

**Low Income Home Energy Assistance  
Program (LIHEAP)**

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**Service Chapter 415**

**North Dakota Department of Human Services  
600 East Boulevard Dept. 325  
Bismarck, ND 58505-0250**

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**General Provisions 415-05**

**Authority Reference 415-05-01**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

[View Archives](#)

1. Public Law 97-35, Title XXVI
2. Section 50-01-09 (North Dakota Century Code)
3. Section 50-06-05.1 (North Dakota Century Code)

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### **Definitions 415-05-05**

**(Revised 10/1/08 ML #3151)**

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### **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)

### **Cost/Consumption Tables**

These tables are used to determine benefits for eligible households. The tables include the rate various types of fuel are consumed in various sizes and types of home or living units. These consumption rates were received from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and adjusted for the weighted average heating degree days in each county of the State. The consumption rate is then multiplied by the cost of the specified type of fuel. Fuel cost information is obtained annually from such sources as the state energy office, fuel suppliers, and utilities just prior to the beginning of each heating season. Data to establish a cost/consumption table for steam heat, kerosene, wood, and coal was not available and therefore the actual expenses incurred by the eligible household will be negotiated, or the rate for MDU natural gas will be used.

Homes or living units that are not obviously within any of the following definitions will be assigned to the most appropriate category by the State Program Administrator or designee based on the number of wall and other surfaces exposed to the outside weather and temperature:

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- a. Single detached home  
This term means a single building that includes only one home or complete living unit. Mobile homes are included under this definition.
- b. Duplex  
This term means a single building that contains two complete living units.
- c. All other living units (apartment building - row houses - townhouses - high rise)  
This term means all other building types not described in 'a' or 'b' above.

### **Disabled**

This term includes all individuals who have a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities, have a record of such impairment, or are regarded as having such an impairment.

### **Elderly**

This term includes all individuals who are 60 years of age or over. (This definition applies to all references in this manual to individuals who are "over 60.")

### **Eligible Households/Economic Unit**

This term means any individual or group of individuals who are living together in a housing unit.

### **Emergency Home Energy Assistance (Energy Crisis Intervention and Prevention)**

This term means home energy assistance to low income households necessitated by:

- a. Weather related supply shortage, and/or other household energy related emergencies;

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- b. The household's inability or potential inability to secure home energy for financial or other reason;
- c. Age and/or health factors that require the use of extra home energy;
- d. The maintenance and safety of the home energy system; or
- e. A combination of the above factors.

### **Energy Burden**

This term means the expenditures of the household for home energy divided by the income of the household.

### **Garnishment**

A **garnishment** is a means of collecting a monetary judgment against a defendant by ordering a third party (the **garnishee**) to pay money, otherwise owed to the defendant, directly to the plaintiff. Wage garnishment, the most common type of garnishment, is the process of deducting money from an employee's monetary compensation (including salary) as a result of a court order.

#### **Examples of garnishments that can be used by LIHEAP are:**

Child support

Taxes

Unpaid court fines

### **Heating Degree Days**

This term means the sum of the differences obtained by subtracting the mean temperature for each day in a given period of one year from 65E Fahrenheit.

### **Home Energy**

This term means a source of heating or cooling in a residential dwelling. This includes any type of heating fuel, the mechanical

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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.

### **Housing Unit (Living Unit)**

This term refers to one or more rooms occupied as a separate living quarter in a residential dwelling except:

- a. Housing units owned or operated by educational and/or other institutions which perform an educational or other service for the residents are excluded if the heating costs are obligated, guaranteed, or in any way the responsibility, directly or indirectly, of the institution, or are integrated in any way with the educational or other service costs.
- b. Dormitories, residential treatment or rehabilitation centers, teaching/training centers, transitional living centers, hospitals, nursing homes, retirement or rest homes, homeless shelters, hospice care facilities, communes, or other forms of congregate living arrangements are excluded.
- c. Temporary transient living units in hotels, motels, or other commercial dwellings are excluded.

### **Hypothermia**

Hypothermia, a reduction of the body's "core" temperature caused by prolonged exposure to cold temperatures, is potentially a serious danger to the elderly or persons with certain medical problems. These people should be encouraged to maintain room temperatures of at least 70° F. The following groups of people are more vulnerable to hypothermia:

- infants under age 1
- elderly persons, especially those over age 75
- persons taking drugs which reduce the body's ability to regulate its temperature normally, especially the phenothiazines used for treatment of anxiety, depression, nervousness, nausea

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- persons with hormone dysfunctions such as hypothyroidism which cause a slow metabolism
- persons with head injuries, strokes, or any condition causing paralysis
- persons with immobilizing illness such as severe arthritis or Parkinson's disease
- persons with conditions impairing normal constriction of blood vessels such as a blood clot or hardening of the arteries

### **In-Kind Income**

In-kind income occurs when something of value is received in lieu of a cash payment for goods or services.

### **Intake Function**

Intake is defined as the beginning formal contact(s) with a potential applicant to provide program information and explanation and to provide the application form with instruction for completion and submission.

### **LIHEAP Share Effective Dates**

The LIHEAP Share effective date signals the computer when to start paying out the LIHEAP Share percentage.

### **Outreach Function**

The outreach function takes advantage of opportunities to publicize the LIHEAP through a variety of publicity methods, including but not limited to the public media, meetings and presentations, flyers and brochures, to assure all households are aware of the program and the application process.

### **Poverty Level**

This term refers to the income poverty guidelines for non-farm population of the United States as prescribed by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget as applicable to the State of North Dakota.

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## **Prudent Person Judgment**

Reasonable judgment made by a worker based on experience and knowledge of the program and surrounding community.  
Documentation must support that judgment.

## **Services**

This term means all non-administrative activities designed to benefit the applicant, including, but not limited to:

- a. Negotiating, facilitating, or otherwise assisting the household and the supplier to develop and follow reasonable payment plans.
- b. Providing energy conservation referrals, education, and information.
- c. Emergency Assistance crisis evaluation and planning, preventive services and follow-up.
- d. Referrals and/or advocacy.
- e. Social and economic counseling such as credit or budget counseling, self-reliant/self sufficiency counseling, case management services, etc.

## **Young Child**

This term includes all children under six years of age.

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### **Purpose of the Program 415-05-10 (Revised 10/02 ML #2812)**

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At the time the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program was initiated the United States Congress found:

1. Recent and projected increases in the cost of primary energy sources have and will continue to cause corresponding sharp increases in the cost of home energy.
2. Fixed income, lower income, and lower middle income households should be protected from disproportionately adverse effects on their incomes resulting from national energy policy and beyond their control.
3. Adequate home heating is a necessary aspect of shelter and the lack of home heating or home cooling for certain individuals poses a threat to life, health or safety.
4. Assistance to households in meeting the burden of rising energy costs is insufficient from existing State and Federal sources and credit is not available to low income households.

Therefore, the purpose of this program is to provide assistance to eligible households to offset the rising costs of home energy that are excessive in relation to household income. Therefore, the benefits provided by the North Dakota Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program are not designed to pay the eligible household's total fuel costs, but rather to protect the household against the rising costs of fuel. Further, benefit amounts are based on the individual household's fuel needs insofar as possible and require a fixed percent of household income be spent for fuel.



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### **Administrative Organization 415-05-11** **(Revised 10/02 ML #2812)**

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The Department of Human Services established a LIHEAP administrative unit within the Office of Economic Assistance and delegated responsibility for program planning, direction, supervision, monitoring and evaluation. Various units of the Department of Human Services' division of Management Services will provide research, reporting, accounting, and data processing services. The 53 county social service boards are responsible for local program administration, outreach and the delivery of services. Supervision and monitoring is provided by the Area Supervisors of Economic Assistance. Fair hearings are conducted by the Department of Human Service's Hearing Officer.

