

Service Chapter: Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

Effective Date: June 1, 2025

Overview

Additional verbiage changes, not always reflected in this manual letter, will be made throughout the manual. These changes will not affect the intent of the policy.

Description of Changes

- 1. Definitions 415-05-05 - Change**
- 2. Staffing Needs 415-05-55 - Change**
- 3. Records Retention Policy 415-05-60-10 - Change**
- 4. Outreach Services to Individuals 415-10-05-10 - Change**
- 5. Vendor Budget Payment Plans 415-10-10-15 - Change**
- 6. Case Management – Termination of Services 415-10-15-15 - Change**
- 7. Deadlines for Application 415-15-05-10 - Change**
- 8. Deadlines for Processing 415-15-05-15 - Change**
- 9. Applications – Receipt of 415-15-05-25 - Change**
- 10. Reapplication Procedures 415-15-05-30 - Change**
- 11. Verification of Other Eligibility Factors 415-15-10-20 - Change**
- 12. Benefits Available 415-20-05 - Change**
- 13. Benefits for Heating Assistance 415-20-05-05 – Change**
- 14. Electric Heating 415-20-05-05-02 - Repeal**
- 15. Utility Costs 415-20-05-05-05 - Repeal**
- 16. “Topping Off” Tanks 415-20-05-05-25 - Change**
- 17. Electric Utility Benefits 415-20-05-08 - New**

18. Premium Benefits 415-20-05-10 – Change
19. Furnace and/or Chimney Cleaning 415-20-05-10-05 - Change
20. Eligible Households 415-20-10 - Change
21. Part-Time Residents and Non-Resident Applicants 415-20-10-10 - Change
22. Migrant Workers 415-20-10-20 - Change
23. Temporary Absences 415-20-10-40 - Change
24. Eligibility Determination 415-25 - Change
25. Child or Adult Dependent Care 415-25-05-05-20 – Change
26. Unearned Income 415-25-05-20-20 – Change
27. Deductions from Income 415-25-05-05 – Change
28. Medical Expenses 415-25-05-05-05 - Change
29. Eligibility for Back Bills and Reimbursements 415-25-05-35 - Change
30. Benefit Computation 415-30 - Change
31. Eligible Months – Computation 415-30-01 - Change
32. Cost of Heating – Secondary Heat Source 415-30-15-05 - Change
33. Cost of Heating – Counting Bedrooms 415-30-15-10 - Change
34. Cost of Heating – Different in Months Prior to Application 415-30-15-15 –
Change, Title Change
35. Authorization Period Computation 415-30-20 – Change
36. Payments Not Required Prior to the Month of Application 415-30-20-05 -
Repeal
37. Bill Owed to Current Heating Vendor 415-30-20-10-05 - Change

38. Bills Owed to Different Vendor 415-30-20-10-10 - Change
39. Reimbursements for Paid Bills 415-30-20-10-15 - Change
40. Renter Benefits Computation 415-30-30 - Change
41. Renter Benefits – Computation of Monthly Payment 415-30-30-10 – Change
42. Renter Benefit for New Case with Old Vendor Bills 415-30-30-20 - Change
43. Renter Benefit – New Vendor 415-30-30-25 - Repeal
44. Payment Methods – How to Choose 415-30-30-25 - Change
45. Automated Vendor Billing/Payment – Procedures for Designated Primary Vendors 415-35-10 - Change, Title Change
46. Renter Payments 415-35-15 - Change
47. Miscellaneous On-Line Payments Procedures 415-35-20 - Change,
48. Miscellaneous Payments – To a Designated Primary Vendor 415-35-20-15-05 - Repeal
49. Miscellaneous Payments to a Non-Participating Vendor 415-35-20-15-10 - Repeal
50. Miscellaneous Payments – To a Secondary Vendor 415-35-20-15-15 - Repeal
51. Miscellaneous – Reimbursements to the Household 415-35-20-20-05 - Change
52. Miscellaneous – Reimbursements for Monthly Payment Plans 415-35-20-20-10 - Repeal
53. Miscellaneous – Renter “Catch-Up” Payments 415-35-20-20-15 - Change
54. Miscellaneous – To Household When Bill Not in Applicant’s Name 415-35-20-20-20 - Change
55. Premium Payments – On-Line Payment Procedures 415-35-25 - Change, Title Change

56. Furnace/Chimney Cleaning and Service Efficiency Maintenance 415-35-25-05 - Change
57. Emergency Payment On-Line Payment Procedures 415-35-30 - Repeal
58. Emergency Payment – Approved Application of File 415-35-30-05 - Change
59. Emergency Payment – Denied Application on File 415-35-30-10 - Change
60. Emergency Payment – No Application on File 415-35-30-15 - Change
61. Duplicate Dates 415-35-35-05 - Change
62. Emergency Payments for Old Bills 415-35-35-10 - Repeal
63. Third Party Payments 415-35-40 - Change
64. Definitions (Changes) 415-40-01 – Repeal
65. Household Reporting Requirements 415-40-05 - Change
66. Change in Household Members – Effective Date 415-40-10-05 – Change
67. Changes Affecting Eligibility 415-40-10-05-05 - Repeal
68. Moves of Changes in Heating Source-Effective Dates 415-40-15 - Change
69. Changes Affecting Bills Already Paid or Incurred 415-40-20 - Change
70. Computer Output 415-45 - Repeal
71. Pending Cases 415-45-01 - Repeal
72. Remittance Advice 415-45-05 - Change
73. Payment Rejection List (State Office Use Only) 415-45-10 - Change
74. Rejection Messages, Probable Problems, Resolutions 415-45-10-05 - Change
75. County Vendor Printout 415-45-15 – Repeal

- 76. Emergency Home Energy Assistance 415-50 - Change**
- 77. Electric Utilities 415-50-05-25 - Change**
- 78. Application 415-50-10-05 - Change**
- 79. Emergency Assistance Eligibility Guidelines 415-50-10-10- Change**
- 80. Emergency Payments on Old Bills 415-50-10-20 - Change**
- 81. Exception to Limitation for Emergency Services 415-50-15 - Change**
- 82. Deposits 415-50-20 - Change**
- 83. Cooling Assistance Program 415-60 - Change**

Policy Section Updates

1. Definitions 415-05-05 - Change

Authorization Dates

These are the dates between which you want the client to receive services from a vendor.

(~~Example: Jane applies in the middle of December and is eligible back to October 1. She paid the October and November bills, but not for December. You would reimburse her for the October and November bills and start the authorization period from December 1.~~) (See also [415-30-20](#))

Energy Crisis

Weather-related and supply shortage emergencies and other household energy-related emergencies.

Examples include (but are not limited to):

- Heat-related shut off or disconnection notice
- Near-empty fuel tank and refusal to deliver
- Non-heat electric utility shut off or disconnection notice

Home Energy

~~This term means a source of heating or cooling in a residential dwelling. This includes any type of heating fuel, the mechanical system necessary to produce heat from fuel, and/or all the residential electrical energy if a portion is necessary to operate heating or cooling systems.~~

Home energy references all energy sources used within a household for heating, cooling, and electrical utility power.

2. Staffing Needs 415-05-55 – Change

Appropriate administrative methods must be implemented to at least partially alleviate the temporarily excessive workloads that may occur ~~at the beginning of the heating season~~ while administering the LIHEAP program. The level and extent of county social service board Human Service Zone (HSZ) workload must be assessed, and sufficient staff employed, or staff reassigned, as needed, on a temporary, part-time or full-time basis. Staffing may need to be employed and/or reassigned on a temporary, part-time, and or full-time basis as the needs arise.

3. Records Retention Policy 415-05-60-10 - Change

Though there is client eligibility overlap from fiscal year to fiscal year, the The LIHEAP program year terminates at the end of each Federal Fiscal Year or September 30 of each calendar year. Casefiles may be closed throughout the year for various reasons, and but all remaining open casefiles are considered open, even if their eligibility carries over into a new fiscal year. ~~closed on September 30. A new casefile is established at the beginning of each federal fiscal year.~~ All casefile activity will be tracked within the given fiscal year that the activity occurs.

4. Outreach Services to Individuals 415-10-05-10 - Change

~~The county social service board~~ Human Service Zone (HSZ) offices will provide outreach activities and services to assist households to understand, verify, or otherwise complete the application, when necessary, especially when a member of the household is elderly or disabled. Direct outreach activities and services for heating assistance and emergency assistance may include, but are not limited to:

1. Assistance with Application Process

Most potential applicants can ~~are able to~~ complete the application and obtain needed verification and understand the payment procedures without assistance. Many of these applications and certifications can be handled successfully by mail or telephone contact. The applicant has 30 days from the date an application is received in the HSZ ~~county~~ office to provide all necessary information and verifications. If, however, a potential applicant does not respond to written or telephone requests for additional information, it is the responsibility of the ~~county social service board~~ Human Service Zone (HSZ) to offer to provide the applicant with assistance in obtaining the necessary information before a decision is made to deny the application because of lack of verification. ~~No application shall be denied based on lack of verification unless the case file documents that the applicant refused to provide the information or that every effort was made to assist the applicant in obtaining necessary verification.~~ Applications will not be denied on the immediate lack of verification unless the applicant refuses to provide the verification documents necessary to process to case. Every effort will be made to assist the household obtain the necessary verification documentation to process the case.

In some cases, a face-to-face interview with the applicant may be necessary. If the applicant cannot come to the ~~social service~~ office by reason of age, illness, disability, lack of child care or transportation, isolation, work schedule,

- or other appropriate reason, it is the responsibility of the ~~county social service board~~ Human Service Zone (HSZ) to arrange another means of making contact. This may include:
- a) Home visits, when necessary;
 - b) Arranging for transportation or assistance from another staff person, friend, or relative;
 - c) Providing application forms, assistance, advice, information and services at alternate sites, especially in outlying communities, senior citizen centers, etc.;
 - d) Mailing of applications and instructions when appropriate and providing follow-up to assure applicant receives and understands needed services;
 - e) Providing advice and other information through personal and telephone contact;
 - f) Scheduling appointments for the convenience of the applicants;
 - g) Providing extended office hours when necessary;
 - h) Arranging for communication assistance, if necessary, for applicants who are non-English speaking or who have a communication disability; and
 - i) Providing procedures for after hour emergencies to provide at least minimal assistance.
2. Referrals to Weatherization Services ~~...~~ and Workers will send referrals to weatherization services when necessary and assist the households by providing or securing home energy conservation advice or information for individual households or groups of households.
3. Enable Communications Between Suppliers and Eligible Households ~~...~~ and Workers will act as a facilitator to develop realistic payment agreements when necessary.
4. Assistance with Improved Economic and Energy Self-Sufficiency by:
Provision of or referral to credit, financial, or other appropriate counseling;
Provision of Case Management Services and advocacy; and
Assisting applicants to develop self-sufficiency action plans and services.

5. Vendor Budget Payment Plans 415-10-10-15 – Change

Many LIHEAP participants ~~recipients~~ can benefit from participating in budget payment plans offered by all major utilities and by many other fuel vendors. However, participants ~~recipients~~ may be reluctant to participate in a year around payment plan if the amount of the monthly payments does not consider ~~take into~~

~~account~~ the amount of ~~fuel~~ energy assistance received and reduce the monthly payment accordingly.

Vendors may achieve increased participation in budget plans if they will deduct the amount of the annual ~~fuel~~ energy assistance from the customer's estimated consumption cost before calculating monthly payment amounts.

The customer's annual ~~fuel~~ energy assistance benefit can be estimated by multiplying the customer's co-payment percentage times the actual ~~heating~~ energy bills from the previous ~~heating season~~ year. Example: The vendor determines that annual consumption for the previous ~~heating season~~ year (October 1—June 30) was \$1200. The customer is eligible for LIHEAP benefits but is still responsible for a co-payment of 50% of the heating costs. The customer's annual ~~fuel~~ energy assistance benefit would be estimated at \$600. The vendor would then deduct the customer's estimated annual ~~fuel~~ energy assistance of \$600 from the estimated annual ~~heating~~ energy consumption of \$1200, add any additional costs for the ~~non-heating months~~ (July 1—September 30), and divided the result by 12 to determine the amount the customer would pay in even payments year around.

The advantage to the vendor is that ~~he~~ they will not be carrying large bills during ~~the peak of the heating season~~ when the cost of ~~heat~~ energy is the greatest, because the customer would have accumulated a credit. The customer would be able to maintain a more balanced monthly budget.

Some vendors may prefer to set up budget plans, but suspend them during the time LIHEAP is paying on the ~~heating~~ energy bills. This can also work, especially for customers whose low-income problems are short term or seasonal. However, for the consistently low-income customer, the monthly payment amount may still be unmanageable and therefore discourage ~~his~~ their participation.

