefit payments will be issued following issuance of the Household's regular HEAP/Fuel Assistance Benefit.

Q7:	How are TANF Supplemental Benefits issued/paid?
A7:	Except in the case of firewood, TANF Supplemental Benefits will be issued in accordance with the information recorded in the System of Record – <i>i.e.</i> , designated Vendor or direct check. MaineHousing will issue/pay TANF Supplemental Benefits as follows:

Designated Vendor/Fuel Type in System of Record:	
Firewood	<p>If the Household's regular HEAP/Fuel Assistance Benefit was issued for firewood, the TANF Supplemental Benefit will be issued to the electricity Vendor provided the electricity account is in a Household Member's name.</p> <p>If the Household has a secondary heating system, the TANF Supplemental Benefit may be issued to an approved Vendor that supplies the fuel type for the secondary heating system.</p> <p>A direct check will be issued if the Household does not have electricity or the account is not in a Household Member's name or does not have the TANF Supplemental Benefit issued for fuel for a secondary heating system.</p>
All Other Fuel Types (excluding firewood)	MaineHousing will issue a Vendor Voucher Report and make payment to Vendor.
No Designated Vendor (rent with heat, no participating vendor)	MaineHousing will issue a direct check to the Applicant.

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

Q9:	How will TANF Supplemental Benefits be documented in System of Record?
A9:	TANF Supplemental payments will be recorded on the benefits tab in the System of Record as a TANF Allocation.

Q10:	What if the account information, physical address, or fuel type listed on the Vendor Voucher Report differs from the Vendor's (account) records?
A10:	Vendor must contact MaineHousing immediately at 1-800-452-4668. Any deviations from the Vendor Voucher Report must be approved in writing by MaineHousing prior to delivery. CAAs are <b>not</b> authorized to approve deviations.

Q11: Which funds/benefits must be used first?
A11: A Household’s regular HEAP/Fuel Assistance Benefit must be exhausted before using TANF Supplemental Benefits. If the Household receives a PY2025 regular HEAP/Fuel Assistance Benefit and has a remaining credit balance of PY2024 TANF Supplemental Benefits, the Vendor must use the PY2024 TANF Supplemental Benefits first. Benefits/funds must be used in the following order: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. PY2024 HEAP funds</li> <li>2. PY2024 TANF Supplemental funds</li> <li>3. PY2025 HEAP funds</li> <li>4. PY2025 TANF Supplemental funds</li> </ul>

Q12: Do TANF Supplemental Benefits expire?												
A12: Yes. Use dates for TANF Supplemental Benefits follow the same guidelines as standard HEAP Benefits.												
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Program Year</th> <th>Delivery must occur between:</th> <th>Benefit cannot be used on or after:</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>PY2023</td> <td>Oct. 1, 2022 and April 30, 2024</td> <td>May 1, 2024</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PY2024</td> <td>Oct. 1, 2023 and April 30, 2025</td> <td>May 1, 2025</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PY2025</td> <td>Oct. 1, 2024 and April 30, 2026</td> <td>May 1, 2026</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Program Year	Delivery must occur between:	Benefit cannot be used on or after:	PY2023	Oct. 1, 2022 and April 30, 2024	May 1, 2024	PY2024	Oct. 1, 2023 and April 30, 2025	May 1, 2025	PY2025	Oct. 1, 2024 and April 30, 2026	May 1, 2026
Program Year	Delivery must occur between:	Benefit cannot be used on or after:										
PY2023	Oct. 1, 2022 and April 30, 2024	May 1, 2024										
PY2024	Oct. 1, 2023 and April 30, 2025	May 1, 2025										
PY2025	Oct. 1, 2024 and April 30, 2026	May 1, 2026										

Q13: How are partial deliveries handled ( <i>i.e.</i> , amount delivered is less than Household’s remaining TANF Supplemental Benefit)?
A13: Non-utility vendors may make multiple deliveries against the Household’s TANF Supplemental Benefit. MaineHousing will pay the Vendor for each (partial) delivery within ten (10) business days of its receipt and approval of the Vendor’s delivery ticket/invoice and transaction history report.

Q14: How do TANF Supplemental Benefits impact a Household’s eligibility for Energy Crisis Intervention Program (ECIP) services?
A14: Any remaining TANF Supplemental Benefit funds must be used in conjunction with or in lieu of ECIP funds. The CAA will need to contact the vendor to confirm the amount of remaining TANF Supplemental Benefit funds. ECIP amount will be equal to the fuel cost, plus delivery fee, minus remaining HEAP funds, minus remaining TANF Supplemental funds. In the case of electricity, any remaining Low Income Assistance Program (LIAP/ELP) benefits must also be used in conjunction with or in lieu of ECIP funds.