The four Indian tribes, located on the North Dakota reservations, will administer a program of low income home energy assistance to eligible Indian households that reside within the boundaries of the reservations. Indians and non-Indians residing on the North Dakota part of the Lake Traverse Reservation are within the scope of this plan administered by the State and by county social service boards.

## **Differences From Other Financial Assistance Programs 415-05-12**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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1. Block grant funding significantly reduces Federal requirements and restrictions.
2. Income and asset eligibility criteria are significantly increased.
3. Controls on minor procedures are reduced, permitting increased efficient use of staff time, lower total administrative costs, simplified procedures, flexibility, and case decisions focused on individual household needs.
4. The importance of seeking out eligible households in any way possible is emphasized, including the responsibility to assist applicant households to successfully establish their eligibility.
5. Acknowledgment that home heating conservation methods are an investment in the future.

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**Confidentiality 415-05-15**

**(Revised 10/1/11 ML #3276)**

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North Dakota Century Code, Section 50-06-16, prohibits the disclosure of any information about persons applying for or receiving assistance under any program administered by the Department of Human Services.

A written release of information signed by the applicant must accompany any request for information regarding a LIHEAP household. If the agency requesting information does not have a Release of Information Form, Department of Human Services Form 1059 may be used.

The county social service board and any persons receiving payments on behalf of LIHEAP households may NOT release the names of LIHEAP applicants to any person/agency other than an authorized representative of the Department of Human Services or the county social service board.

## **Right to Appeal and Fair Hearing 415-05-20** **(Revised 10/1/06 ML #3045)**

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If a household believes the decision made on their **Heating Assistance** or **Emergency Assistance** application may be wrong, or if they do not receive a written notice of the action taken on your Heating Assistance application within 45 days from the date their application is received, they should **first** contact their county social service office to be sure they have all the information they need to correctly determine your eligibility.

If the household still believes the decision is wrong for some reason, they are entitled to request a hearing before the North Dakota Department of Human Services.

Contact the county social service office for instructions on how to request a hearing. The household's request for a hearing must be received within 30 days of the date of the notice of action. The household can have an attorney, relative, friend or other person assist them at the hearing.

If a household's hearing request is received within that time, their benefits will not be changed until a decision is reached. However, the household will be required to pay back any excess benefits received if the appeal is not successful.

A hearing officer will contact the household to arrange a hearing time and place that is convenient for them.

The household will receive a written decision from the North Dakota Department of Human Services.

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### Nondiscrimination

The household has the right to file a written complaint if they believe they have been discriminated against because of race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender, disability or status with respect to marriage or public assistance. The written complaint may be filed with the county social service office; the North Dakota Department of Human Services Office for Civil Rights, 600 E Boulevard Ave., Dept. 325, Bismarck, ND 58505; or the Office of Civil Rights, Department of Health and Human Services, Federal Office Building, 1961 Stout St., Denver, CO 80294.

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## **Right to Review Manual Policies 415-05-25 (Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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State and county social service agencies are required to maintain program materials and policies and to make them available for examination by the public upon request; therefore, the public has a right to review the policies and procedures of the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program. The agencies have the right to insist that such review of policies be restricted to regular hours during normal work days.

Public social service agencies are required to reproduce without charge certain policy materials reasonably requested by an applicant/recipient to help him decide whether to appeal for a fair hearing or with his preparation for a fair hearing. Such policies must also be made available without charge or at a charge related to actual cost to other individuals or organizations appearing to have a legitimate interest in them.

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**Right to Non-Discrimination 415-05-30**

**(Revised 10/02 ML #2812)**

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It is the intent of the Department of Human Services that the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program be administered without discrimination by reason of race, color, sex, national origin, religion, or disability (Chapter 300-01-02-09-33).

Each applicant or beneficiary of services or assistance shall receive a copy of the brochure, SFN 143, "Your Civil Rights Under North Dakota Department of Human Services Programs." This brochure explains the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and other acts that protect persons who receive services from the Department of Human Services. The brochure also explains what a client should do if they feel they have been discriminated against.

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### **Case Recording 415-05-35**

**(Revised 12/1/03 ML #2895)**

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The case record must contain sufficient information to support a decision regarding eligibility and benefits and duration. The following items should be in LIHEAP case files:

1. Heating Assistance Application (SFN 529);
2. SFN 530 (Eligibility and Benefit Worksheet);
3. Verifications (income, deductions, and assets, living arrangements, fuel type, or other factors affecting eligibility or benefits);
4. Emergency Assistance Application (SFN 62) if EA is requested;
5. Action Plan (SFN 11), if referrals for services are made;
6. Copies of all bills entered on the computer by county staff;
7. Copies of any correspondence (excluding notices generated electronically);
8. Copies of any overpayment agreements;
9. Copies of any other optional forms used in the case; and
10. Case narrative.



**Case Narrative Contents 415-05-35-05**  
**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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It is not necessary to repeat information in narrative that is on the forms. The case narrative should be used, however, to record the following:

1. Support for decisions made regarding miscellaneous, premium, and emergency payments.
2. The circumstances resulting in the use of the "prudent person concept" to obtain additional verification of eligibility factors, if this is not explained on the Form 530.
3. Circumstances relating to overpayments and questions of suspected fraud, actions taken, and how resolved.
4. Documentation of "outreach" efforts.
5. Additional information for all cases reporting zero or near zero income regarding how the household is meeting other basic living needs such as shelter, food, medical expenses, etc. The case narrative will document that referrals have been made to other appropriate programs such as Food Stamp, Medical Assistance, etc., to be certain the household is fully aware of all resources which might help during their financial crisis. Form 1681, "Near Zero Income Worksheet" may be used in place of or to supplement the case narrative.

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**Notification of Eligibility and Benefits 415-05-40**  
**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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The applicant and the heating vendor authorized by the applicant must be notified in writing of the LIHEAP heating assistance benefits available to the household and to whom payments will be made.

A "Notice of Action" must be sent:

1. When action is first taken on an application.
2. Whenever an action is taken which will change the amount or type of benefits available.
3. Whenever the time period changes for covered heating costs.
4. Whenever a miscellaneous payment is authorized.
5. Whenever a premium payment is authorized.
6. When action is taken on an application for Emergency Assistance.

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**Informational Brochures 415-05-45**  
**(Revised 10/01 ML #2711)**

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A copy of the brochure "North Dakota's Energy Assistance Program: LIHEAP" as well as the Department Civil Rights brochure MUST be mailed or given to each applicant at the time of initial application and at the time of a reapplication.

It will not be necessary to mail this brochure when notifying the household of changes in eligibility, authorization periods, or at the time of authorization of miscellaneous or emergency payments.

Additional supplies of these brochures can be ordered from the supply unit of the Department of Human Services in Bismarck.

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**LIHEAP Payments Disregarded as Income  
415-05-50**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the amount of any home energy assistance payments or allowances provided to an eligible household by LIHEAP shall NOT be considered income or resources of such household, or any member thereof, for any purpose under any federal or state law, including any law relating to taxation, food stamps, public assistance, or welfare programs.

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### **Staffing Needs 415-05-55**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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Appropriate administrative methods must be implemented to at least partially alleviate the temporarily excessive workloads that occur at the beginning of the heating season. The level and extent of county social service board workload must be assessed and sufficient staff employed, or staff reassigned, as needed, on a temporary, part-time or full-time basis.

100% of the county social service board LIHEAP administrative costs will be reimbursed unless the total statewide administrative costs exceed 10% of the State's allotment.