Neither the vendors nor the LIHEAP ~~participants~~ recipients can be required to participate in budget payment plans. However, the Human Service Zone (HSZ) ~~county social service~~ office should strongly encourage both vendors and customers to negotiate in advance some type of reasonable payment arrangement for ~~heating~~ energy costs not covered by LIHEAP.

6. Case Management – Termination of Services 415-10-15-15 – Change

By Request: The referral source, the customer, or the case manager may terminate case management services at any time after written notification to each

other. The cost of all services provided prior to written termination shall be authorized.

Customer Moves: Authorization for LIHEAP services will be terminated when a household moves out of the jurisdiction of the referral source. The household may or may not be re-referred by the receiving referral source. The initial referral source may transfer file information.

End of ~~End of Eligibility Period~~ LIHEAP Program Year: Technically, all LIHEAP households are ineligible at the end of their eligibility period ~~on September 30 of each year~~. However, to allow time for the household to reapply or complete their review and the HSZ ~~county~~ staff to process and enter the data in the electronic file without an interruption of service:

1. LIHEAP will extend payment authorization two months past their end date of eligibility ~~through November 30~~ unless it is known that the household will not reapply or will not be LIHEAP eligible.
2. Payment will not be authorized after the two month extension period ~~November 30~~ if the electronic file has not been updated and activated. In such cases, a complete new referral will be needed to continue case management services.
3. LIHEAP payments shall not be authorized for any new referrals until the household has been approved for LIHEAP and the new electronic file activated.

7. Deadlines for Application 415-15-05-10 – Change

Applications will be accepted for this program any time during the calendar year ~~beginning October 1~~. All applications must be completed, signed, and received by the Human Service Zone ~~county social service board~~ by the close of business on May 31 of each year. If May 31 falls on a weekend or holiday, the deadline for receipt of signed applications will be the first working day after May 31 by close of business. Those households who apply in May have 30 days to provide verifications to complete the application. No amendments to the application may be accepted after May 31. Applicants must reapply each year.

The State reserves the right to deny new applications at any time prior to ~~May 31~~ if federal program funds are exhausted.

~~Households whose income is solely from a fixed income source(s) may apply for heating assistance prior to October 1 of each year. Fixed income households~~

~~who received LIHEAP in the prior year may be contacted by the county to apply as early as September 1 for the upcoming heating season.~~

~~The following income types are considered a fixed income source:~~

- ~~1) Pension~~
- ~~2) Railroad payments~~
- ~~3) Social Security~~
- ~~4) SSI~~
- ~~5) Veteran Benefits~~
- ~~6) Annuities~~
- ~~7) IRA Distributions~~

~~A complete application includes all information and verifications needed to establish eligibility and compute benefits.~~

~~If the application has not been signed, the application is not valid.~~

~~Applications from fixed-income households that arrive before October 1 will be considered to have been received on October 1. **Although the application received date is prior to October 1, the applicant will have 30 days from October 1 to provide necessary verifications and the eligibility worker will have 45 days from October 1 to process the application.**~~

8. Deadlines for Processing 415-15-05-15 - Change

The date of application (Application Received Date in SPACES) is the date the Human Service Zone (HSZ) receives a signed Application for Assistance provided the application was submitted during normal North Dakota Department of Health and Human Services business hours. When an application is submitted after normal business hours, on a weekend, or on a North Dakota Department of Health and Human Service holiday, the application is considered received the next business day. The HSZ must document the date an application is filed by recording the date it was received on the application. The processing timeframe begins the day following the date of application.

NOTE: If the application is signed but not dated, the date stamp (date received in HSZ county) will be considered as the date the application was signed.

~~Applications from fixed-income households that arrive before October 1 will be considered to have been received on October 1. **Although the application received date is prior to October 1, the worker will have 45 days from October 1 to process the application.**~~

9. Applications – Receipt of 415-15-05-25 - Change

The Human Service Zone (HSZ) county social service office shall provide application forms to any individual, agency, fuel vendor, etc., who may wish to distribute and assist a potential applicant in completing the form. ALL applications MUST be received by the ~~county social service board~~ HSZ, however, and reviewed for eligibility. NO OTHER agency may make any decision regarding eligibility or the level of benefits.

Applications may be received, filed and maintained at any HSZ within the state, based on what is most convenient for the applicant or participants recipients.

~~NOTE: When a household applies for fuel assistance and is income-eligible for prior months when they were living in a different county (in the early months of the same fuel season), the current county will complete the eligibility process. The eligibility will be based on the cost of heating at the time of the application.~~

~~Example: Household lived in Burleigh County from October through December and did not apply for fuel assistance. The household moved to Morton County in January and applied for fuel assistance. The Morton County LIHEAP staff will determine eligibility that includes October through December. The LIHEAP Share percentage will be based on the household's current income and estimated cost of heating and will be applied to prior months in which eligibility exists.~~

Face-to-face interviews shall not be required unless factors affecting eligibility cannot be clarified by telephone or mail. Circumstances which may indicate the need for a face-to-face interview include:

1. An applicant has a history of misrepresentation;
2. An applicant has difficulty understanding written communication;
3. The application has discrepancies or complex resource information which cannot be resolved by telephone or mail; and
4. The applicant is a "high risk" for Emergency Assistance and an interview is appropriate for crisis prevention (see [415-50-02-05](#)).

HSZ ~~Counties~~ who elect to routinely schedule applications by interview must inform the applicant that the interview can be waived if it will cause undue

hardship because of poor health, lack of transportation, age, disability, isolation, or conflicting work schedules. HSZs are encouraged to be innovative, assisting in providing assistance to applicants who cannot come to the HSZ office.

Example: In some cases, if weather conditions are poor and an emergency need for fuel or electricity exists, the application might be taken by phone, and if income verifications can be done with collateral contacts, the application could be sent with the energy fuel vendor when they he makes an emergency delivery of fuel so the applicant can sign it.

If alternate methods are not successful in assisting the applicant to complete or understand the application or payment procedures, the HSZ county office must arrange a personal contact. This may require a home visit if the applicant cannot come to the office and other arrangements are not practical.

10. Reapplication Procedures 415-15-05-30 - Change

Only one application per heating season will be required for each household, UNLESS the case was originally denied or closed. A new application is required if a case has been denied or closed.

~~If a household which had originally been denied wishes to reapply, a new application is required.~~

11. Verification of Other Eligibility Factors 415-15-10-20 – Change

Verification of the applicant's statement of resources, or any other factor of eligibility and benefit determination, may be required whenever it is questionable in the judgment of the Human Service Zone (HSZ) board representative. If the required verification is refused, the application may be denied. In addition to the household income, eligibility and/or benefit determination factors include, but are not limited to identity, location and size of home, type of fuel, various dates, household composition, vulnerability, etc.

The following are illustrations of circumstances in which the eligibility worker would find it "prudent" to make further inquiry into the applicant's eligibility status:

1. The applicant's situation indicates potential resources not reported by the applicant, such as sick leave benefits, eligibility for OASDI, veterans benefits, or unemployment compensation;

2. The applicant's condition indicates that some, if not all, of the eligibility factors need further inquiry or verification. This would include instances in which the applicant:
 - a) Appears to be mentally confused.
 - b) Is physically ill or disabled and unable to participate adequately in the eligibility determination process.
 - c) Has a known history of misrepresentation.
 - d) Is a transient or someone who changes his address frequently or who has no permanent place of abode.

50-50 Custody Arrangement Verification

If there is a court order, legal agreement, or a notarized agreement between both parents that indicates that both parents have 50% custody of their children, each parent can count the children in their separate household when applying for LIHEAP.

A copy of the court order or agreement must be saved in the case file for each eligibility period heating season, as verification. If the document is dated a year ago or more, verify and document on the copy that the court order, legal agreement, or notarized agreement is still accurate.

12. Benefits Available 415-20-05 – Change

Any benefits paid under the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) must be directly related to home energy costs only. There are four three broad categories of benefits: 1) Heating assistance LIHEAP benefits; 2) Electric Utility Benefits 3) Premium LIHEAP benefits; and 4) Emergency LIHEAP Assistance benefits. (~~See Emergency Fuel Assistance Service Chapter 415-50.~~)

Though a household may be determined eligible for LIHEAP, the issuance of some or all benefits may be adjusted or suspended at any time, subject to the availability of program funds, as determined by the State Office.

13. Benefits for Heating Assistance 415-20-05-05 – Change

~~Allowable heating related costs which may be billed directly to LIHEAP include: all types of energy sources (oil, propane, natural gas, electricity, wood, kerosene, coal) used to provide heat to the eligible household's living unit only; and~~

incidental costs, if normally billed to the household, including connection and re-connection charges, delivery charges, or propane tank rental.

Eligible households can receive heating assistance benefits for a primary and secondary heat source for the eligible household's living unit only.

Allowable energy-related costs which may be billed directly to LIHEAP at any time during the calendar year included:

- Energy sources such as oil, propane, natural gas, electricity, wood, kerosene, and coal.
 - **Note:** When a household identifies electricity as a heat source, it will ALWAYS be listed as the primary source of heat in the case file.
- Incidental costs, if normally billed to the household, including:
 - Propane tank rental
 - Wireless monitoring devices
 - Set-up or hook-up charges/ Connection and re-connection charges
 - Leak-check charges
 - Same day delivery charges
 - Regulators

Propane Tank rentals

- Propane tank rentals must be billed year-round during the regular heating season (October 1 – May 31).
- Use fuel type "08-Tank Rental" to bill for these charges.
- Assistance with tank rental charges prior to eligibility after May 31 must be handled through emergency assistance.
- ~~LIHEAP will **not** pay for tank rental charges associated with secondary heat sources.~~
- LIHEAP does **not** purchase tanks or pay installment payments for tanks which are on a purchase contract.

Wireless Monitors

- Wireless Monitor charges can must be billed year round during the regular heating season (October 1 – May 31).
- Use fuel type "08-Tank Rental" to bill for these charges.
- Assistance with wireless monitor rental charges prior to eligibility after May 31 must be handled through emergency assistance.
- LIHEAP will **not** pay for wireless monitor installation charges associated with secondary heat sources.

Set-up or Hook-up Charges

- The set-up or hook-up of a new tank or the connection or re-connection of a tank, service, or utility can be billed any time during the calendar year must take place during the regular heating season (October 1 – May 31).
- Use fuel type "16-Setup/Hook-up Costs" to bill for these charges.
- Assistance with setups or of hook-ups or the connection or re-connection of a tank, service, or utility prior to eligibility after May 31 must be handled through emergency assistance.
- ~~LIHEAP will not pay for set-up/hook-up charges associated with secondary heat sources.~~

Incidental Charges Same Day Delivery Charges

- **Incidentals**, such as same-day delivery charges or leak check costs, can be added to the delivery cost.

Leak Check Charges

- Leak check charges can be added to the cost of the delivery.

Regulators

- Regulators are the client's property, therefore the replacement charges for obsolete or non-functioning regulators, along with the miscellaneous costs needed for the hook-up of the regulator may be billed to LIHEAP.
- Use fuel type "16-Setup/Hook-up Costs" to bill for these charges.
- These charges can be billed to the LIHEAP **anytime during the calendar year**.

NOTE: ~~If regulators are replaced outside of the regular heating season the worker will need to enter the payment as a miscellaneous payment.~~

Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program payments to vendors can be made ONLY for actual cost of allowable fuel and services that are incurred by the customer during their period of eligibility. If the household is deemed eligible, home energy charges incurred prior to eligibility may be covered under emergency assistance.

Allowable heating-related costs are paid at the client's established LIHEAP Share percentage.

14. Electric Heating 415-20-05-05-02 - Repeal

~~LIHEAP households who heat with electricity may also have installed devices such as demand control, off-peak, dual heating systems or sub-metering which offer reduced electric heating rates. When a household has off-peak electric heat, the electric vendor requires the household to have a whole-home back-up (supplemental) heating system therefore, **electricity is to be considered the primary heat source in this situation.**~~

15. Utility Costs 415-20-05-05-05 - Repeal

~~Other utility costs may NOT be billed as heating assistance costs except when the cost of heat cannot be differentiated from the total fuel cost. For households with electric heat, the LIHEAP system calculates a LIHEAP share percentage (LS%) that is 75% of what it would be for any other fuel. This is to adjust for the non-heating portions (lights, TV, etc.) of each electric bill that is submitted. By using the adjusted LS%, LIHEAP is paying benefits based upon a presumed heating cost that is 75% of the entire metered residential bill. The LIHEAP system is "presuming" non-heating electric costs to be 25% of the total residential usage. This presumed electric utility cost may NOT be rebilled to LIHEAP.~~

16. "Topping Off" Tanks 415-20-05-05-25 - Change

Tanks may be "topped off" anytime during the calendar year at the end of the heating season (deadline is May 31), provided that the household has either requested or authorized the fuel delivery. LIHEAP will not honor bills if the household did not want the fuel or if the household has moved prior to the delivery.