Q15: What if the Household moves and/or requires a fuel type or Vendor change?
A15: The TANF Supplemental Benefit notification letter instructs the Applicant to notify CAA, in writing, if they move and/or need to change vendors or fuel types. CAA will follow the same process as a HEAP COA/COP.



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## **APPENDIX A: INFORMATION PROTECTION GUIDELINES**

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### **INFORMATION PROTECTION GUIDELINES**

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

#### **PERSONALLY IDENTIFIABLE INFORMATION**

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

Examples of PII include, but are not limited to:

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

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

#### **INFORMATION PROTECTION MEASURES**

- **Encrypt all Personally Identifiable Information contained on computers, laptops, and portable electronic devices, such as CD’s and USB drives.**
  - Encryption converts the contents of a file to make them unreadable to others, unless they have the correct password. There are many file and disk encryption options available, such as Bitlocker for Windows, or several free/open-source options that are fairly easy to use.
- **Send e-mails or e-mail attachments with Personally Identifiable Information through an email encryption server or application.**

- If you don't have access to an application that encrypts e-mail, request that your MaineHousing contact send you a secure e-mail. You will receive an encrypted e-mail notification that will allow you to access MaineHousing's email encryption service. You can securely reply to the encrypted message by using the reply function through the secure email portal. Alternatively, MaineHousing can provide access to Sharefile for securely sending documents back and forth to MaineHousing.
- **Put measures in place to prevent the loss, theft, misappropriation or inadvertent disclosure of Personally Identifiable Information. These could include data loss prevention (DLP), data access governance, secure file transfers, or audit logging applications / services.**
  - Remove documents that contain PII from printers or fax machines, do not leave paperwork containing PII on desks or other work areas unattended, place paperwork containing PII in a locked file at the end of the business day, and shred documents containing PII that are no longer needed.
  - Securely dispose of any computer equipment or storage media containing PII. Destroy or securely erase hard drives.

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

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## APPENDIX B: COURT ORDERED CHILD SUPPORT DEDUCTIONS

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

**C. Required Documentation:**

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

**D. System of Record - Guidelines for entering Income:**

***Example 1: Deduct only the amount paid during the income verification period.***

**Application Date:** November 12, 2024  
**Income Verification Period:** Prior 28 calendar days  
**Household Member's One (1) Month Income:** \$1,625.00  
**Household Member's Monthly Child Support Obligation as documented on the court order.** \$200.00

<b>Paid Child Support:</b>	Monthly Amount Paid	\$200.00
	Multiplied by 1 Month	1
<b>Total Child Support Paid</b>		<b>\$ \$200.00</b>

<b>System of Record Data Entry:</b>	Gross Income	\$1,625.00
	Child Support	(\$200.00)
	<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$1,425.00</b>

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

<b>Application Date:</b>	January 16, 2025	
<b>Income Verification Period:</b>	Prior 28 calendar days	
<b>Household Member's One (1) Month Income:</b>	\$500.00	
<b>Household Member's Monthly Child Support Obligation (as documented on the court order):</b>		\$575.00
<b>Paid Child Support:</b>	Monthly Amount Paid	\$575.00
	Multiplied by 1 Month	x 1
	<b>Total Child Support Paid</b>	\$575.00
<b>Countable Income</b>	1 Month Income	\$500.00
	Minus 1 Month Child Support Paid	(\$575.00)
	<b>Total Income (Result is a negative)</b>	<b>(\$75.00)</b>
<b>System of Record Data Entry:</b>	Gross Income	\$500.00
	Child Support	(\$500.00)
	<b>Total Income</b>	\$0.00
The child support deduction is more than the Household's income. Enter enough child support to bring the total Household income to \$0.00 and enter case file notes.		

***Example 3: Household Member paid lump sum child support arrearage in the income verification period.***

<b>Application Date:</b>	April 11, 2025	
<b>Income Verification Period:</b>	Prior 28 calendar days	
<b>Household Member's One (1) Month Income:</b>	\$1,500.00	
<b>Household Member's Monthly Child Support Obligation:</b> (as documented on the court order)	\$200.00	
<b>Paid a lump sum Child Support Arrearage in March</b> (in addition to monthly obligation)	\$400.00	
<b>Paid Child Support:</b>	Monthly Amount Paid	\$200.00
	Multiplied by 1 Month	x 1
	<b>Total Obligated Child Support Paid</b>	\$200.00
<b>Countable Income</b>	1 Month Income	\$1,500.00
	Minus 1 Month Child Support Paid	\$200.00
	<b>Total Income (Entered in HEAP Cloud)</b>	<b>\$1,300.00</b>



Lump sum arrearage payment of \$ \$400.00 is **not** deductible, even though it was paid during the income verification period.

<b>System of Record Data Entry:</b>	Gross Income	\$1,500.00
	Child Support	(\$200.00)
	<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$1,300.00</b>

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

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