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**Records Retention 415-05-60**

**Authority (Records Retention) 415-05-60-05  
(Revised 11/02 ML #2829)**

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The LIHEAP record retention policy is intended to conform to the provisions of the North Dakota Records Management Act in N.D.C.C. 54-46, the policies and procedures promulgated by the administrator of the North Dakota Records Management Division, the North Dakota Department of Human Services Records Management Policies and Procedures in the Department Manual Service Chapter 248-01, P.L. 97-35 the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Act of 1981 as amended, and C.F.R. Title 45 Part 96 and C.F.R. Title 45 part 74.20.

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### **Records Retention Policy 415-05-60-10 (Revised 11/02 ML #2829)**

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The LIHEAP 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 all remaining open casefiles are considered closed on September 30. A new casefile is established at the beginning of each federal fiscal year.

The North Dakota Century Code was amended by the 1993 Legislature to provide for a record retention period consistent with Federal retention requirements. Case files, including all documents pertinent to determining eligibility and benefit amount, shall be retained for three (3) years after a case is closed. Subsequent re-openings of cases does not alter the allowable destruction of materials for the prior period of eligibility once the three years has lapsed. The closed case files may, at county option, be destroyed. Verification materials required for a current open case must be retained.

LIHEAP case files are maintained by the county social service boards and contain the necessary information to determine a client's eligibility to receive a specified service or benefit. The casefiles include all forms and documents that have a client signature or are used to apply for assistance, to establish eligibility, to compute or re-compute benefits, or to otherwise authorize or limit assistance. Casefiles also include any form, document, notes, narrative, letters, etc., that are used to verify information and/or used to support payments.

The LIHEAP statewide electronic file includes household identifying data and pertinent characteristics, payment actions, and history of changes that have occurred throughout the federal fiscal year. The electronic file is active for a maximum of three years. The data is then converted to microfiche that is stored indefinitely. County case

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files include documents that will verify the electronic household and payment actions. Other documents that support the electronic file, such as vendor billing forms, rejection notices, county vouchers, the remittance advice, payment adjustment forms, refunds and recoveries, etc., are also retained for three years after the close of each federal fiscal year.

Retention of non-record information is not required. Examples of non-record material are exhibits, library and reference material, extra copies, drafts, transcribed tapes, and an excess supply of forms, brochures, etc.



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## **Outreach and Coordination 415-10**

### **Outreach 415-10-05**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

[View Archives](#)

Outreach activities designed to assure that all potentially eligible households are informed about LIHEAP are an essential part of the program. Outreach activities also include assisting applicants to establish their eligibility. Special emphasis must be placed on reaching those households that include at least one elderly or disabled individual.

It shall be the responsibility of the county social service board to conduct outreach activities for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program. Each county office will maintain a file documenting outreach efforts that can be monitored by the Area Supervisor of Economic Assistance.

Outreach activities will be divided into two categories. "General Outreach--Public Information" includes any efforts designed to make the general public aware of the assistance available under LIHEAP. "Outreach Services to Individuals" are those efforts to assist individual households in completing the application process, understanding the payment procedures, and assisting as needed with other heating related problems or making a referral to the appropriate social service agency.

## **General Outreach - Public Information 415-10-05-05**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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### 1. Public Media

Major newspapers, radio stations, television stations, and local weekly newspapers shall be utilized to provide frequent news releases and Program advertisements. County offices should maintain contact with media in their area to announce up-dates on the program's progress or to announce the availability of county staff in outreach stations of outlying communities, and to publicize their emergency telephone number for after-hour crises.

### 2. Posters and Brochures

Printed materials shall be distributed for displays to utility companies, major fuel suppliers, social service board offices, senior citizen centers, day care centers, medical facilities, Community Action Agencies, and any other community agency or public place available to display such information. An emergency telephone number for after-hour crises shall be included on all posters.

A copy of the LIHEAP brochure shall be provided to every applicant for Heating or Emergency Assistance.

### 3. Distribution of Application Forms

The county social service boards shall distribute heating assistance application forms to all individuals upon request, and provide such application forms to fuel suppliers, Community Action Agencies, senior citizen centers, or any other individuals or organizations that are willing to distribute the form to potentially eligible households.

### 4. Public Speaking

The county social service boards are encouraged to seek opportunities to give talks at community organizations,

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church groups, senior citizen clubs and centers, et cetera, as another means of publicizing the program.

5. State Office Support

Brochures, posters and other printed material will be available from the State Office. Prepared radio "spots" suitable for either paid advertising or public service announcements can be made available. Sample media news releases will be made available upon request.

6. Emergency Services

Public information news releases, posters, brochures, and other contacts shall include information about the availability of Emergency Assistance funds for additional fuel, emergency repairs or shelter, payments to prevent utility shut-offs, et cetera.

**Outreach Services to Individuals 415-10-05-10**  
**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

[View Archives](#)

The county social service board 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 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 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 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.

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

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social service board 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 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 act as a facilitator to develop realistic payment agreements when necessary.
  4. Assistance with Improved Economic and Energy Self-Sufficiency by:
    - a. Provision of or referral to credit, financial, or other appropriate counseling;
    - b. Provision of Case Management Services and advocacy; and
    - c. Assisting applicants to develop self-sufficiency action plans and services.

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### **Alternate Sites for Outreach and Intake 415-10-07 (Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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North Dakota Community Action Agencies and the Area Aging Services Coordinators will provide outreach and intake functions to reach potential applicants who might not otherwise know about or apply for heating assistance.

Outreach activities which will be provided by these agencies may include publicity through public media, meetings and presentations, flyers and brochures, etc.

Intake activities will include the first formal contacts with a potential applicant to provide information and explanation of the program services. Assistance may be provided, when necessary, to complete the application form and the verifications required. The intake function is completed when the signed application is submitted to the county social service board.

Clarifying verifications, eligibility determination, benefit computation and recomputations, payment of authorized bills, and the provision of or referral to personal services when needed shall be the responsibility of the county social service board.

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### **Coordination 415-10-10**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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The State coordinates fuel assistance activities with similar and related programs administered by the State and Federal government, particularly low income energy related programs administered by the Community Action agencies, Supplemental Security Insurance programs, Title XX programs, and the TANF Program. The county social service boards coordinate fuel assistance with other service programs, the Food Stamp Program, General Assistance Program, and medical care program.

The Department of Human Services, Aging Services Division, coordinates a network of services and special projects for the elderly including nutrition, transportation, recreational, educational, and chore services.

Many LIHEAP households can benefit from these programs and should be referred to them. The senior projects may also help LIHEAP locate unserved elderly households. The county social service boards are encouraged to become acquainted with any local senior project staff and with the regional aging services coordinator to ensure that appropriate referrals are made.

Responsibilities, such as outreach, distributions and securing of applications, obtaining income verifications, and the determination of eligibility, should be coordinated with other county social service board programs and the Community Action agencies. As a minimum, the recipients of last year's Fuel Assistance Program, as well as recipients of other programs administered by the county social service boards, should be given the opportunity to apply for fuel assistance.

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### **Conservation Emphasis 415-10-10-05**

**(Revised 12/1/03 ML #2895)**

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All heating assistance applicants will automatically be referred for energy conservation services (Item 7 on SFN 529).

Discussion with applicants who live in poor quality housing, that have high-energy usage, or who are demonstrating a pattern of reliance on Energy Assistance should focus on the benefits of conservation services.

1. Energy conservation will stretch LIHEAP dollars.
2. The amount of money required for heating from the applicant's own pocket is reduced.
3. The conservation and weatherization services will continue to reduce energy costs, so even if the applicant is not eligible for LIHEAP, the out-of-pocket costs will be lower.
4. Their home will be more comfortable with fewer drafts and cold spots

The long range advantage of taking the extra time to encourage participation in conservation services now is that program expenditures will be reduced, allowing more people to be served and reducing the chances that benefit levels will have to be decreased in the future.