17. Electric Utility Benefits 415-20-05-08- New

Eligible households can receive year-round electric utility benefits either in conjunction with their heating assistance benefits (as long as they are not using electricity as a heat source) or on a stand-alone basis.

NOTE: The one exception to the above rule is a client who has electricity as a heat source and electricity as a utility being billed separately.

EXAMPLE 1: Jane is a renter who is eligible for LIHEAP and has electric heat is included in her rent. Jane also has a separate electric utility bill that is in her

name (metered separately). Jane would be eligible for both an electric Heating Assistance “renter” benefit and the Electric Utility benefit.

EXAMPLE 2: Jess is a homeowner who is eligible for LIHEAP and has an electric furnace. Jess’s electric heating bill is combined with their electric utility bill. Jess would only receive the electric Heating Assistance benefit and not the Electric Utility benefit.

EXAMPLE 3: John is a subsidized renter who is eligible for LIHEAP and has electric heat included in his rent. John also has a separate electric utility bill that is in his name (metered separately). John would not be eligible for heating assistance benefits as his rent is subsidized, but he would be eligible for electric utility benefits because he would be subject to the rising costs of home energy.

NOTE: When a household identifies electricity as a heat source, it will ALWAYS be listed as the primary source of heat in the casefile.

Allowable energy-related costs which may be billed directly to LIHEAP at any time during the calendar year include:

- Electric power usage
- Incidental costs including:
 - Connection
 - Re-connection charges

NOTE: LIHEAP will not cover the costs of solar panels, or any items related to personally owned solar energy.

18. Premium Benefits 415-20-05-10 – Change

Households eligible to receive Energy Heating Assistance are also eligible for "Premium" benefits, subject to the conditions described for each premium benefit. Requests for furnace cleaning and chimney cleaning may be made any time during the calendar ~~October 1 – July 31st of the current year.~~ Electric rate reduction devices may be requested any time during the calendar ~~October 1 – September 30th of each year.~~

The household is not required to be eligible under the guidelines of the Emergency Assistance Program. Premium benefits are designed to meet special needs.

19. Furnace and/or Chimney Cleaning 415-20-05-15-05 - Change

To prevent a heating crisis and promote safety and energy conservation, premium benefits can be paid to clean the furnace of an eligible household. Up to \$500 per household (exceptions must be approved by the State Administrator) may be used for travel, labor, furnace cleaning, maintenance, and service including the cost of replacement parts such as fuel nozzle, filter, etc., necessary for maintenance and service. An additional payment of up to \$150 per household may be allowed for chimney cleaning when necessary for safety. All households who were financially eligible for basic LIHEAP heating assistance in any prior month of the current fiscal year are also eligible for these services, except as noted in the following paragraph.

~~**Exception for furnace cleaning for those now eligible:** If a household had a furnace cleaning done prior to LIHEAP eligibility (but within the current heating season) and the vendor can fill out the furnace and chimney cleaning form with accuracy then the cost of furnace cleaning can be reimbursed to the client upon providing proof of full payment or to the vendor if furnace cleaning has not yet been paid for by the client.~~

One furnace cleaning per household per eligibility period season is allowed. The household has the choice of a primary or secondary furnace being cleaned in a season.

When a furnace cleaning and/ or chimney cleaning is completed by a vendor, the household must needs to sign the form. No payment will be made on the form unless there is a signature.

If the vendor, while cleaning the furnace, identifies an emergency repair is needed. ~~When~~ the **Human Service Zone (HSZ) is responsible for emergency furnace repairs.** ~~The~~ HSZ must needs to take the following steps:

- a. ~~E~~nsure that the furnace is not functional or poses a threat to the household's health and safety.
- b. Have the household fill out an application for emergency assistance
- c. Determine whether the household is eligible (income and asset)
- d. Contact a vendor to repair the furnace (two bids are not needed for furnace repair)

- e. When the furnace has been repaired, it should be determined that the household is satisfied with the repair and the vendor's costs are reasonable. Furnace breakdowns on a weekend may be reimbursed if an eligible household reports to the HSZ immediately on Monday. Households should contact the office in a timely manner to have emergency furnace repair bills paid or reimbursed. **Prudent judgment** by the eligibility worker is to be used to determine if payment or reimbursement is issued.

Furnace and/or chimney cleaning may be authorized for renters or homeowners who purchase fuel from a vendor, but not for a renter whose heat is included as an undesignated part of the rent. Furnace and/or chimney cleaning should not be authorized if the heating unit services more than one living unit and other households in the building are not LIHEAP participants recipients.

Requests for furnace/chimney cleanings may be made any time during an eligibility period. ~~October 1 – July 31 of the current heating season.~~

Some LIHEAP-eligible households have yearly maintenance contracts with energy fuel vendors. Vendors are responsible for repairing any appliance in the household, including cleaning the furnace. The vendor must notify the HSZ (unless the household has already requested a furnace cleaning from the vendor) that they are going to do a furnace/chimney cleaning and request a furnace/chimney cleaning form from the HSZ. The vendor then must verify the cleaning by supplying the HSZ county office with the completed furnace/chimney cleaning form (at this time, inform the HSZ county that the household has a vendor contract). The HSZ can reimburse the household when the bill and the completed furnace/chimney cleaning form are received. The charge for the furnace cleaning has to be in line with other furnace cleaning done to similar furnaces.

Prior authorization by the HSZ is required. It is the responsibility of the client to choose a vendor who can perform the required services. The furnace/chimney cleaning authorization is generated in the integrated eligibility system by the HSZ. The authorization is sent from the state office to the vendor. The vendor in turn calls the client and sets up an appointment for the furnace/chimney cleaning.

20. Eligible Households 415-20-10 - Change

Generally, eligible households (See [415-05-05](#), Definitions) will fall into two groups, those who pay a energy fuel-vendor directly and those whose cost of

heating or electric utility is included as an undesignated portion of their rent payments. The basic eligibility for both groups is determined similarly; that is, the household must meet income limitations of the program. (Tenants of subsidized housing in which heat and/or electricity is included in the rent are not eligible. If a subsidized household has heat or electricity included in their rent, but they have the opposite (heat or electricity) bill in their name, the household is eligible for only the heat or electric bill in their name. (See [415-20-10-30](#))

Eligibility and benefits can be established for heating costs incurred by the household **only** during the time they were physically occupying a residence (living unit) in North Dakota. (See [415-20-10-40](#), Temporary Absences, for exception).

Though a household may be determined eligible for LIHEAP, the issuance of some or all benefits may be adjusted or suspended at any time, subject to the availability of program funds, as determined by the State Office.

21. Part-Time Residents and Non-Resident Applicants 415-20-10-10 - Change

A household may **NOT** apply for North Dakota Heating or Emergency Assistance if even though they have already moved out of state.

Eligibility and benefits can only be established for an applicant who is currently residing within the State of North Dakota. Emergency benefits will only be provided to a current eligible resident of North Dakota while they reside in North Dakota.

~~However, eligibility and benefits can only be established for heating incurred by the household at the time it was physically occupying a residence in North Dakota, but emergency assistance cannot be provided to any energy costs not incurred in the current living unit.~~

See [415-30-20](#) for instructions regarding determination of eligibility and benefits for this circumstance.

Similarly, households who maintain a permanent residence in North Dakota may elect to leave the state during the winter months or live with a friend or relative, maintaining only a minimum of heat and electricity in their permanent home. An eligible household may be approved for benefits for heating costs incurred during the time they actually live in their permanent North Dakota residence **ONLY**.

22. Migrant Workers 415-20-10-20 - Repeal

~~A migrant worker is a person who has left his 'home' or accepted place of residence temporarily to do hired field or food processing work which requires travel such that the worker is unable to return 'home' within the same day.~~

~~Migrant workers from other states can be expected to arrive in North Dakota during the latter part of the LIHEAP heating season. Occasionally they will bring with them unpaid or prepaid fuel costs incurred in their 'home' states. North Dakota LIHEAP funds shall NOT be available for fuel costs incurred in any other state. The household may be referred to the other state's LIHEAP program.~~

~~Migrant workers ARE eligible to apply for and receive heating assistance benefits in North Dakota if they incur heating bills in North Dakota between October 1 and May 31, or until federal program funds are depleted.~~

23. Temporary Absences 415-20-10-40- Change

Occasionally, an applicant may be forced to temporarily live away from their his permanent home due to illness or other circumstances beyond their his control.

If the applicant intends to return to their his home within a reasonable time period (up to three months), LIHEAP funds may be used to pay for the cost of maintaining energy costs a minimum of heat in the home during their his absence at the prescribed LIHEAP share.

Examples:

1. An elderly person in nursing home for a short stay.
2. Persons of any age that need to go away from home a short time because they cannot care for themselves.
3. Someone away for a reasonable time for medical treatment.

24. Eligibility Determination 415-25 - Change

Applicant households must meet income eligibility criteria in order to receive benefits under LIHEAP.

LIHEAP Heating Assistance benefits will be paid ONLY for bills incurred during the months in which eligibility exists.

~~Eligibility for applications received prior to the first month of the heating season will be based on income received. In October, the first month of the heating season.~~

Eligibility will be based on countable income. (See policy Annualizing Income 415-25-05-15.)

Though a household may be determined eligible for LIHEAP, the issuance of some or all benefits may be adjusted or suspended at any time, subject to the availability of program funds, as determined by the State Office.

25. Child or Adult Dependent Care 415-25-05-05-20 – Change

The out-of-pocket dependent care costs are only allowable for the care of a child under the age of 18, an incapacitated household member, or other elderly or disabled dependent when necessary for a household member to:

- Accept of continue employment
- Seek employment
- Attend training or pursue education preparatory to employment

Incapacitation refers to any permanent or temporary condition that prevents an individual from participating fully in normal activities, including but not limited to work or school, without supervision and that requires the care of another person to ensure the health and safety of the individual, or a condition or situation that makes lack of supervision risky to the health and safety of that individual.

If the household incurs dependent care costs that could qualify as both a medical deduction and dependent care deduction, the costs may be deducted as a medical expense or a dependent care expense, but not both.

The portion of dependent care costs that will be reimbursed are not allowable.

Example:

The child care expense for one child is \$750 and CCAP reimburses the household \$300 which is applied toward that child care bill.

1. Disregard as income the \$300 CCAP payment.
2. Allow a child care deduction in the amount of \$450 (\$750 total child care expense incurred minus the \$300 child care payment).

Dependent care expenses will be allowed only if the service is provided by someone outside the LIHEAP household.

Example:

Grandma, mom, and child are all in the same LIHEAP and SNAP household. Grandma is providing child care for the child and receiving a CCAP payment of \$300. Mom is paying out of pocket expenses to grandma of \$50. The \$300 CCAP payment is counted as earned self-employment income to grandma. The \$50 mom is paying grandma out of pocket is not counted as income to grandma and is not allowed as an expense for mom.

If the household verifies that payments are being made on a regular monthly basis, the monthly amount may be annualized before deducting it from the income. However, if the payments have been irregular, only those payments actually made the previous 12 months ~~since June 1~~ may be deducted.

26. Unearned Income 415-25-05-20-20 - Change

8. Recurring Lump Sum Payments are those payments that can be reasonably anticipated to be received more than once. Payments may be recurring monthly, quarterly, yearly, etc.

Recurring payments received or anticipated to be received ~~between the previous June 1 and the following May 31~~ are annualized.

Recurring Lump Sum Payments include but are not limited to the following:

- Gambling winnings
- Mineral lease bonuses, oil and gas royalties. Any mandatory production taxes withheld prior to distribution are not counted and are allowed to reduce the amount of countable income. Any income taxes withheld are not allowed to reduce the amount of countable income.
- Alaska Permanent Fund Payments
- Insurance settlements
- Inheritance

- Income received from a trust - Submit SFN 1947, Request for Trust Review, along with complete copies of all trust agreements to the Legal Advisory Unit of the Department of Human Services for review.
- Lump sum retroactive social security payments when the individual had earnings in the year prior to the adjustment

27. Deductions from Income 415-25-05-05 – Change

Some expenses over which the household has little or no control reduce the amount of funds available to the household to spend on fuel.

