

+-----+
| LOCAL COMMISSIONERS MEMORANDUM |
+-----+

Transmittal No: 90 LCM-203

Date: December 27, 1990

Division: Income Maintenance

TO: Local District Commissioners

SUBJECT: 1990-91 Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)

ATTACHMENTS: Attachment A: Tentative Allocations for 1990-91 -
not available on-line.
Attachment B: 1990-91 Outreach Plan - available on-line.
Attachment C: Bureau of Energy Programs County Liaison
Assignment List - available on-line.

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide you with information regarding the 1990-91 Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP). Local districts are asked to share this information with other local certifiers.

I. Federal Appropriation

Planning and program development for 1990-91 HEAP were based on an anticipated funding level of \$176.7 million.

It should be noted that the recent reauthorization of LIHEAP will provide an initial allocation to New York State which is slightly more than our planning estimates.

II. HEAP State Plan

A copy of the final plan was transmitted to districts on December 6, 1990.

III. Tentative Allocations

- A. Attachment A provides tentative allocations for the Public Assistance (PA), Non-Public Assistance (NPA), and Emergency components.
- B. These tentative allocations are based upon the currently anticipated funding level and are subject to change based upon the final federal appropriation.
- C. The anticipated available funding will be allocated as follows:
 - NPA - \$50.5M \$10M will be reserved to provide additional funds to districts which exhaust their initial NPA allocation.
 - PA - \$61.5M
 - Emergency - \$22M \$10M will be reserved to provide additional funding to local districts which exhaust their initial emergency allocation.
 - Weatherization - \$6.45M \$4.95M will be provided to Department of State for low income weatherization assistance. \$1.5M will be held by NYSDSS to provide essential heating equipment replacement for HEAP eligible households. These funds will be allocated on a case by case basis to local districts.
- D. Local district administrative allocations have not yet been finalized. Districts should base planning on the administrative allocation for 1989-90. However, districts should be aware that this allocation may be reduced if the federal appropriation is less than anticipated. Local districts should also be aware that they may be experiencing slight increases or decreases as we intend to move toward a per capita processing approach to local allocations.
- E. WMS statistics will be used to monitor NPA and Emergency obligations and to trigger allocation increases and advances.

- F. As in the past several years, no transfers are permitted between allocations.
- G. Local district questions regarding allocations, advances, and/or claims should be directed to the Bureau of Local Financial Operations.

IV. Advance Procedures

A. Public Assistance (PA)

PA advances will be made in early January 1991. Local districts wishing to make PA mass authorization payments prior to January should contact the Bureau of Local Financial Operations to arrange an earlier advance.

B. NPA and Emergency

Advances will initially be made on a weekly basis with the amount of the advance based on WMS statistics. However, as expenditures slow down or funds become temporarily unavailable, advances may be made less frequently. As in previous years, a percentage of the amount authorized, less previous advances, will be added to each advance.

C. Administration

Advances will be made on a monthly basis and will be based on 1989-90 claims.

V. HEAP Start Up

- A. The 1990-91 program is scheduled to begin November 15, 1990. However, the mail out of applications to those households permitted mail in access may begin November 1, 1990. NYSDSS provided local districts with mailing labels for these households.

Both the regular and emergency components are scheduled to operate through March 29, 1991. The regular and/or emergency components may be extended beyond March 29, 1991 if this Department determines that there are sufficient administrative and program funds available.

- B. NYSDSS will issue a press release on November 15, 1990 advising of program start-up and limited funds.

We recommend that districts also issue local press releases/notices on program start-up providing specific information such as certifiers, addresses, and phone numbers.

Any local press releases should be general and not discourage any households from applying.

All outreach materials developed by non-DSS certifiers must be reviewed and approved by LDSS prior to release as per the HEAP Manual.

All press releases/notices must include the following statement:

You should be aware that there is limited money available for HEAP benefit payments. Once available money is used up, no benefits will be issued and the program will close. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that you complete and return your application as soon as possible. Be aware that in past years, the program has closed down as early as March 30.

C. Outreach Plan

As in past years, local districts must complete an outreach plan which is available for review. Attachment B provides the format for this plan.

VI. HEAP Forms and Notices

A. Distribution

Forms and notices were distributed to local districts during late October.

LDSS is responsible for providing non-DSS certifiers with supplies of forms and notices.

B. Samples

Samples of forms and notices with instructions for their use were distributed to HEAP liaisons and IM Directors in a letter dated September 24, 1990.

C. Ordering

All forms must be ordered by local DSS through the normal forms ordering process.

D. Local Equivalents

Districts intending to substitute local equivalents for NYSDSS produced forms must submit the equivalent to the NYSDSS Office of Administrative Support Services for review/approval in accordance with 89 INF-53.

Districts intending to make substantive changes in language required for the alien status form, the mail in cover letters, or the mail in verification letter must submit the language to the NYSDSS Bureau of Energy Programs for review and approval.

VII. Highlights of Major HEAP Components

A. Application Process

1. Mail in access has been extended to those NPA non-elderly/disabled households who received a benefit in 1989-90. Mailing labels for these households were provided to local districts.
2. Labels for elderly (over age 60) households were also provided to State Office for the Aging (OFA) for distribution to local OFA offices.
3. Mailing labels for NPA Food Stamp (FS) households have been generated and were distributed at the end of October. Labels are divided into under and over age 60 households. Local DSS and local OFA may agree to have the mail out of applications for the over age 60 households conducted by OFA.
4. Local districts must submit a schedule to NYSDSS outlining the mailing of applications to those households permitted mail in access.
5. PA recipients are no longer required to complete an application form for either regular or emergency HEAP benefits.