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### **Conservation Referrals 415-10-10-05-05** **(Revised 10/1/07 ML #3094)**

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#### Comprehensive Energy Conservation Program

The Comprehensive Energy Conservation Program will be conducted by Community Action Agencies' Weatherization Coordinators. The Program will provide households with the following services regardless of previous weatherization activities:

1. An initial contact by the Weatherization Coordinator to explain program services and to motivate participation.
2. A home energy conservation assessment to include evaluation of current energy consumption, home energy audit, life style effects on consumption, knowledge of conservation, etc.
3. Development of an individual Conservation Action Plan based upon the results of the assessment.
4. Group and individual education regarding energy conservation, life style changes to reduce consumption, and weatherization techniques.
5. Specific services, as needed, will be provided by the Comprehensive Energy Conservation Program or, if the applicant prefers, arranged to be provided by a qualified private business of the applicant's choice. Such services may include:
  - a. Chimney (up to \$100/heating season) and/or furnace cleaning and tuning (up to \$100/heating season);
  - b. Minor furnace repair or replacement of inefficient and/or inoperable heating systems\*\*;
  - c. Minor home repair, insulation, and/or the complete range of Department of Energy (DOE)/LIHEAP Weatherization Assistance.\*\*

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\*\* Note that if the services in b) and c) are needed, the Comprehensive Energy Conservation Program becomes the "vendor" providing a service the same as any other "vendor" would provide a service to a LIHEAP client. Therefore, the process of approving payment of such services when recommended by the Program requires that the applicant be found eligible for Emergency Assistance and the dollar maximums a county may approve without State Office clearance are also the same. If these dollar maximums are not sufficient to resolve the emergency, the county may recommend a higher level of assistance to the State Office, but the State Office must approve the expenditure.

However, if the needed services can be provided with funds from the DOE Weatherization Program or with weatherization funds transferred to Community Action from LIHEAP, the county office would not need to process an emergency application. The staff of the Comprehensive Energy Conservation Program will know whether DOE/LIHEAP Weatherization funds are available or whether an Emergency Assistance application will need to be processed.

6. Coordination with all other community energy resources and all Community Action Agency services and programs administered under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964.
7. Follow up evaluation of energy savings achieved and/or assessment of additional conservation activities needed.

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**Coordination with Other Energy Agencies**

**415-10-10-05-10**

**(Revised 10/02 ML #2812)**

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Applicants, as well as other individuals that inquire about the Fuel Assistance Program, should be made aware of energy audits that are conducted by utility companies. Brochures or other forms of written material that may be available from the utilities or Community Action agencies describing the energy audit or other conservation methods should be distributed to applicants or individuals that inquire about the Fuel Assistance Program.

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**Documentation of Coordination 415-10-10-05-15**  
**(Revised 10/02 ML #2812)**

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The county social service board must be able to demonstrate and document their efforts to coordinate fuel assistance activities with all other energy-related programs. A notation in a general coordination file may be sufficient, if the activity is not related to a specific case.

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**Conservation Referral Process 415-10-10-10**  
**(Revised 10/02 ML #2812)**

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The LIHEAP application offers all eligible applicants conservation services.

The LIHEAP application, if signed by the client, automatically refers eligible applicants to the conservation services provided by the Community Action Agencies.

The county should discuss the potential benefits of conservation activities to be sure the applicant understands the value of a referral. The county should explain the availability of cost reduction services through LIHEAP such as furnace/chimney cleaning (see 415-20-05-10-05) and installation of demand control devices, etc. for electrically heated homes (see 415-20-05-10-10).

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### **Vendor Budget Payment Plans 415-10-10-15** **(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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Many LIHEAP recipients can benefit from participating in budget payment plans offered by all major utilities and by many other fuel vendors. However, recipients may be reluctant to participate in a year around payment plan if the amount of the monthly payments does not take into account the amount of fuel 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 assistance from the customer's estimated consumption cost before calculating monthly payment amounts.

The customer's annual fuel assistance benefit can be estimated by multiplying the customer's co-payment percentage times the actual heating bills from the previous heating season. Example: The vendor determines that annual consumption for the previous heating season (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 assistance benefit would be estimated at \$600. The vendor would then deduct the customer's estimated annual fuel assistance of \$600 from the estimated annual heating 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 will not be carrying large bills during the peak of the heating season when the cost of heat is the greatest, because the customer would have accumulated a credit. The customer would be able to maintain a more balanced monthly budget.

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Some vendors may prefer to set up budget plans, but suspend them during the time LIHEAP is paying on the heating 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 participation.

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

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**Case Management Services 415-10-15**

**(Revised 10/02 ML #2812)**

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The need for case management services (self reliance) to be available for LIHEAP clients stimulated an agreement between the Office of Economic Assistance and the Division of Community Service dated May, 1990. Later, additional funds were provided to LIHEAP to purchase case management services for LIHEAP eligible households that were not on the JOBS program. Consequently, under no circumstances, will county funds be required for these services.

Purchasing case management services for LIHEAP eligible households is intended to supplement, but not to substitute or replace LIHEAP services provided by the county social services office.



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**Description of Case Management Services**  
**415-10-15-05**

**(Revised 10/02 ML #2812)**

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The actual services provided are based on a comprehensive social and economic assessment and an Action Plan, developed and updated by the case manager and the customer. Services included on the Action Plan may be provided in an individualized or group setting or both.

**Individualized Case Management 415-10-15-05-05**  
**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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1. Provide information about assistance and service programs, employment and training opportunities available, community resources, support services, recipient rights and responsibility, etc.
2. Referrals to appropriate employment support services, treatment or other needed services, etc. Includes follow up, advocacy, coordination, etc.
3. May assist to develop or update resumes, and assist in job search, job coaching, practice interviews, etc.
4. Supportive relationships to encourage the customer to carry out the plan and their responsibilities.
5. Actions designed to heighten and maintain the individual's motivation to resolve personal problems that may be barriers to employment and self sufficiency.
6. Realistically identifying individuals and households that have little potential of becoming more self sufficient so economic security, protective service, and maintenance of current level of functioning may be established as the appropriate goals.

**S.T.E.P.S. Program 415-10-15-05-10**  
**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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Steps to Excellence for Personal Success (S.T.E.P.S.) is a multi-media group program tailored to assist people who have never been employed or for individuals who are no longer employed. It is designed to help people move from unemployment to employment and from dependence to independence. People accomplish this transition through the application of effective thinking skills. S.T.E.P.S. teaches people to think differently about themselves, the job market, and what they can and cannot do. It presents down-to-earth concepts relating to goal-setting, self-esteem, communication, affirmations, and motivation.

1. FORMAT

The training session incorporates video tapes, an application guide manual, program handouts, group discussion and interaction, and individual reflection time. Each group meets for 2 to 22 days, or approximately 14 hours of classroom training.

The variation in the number of days allows the facilitator to take into consideration travel distance, cost, and problems with full day participation due to child care needs, other family responsibilities, or to avoid overwhelming participant's who may not be used to a full day of classroom activity.

2. CURRICULUM

There are 13 units. With each video (unit), the facilitator presents an overview of the objectives of the unit, and following the taped presentation by Lou Tice (founder of Pacific Institute), provides time for group discussion and interaction. Individual and group exercises are included.

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Each participant is provided with a kit which includes a program application guide manual with a 13 week home study follow up program, and four audio follow up tapes.