The following expenses are deducted from the household's gross income:

1. Medical expenses as defined in [415-25-05-05-05](#).
2. Legally obligated child or spousal support payments paid by a household member to or for a non-household member, including payments made to a third party on behalf of the non-household member. If the household verifies that payments are being made on a regular monthly basis, the monthly amount may be annualized before deducting it from the income. However, if the payments have been irregular, only those payments actually made in the previous 12 months ~~since June 4~~ may be deducted.
3. The fully automated Child Support Enforcement System can be used to verify household legal obligation to pay child support. Other types of verification can be used also such as copies of court documents, child support stubs, wage stubs, etc.
4. Twenty-seven percent (27%) of earned income (to compensate for income producing employment expenses and income withheld or payments made for social security and Federal and State taxes). This does NOT apply to Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Training, Education, Employment, and Management/Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), interest income, etc. See [415-25-05-20-05](#) for a description of earned income.
5. The annualized amount of wages garnished by a court order, or other deductions/payments required by statutory law such as levies by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), etc. See [415-05-05](#) for a definition of garnishment.
6. Up to \$500/month may be deducted from household income for a head of household or spouse who must reside away from home for all of the school week for higher education purposes. Prorate the deduction down if the student is away for less than a full school week, but if the student is away less than 50% of the school week, no deduction will be allowed. This

deduction will be further reduced by any portion of exempt educational income which is available to the student for living costs.

7. Up to \$500/month may be deducted from the earnings of a head of household or spouse who must reside away from home for all of the work week for employment purposes. Prorate the deduction down if the worker is away for less than a full work week, but if the worker is away less than 50% of the work week, no deduction will be allowed. This deduction will be further reduced by any reimbursement or subsistence allowance provided by the employer for living expenses while on the job. This work expense deduction will be deducted from gross earnings after the 27% earned income deduction is made.
8. Additional mandatory employment or educational expenses that are significant and unusual that are determined by the State Program Administrator to be unavailable to the household.
9. Out-of-pocket child or adult dependent care costs related to work, training, or educational purposes that are not reimbursed to the household from any source. If the household verifies that payments are being made on a regular monthly basis, the monthly amount may be annualized before deducting it from the income. However, if the payments have been irregular, only those payments actually made the previous 12 months since June 1 may be deducted.
10. Representative Payee Fees.

28. Medical Expenses 415-25-05-05-05 – Change

Calculating Medical Expenses

Allowable medical expenses are annualized as follows:

- Non-Fluctuating recurring medical expenses are annualized by using the total in month of application multiplied by 12.
- Fluctuating recurring medical expenses are averaged from a prior three-month period if that is indicative of what the household anticipates to have as ongoing medical expenses. Multiply the average monthly amount by 12 to arrive at an annual expense.

If a recurring medical expense does not have a three-month history (ex: new prescription) but the worker can establish what the household anticipates as a monthly ongoing expense, the expense can be annualized (x12).

- For **non-recurring** medical expenses only the actual amounts paid in the previous 12 months between the previous June 1 and the following May 31 in the previous 12 months are allowed as an expense.

29. Eligibility for Back Bills and Reimbursements 415-25-05-35 - Change

If the household is currently income eligible (monthly countable income minus allowable expenses) for months prior to the month of application and heating and/or electric utility energy costs were incurred prior to the month of eligibility these bills may be paid under Emergency Assistance, the LIHEAP Share Percentage of the bill can be paid on unpaid bills or the LIHEAP Share Percentage of the bill can be reimbursed to the household (for special circumstances, see 415-25-05-15-15). The LIHEAP Share Percentage is calculated on the basis of the month of application (or an average, See 415-25-05-15) and applied to bills from prior eligible months.

~~Back bills and reimbursements may NOT be paid for ANY month in which income eligibility did not exist.~~

30. Benefit Computation 415-30 - Change

The LIHEAP benefit level is expressed as a "LIHEAP Share Percentage" that will be paid on each authorized heating and/or electric utility bill that falls within an eligible month. The LIHEAP Share Percentage subtracted from 100% is the "Co-payment Percentage" which the household will be expected to pay on each heating bill.

The LIHEAP benefit level is determined by calculating the household income and the worker entering that income into the system. The system will then establish which SMI group (0%-9.9%, 10%-19.9%, 20%-29.9%, etc.) the household falls into. Based on the SMI group, the system determines what the LIHEAP Share Percentage is for the household.

Note: Though it is expected that heating benefits and electric utility benefits will be paid at the same LIHEAP Share Percentage, there may be adjustments made to the share percentages for each individual benefit type based on data collection and availability of funds.

31. Eligible Months – Computation 415-30-01 - Change

Benefits (LIHEAP Share Percentage) will generally be computed based on the household's annualized income that is calculated at time of application and applied from the month of application forward for 12 months. ~~to May 31.~~

Households can only receive LIHEAP Benefits for months prior to eligibility through Emergency Assistance.

~~If the household has income eligibility (monthly countable income minus allowable expenses) for months prior to the month of application, the ongoing LIHEAP Share Percentage and the household's co-payment percentage that have been established will be applied to bills from eligible prior months.~~

~~The months the fuel dealer is authorized to bill LIHEAP on behalf of his customer may be adjusted to include prior months of eligibility.~~

NOTE: A household will not be eligible for Emergency Assistance benefits for months prior to the month of application if the household has NO ongoing eligibility.

32. Cost of Heating – Secondary Heat Source 415-30-15-05 - Change

The same LIHEAP Share Percentage and household Co-payment Percentage that has been computed for the primary source of heat will be used to pay a secondary source of heat.

Payment on secondary heat sources can be paid throughout the eligibility period ~~heating season~~ at the established LS percentage.

LIHEAP will not pay for a secondary heat source unless it is used in a primary living space, such as a bedroom ~~that is in use~~, a kitchen, a living room, or family room.

~~NOTE: Payment of secondary heat in basement bedrooms is allowed even if the bedrooms in the basement are not counted.~~

NOTE: ~~There are no~~ Emergency payments can be made for secondary heat if it is determined a necessity to heat a living unit. Examples include: to heat a portion of the living unit that is not

heated by the primary heat source or it is meant to be a backup heat source for electric heating during off-peak or usage control time frames. Workers must use prudent judgement in determining if the loss of secondary heat poses a risk to the household or its members.

33. Cost of Heating – Counting Bedrooms 415-30-15-10 - Change

The purpose of counting bedrooms is to estimate the size of the area to be heated which has exterior walls exposed to cold outside air. This information is gathered on the application for data collection and reporting purposes. Since it is nearly impossible to completely 'close off' unused bedrooms and prevent heat loss into them, households will be allowed to count unused bedrooms.

The household will be allowed to count the number of rooms on the main, basement, and upper floors which were designed to be used as bedrooms. ~~Bedrooms in a basement cannot be counted unless the entire living unit is contained within a basement, and/or the only bedrooms in the unit are in a basement.~~ A household is not allowed to count as a bedroom any room which was structurally intended for another purpose. For example, if a member of the family sleeps in the living room, this could not be counted as a bedroom.

~~If a house is a split-level home where one or more walls of the lower level are fully exposed to the outside air, bedrooms on that floor can be counted. Similarly, "split foyer" or "raised ranch" style homes generally have 4-5 feet of the lower level above ground level and exposed to the outside air. Bedrooms on the lower level of these homes may be counted.~~

A single-detached house which has an apartment will be treated as a duplex, since the house contains two separate and complete living areas.

34. Energy Costs Cost of Heating – Different in Months Prior to Application 415-30-15-15 – Change, Title Change

Energy costs that were incurred in the months prior to application may be covered under Emergency Assistance only.

~~When the cost of heating for the month of application is different from previous months for any reason, the benefit will be calculated based upon the cost of heating at the time of application.~~

~~When a household applies for fuel assistance and was eligible in a different county previously (in the early months of the same fuel season), the current Human Service Zone (HSZ) will complete the eligibility process. The eligibility will be based on the cost of heating at the time of the application.~~

35. Authorization Period Computation 415-30-20 - Change

The purpose of the authorization period is to prevent the designated vendor from billing for energy costs provided ~~fuel delivered~~ during an ineligible time period or for fuel the customer has already paid for. Therefore, the authorization period will not necessarily include all the months a household has eligibility. The sections which follow provide examples of the correct use of the authorization period to achieve that purpose.

36. Payments Not Required to the Month of Application 415-30-20-05 – Repeal

~~The authorization period for those households who are NOT eligible for or are not requesting payment of any bills incurred prior to the month of application shall be dated from the first day of the month of application through May 31. Since benefit levels will NOT be adjusted for income changes, this authorization period would NOT be shortened to limit payments for cases with fluctuating income.~~

NOTE: Authorization periods are not shortened for the LIHEAP Program.

37. Bills Owed to Current Heating Vendor 415-30-20-10-05– Change

The authorization period for current heating vendors will begin the month of the household's application if the household is deemed eligible. ~~will be retroactive to the first month in which "continuous eligibility" was established if:~~

- ~~• the household has unpaid bills incurred prior to the month of application,~~
- ~~• the unpaid bills are owed to the household's current heating vendor, and~~
- ~~• the household was eligible during the month in which those bills were incurred.~~

Example 1: ~~The household applies for LIHEAP in February and is determined eligible from February 1st to May 31st. However, the household has also incurred unpaid bills from October through January and has been found to be~~

eligible for LIHEAP during October, December and January but not November. The authorization period will be submitted as December 1st through May 31st, provided the unpaid bills incurred during December through January were with the same vendor the household will be using for the remainder of the heating season. The vendor will be allowed to bill for these back bills in the same manner as he will bill for current unpaid bills on the computer print-out, "Request for Payment." The October bill will be paid with the "Miscellaneous and Emergency Payment" screen even though the payment may be issued to the current vendor.

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Example 2: The household applies for LIHEAP in February and is determined eligible from February 1st through May 31st. The household has also incurred unpaid bills from October through January, but was eligible only during November. The authorization period will be from February 1st through May 31st. The November bills ONLY will be paid with the "Miscellaneous or Emergency Payment" screen even though the payment may be issued to the current vendor. The current vendor will be allowed to submit ONLY current unpaid bills on the computer Printout, "Request for Payment."

38. Bills Owed to Different Vendor 415-30-20-10-10 - Change

If unpaid back bills (prior to application month) were with a different vendor, these bills may be covered under Emergency Assistance if the household is deemed eligible. the authorization period will be recorded as February 1st through May 31st, and the unpaid back bills with the previous supplier will be paid as miscellaneous payments. The current supplier will bill current unpaid bills on the computer printout, "Request for Payment."

39. Reimbursements for Paid Bills 415-30-20-10-15 - Change

LIHEAP households cannot receive reimbursement payments for bills paid prior to eligibility. If a household applies for LIHEAP and makes any payments towards bills incurred after the date of eligibility, If the household is requesting a reimbursement for bills paid prior to the month of application, and the household has been determined income eligible (monthly countable income minus allowable expenses) during the months those bills were incurred, payment can be issued to either the client or vendor, as appropriate, using the following options:

- If the household provides proof of paid bills, reimburse the client, authorize the vendor starting with a date after the last date you paid.

- If the household does not provide proof of paid bills, start the vendor authorization when the household was eligible. The vendor can now bill for paid bills, if authorized. Once the vendor has been authorized to bill, you would no longer issue reimbursements.

NOTE: The above options also apply to clients on **auto-pay** with their fuel vendor

This prevents duplicate payments.

40. Renter Benefits Computation 415-30-30 - Change

Establishing the LIHEAP benefit level for unsubsidized renters whose heating costs are included as an undesignated part of their rent will be similar to the procedures for establishing a LIHEAP benefit level for any other eligible LIHEAP applicant, with ONE EXCEPTIONS:

1. Renter benefits for heating or electric utility will come from applying the applicable SMI group to the respective data base below. ~~An additional calculation for the estimated cost of heating is necessary. The annual estimated cost of heating will be established for the renter based off fuel type and pulled from a data table. The annual estimated cost of heating will then be divided by 12 months to establish a monthly estimated cost of heating.~~

Renter Heating Benefit Table				
SMI	Fuel Oil	Propane	Electricity	Natural Gas and Other
0-10	\$183	\$146	\$125	\$58
11-20	\$183	\$146	\$125	\$58
21-30	\$174	\$139	\$119	\$55
31-40	\$156	\$124	\$106	\$50
41-50	\$119	\$95	\$81	\$38
51-60	\$83	\$66	\$56	\$26

The values on this table will be adjusted on a FY basis as determined by Federal Income Guidelines.

Renter Heating Yearly Cap	
Fuel Type	Yearly Cap
Fuel Oil	\$2,200
Propane	\$1,750
Electricity	\$1,500
Natural Gas and Other	\$700

The values on this table are subject to change depending on funding availability.