B. Eligibility

1. Income eligibility guidelines have increased slightly.
2. NPA FS households are categorically eligible if the household is on the NYSDSS October pulldown or at least one member of the HEAP household is in receipt of FS on the date that the application is received by the certifier.
3. Households containing at least one member in active receipt of PA, NPA, FS, or Code A SSI benefits are now categorically eligible for emergency HEAP benefits as well as regular HEAP.
4. Households applying for emergency benefits must now utilize all available liquid resources. The \$1,000 resource disregard has been eliminated.

5. Households applying for emergency benefits are no longer required to explore alternative payment arrangements, including a deferred payment agreement with the utility company.

C. Benefit Levels

1. Benefits range from \$100 to \$325 depending upon heating region, heating situation and income level.
2. Four heating regions have been maintained. However, the following counties have had changes in their regions: Greene, Steuben, Tioga, Yates, and St. Lawrence.
3. Benefits for the emergency and regular components are now set at the same levels.
4. Two emergency benefits for utility and heat related non-utility emergencies may be provided during the 1990-91 program.
5. Emergency benefits up to \$500 may now be authorized for installation of heat related propane service.

D. Authorization of Benefits

1. Districts may request a waiver to authorize one or both emergency benefits simultaneously with the regular benefit when an emergency situation exists at the time of application or to authorize both emergency benefits at the same time.
 - Utility companies must provide thirty (30) days of prospective service for each HEAP benefit authorized.
 - Non-utility fuel vendors must utilize benefits to provide current and future deliveries.
2. Emergency benefits are authorized for the full matrix amount, regardless of the balance due on the account. This may result in establishment of a credit in some cases.
3. Emergency benefits for replacement of applicant owned essential heating equipment will again be available. Districts may authorize up to \$2500 for HEAP eligible households. Districts may also request waivers on a case by case basis to authorize benefits in excess of \$2500.

As the anticipated \$1.5 million allocation for this component is insufficient to provide for individual district allocations, NYSDSS will hold these funds and allocate on a case by case basis.

HEAP liaisons may request funds by contacting the Bureau of Energy Programs.

Funding approval should be obtained prior to LDSS authorizing replacement work as these funds are limited and NYSDSS cannot guarantee reimbursement if prior approval for funds was not obtained.

E. WMS and BICS

1. The mass closing of 1989-90 HEAP cases has been eliminated.
2. The BICS generated "Notice of Eligibility Decision" will only be produced with the 3209 authorization generation.
3. Two new payment codes have been added:

H7-HEAP Emergency Benefit-Replace Heating Equipment
H8-HEAP Emergency Benefit-Propane Tank Deposit

4. Districts should refer to the September 17, 1990 "Dear WMS Coordinator" and the October 24, 1990 "Dear HEAP Liaison" letters for specific information.

F. Public Assistance (PA) Automatic Payments

The PA Mass authorization occurred on October 27 and 28, 1990.

Please see the September 7, 1990 letter to WMS and BICS Coordinators for specific information.

G. Code A SSI Automatic Payments

1. New procedures were implemented for 1990-91. Those SSI households whose current address listed on the SDX matches their 1989-90 address will be provided with the same determination in 1990-91 as they received for 1989-90. A questionnaire will not be sent to these households. Instead, a letter informing them of the determination will be sent during early November 1990.
2. A questionnaire will be provided to those households whose address does not match and to new Code A SSI households.

3. The Code A listing, along with information on the new process, was provided to districts on September 25, 1990.
4. A final pay/no pay list will be provided to districts in late November.

Any questions regarding 1990-91 HEAP should be directed to your Bureau of Energy Programs liaison at 1-800-342-3715, extension 4-9321. Please see Attachment C for the current listing of Bureau of Energy Programs County liaison assignments.

Oscar R. Best, Jr.
Deputy Commissioner
Division of Income Maintenance

1990-91
HEAP Outreach Plan

County: _____ Agency: _____

I. Special population served by this agency:

- _____ Elderly
- _____ Disabled
- _____ Hearing Impaired
- _____ Sight Impaired
- _____ Non-English Speaking
- _____ Non-Categorical Working Poor
- _____ NPA Medical Assistance
- _____ Other (specify) _____

II. Information is distributed through: (Please discuss in section III)

A. Media Announcements

- _____ Radio
- _____ Television
- _____ Newspaper

B. Materials

- _____ Posters
- _____ Brochures
- _____ Newsletters

C. Contacts

- _____ Local/State Legislators
- _____ Utility/Fuel Companies
- _____ Human Services Agencies
- _____ Veterans Groups
- _____ UIB Offices
- _____ Churches/Religious Associations
- _____ Community Organizations
- _____ Others (specify) _____

III. Activities and Timeframes:

A. Media Announcements

B. Materials

C. Contacts

Effective 10/22/90

Bureau of Energy Programs
County Liaison Assignments

John Fredericks
(4-9321)

Cayuga
Franklin
Madison

Paula Cook
(4-7584)

Allegany
Chemung
Fulton
Monroe
Otsego
Putnam
Schuyler
Westchester

Steve Ptak
(4-9329)

Albany
New York City
St. Lawrence

Bob Loz
(3-0049)

Genesee
Lewis
Montgomery
Nassau
Ontario
Orleans
Oswego
Steuben
Washington

Sue Herlands
(4-9364)

Cattaraugus
Chautauqua
Chenango
Cortland
Erie
Jefferson
Niagara
Orange
Rensselaer

Tim Ryan
(4-2244)

Clinton
Essex
Hamilton
Herkimer
Rockland
Schenectady
Seneca
Suffolk
Yates

Jim Gaudet
(4-2166)

Dutchess
Greene
Oneida
Onondaga
Saratoga
Sullivan
Tompkins
Ulster
Warren

Debbie McArdle
(3-9783)

Broome
Columbia
Delaware
Livingston
Schoharie
Tioga
Wayne
Wyoming