The 13 units include:

- 1A Breaking Barriers
- 1B The Wizard
- 2 Conditioning
- 3 Your Self-Image
- 4 How Your Self-Image is Built
- 5 Building Self-Esteem
- 6 Comfort Zones
- 7A Motivating Yourself
- 7B Self-Esteem and Performance
- 8 Creating Positive Motivation
- 9 Shaping Your Future
- 10 Making It Work
- 11 Staying on Track

**Case Management Referral Process 415-10-15-10  
(Revised 10/02 ML #2812)**

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Case management services will not be purchased for any individual or household unless referred by a county social service board LIHEAP representative on SFN 98, "Case Management Inter-Agency Referral Form."

Individuals or households that are referred for case management services by LIHEAP, and later become eligible in the other program, should not be re-referred.

The case manager shall contact all individuals referred, usually within 10 days, to complete the assessment, the action plan, and to initiate services. A copy of the "Action Plan Summary" is provided to the referral source.

1. Households that are eligible for LIHEAP may only be referred by county social service board staff. Identifying the household that should be referred will be based on the county worker's knowledge of the household, the problem and service needed, and the variety of other community services available. Training and case consultation has and will continue to be provided, but continuous communication between county staff and the case manager is essential. Joint training or information meetings within a county, regional, or statewide could be scheduled.

## **Case Management - Termination of Services 415-10-15-15**

**(Revised 10/02 ML #2812)**

[View Archives](#)

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 LIHEAP Program Year: Technically, all LIHEAP households are ineligible on September 30 of each year. However, to allow time for the household to reapply and the county staff to process and enter the data in the electronic file without an interruption of service:

1. LIHEAP will extend payment authorization 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 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.

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### **Case Management Billing Process 415-10-15-20 (Revised 10/02 ML #2812)**

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SFN 339 "Monthly Case Management Billing and Reporting Form" will be completed by the case manager. One form for each county is completed for services provided to a household

The billing form should be submitted to the referral source by the case manager by the 10th of the month after the service was provided and forwarded to the state office by the 15th. Payment will not be made for any services provided three or more months prior to the receipt of the billing form by the referral source.

The form is self explanatory. The referral form (SFN 98) provides most of the necessary identifying information. A uniform system to calculate each case manager's cost per hour per county has been adopted. The signature of the director of the community action agency will certify that the billing is accurate and that the services were delivered. When completed by the case manager, the billing form is submitted to the referral source. The monthly data report will be attached and should be referenced to the Action Plan Summary.

Eligible household billing forms are sent by the case manager to the LIHEAP worker who referred the household. The county worker receives the form for accuracy and LIHEAP eligibility.

If someone is not eligible for LIHEAP, the community action agency must be notified so that they may bill those costs elsewhere.

#### County Social Service Representative

- Review the form for accuracy and that LIHEAP eligibility is checked appropriately.

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LIHEAP Households . . . Billing is sent directly to the county social service office that made the referral.

- Signature certifies that:
  - Household was properly referred for case management services
  - Case has not been closed
  - Household was LIHEAP eligible during the current federal fiscal year
- Checks that services on the monthly data report are in accord with the Action Plan Summary on file.
- Resolves any questions with the case manager and/or CAA official.
- Submits billing form to State LIHEAP Office for payment. Attach explanation of any unresolved questions.



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## **Application & Verification Procedures 415-15**

### **Application Procedures 415-15-05**

#### **Right to Apply 415-15-05-05**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

[View Archives](#)

Any person has the right to apply for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), even those who are clearly ineligible. The county social service board must provide information about the eligibility requirements of the program; explain applicants' rights, benefits, and obligations under the program; assist individuals as necessary in completing their applications; and accept and process applications without delay.

The county social service board's obligation to provide assistance to the applicant in completing the application process is described in detail in the section of this Service Chapter dealing with "outreach." (See 415-10-05-10.)

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### **Head of Household 415-15-05-06**

**(Revised 10/1/08 ML #3151)**

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The head of the household is the household member responsible for payment of the heat cost. Usually, this is the person who will be the applicant for heating assistance and who will sign the application. However, any other household member could provide the application information and documentation and could sign the form to attest to its accuracy. **See 415-15-10-17** regarding verification of heating responsibility. See also 415-35 for information regarding the payment process when the designated head of household for LIHEAP is a different person than the person whose name is on the bill.

**Note:** Usually the social security number for the head of household should be used when entering an application. If the applicant has no social security number, leave it blank and request that a "dummy" number be assigned by the state office.

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### **Deadlines for Application 415-15-05-10 (Revised 10/1/08 ML #3151)**

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Applications will be accepted for this program beginning October 1. All applications must be completed, signed, and received by the 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 end of the first working day after May 31. 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 terminate the acceptance of new applications at any time prior to May 31 if federal program funds are exhausted.

Supplemental Security Income/Social Security Administration (SSI/SSA), flat grant TANF whose income is fixed may be contacted by the county beginning August 15 to make reapplication for the coming heating season. (These applications will be dated 10/1 in computer.) This shall be at the discretion of the local county social service board.

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

If the application has not been signed and dated, the county does not have a valid application and it is not necessary to make any data entry on the computer.

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### **Deadlines for Processing 415-15-05-15 (Revised 12/1/03 ML #2895)**

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An application shall be considered as "received" on the date a signed application is received by the county social service board office. This is the "Application Date" which will be entered on the computer "Household Data" screen.

Applications from households that arrive before October 1 will be considered to have been received on October 1. **The "Application date" will be entered as October 1 and the worker will have 45 days from October 1 to process the application.**

"Notice of Action" must be completed by the county social service board representative, dated, and mailed to the applicant promptly or at least within 45 days from the date the county social service board received the signed application. The case record must document the cause of any delay.

The date the Notice is completed by the county social service board representative and "Date of Action," on the "Household Data" screen must coincide and will be compared with the application date to assure a total of 45 days is not exceeded.

If the application is incomplete, every attempt must be made by the county social service board to help the household obtain the necessary information to ensure prompt processing.

To speed the application process, an applicant has the right to submit the completed application form at any time, without being required to wait until a personal interview can be scheduled. This will allow the county social service board the opportunity to review

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the application and notify the applicant of any missing information or verification which must be provided before eligibility can be determined.

Upon receipt of a signed application, a pending case should be established in the LIHEAP computer system. Missing data may be added as it comes in.

Within 15 days of receipt of an incomplete application, the county social service office must provide the applicant with a written notice. The computer generated Request for Information letter on the Notice menu should be used.

1. Clearly identifying missing information or verifications, and
2. Identifying a deadline date after which the application will be denied because it is incomplete. This deadline date should be 30 days following receipt of the application.

Applications, including verifications, that are not completed within 30 days\* of the date the application is received in the county office may be denied and the household invited to submit a new signed and dated application with verifications. (See 415-10-05-10 #1 for county office outreach responsibilities). However, if the applicant provides the necessary information and verifications before the county office has finished processing the denial (A "Notice of Action" is not completed and the case has not yet been entered on the computer file) and the 45 day processing time limit will not be exceeded, the applicant should not be required to complete a new application even though his 30 day deadline has passed. Once the case has been established on the computer as a denial, a new application is mandatory.

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### Summary of processing deadlines:

**Day #1:** The 'clock' begins the day the signed application is received in the county office, even if it is not complete. This is the date used in the 'Application Date,' of the 'Household Data' screen. The 'pending' case is added to the LIHEAP computer file.

**By Day #15:** Notice of missing data or verifications and deadline has been provided to the applicant.

**By Day #30:\*** The applicant must have returned all data and verifications. If not, and the county office has provided appropriate assistance to the applicant in completing the application, the application may be denied.

**By Day #45:** All case information and action taken has been added to the computer file. The 'Notice of Action' has been mailed.

**NOTE:** SFN 530 (Eligibility and Benefit Worksheet) must be signed and dated by the worker, where it says "Signature of CSSB Representative."

If the SFN 530 (Eligibility and Benefit Worksheet) is not used by a worker, then the worker needs to sign the application to show that they have determined eligibility.