Renter Electric Utility Benefit Table	
SMI	Electric
0-10	\$125
11-20	\$125
21-30	\$119
31-40	\$106
41-50	\$81
51-60	\$56

Renter Electric Utility Yearly Cap	
Amount	
\$1,500	

41. Renter Benefits – Computation of Monthly Payment 415-30-30-10 – Change

The monthly benefit will be calculated by the integrated eligibility system computer using the following formula:

The annual estimated cap will be determined by the primary energy fuel type and pulled from the table provided in the integrated eligibility system. That amount will be divided by 12 months to determine the maximum monthly energy benefit ~~estimated cost of heating~~. The maximum monthly energy benefit ~~estimated cost of heating~~ will then be multiplied by the LIHEAP Share Percentage that will be provided from the SMI table (based off the clients income). That total will ~~then be subtracted from the monthly estimated cost of heating to determine the monthly renter benefit.~~

Note: Adjustments to benefit levels are subject to availability of funds.

Note: The benefit levels will be adjusted on a FY basis as determined by Federal Income Guidelines.

42. Renter Benefit for New Case with Unpaid Rent ~~Old Vendor Bills~~ 415-30-30-20 - Change

Occasionally a household may apply as a renter but have prior months of eligibility during which time the household paid a vendor for fuel and incurred unpaid bills or requests a reimbursement for bills paid. The unpaid bills may be paid through Emergency Assistance if the household is determined eligible. The LIHEAP Share Percentage and renter benefit will be calculated the same as the current living situation, and but the amount which will be paid out in miscellaneous payments for unpaid back bills will match the monthly Renters benefits the household will receive moving forward. ~~or reimbursements will be determined using the LIHEAP Share Percentage that is calculated for the current living situation.~~

Note: Emergency Assistance will NOT provide reimbursement payments for prior month's rent that has already been paid

Example: ~~The household applies in February and is determined eligible from February 1st through May 31st. The household has also incurred heating costs in the form of unpaid vendor bills and/or reimbursements from October through January, and is determined eligible during October, December and January, but NOT November. The LIHEAP Share Percentage for this household is computed~~

at 50%. LIHEAP could pay 50% of unpaid vendor bills and/or reimbursements for October, December, and January. No unpaid vendor bills and/or reimbursements will be paid by LIHEAP for the month of November as the household was not eligible in November. February 1 through May 31 renter/heat paid benefits will be paid at the 50% level.

43. Renter Benefit – New Vendor 415-30-30-25 - Repeal

For a household who applies and pays a fuel vendor, but has prior months of eligibility as a renter with heat paid, reimbursement using "miscellaneous payments" should be used for any eligibility for renter benefits. The LIHEAP Share Percentage will be based on income in the month of application, and applied to the renter reimbursement for any prior month. This calculation must be done manually.

44. Payment Methods – How to Choose 415-30-30-25 - Change

There are three basic payment methods.

1. Automated Vendor Billing Payment (Automated)
There are three types of vendor billing payments: primary secondary, and electric utility. There can only be one energy vendor associated to each.
Only one vendor, designated by the household as a primary vendor, is allowed to directly bill LIHEAP (415-35-10).
2. Automated Payments to Renters (Automated)
This method is used when the heating cost is included as an undesignated portion of an unsubsidized rent payment. Payments are made the third Tuesday of the month throughout the year October through May (415-35-15).
3. Miscellaneous Payment (Manual) On-Line Payments

This method is used to enter manual payments, premium payments, and emergency payments. The state office also uses this function to enter miscellaneous adjustments such as payments, refunds, and voids.

This method is used to pay miscellaneous, premium, or emergency bills. There are two ways of entering on-line payments:

- a. Option F, "Miscellaneous, Premium, Emergency" screen—Used for miscellaneous, premium, or emergency bills.
- b. Option Q, "Payment Adjustments" screen (can be used only by the State Office)—This method is used for bills (usually emergency) which

~~have delivery dates prior to October 1 of the current fiscal year. Since only the State Office can use this screen, the county office needs to submit the information needed to pay the bill to the State Office by regular or electronic mail. (415-35-35-10) The State Office also uses this screen to record refunds, cancellations, and other adjustments.~~

45. Automated Vendor Billing/Payment – Procedures for Designated Primary Vendors 415-35-10 - Change, Title Change

Most households who pay heating costs directly to an energy vendor will have LIHEAP payments made on their behalf directly to their designated energy vendor.

This method should be the most widely used when the household purchases buys their fuel and/or electricity regularly from the same vendor. Generally, if the household uses two forms of heating fuel sources, one fuel type will be designated as the primary with the other fuel type being designated as the secondary, and the vendors identified by the household should be associated to their respective fuel type. This also applies to the household's electric utility. fuel, and the provider of that fuel will be the designated primary vendor.

Note: If the household identifies electric as a fuel type for heating, the system will auto populate that information in to the primary category and the household will NOT receive an additional electric utility benefit.

Making payments to the designated, primary vendors is a four-step process:

1. View the Eligibility Determination Results screen to ensure the household is eligible.
2. Go to Vendor Management to associate the vendor
3. Vendor Pay – will send a notice to the vendor authorizing them to bill the state office.

Note: Miscellaneous Pay – will not send a notice to the vendor as they are not authorized to bill the state office.

4. Ensure correct vendor ID, heat type, name on bill, account number, and authorization dates.

Note: Do not enter a manual payment if the vendor is associated for the same read/delivery date.

Step 1:

The eligible case is established in the computer file on the "Household Data" screen.

The "Household Data" screen is completed with a payment type of Code 01 (Vendor), the vendor's ID number, and the dates he is authorized to bill. The designated vendor will be notified by the county office using a "Notice of Action," that his customer is eligible for LIHEAP benefits, including the benefit level and the authorized time period covered. The county social service board will instruct all vendors in their service area NOT to expect any LIHEAP payments unless they have first received a "Notice of Action."

Step 2:

For New Vendors Only

When a LIHEAP household designates an energy heating vendor that is not already listed in vendor management the computer vendor file, the Human Service Zone eligibility worker county will need to refer the vendor to request the State Office to obtain assign a vendor ID and enter the new vendor into the integrated eligibility system computer file. The county also needs to tell the State Office when the household file using the new vendor ID will be entered in the computer.

The State Office will automatically send the vendor a computer printout entitled "Request for Payment" along with a copy of the LIHEAP Heating Vendors Billing Procedures Manual. This printout will have the names of all the vendor's LIHEAP-approved customers currently on file up to the date the "Request for Payment" is printed. It will repeat the benefit level and authorization period for each approved customer and will also be used by the vendor to bill LIHEAP for heating energy supplied to the customer.

This printout will be sent automatically from the State only when the vendor first has a customer approved for LIHEAP. From then on, a new "Request for Payment" will only be sent when a payment is made to the vendor.

For Vendors Carried Over From Previous Heating Season

All vendors carried on file at the end of the previous heating season will be transferred automatically into the vendor file of the new heating season. These vendors will automatically receive in mid-October four blank pages with only their

name, address, I.D. number, and the column headings printed on it. They will use this form to write in the names, billing number and billing information for their very first approved LIHEAP customers. When they send these in for payment, the automatic process described in Step 4 will take over. If counties have already entered some cases on the file, those customers will have pre-printed customer information on the billing form.

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Step 3:

Manual Billing Method

The vendor can use the vendor portal or complete the paper 'Request for Payment' and mail it to the state office to request payment.

The vendor uses the columns in the center of the printout to submit his bill for those customers who have had fuel delivered, and the vendor sends the original copy of the "Request for Payment" to the State Office for payment. He retains a copy for his records.

Secure Web File Transfer Billing Method

Some of the larger utility companies have elected to transmit bills for their LIHEAP customers by electronic file. Each local office of the company submits billing information to the company's central computer, and the bills for all the company's LIHEAP customers statewide are then transmitted to the State integrated eligibility system computer once per week via electronic file.

Each local office of the utilities will continue to receive all the documents identified in Step 4, but they will no longer need to submit the billing information by hand for current bills. Montana Dakota Utilities and Ottertail are not able, however, to submit back bills via electronic file and will have to manually submit back bills with the "Request for Payment" printout.

-
Xcel Energy will send an electronic file from the Minneapolis office. Local Xcel Energy offices will continue to receive their check and all other documents identified in step 4 including a printed copy of the Remittance Advice. Xcel Energy will have the capability to use the computerized billing for current and back bills.

-
Step 4:

One check will be issued for all the vendor's customers for whom the vendor he is receiving payments, and a "Remittance Advice" will break down the amounts that are to be credited to each customer's account. The Remittance Advice will also show the payments that were rejected. This will tell the vendor why the bills were rejected and not paid during this check run. At the same time, the vendor

will receive from the State Office a new "Request for Payment" showing all LIHEAP-approved customers on file up to the date the report is printed. In this way, newly approved applicants will be added to the "Request for Payment" so the vendor can submit bills for new LIHEAP customers.

Each vendor will also receive with the check an electronically produced printout of bills submitted which were rejected by the computer for payment. This "[Rejection List](#)" will tell the vendor why the bills were rejected. There will continue to be some rejected bills which cannot be identified by this electronic system, and these will be handled manually by the State Office staff. The manually generated rejection notices will NOT be mailed with the check, however, but will be mailed separately within a week following the computer run.

If the vendor does not receive all the payments requested, he should be advised to wait for the rejection notice before calling in to the State Office.

Step 4 will be repeated until the end of the program. As individual customers have their cases closed, their names will no longer appear on updated "Request for Payment" reports. Only the names of customers who have designated the vendor as the primary vendor for on-going bills will appear on the "Request for Payment." If miscellaneous payments only are authorized to go to this vendor for a particular customer, that customer's name does not appear in the "Request for Payment." If a non-authorized vendor submits a bill for a customer, that bill will be rejected.

46. Renter Payments 415-35-15 - Change

Renters whose energy heating costs are included as an undesignated portion of their rent payment will receive LIHEAP payments directly. Payments will generally be made once per month, on the third Tuesday, and will continue until the county social service board Human Service Zone (HSZ) closes the case on the computer, the authorization period expires, or a "lump sum" renter case is closed by the computer (status 10). The authorization period (see [415-30-25-05](#)) will be entered into the computer system on the "Household Data" screen, along with a Payment type code of "03." The monthly renter benefit will be computer calculated. If the household's heat is included in the rent (and there is no rent subsidy), a monthly renter check will be paid to the household.

Renter payments can generally be set up until 5 p.m. (Central Time) on the day of the regular monthly run. However, if a payment is missed, the computer

does NOT go back to pick it up. You need to issue a "catch-up" renter payment as described in [415-35-20-20-15](#).

47. Miscellaneous On-Line Payments Procedures 415-35-20 - Change

Miscellaneous payments authorized by the [Human Service Zone \(HSZ\)](#) county social service office are sent directly through the State Office [integrated eligibility system](#) computer for payment. There is no "authorization" for the applicant or vendor to sign.

Miscellaneous payments may be made for any eligible household provided eligibility existed during the month in which the heating cost was incurred. Although the household's ineligible months are stored in the computer information system, there are not any edit checks built in to be sure bills submitted for miscellaneous payments do not fall within those ineligible months. It is the responsibility of the county social service worker to monitor this.

Anything which can be billed under heating assistance benefits as described in [415-20-05-05](#) may be paid by miscellaneous payments.

48. Miscellaneous Payments – To a Designated Primary Vendor 415-35-20-15-05 - Repeal

- ~~1. Generally, miscellaneous payments to the primary vendor will be for payment of an unpaid back bill if the back bill did not fall within a month of "continuous eligibility" as described in [415-30-15-10-05](#).~~

~~Example: A household applies in February and was determined eligible from February 1 through May 31. Heating costs were also incurred between October and January, but eligibility existed only for October, December and January. The December and January bills can be billed by the primary vendor on the computer printout "Request for Payment." The October bill will be paid on the "Miscellaneous and Emergency Payment" screen.~~

- ~~2. Miscellaneous payments may be necessary to the primary vendor if a bill has been only partially paid for any reason. Since the delivery date has already been used, the computer will not accept another bill from the vendor for the same delivery date, with the same invoice number and type of fuel.~~

- ~~3. Miscellaneous payments may be necessary to a primary vendor if the energy bill is in the name of someone other than the applicant's. The county needs to exercise caution, since the bill may be in another name due to previous unpaid bills. The applicant must understand that the payment to the vendor will be listed under his name.~~

~~If this will cause a problem, the payment may need to be sent to the applicant.
(See [415-35-20-20-05](#) or [415-35-20-20-20](#).)~~

49. Miscellaneous Payments to a Non-Participating Vendor 415-35-20-15-10 - Repeal

~~Occasionally a vendor may not wish to participate with LIHEAP in the billing process. In this case, all payments would have to be made as miscellaneous payments.~~

~~The County Social Service Board will have the household or the vendor supply the county office with a copy of each unpaid delivery ticket as proof of delivery, and will submit the bill on the "Miscellaneous or Emergency Payment" screen as an alternative to the vendor submitting the bill himself. The payment type on the "Household Data" screen will be coded 04 (Miscellaneous Only), and NO authorization period or vendor ID will be entered. The household's name will NOT be printed on any vendor's "Request for Payment" printout.~~

50. Miscellaneous Payments – To a Secondary Vendor 415-35-20-15-15 – Repeal

- ~~1. Generally, miscellaneous payments to the secondary vendor will be for payment of an unpaid back bill if the back bill did not fall within a month of "continuous eligibility" as described in [415-30-15-10-05](#).~~

Example:

~~A household applies in February and was determined eligible from February 1 through May 31. Heating costs were also incurred between October and January, but eligibility existed only for October, December and January. The December and January bills can be billed by the primary vendor on the computer printout "Request for Payment." The October bill will be paid on the "Miscellaneous and Emergency Payment" screen.~~

- ~~2. Miscellaneous payments may be necessary to the primary vendor if a bill has been only partially paid for any reason. Since the delivery date has already been used, the computer will not accept another bill from the vendor for the same delivery date, with the same invoice number and type of fuel.~~
- ~~3. Miscellaneous payments may be necessary to a primary vendor if the energy bill is in the name of someone other than the applicant's. The county needs to exercise caution, since the bill may be in another name due to previous unpaid bills. The applicant must understand that the payment to the vendor will be listed under his name.~~

~~If this will cause a problem, the payment may need to be sent to the applicant.
(See [415-35-20-20-05](#) or [415-35-20-20-20](#).)~~

51. Miscellaneous – Reimbursements to the Household 415-35-20-20-05 - Change

All reimbursements to households for PAID energy heating costs will be made as miscellaneous payments. They may be reimbursed for their expenditure(s) by providing proof of payment and a copy of the bill to the Human Service Zone (HSZ) county social service office.

~~The county worker should not enter a reimbursement to the household unless the total is at least \$5.00 or more. If the reimbursement is less than \$5.00, this amount should not be paid to the household unless there would be an additional miscellaneous payment that would bring the total to at least \$5.00 and these amounts were entered so they would all process at the next checkwrite. The checkwrite would then generate a check for the combined total of at least \$5.00 or more.~~

~~If a vendor will not be directly billing LIHEAP, the "Household Data" screen will be completed showing Code 04 (Miscellaneous Only) for payment type, and NO authorization period or vendor ID. The household's name will NOT be printed on any vendor's "Request for Payment" printout.~~

~~Option F, "Miscellaneous or Emergency" screen will be used to enter the reimbursement.~~

52. Miscellaneous – Reimbursements for Monthly Payment Plans 415-35-20-20-10 - Repeal

~~Households are encouraged to enter into "even monthly payment plan" agreements with their supplier.~~

~~Whenever the household chooses to have these payments carried as a credit with the supplier, the current energy costs are considered "unpaid" and may be billed to LIHEAP by the supplier.~~

Example:

~~A household eligible from October through May, applies in December and has been paying even monthly payments to the supplier of \$50/month. The household chooses to have these payments held by the supplier as credit. The authorization period will begin October 1, and the supplier will be allowed to bill actual heating costs from October – May to LIHEAP or until the authorization period expires.~~

~~Whenever the household chooses to have his monthly payments considered as "paid" fuel costs, the supplier will not be authorized to bill for these months, and the household may request reimbursement. The reimbursements will be determined as follows:~~

- ~~1. Determine the total amount of monthly payments the household has paid since October.~~
- ~~2. Determine the actual cost of each fuel delivery made during an eligible month~~
- ~~3. Reimburse the household for the LIHEAP Share Percentage of the actual cost of each delivery up to the total of monthly payments the customer has made since October.~~

Example:

~~A household, eligible from October through May, applies in December and has been making even monthly payments to the supplier of \$50/month. The LIHEAP Share Percentage is determined to be 60%. The authorization period will begin January 1 and continue through May 31. The total of monthly payments made since October is \$150. The reimbursements will be calculated as:~~

<u>Actual Cost x 60% = LIHEAP Share</u>	<u>Reimbursement (up to \$150)</u>
Oct. — \$ 45 x 60% = \$ 27	\$27
Nov. — \$ 70 x 60% = \$ 42	\$42
Dec. — <u>\$150</u> x 60% = <u>\$ 90</u>	<u>\$81</u>

Totals \$265 ————— \$159 \$150

~~The household will be reimbursed 60% of each bill as long as the total does not exceed the \$150 they have actually paid in to their payment plan. In this example, the total would exceed \$150, so the December reimbursement will be \$9.00 less than 60% of the actual cost. The \$9.00 not paid by the household in their payment plan that is covered by the 60% LIHEAP Share, would be paid directly to the vendor.~~

53. Miscellaneous – Renter “Catch-Up” Payments 415-35-20-20-15 - Change

~~"Catch-up" payments for missed renter payments will be generated on the following checkrun. can be made as a miscellaneous payment to the household. The reason code is 'H'. The service code should be the code for the type of heating fuel, and the delivery date is the third Tuesday of the eligible month for which the automatic payment was missed.~~

~~Again, use Option F, "Miscellaneous or Emergency" screen.~~

54. Miscellaneous – To Household When Bill Not in Applicant’s Name 415-35-20-20-20 - Change

~~Occasionally, the applicant will be responsible for the heating bill, but for some reason the bill is not in the applicant's name. This can be resolved by entering the name that is on the bill in the vendor management system when authorizing the vendor. and sending a payment to the heating vendor would cause a problem for the applicant or the vendor will not accept a payment with a different name than what is on the account.~~

~~The applicant may pay the bill himself and be reimbursed as described in [415-35-20-20-05](#).~~

~~However, if the applicant does not have funds to pay the bill, a miscellaneous payment can be generated to the applicant but sent to the county office by entering "c/o XXXX CSSB, XXX Street, Box XX" on the address line of Option F, "Miscellaneous or Emergency" screen.~~

~~The purpose of using this alternate address is to allow the applicant to endorse the check so the county can generate its own check to the vendor to be applied to the current account number.~~

~~This method should be used only as a last resort.~~

55. Premium Payments – ~~On-Line Payment Procedures 415-35-25~~ - Change, Title Change

The household is NOT required to be eligible for the Emergency Assistance Program. These benefits are designed to meet special needs as described in [415-20-05-10](#).

~~The county office enters Premium Payments on the computer using Option F, "Miscellaneous or Emergency" screen.~~

56. Furnace/Chimney Cleaning and Service Efficiency Maintenance 415-35-25-05 – Change

Payments for furnace/chimney cleaning and/or efficiency maintenance service (see [415-20-05-10-05](#)) will be made as premium payments, entered by the Human Service Zone (HSZ) county staff ~~on the computer using Reason Code N,~~ and service code 14 (Prevention/Safety). The HSZ county must retain a copy of the furnace/chimney cleaning authorization notice and the billing invoice in the case file.

57. Emergency Payment On-Line Payment Procedures 415-35-30 - Repeal

~~Emergency payments are entered on Option F, "Miscellaneous or Emergency" screen.~~

58. Emergency Payment – Approved Application of File 415-35-30-05 – Change

In most cases the household already will have a heating assistance application on file and the household data will be in the integrated eligibility system computer

file. Unless something in the basic household data has changed, it is not necessary to make any changes to the computer's file. The following steps should be followed to make emergency payments:

Step 1: The "Notice of Action" for Emergency Assistance must be completed.

Step 2: The Reason Code for payments for emergency fuel services will be either 'I' for an emergency payment to a vendor or 'J' for an emergency payment to the customer.

If the payment is for an old bill incurred prior to October 1 of the current fiscal year, you must request the State Office to generate the payment. [See 415-35-35-10](#).

If it is a portion of the customer's co-payment which is being authorized, the service code should indicate the type of fuel (oil, propane, etc.) which is being purchased.

Note: 'Reconnect fees' are NOT the same as 'deposits.' Reconnect fees are generally small non-refundable fees to cover the company's cost of service hook-up. A deposit will be refunded if the customer keeps his bills current and is usually much larger, perhaps as much as an amount equivalent to two months bills. If a reconnect fee is assessed, it is considered an incidental cost ([see 415-20-05-05](#)) and therefore may be included in an emergency payment. If it is separately identified, use service code 16 for "hook up" fees.

Step 3: Supporting data, such as bills and documentation, must be retained in the county social service board [Human Service Zone \(HSZ\) files](#) for any emergency payment authorized, including bills which are generated by the State Office as described in [Section 415-35-35](#). Do NOT send copies of bills to the State Office.

59. Emergency Payment – Denied Application on File 415-35-30-10 - Change

If the heating assistance application already on file was a denial, and the household now qualifies for heating assistance, the household may reapply and may also be eligible for Emergency Assistance. ~~the computer file must be changed to status 01 ("approved"), and any information omitted from the original file must now be added to the household data record. If the household applies before May 31, it may qualify for heating assistance as well as emergency fuel assistance.~~

~~If the household is to be approved ONLY for emergency services, the payment type must be coded "05," and the authorization period is left blank. No vendor ID# is entered.~~

~~The remainder of the payment process is the same as Steps 1-3 described in 415-35-30-05.~~

60. Emergency Payment – No Application on File 415-35-30-15 – Change

If there is no application on file for the household current heating season, an application must be taken before emergency services can be approved (415-50-10-05). ~~If the household applies before May 31, it may qualify for heating assistance as well as emergency fuel assistance. In this case, the "Household Data" will be added as it would be for any other approved case, and the payment process for the emergency payments will be as described in Steps 1-3 of 415-35-30-05.~~

~~However, some applications can be approved ONLY for emergency services because of eligibility factors or because the application was received after the deadline for heating assistance (May 31). In this case, the Status will be coded 01 ("approved"). The payment type, authorization period, and vendor ID# will be entered the same as described in 415-35-30-10. The remainder of the payment process is the same as described in Steps 1-3 of 415-35-30-05.~~

61. Duplicate Dates 415-35-35-05 – Change

The integrated eligibility system computer is programmed to reject any bill which has the same delivery date as a payment already made. Any time a bill has the same delivery date as a previously made payment, special handling will be required regardless of whether it is an emergency, premium, miscellaneous, or vendor-submitted payment.

Occasionally a vendor will receive only a partial payment for an invoice. This most often occurs when the vendor has submitted a bill incorrectly. The vendor will not be able to bill for the balance of the partially paid delivery themselves himself.

The delivery date must NOT be changed. A special handling payment can be issued by the Human Service Zone (HSZ) county worker using the correct date and selecting the corresponding checkbox. ~~To process a duplicate date, the county worker can enter the bill on Option F, "Miscellaneous, Emergency, Premium Payments" screen.~~

~~The computer is programmed to perform a series of edits to determine if a payment entered on the Option F screen is a duplicate. If the payment appears to be a duplicate, the county worker has the option to "ignore" it, so it does not get paid, or to approve payment. If the payment is approved, the system will automatically assign a Memo number in place of the delivery date. The actual delivery date is retained in the payment trailer under the heading "reference date."~~

~~Choosing to "ignore" one payment of several entered on the same payment screen will not disrupt payment of the other approved bills.~~

~~Please note that entering the "special handling" bill under the correct fiscal year becomes an issue especially during each fall when Emergency Assistance applications are taken either at the end of the previous fiscal year or at the beginning of the current fiscal year.~~

The correct fiscal year is determined by the date the Emergency Assistance application is taken:

- If taken before October 1, enter it under the previous fiscal year.
- If taken after October 1, enter it under the current fiscal year. ([See 415-35-35-10](#))

62. Emergency Payments for Old Bills 415-35-35-10 - Repeal

~~When an Emergency Assistance application is taken after October 1, but the bills were incurred prior to October 1 of the current fiscal year, the Payments Screen (Option F on the Menu) will not accept these bills. You will need to request the State Office to enter these bills. The easiest method is to send them by email, but the request can also be mailed. The State Office needs the same information that is normally entered on the Option F Payment screen.~~

63. Third Party Payments 415-35-40 - Change

In unusual circumstances, the State LIHEAP Administrator may authorize third party payments. This is to be used only when other payment methods are inadequate and may include but are not limited to:

1. A landlord refuses to have the tenant's name on the vendor's account. (Landlord must be enrolled as a vendor and must verify that they have paid the bill in full);
2. Other circumstances as deemed appropriate by the State LIHEAP Administrator.

Third party payments are entered as miscellaneous manual payments and require the payee to be enrolled as a LIHEAP vendor. A vendor association is required in order to issue a third-party miscellaneous manual payment in the system.