**Emergency Application Procedures 415-15-05-20**  
**(Revised 11/02 ML #2829)**

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An applicant household may have a heating emergency (because of being without fuel or having received a "shut-off notice") under these circumstances:

1. During hours when the county social office is not open;
2. During a natural disaster declared by the Governor; or
3. When eligibility cannot immediately be established due to lack of verification.

For dealing with cases described in 'A' and 'B,' each county must have a workable plan by which temporary assistance is available for health or life threatening crises. This may involve an arrangement with local police or any other agency which is accessible 24 hours per day and can be publicized as available for after-hour emergencies. In these cases, the county social service board or its designated agency may authorize, without a signed application or verifications, the purchase of the minimum amount of fuel practical under the circumstances.

In an emergency under the conditions described in 'C,' the county social service board must attempt to secure the health and safety of the household short of authorizing the purchase of fuel. Measures could include arranging for the family to stay with relatives temporarily or locating emergency services provided by local churches, for example. If all such measures have been exhausted, the county social service office may authorize purchase of the minimum amount of fuel practical to alleviate the emergency.

In all of the above situations, the county social service board must assist the applicant to obtain the verifications necessary as soon as

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possible. If found ineligible, the household must refund all LIHEAP funds expended or committed.



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### **Applications - Receipt of 415-15-05-25 (Revised 10/1/04 ML #2936)**

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The 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, however, and reviewed for eligibility. NO OTHER agency may make any decision regarding eligibility or the level of benefits.

Applications will be taken by the county social service board in the county where the client currently resides.

NOTE: 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 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 they 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.

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;

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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).

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. Counties are encouraged to be innovative in providing assistance to applicants who cannot come to the county office. In some cases, if weather conditions are poor and an emergency need for fuel 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 fuel vendor when 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 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.

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**Reapplication Procedures 415-15-05-30**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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Only one application per heating season will be required for each household, UNLESS the case was originally denied or when the household has transferred from another county. The revised information will be noted in the case narrative or on SFN 530, "Eligibility and Benefit Worksheet," used to recompute the benefit level. The changes in information will be submitted to the computer on the "Change Household Data" screen.

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**Denied Cases (Reapplication) 415-15-05-30-05**  
**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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

\*Note: The new application cannot be recorded as "pending" on the computer record. Any changes to the computer record resulting from the new application will be recorded at the time action is taken on the new application. If the household was authorized for case management services, refer to 415-10-15-15.

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**Transferred Cases (Reapplication) 415-15-05-30-10  
(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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If a household moves to another county, a copy of the original application and other verifications may be forwarded to the new county. However, a new application shall be taken as well. \* The benefit level will be recomputed on SFN 530, "Eligibility and Benefit Worksheet."

\*Note: The new application cannot be recorded as "pending" on the computer record. Any changes to the computer record resulting from the new application will be recorded at the time action is taken on the new application. If the household was authorized for case management services, refer to 415-10-15-15.

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**Verification Procedures 415-15-10**  
**(Revised 10/1/08 ML #3151)**

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Unless otherwise indicated, Department of Human Services SFN 1059, "Authorization to Release Information," should be used whenever requesting information not available from public records, or when the general release on the application is not adequate for the agency asked to supply information.

If medical information is needed to determine eligibility on a case, the SFN 1059 should be used. The statement on the LIHEAP application is not sufficient.

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### **Income - Verification 415-15-10-05** **(Revised 10/1/06 ML #3045)**

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While eligibility for LIHEAP is determined in large measure on information supplied by the applicant under penalty of perjury, income eligibility must be supported by conclusive, documenting evidence.

All sources and types of income and the household's deductible expenses that exceed \$500 per year must be verified at the time of application by written documentation. This may be accomplished by the use of wage stubs, signed statement from an employer, Internal Revenue Service (IRS) forms, automatic bank deposit slips for social security, award letters for SSI, or other types of benefits, etc.

If the application is taken during the early days of the month before the current wage stub is available, the previous month's wage stubs, etc. may be used to establish the amount of monthly income. If the applicant has income from a new source in the month of application, consider the amount of this monthly income. Establish the annual amount of income by using the current wage stubs received and the pay frequency. If no pay checks have been received at the time of application, a written verification from the employer should be provided by the applicant.

Income received during any month used to compute eligibility and/or benefits prior to the month of application must be similarly verified.

Wherever possible, the case file should contain copies of the written verification provided by the applicant. However, where this is not feasible, such as when an application is taken by home call or in alternate sites where a copy machine is not accessible, it is

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sufficient for the eligibility technician to make a case note of the type of written verification that was seen.

Where the applicant is a current recipient of another public assistance program, it is sufficient to make a cross reference in the case file to the appropriate public assistance record containing the documentation of income, so long as the other record is current and has been reviewed for completeness of information used to establish LIHEAP eligibility. If the TEC3 screens are used to verify TANF income, the worker needs to be sure the amounts used reflect the net TANF grant actually received without the extra allowances for special needs, child care reimbursements, incentive allowances, etc.

Since LIHEAP eligibility will normally be determined only once during the duration of the heating season, it is not necessary to report or verify income changes.



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**SSI/SSA Income - Verification 415-15-10-05-05**  
**(Revised 10/1/11 AMENDED ML #3276)**

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Neither TPQY nor SDX can be accessed to verify SSA/SSI benefits for individuals that are only in receipt of LIHEAP. If verification is obtained for TANF, Medicaid, Healthy Steps or SNAP it may also be used for LIHEAP.

If the case is a LIHEAP case only, the eligibility worker will need to obtain the information from the client.

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**Worker's Compensation - Verification**  
**415-15-10-05-10**

**(Revised 11/02 ML #2829)**

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To verify Worker's Compensation, send a SFN 1059, "Authorization to Release Information" signed by the claimant directly to the Worker's Compensation Bureau.

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**Unemployment Compensation - Verification**  
**415-15-10-05-15**

**(Revised 10/1/04 ML #2936)**

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To verify Unemployment Compensation, send SFN 1059, "Authorization to Release Information." The 'online' Unemployment Benefit screen, on the Job Service web site, can also be used for verification purposes.

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## **Deductions - Verification 415-15-10-05-20** **(Revised 10/1/10 ML #3231)**

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Except for the earned income deduction, all deductions (415-25-05-05) from the gross income that exceed \$1,000\* per year must be verified. (The \$1,000\* applies to each category of deductions, i.e., Medical, Health and Hospitalization Insurance, Child Support, etc.). Acceptable verifications may include:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Medical                                       | Cancelled checks, receipts, vendor account statements.   |
| 2. Health and Hospitalization Insurance Premiums | Cancelled checks, receipts, vendor account statements.   |
| 3. Child Support                                 | The Child Support Enforcement System is to be used to determine child support income.                                      |
| 4. Education                                     | Bills, statements, receipts, from the educational institution (See 415-25-05-05 Item 7)                                    |
| 5. Garnishment                                   | Copy of the court order/Verification of IRS levies, etc. (See 415-05-05 Definition of Garnishment)                         |
| 6. Employment                                    | Statement from employer, work schedule from employer, receipts from motels or work-site landlord (See 415-25-05-05 Item 7) |

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7. Child Care
- Cancelled checks, receipts from providers, etc. in combination with evidence of the amount reimbursed from an outside source such as TANF.

\* The \$1,000 is not an automatic deduction. A client can claim up to that amount per category without providing verification, but she or he must first claim to have had that expense.

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**School Attendance - Verification 415-15-10-10**  
**(Revised 10/1/08 ML #3151)**

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When the household wishes to have the earnings of a minor child age 19 and under but still in secondary school disregarded from the determination of household income, it will be necessary to verify the school attendance of the child whose earnings are to be disregarded. This should be verified at the time of the initial application. (See 415-25-05-50).