64. Definitions (Changes) 415-40-01 - Repeal

~~There are several references in this chapter to "effective date of changes." When the response to a change causes an adjustment to the benefit level, the "effective date of the change" will be the LIHEAP Share Effective Date, since that is the date which determines the benefit level paid on any specific bill.~~

~~When the response to a change causes the case to be closed, the "effective date of the change" will be the Closing Date. Entering a date in this field is required with a closing status code (04-07). That is, if a case is closed because the household moved, (status 05), the computer will refuse to pay any vendor submitted bill that has a delivery date after the date entered as the "Closing Date."~~

~~When any other status code is entered, the Action Date simply reflects the date the action was taken.~~

65. Household Reporting Requirements 415-40-05

Housholds are required to report and verify changes on a timely **basis**. Changes are considered 'timely' when they are reported and verified within 10 days from the date the change occurs. The following changes are mandatory changes to report:

1. Loss/addition of a household member. (Income of the new household member will need to be reported and verified.)
2. Household moves to different home.
3. Change in the type of heat.
4. Change in rent subsidy status.

The household will be informed of the change reporting requirements in the approval notice. They may contact the eligibility worker by telephone, letter, or other type of communication to report the changes.

When mandatory changes are reported, both income and deductions **must** should be reviewed. ~~A change in income may result in an adjustment to the LIHEAP share percentage.~~

When non-mandatory changes are reported, benefits can be increased but not decreased. If benefits will increase, the effective date of the change will be the month the change is reported.

Example: If a change is reported April 28th, the effective date of the change is April 1.

~~NOTE: Although benefit levels will not be adjusted under the Heating Assistance Program if the client reports only an income change, a significant decrease in income may result in an Emergency Assistance application. (See 50-05.)~~

~~To prevent a reported change from being overlooked, the household should be instructed to attach a note requesting that the information reported for any of the other programs be shared with the LIHEAP eligibility worker. **All changes must have the required verifications attached.**~~

66. Change in Household Members – Effective Date 415-40-10-05 – Change

If the change in household members is reported within 10 days and the eligibility worker processed the information within 10 days, the "effective date of the change" shall be 20 5 days from the date the change occurred is entered in the computer system and the notice is sent.

If the household fails to report within 10 days, the eligibility worker has 10 days from the date the change is reported to re-compute the case. The "effective date of the change" will be 20 5 days from the date the change occurred is entered in the computer system and the notice is sent. The eligibility worker must review the possibility of an overpayment in this case and an attempt must be made to collect any overpayment that occurs due to the household's failure to report the change on time.

67. Changes Affecting Eligibility 415-40-10-05-05 - Repeal

~~If a household has been previously determined ineligible because of excess income and later reports a decrease in income which would make them eligible, a new application shall be taken and eligibility shall be determined.~~

~~If a household which has been previously determined ineligible due to a household member's income reports that the household member has left the household, a new application shall be taken and eligibility shall be determined. The eligibility worker may need to request verification that the household member has actually left the household.~~

~~Likewise, if a household which has been previously determined eligible and is receiving LIHEAP benefits reports an additional household member which would make the household ineligible, the case shall be closed, effective 20 5 days from the date the change is recomputed and entered into the computer system and notice sent. This change would have to be reported within 10 days. If these changes are not reported on time, the possibility of overpayments will need to be reviewed.~~

68. Moves of Changes in Heating Source-Effective Dates 415-40-15 - Change

If a move or a change in heating source is reported within 10 days, the "effective date of the change" will be the date of the move or the date the heating source changed.

If the move or a change in heating source is not reported within 10 days, an "effective date of change" will need to be negotiated with the household, past and present suppliers, and the eligibility worker.

Example:

Re-computation — Renter/Heat Paid Moves to Vendor Pay

This change to the LIHEAP Share Percentage will be effective the date of the move, unless the household fails to report within 10 days. If the household fails to report on time, the eligibility worker will need to determine the date the household became responsible for the heat. This should be the LIHEAP Share Effective Date, but if renter/heat benefits were paid after the date of the move, the eligibility worker will need to determine the possibility of overpayments or of negotiating a different effective date.

Before closing the case, determine the date of the final meter reading. Contact the vendor to obtain this date and close eligibility based on the final meter reading.

A final meter read is allowed if the read is within close proximity of the date of the change and the read is within the heating season. (October-May)

Example:

Client passed away 4/16; final read 4/23

Client moved 5/12; final read 5/19

69. Changes Affecting Bills Already Paid or Incurred 415-40-20 - Change

Benefits already provided under the program do NOT have to be refunded as long as the change was reported on time. The excess benefits were paid for bills incurred before the effective date of the change.

If a bill is incurred before the effective date of the change and remains unpaid at the time of recalculation, the bill will be paid at the previous benefit level. The integrated eligibility system computer will determine benefit payments based on the LIHEAP Share Effective Date.

If a change results in an increase in co-payment percentage, the participant will be responsible for any overpayment.

If the household fails to report on time and the change resulted in an increased household co-payment percentage, the household will be responsible for any overpayment that may have resulted. Any fuel that was delivered prior to the recalculation but after the household should have reported will be paid by LIHEAP based upon the amount of the LIHEAP benefits stated on the previous Notice of Action because the vendor has acted in good faith. The overpayment will be determined by the eligibility worker based on the 10 days to report, 10 days to process, and effective date of 5 days from date entered. If the unreported or late reported change exceeds the 25 day time frame, an overpayment will have resulted.

If the household fails to report on time and the change resulted in an increased LIHEAP Share Percentage, the LIHEAP Share Effective Date for the new benefit level will be 5 days from the date the change is entered into the computer system.

70. Computer Output 415-45 - Repeal

Entering the household data on the "Add Household Data" screen is the **first step** in the automated payment system. No other reports will be generated for any recipient until this information is successfully entered into the system.

If the application can be acted upon at the time it is received, all the case data can be entered immediately for an approved/denied/withdrawn case.

A computerized referral to the appropriate Community Action Agency is generated during the next scheduled payment run for any newly approved households when the LIHEAP application has been signed.

If the application must be held due to lack of information or processing time, it must be entered on the computer as a "pending" case. An "on-line" screen produces a list of "pending" cases by worker ID and includes the processing deadline date (45 days).

The **second step** is the generation of the computerized Notice of Action to the client and appropriate vendors. These Notices are printed daily. (See 417-05.)

The **third step** is the generation by the computer of the first "Request for Payment" printout described in detail in [415-35-10](#) and [415-35-10-05](#).

The **fourth step** is initiated when the vendor mails in a completed "Request for Payment." Weekly payment 'runs' are made to create checks for payments approved during the preceding week. Four reports are generated when a check is written to the vendor. The Remittance Advice breaks down for the vendor the amount of money included in his check for each recipient. The updated "Request for Payment" gives him a new list of his eligible customers and serves as a new billing form. The [payment rejection list](#) tells the vendor which bills were not paid and why they were rejected. The county voucher gives each county a list of clients for whom a payment has been made.

The **fourth step** is repeated until all cases have either been closed or the heating season ends.

The **fifth step** is a "Record of Payments" Notice to the recipient generated by the computer.

71. Pending Cases 415-45-01 - Repeal

New cases which cannot be acted upon immediately at receipt must be added to the computer record using Option A, ("Adding Household Data"). The worker may enter as much information as is available at the time, but must include at a minimum, the social security number, worker ID, county number, applicant name, address, city, state, zip, and the date of application (the date the signed application is received in the county office). When the information is complete and action can be taken on the application, new information can be added to the computer case file in the same manner as information is "changed" (Option B, "Changing Household Data") on existing case files.

In order to prevent accidental payments to cases which are still "pending," the payment system rejects any bills if the status code is "pending". However, since workers may want to be adding information to the computer case file as it is obtained, but still need to maintain "pending" status to verify some pertinent data, the computer will allow the worker to have all data elements completed on Option B, including payment data, and still maintain the "pending" status code. If a benefit is entered while the status code is still "pending," a warning message will appear at the top of the screen. This warning is NOT an 'error' message. The computer will allow you to have a "pending" status on the case if you have filled in the benefit field. The warning is there to alert workers who may have completed the case but have just forgotten to change the status code from "pending" to "approved".

~~Applications which have been entered as "pending" will appear on Option P by fiscal year and worker ID until action has been taken. The list of "pending" cases will also alert the worker to the date on which the case must be completed (45 days). If desired, the worker may specify a partial list of "pending" cases by entering a "due date". The cases listed will be only those with "due dates" on or preceding the date specified.~~

~~Letters may also be written to the applicant through the Notice system (Option Z) once the case file is entered as "pending." This allows the county worker to notify the applicant in a timely basis about missing information needed to process the application.~~

72. Remittance Advice 415-45-05 - Change

The Remittance Advice gives the vendor's identification number in the upper right hand corner. This is a seven digit number. Next is the vendor's name and mailing address. Following this is the list of payments or adjustments made for each customer, alphabetized by last name. It includes the customer's billing number, the customer account number (if one was entered ~~in on the~~ [integrated eligibility system](#) computer file), the invoice number (if any), the delivery date, LIHEAP Share Percentage, and the amount paid for each customer. If the vendor is receiving a payment for two deliveries for one customer, the customer's name will appear twice, once for each delivery date. A total dollar amount will be given for all payments.

The Remittance Advice may be separated into [Heating payments, Emergency Payments, Energy Share Payments, Premium, and Payments Rejected](#), three sections: ~~Payments, [Premium](#) and [Emergency Payments](#), and Energy Share Payments.~~ Each section will have the payment and/or adjustments listed alphabetically. If a reason code is on a payment line, this indicates why an adjustment was made. A translation of these codes is outlined in section [45-15](#).

The [Energy](#) Payments section will include vendor-billed or [Human Service Zone \(HSZ\) County](#) generated payments. Also included in this section will be [HSZ County](#) generated adjustments to correct prior LIHEAP paid bills. This section will have a total dollar amount for all these payments.

The Premium and Emergency Payments section will include [HSZ County](#) generated payments or adjustments to the vendor for premium services or payments made under Emergency Assistance eligibility for a customer. The

payment line will indicate if the service was Premium or Emergency. This section will have a total dollar amount for all these payments.

If a vendor receives payment for Energy Share bills, the section for Energy Share Payments will be on the Remittance Advice to identify customers with payments made under this eligibility. A memo number is assigned by the State LIHEAP office in place of a delivery date to track these special payments. This section will have a total dollar amount for all these payments.

The Payment Rejected section includes payments the vendor submitted that were not paid.

The total amount from each section will be combined and there will be a grand total at the bottom of the Remittance Advice. This grand total should match the amount of the vendor's check.

73. Payment Rejection List (State Office Use Only) 415-45-10 - Change

The Payment Rejection List will be arranged in the same manner as the Remittance Advice. However, the "amount of payment" will be the amount of the bill submitted, and the reason for the rejection will be in the column labeled Rejection Reason(s). ~~on the line below the customer's name.~~

The List will NOT tell the vendor whether or not he should resubmit the bill. The general instructions we will provide for vendors will include a description of the rejection messages so they will usually be able to accurately interpret the message. If not, the vendors will be asked to contact the local ~~county social service board~~ Human Service Zone (HSZ) FIRST if they feel there is an error. The HSZ ~~county~~ office should be able to resolve most problems from information in the case file. If the problem is not apparent, the HSZ ~~county social service board~~ can contact the State Office for assistance.

74. Rejection Messages, Probable Problems, Resolutions 415-45-10-05 - Change

1. 'Case Not Open': This message will be generated whenever the status in the integrated eligibility system ~~computer~~ , is denied or withdrawn;

If the status of the case should be one of these codes, the bill should NOT be resubmitted, because it has been correctly refused.

If the status is incorrect, it should be changed and the vendor instructed to resubmit the bill.

- ~~2. 'Case Not Open as of (Mo/Da/Yr)': This message will be generated whenever the status in the computer, is one of the closed codes (Status Codes 04-07). The date given is the same as the "Closing Date" on the computer household data file. This tells the vendor that only fuel delivered on or before this date can be paid. Any bills for fuel delivered after this date should not be resubmitted, unless the computer's information is incorrect and will be changed.~~
3. 2. 'Delivery Date Not Within [Authorization Period](#)': If the delivery date of the bill submitted by the vendor does not fall within the authorization dates on the [integrated eligibility system](#) computer file, the bill will reject and should NOT be resubmitted.