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**Assets - Verification 415-15-10-15**

**(Revised 10/1/07 ML #3094)**

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The reporting of real and personal property assets is to be accepted on a self declaration basis under penalty of perjury. The county social service board may verify any assets which appear to be questionable and suggest under the "prudent person concept" that further inquiry or documentation should be required. The county social service board is discouraged, however, from routinely verifying all reported assets for all applicants as this may unnecessarily delay the processing of the application and cause undue hardship to an applicant who is in need of heating fuel.

Many applicants may not understand what assets are counted. If the reported assets are greater than \$10,000, (plus \$5,000 for each household member 60 years of age and over) the eligibility worker shall discuss the assets with the applicant to be sure reported assets are in fact counted assets.

**Responsibility for Heat Costs - Verification**  
**415-15-10-17**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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If there is any question that the applicant is responsible for payment of heating costs, the county social service board may require verification of that responsibility. In most cases, the name on the heating bill will be the same as a member of the household. However, some landlords may choose to leave the bill in their own name and have the tenant reimburse them for the heating bill the landlord pays to the heating vendor. Usually, a written lease agreement will verify the responsibility of the tenant to pay the heating costs. In the absence of a written lease, previous tenants, community knowledge of the landlord's policy, the vendor, or the landlord's accountant may be able to attest to the rental policy regarding responsibility for heating costs. See 415-35 regarding payment procedures.



## **Verification of Other Eligibility Factors 415-15-10-20**

**(Revised 10/1/08 ML #3151)**

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Verification of the applicant's statement of resources or assets, or any other factor of eligibility and benefit determination, may be required whenever it is questionable in the judgment of the county social service board representative. If the required verification is refused, the application may be denied. In addition to the household income and assets, 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.

If there is a court order or legal agreement form that indicates that both parents have 50% custody of their children, each parent can count the children in their household.

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, unemployment compensation, or when there is reported interest income without reported assets;
2. Property or cash reserve holdings are very near or equal to the limitation allowed; and
3. 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.

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- 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.

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### **Collateral Contacts for Verification 415-15-10-25 (Revised 11/02 ML #2829)**

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Whenever the county social service board is unable to determine eligibility on the basis of information provided by an applicant, it must seek additional data. The applicant should be given first opportunity to supply the needed information, provided he is physically and mentally capable of doing so. However, if the applicant is unable to do so, or there is suspicion that the information provided is unreliable, collateral sources must be used to clarify the data. The applicant **MUST** give his written consent for such collateral contacts by use of SFN 1059, "Authorization to Release Information." The applicant must be given an explanation of what information is needed, why it is needed, and how it will be used. Should the applicant refuse to give his consent for necessary collateral contacts, he must be given the choice to: 1) give his consent; 2) withdraw his application; or 3) have his application denied by reason of inadequate verification of eligibility status.

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**Public Records - Use Without Knowledge or Consent  
415-15-10-30**

**(Revised 11/02 ML #2829)**

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Public records may be consulted for documentation without requesting the applicant's consent. No consent is required when seeking information from the Social Security Administration, Employment Security Bureau, Unemployment Insurance Division, courts, Bureau of Indian Affairs, county courthouse records, or Credit Bureau publications.

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**Applicant Responsibility to Provide Verifications  
415-15-10-35**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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It shall remain the primary responsibility of the applicant to provide the necessary verification to the county social service board to establish eligibility. However, if the applicant is unable to obtain the necessary information, it becomes the responsibility of the county social service board to assist the applicant in whatever manner is needed to complete the application process.

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## **Benefits Available & Eligible Households 415-20**

### **Benefits Available 415-20-05**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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

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### **Benefits for Heating Assistance 415-20-05-05** **(Revised 10/1/06 ML #3045)**

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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, propane tank rental (tank rentals may be charged during the regular heating season using fuel type "08") and hook-up (the charge for the set-up or hook-up of a new tank must take place during the regular heating season. Use fuel type "16" to bill for the charges.). LIHEAP does not purchase tanks or pay installment payments for tanks which are on a purchase contract.

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" to bill for these charges. These charges can be billed to LIHEAP anytime during the year. Those billed outside of the regular heating season need to be entered as a miscellaneous payment.

Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program payments to vendors can be made ONLY for costs of fuel actually purchased by the customer during the customer's period of eligibility that has NOT been paid for by the customer. County social service boards need to take extra care to instruct vendors that LIHEAP will NOT pay for fuel which has previously been paid for by the customer. However, special considerations may apply if the vendor and the customer have agreed upon an even monthly payment plan. (See 415-10-10-15.)

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### **Electric Heating 415-20-05-05-02**

**(Revised 10/1/11 ML #3276)**

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Recipients who heat with electricity may or may not have their heating consumption submetered. To ensure that all eligible LIHEAP households retain responsibility for their electric "non-heating" costs, LIHEAP will have electric vendors submit the entire metered residential usage to the State computer, even if the heating is submetered. 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 this adjusted LS%, LIHEAP is paying benefits based upon a presumed heating cost that is 75% of the entire metered residential bill.



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### **Utility Costs 415-20-05-05-05**

**(Revised 10/1/11 ML #3276)**

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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.

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**Excess Usage and Stockpiling Fuel 415-20-05-05-10**  
**(Revised 11/00 ML #2644)**

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LIHEAP funds may be used ONLY to purchase fuel for the living unit of the eligible household in quantities normally purchased for that household and placed in tank(s) connected to the primary residence. LIHEAP funds may NOT be used to purchase fuel to be stockpiled in additional storage tanks.

Heating vendors are not permitted to bill LIHEAP for fuel which has not been delivered in order to build a credit on the account.

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**Non-Residential Usage 415-20-05-05-15**

**(Revised 10/02 ML #2812)**

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Clients whose usage includes non-residential purposes are required to specify this fact on the LIHEAP application, Form 529. These clients will be identified by a code on the data entry screens (See Manual 416) and will be subject to a maximum benefit equal to the estimated cost of heat X calculated LIHEAP Share % of the household.

Definition of Non-Residential Usage: Fuel used to provide heat or electricity to other buildings, machinery, vehicles, etc.

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**Unused Fuel - Credits 415-20-05-05-20**  
**(Revised 10/02 ML #2812)**

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If the customer dies or moves and the fuel purchased by LIHEAP can reasonably be pumped out, the refund must be returned to LIHEAP. The customer may NOT sell any fuel purchased by LIHEAP, nor receive a refund from the vendor for any fuel purchased by LIHEAP.

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**"Topping Off" Tanks 415-20-05-05-25**

**(Revised 10/02 ML #2812)**

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Tanks may be "topped off" 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.

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**Premium Benefits 415-20-05-10**  
**(Revised 11/02 ML #2829)**

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Households eligible to receive 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 October 1 – July 31st of the current year. Electric rate reduction devices may be requested 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.

**Furnace and/or Chimney Cleaning 415-20-05-10-05  
(Revised 10/1/08 ML #3151)**

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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 \$100 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 \$100 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 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.

One furnace cleaning per household per 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 needs to sign the form. No payment will be made on the form unless there is a signature.

When the **county is responsible for emergency furnace repairs** the county needs to take the following steps:

1. Insure that the furnace is not functional or poses a threat to the household's health and safety.

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2. Have the household fill out an application for emergency assistance
3. Determine whether the household is eligible (income and asset)
4. Contact a vendor to repair the furnace (two bids are not needed for furnace repair)
5. 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 county immediately on Monday. Households should contact the office in a timely manner to have emergency furnace repair bills paid or reimbursed. **Prudent judgment** will enter into the decision of whether or not to make a payment.

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 recipients.

Requests for furnace/chimney cleanings may be made October 1 - July 31 of the current heating season.