If the [Human Service Zone \(HSZ\)](#) county social service board has recently revised the authorization period, it may be that a month was inadvertently omitted which should be included. If so, the [HSZ](#) county must correct the authorization period, and the vendor may either resubmit the bill or the [HSZ](#) county may need to pay the bill as a "Miscellaneous Payment." (See [415-35-20-15-05](#) #1)

4. 3. 'Payment Made Previously for This Delivery Date': The [integrated eligibility system](#) computer will reject any bills which have the same billing dates and information as a bill which has already been paid, whether the bill was submitted by the vendor or by the [HSZ](#) county as a "[Miscellaneous](#), [Emergency](#), or [Premium](#) Payment."

In some cases, the vendor may have received only a partial payment for a delivery. The vendor should NOT resubmit the balance of that bill and must provide the billing information to the [HSZ](#) county office to have the bill resubmitted for payment.

If there were two fuel deliveries or a combination of a fuel delivery and service provided on the same date, the vendor may resubmit and there should be separate invoice numbers or fuel codes so the [integrated eligibility system](#) computer can recognize two different payments on the same billing date.

5. 4. 'You are Not the Authorized Supplier': If a vendor other than the one designated by the HSZ county on the integrated eligibility system computer file tries to submit a bill, it will be rejected, and he should not resubmit the bill. If he supplies a fuel which is a secondary heat source and the household wishes to have him paid, a "Miscellaneous Payment" should be used.

If the vendor has recently been changed for this household, either the old vendor or the new may have a bill rejected depending upon whether the change has been entered in the integrated eligibility system computer. If it is a bill from the old vendor, use a "Miscellaneous Payment" to pay it, and he should NOT resubmit the bill. If it is a bill from the new vendor, he should resubmit the bill.

6. 5. Master Record Not Found' or 'Case Not On File': This message tells the supplier our integrated eligibility system computer could not find a match for the billing number he submitted. If the number he used matches the number on the "Notice of Action," he should notify the HSZ county office. If the case has not been entered on the integrated eligibility system computer yet, the supplier can be told when this will be done so he can resubmit the bill. If the supplier used an incorrect number, he can resubmit the bill immediately with the correct number.

This message gives the supplier only the billing number which went through the integrated eligibility system computer, the invoice number of the bill and the amount of the bill. It cannot print out the customer's name.

7. 6. 'Type of Fuel Billed Not Authorized for Payment': This message tells the supplier that his bill was coded for a type of fuel that was not authorized. He should first check to be sure he used the correct code for the fuel he delivered. If so, and this code does not match the authorized fuel code, he is instructed to contact the HSZ county social service office. The county will need to determine if the integrated eligibility system computer was coded incorrectly or if something else is wrong. Once the discrepancy is resolved, the supplier can rebill the delivery, if the delivery can correctly be billed to LIHEAP.
8. 7. 'Pending Case - Cannot Pay': This message tells the supplier that the case is not yet approved for payment. This situation is unlikely to occur unless the HSZ county has forgotten to remove the "pending" status code when approval information was added to the integrated eligibility system computer case record. The bill can be resubmitted once the integrated eligibility system computer file is corrected.

75. County Vendor Printout 415-45-15 – Repeal

The county voucher lists alphabetically by last name the customers on whose behalf payments were made. If two deliveries were billed for one customer, the payments will be listed separately in the order they went through the computer. This may or may not be chronological by delivery date. The customer's billing number, the vendor's name and identification number, the delivery date, amount of the payment, the reason code (if any), the memo number (if any), and the LIHEAP Percentage Share for this customer will be listed. If an emergency or premium payment has been made, it will NOT be added in to the total paid to date. At the bottom of the list of customers, the total of all payments made on that check run will be given.

Adjustments to incorrect payments (such as refunds) made by the State Office will be listed. If the amount of the adjustment is a negative, that amount will be deducted from the total of payments made.

		-	-
A	Premium Adjustment (State Only)	H	Miscellaneous— Recipient
B	Heating Adjustment (State Only)	I	Emergency—Vendor
C	Emergency Adjustment (State Only)	J	Emergency—Recipient
G	Miscellaneous—Vendor	N	Premium

The State Office receives a copy of the county voucher on on-line viewing/RDARS in the event there are any problems with payments.

76. Emergency Home Energy Assistance 415-50 - Change

Emergency Home Energy Assistance is a distinct, separate program from Heating and Electric Utility Assistance.

Requests for emergency assistance may be received and processed by the Human Service Zone (HSZ) county social service offices anytime during the calendar year from October 1 through September 30 of each fiscal year.

Emergency Home Energy Assistance is defined as assistance to low income households necessitated 1) by weather related or supply shortage emergencies, or 2) because the household is unable to secure home energy for financial or other reasons.

Home energy is a source for heating or cooling or utility for a residential dwelling.

Usually Emergency Home Energy Assistance is considered a last resource that will only be used after the household's available personal resources (liquid assets) are nearly depleted, other community resources are not available, and household net income will be consumed by basic shelter, utilities, employment, food, medical and other essential costs. A negotiated combination of the household resources, community resources and LIHEAP may be necessary to resolve some crises. Community resources are considered not available when the applicant has been denied or otherwise known to be ineligible for assistance from any appropriate community agency or organization.

Although these funds are limited to the purchase of home energy costs energy goods and supplies, they can be used in combination with other services to resolve a household crisis. Frequently considerable family financial counseling or community planning and negotiating is necessary in order to arrive at an appropriate use of the emergency assistance funds. Relatively few restrictions are placed on the use of these funds in order to permit the ~~county social service board~~ HSZ representative to develop appropriate individual household plans. Emergency Assistance is not an entitlement program. Eligibility and the amount of benefits provided are designed to resolve or prevent a home energy crisis.

77. Electric Utilities 415-50-05-25 - Change

Emergency Assistance for electric utility or electric fuel sourced heating ~~Primary responsibility for emergency payment of electric utilities (lights only) will be assumed by Energy Share of North Dakota, a private non-profit corporation. All applications, processing, and eligibility determination will be done by Energy Share.~~

~~Homes heated by electricity (as a primary fuel source), including lights, will be assumed by the North Dakota LIHEAP.~~

Do not separate the "heating" from "non-heating" costs. Consider the entire bill, household resources, amount needed to resolve the crisis.

LIHEAP has maintained the [integrated eligibility system](#) computer capability of making payments for electric utilities.

Energy Share will accept applications, determine eligibility and benefits approved for utility payments for households who have emergency needs with electricity costs and electricity is NOT the household's primary fuel source. Energy Share will provide all information needed to make the approved payments and will submit a weekly payment file that is retrieved and processed for payment by the eligibility system.

LIHEAP cannot issue electric utility payments under any circumstance for applicants whose income does not meet LIHEAP [Energy Heating Assistance](#) eligibility guidelines at the time of the application for utility payment, or at some point during the current fiscal year.

78. Application 415-50-10-05 - Change

Requests for emergency assistance will be accepted from [anytime during the calendar year](#) ~~October 1 through September 30~~. Requests may be received in writing, by telephone, or on [SFN 62](#), "Application for Emergency Assistance," and/or personal contact, but a narrative or other written record must be maintained.

An additional application on SFN 529 is not required for those households that need emergency assistance if the household had submitted an application for heating assistance. Otherwise, a new application for [energy](#) heating assistance must be processed to first certify that the applicant's income and resources meet LIHEAP [Energy](#) heating Assistance requirements at the time of the Emergency Assistance request.

79. Emergency Assistance Eligibility Guidelines 415-50-10-10- Change

The applicant's income must be within the limits specified by the [Energy Heating Assistance Program](#) for the month of the Emergency Assistance application ~~or have been approved for heating assistance for some portion of the current fiscal year heating season~~.

Income averaging, as discussed in [415-25-05-15](#), will not be used in determining eligibility for Emergency Assistance benefits.

The following are suggested guidelines for determining eligibility for Emergency Services and must be documented on [SFN 62](#), "Application for Emergency Assistance," each time a new request for Emergency Assistance is received. Guidelines, rather than mandatory specific requirements, permit the Human Service Zone (HSZ) board to evaluate the unique circumstances of each household to decide whether emergency assistance is needed and is an appropriate resolution of the crisis.

1. [Community Resources](#):

Other community programs to alleviate the crisis, such as county General Assistance, credit, churches, and other community agencies** must be denied or known to be unavailable to the applicant or inadequate to resolve the crisis.

~~** Energy Share of North Dakota is not considered a resource for supplemental heating costs.~~

80. Emergency Payments on Old Bills 415-50-10-20 - Change

~~LIHEAP Emergency Assistance may not be used to pay off the entire amount of old bills or arrearages as described in [415-50-05-30](#), #5.~~

However, LIHEAP staff is encouraged to facilitate the development of realistic deferred payment plans for these arrearages. As a "facilitator," you may, with the client's permission, use information from the client's Emergency Assistance records to help the client and vendor arrive at a realistic deferred payment plan. Some clients will not be able to contribute much toward the arrearage at the time of the emergency, and this would not be "realistic" for the vendor. It may be necessary to pay the full arrearage but this is a last resort to resolve the emergency.

LIHEAP Emergency Assistance may be used to help a client pay part or all of one or more of the deferred payments, until the client's financial circumstances enable him to take full responsibility for his deferred payments. To qualify for this assistance, the client must be eligible for Emergency Assistance as described in [415-50-10-10](#). In addition, the following factors must be considered:

1. Amount owed and date incurred.
2. The household effort and ability to pay these costs at the time they were incurred.

3. The household's effort and cooperation to secure payment from an absent household member if that person was responsible for these costs when they were incurred.
4. The household effort to negotiate and honor a previous reasonable payment plan with the supplier.
5. The energy supplier's collection efforts, and cooperation in extending credit and offering a reasonable payment plan.
6. A reasonable expectation that such payment will resolve or alleviate the household's payment problem.

NOTE: Please see Section [415-35-30-05](#), STEP 2, for an explanation of how to submit these bills.

81. Exception to Limitation for Emergency Services 415-50-15 - Change

Whenever an eligible household has an emergency fuel assistance need that exceeds the county [eligibility period](#) maximum, the state approval should be requested. Very few requests for exceptions are expected inasmuch as community negotiations and individual household plans should usually restrict emergency assistance to the specified limits.

82. Deposits 415-50-20 - Change

Utility companies may require a cash deposit from a customer before providing electrical or natural gas service. The purpose of an advance deposit is to protect the utility company against unpaid bills. If unused after a specified period of time, deposits are generally returned to the customer, or the customer is given a credit to be applied on future costs.

If a customer will be receiving LIHEAP for upcoming [energy](#) heating bills, it is preferable that the vendor and the customer arrange for the customer to pay the required deposit [themselves](#) himself, on an installment basis if necessary, during the time period that LIHEAP is paying [their energy](#) his heating bills. The amount of the installments can be set so the deposit is on record by the time the [eligibility period](#) LIHEAP heating season ends. This keeps the customer involved.

Emergency Assistance funds CANNOT be used to pay deposits.

The customer will be responsible to pay any required deposits, or the supplier may waive the deposit for a LIHEAP eligible customer based on LIHEAP assurance of payment of a specified amount or throughout a specified period of time, that is sufficient to maintain service and to permit the household to accumulate the required deposit.

83. Cooling Assistance Program 415-60 - Change

North Dakota State LIHEAP does not routinely include a cooling program. However, the State reserves the option to implement a cooling program contingent upon available funding, or in the event of unusual cooling needs due to weather aberrations, or an emergency disaster declaration.

A LIHEAP-eligible household may qualify for a cooling device (an air conditioner or a fan, as the need dictates). ~~The household need not be responsible for paying heating costs so tenants in subsidized housing may qualify.~~

If a household requests a cooling device assistance and they are eligible for LIHEAP ~~received LIHEAP during the regular heating season~~, a cooling referral notice can be sent to Community Action or the client can provide a copy of their approval notice to Community Action as verification of eligibility.

~~If the household requests cooling assistance after May 31 and they did not receive LIHEAP during the regular season because they had been denied during the year, live in subsidized housing and heat was included in their rent, or never applied in the heating season, they may apply for a cooling device by completing the LIHEAP application (SFN 529). If they are determined income eligible, send a cooling referral notice to Community Action. However, households who apply after May 31 will no be eligible for any other LIHEAP benefits.~~

The LIHEAP application form has a release of information to permit sharing of information between the Community Action Agencies and LIHEAP.

Direct Payments to Household or Vendor for Cooling Costs

The State Administrator may elect to issue direct payments to households or vendors for cooling costs as a cooling component, depending upon the nature of the cooling emergency and the amount of funding available.

Existing household data may be used to identify eligible LIHEAP household so that no additional application is required.

Depending upon the amount of funds available to meet the need, payment may be limited to specific vulnerable groups.

The amount and frequency of the payment(s) will be determined at the time a decision is made to implement this cooling component. Information may be solicited from the electric providers or obtained from available electricity cost reports to establish the level of need and an appropriate benefit amount.