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



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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 county social office 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 LIHEAP system by the county social service office. (This is done by using Option 'Z' Notice of Action, then go to 'F' under "add" a record.) 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.

The payment is to be entered on the computer by the county social service office as a premium payment, on the "Miscellaneous and Emergency Payments" screen, Reason Code "N," service code "14."

**Electric Rate Reduction Devices 415-20-05-10-10**  
**(Revised 10/02 ML #2812)**

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Households who have installed devices such as demand control, dual heating, heating submeters, etc., receive reduced heating rates. As the heating cost goes down, their share of the total bill also goes down, and the cost to LIHEAP goes down.

To encourage recipients who were eligible for Heating Assistance during any prior month of the current fiscal year, to take advantage of these rate reduction devices, the LIHEAP State Office will accept requests for funding assistance with the installation costs. The funding plan approved may:

1. Provide funding from "premium" benefits;
2. Require partial funding participation by the applicant, utility, and/or other sources; or
3. Develop a combination of the above.

Individual proposals should be developed jointly by the recipient and the electric heating vendor and mailed to the State LIHEAP office. No payment of installation costs can be assured without prior approval by the State LIHEAP Administrator. Proposals should include at a minimum:

1. Customer name, address, social security number, county of residence;
2. Vendor name, address, phone number, and contact person;
3. Estimate of annual heating cost without the device, estimated annual dollar savings;
4. Copy of household's previous 12 months actual consumption and cost;
5. Type of cost reduction system selected and why;

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6. Total cost of installation, availability of loan or other incentive programs from the company or other agency which will participate in installation costs, amount of customer's annual installment payments;
7. Who will own the equipment installed and be responsible for repair/maintenance; and
8. Proposed installation date.

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**Eligible Households (See Household Definitions  
05-05) 415-20-10**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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Generally, eligible households will fall into two groups, those who pay a fuel vendor directly and those whose cost of heating 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 both the income and assets limitation of the program. (Tenants of subsidized housing in which heat is included in the rent are not eligible.) **See 415-20-10-30**

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**"Sleeping Room" Renters 415-20-10-05**  
**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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A sleeping room is less than a complete living unit that may or may not have a private entrance. If the living unit has both kitchen and bath facilities within it, it is NOT a sleeping room. Renters of sleeping rooms may be eligible for LIHEAP benefits.

In determining basic eligibility, the household must meet both income and asset limitations. The household's estimated cost of heating will be one-fourth of the one bedroom column on the cost/consumption table, not to exceed 25% of annual rent costs.

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**Part-Time Residents and Non-Resident Applicants**  
**415-20-10-10**

**(Revised 12/1/03 ML #2895)**

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A household may apply for North Dakota Heating or Emergency Assistance even though they have already moved out of state.

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 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.

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### **Non-Indians on Reservations 415-20-10-15** **(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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Four (4) Indian Tribe organizations in North Dakota will administer LIHEAP for Indian households residing within the Reservation Boundaries. They are Standing Rock, Turtle Mountain, Fort Totten, and Fort Berthold Three Affiliated Tribes.

Non-Indian households residing within the boundaries of the reservations will be served by the appropriate county social service board. Households residing within these reservations that include both Indian and non-Indian adults may elect to be served by either the tribal organization or the county social service board, although the Indian or non-Indian designation of the head of the household is the normal determining factor.

The county social service boards involved must establish continuous lines of communications and coordination with the tribal organizations to resolve problems and avoid duplicate payments.

The county social service boards will serve both Indian and non-Indian households residing within the boundaries of the Lake Traverse reservation.

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**Migrant Workers 415-20-10-20**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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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.



## **Households Maintaining Two Residences 415-20-10-25**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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### 1. Work/Education-Site Residence

Occasionally, a head of household or spouse may travel within North Dakota to a work/education site which is too far from his permanent residence to allow him to return home each night. These workers/students frequently maintain a part-time residence during the work week at their work/education site and return to the permanent home only on weekends.

For the purposes of this program, the eligible household may receive LIHEAP benefits ONLY for heating costs incurred at the permanent residence. Heating costs incurred by the worker/student at the "work/education-site" residence will NOT be covered by LIHEAP. This policy does not apply if the entire family has moved with the worker/student at the temporary work/educational site residence. In that case, the policy in #2 of this section shall apply and LIHEAP assistance may be provided at the temporary residence in which the family is living.

- ### 2. A household who elects to maintain a minimum heat in their permanent home but lives elsewhere on a temporary basis due to road or weather conditions or other special circumstances may receive LIHEAP heating assistance ONLY for the residence in which they are living. Benefits will be adjusted as needed when the household moves back to their permanent home.

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### **Subsidized Housing 415-20-10-30**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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Renters of units in some governmental subsidized housing (including HAP renter/heat paid clients) are not directly responsible for heating costs. The rental costs for these households are based on a fixed percentage of the household's income and/or other factors. Their rental costs do NOT increase when heating costs increase; therefore, these households are NOT eligible for heating assistance from LIHEAP.

Those renters in governmental subsidized housing who are responsible for part or all of their heating costs may be eligible for LIHEAP benefits. Their eligibility and benefit level is determined in the same manner as other LIHEAP households.

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**Rent-Free Housing Which Includes Fuel**  
**415-20-10-35**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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Households that receive rent-free housing including fuel as a required condition of part of an employment agreement, or as a gift, or through legal action (separation/divorce), are NOT vulnerable to the rising cost of heat and are therefore not eligible for heating assistance from LIHEAP.

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### **Temporary Absences 415-20-10-40**

**(Revised 10/1/05 ML #2988)**

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

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

#### **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.

## **Aliens Barred from LIHEAP Participation 415-20-10-50**

**(Revised 10/1/08 ML #3151)**

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The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 P.L. 99-603 bars some aliens from participation in LIHEAP.

Newly legalized aliens will have unique identification cards issued by the Immigration and Naturalization Service. (INS Form 688) Based on the identification card and the LIHEAP application, you should be able to determine if the individual is or is not barred from participation in LIHEAP in accordance with the following categories:

1. Aged, blind and/or disabled, and certain Cuban and Haitian entrants (contact State Office for interpretation) that have resided illegally in the United States since January 1, 1982, and have been granted lawful status are eligible to participate in LIHEAP.
2. All other individuals that have resided illegally in the United States since January 1, 1982, and have been granted lawful temporary resident status are barred from participation in LIHEAP for a period of five years. This status became effective for most between May 1987 and May 1988. Therefore, these aliens will reach the end of their disqualification period between May 1992 and May 1993.
3. Certain individuals who performed seasonal agricultural work in the United States during a specified period of time (Special Agricultural Workers - SAWS) that have been granted temporary resident status leading to eventual lawful permanent status are eligible for LIHEAP assistance.
4. After FFY'90, individuals may be admitted to the United States as Replenishment Agricultural Workers (RAWS) as lawful temporary residents to meet a shortage of agricultural workers. These individuals will not be eligible for LIHEAP

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assistance for a period of five years except for certain Cuban and Haitian entrants or unless the individual is aged, blind, and/or disabled.

5. Iraqi and Afghani aliens and family members who claim special immigrant status must provide verification that they have been admitted under section 101(a) (27) of the INA. Once found eligible for LIHEAP, the household would be eligible for the full season in which they applied.
6. Canadian Indians are eligible for LIHEAP if they provide a blood quantum letter which contains information from the individual's Band, Tribe, and Nation and states that the individual's blood quantum is at least 50% aboriginal blood.

The document may use the following verbiage:

- ....at least 50% Aboriginal blood
- ....at least 50% Indigenous blood
- ....at least 50% North American Indian blood
- ....at least 50% American Indian blood

All Indians on reservations must use tribal programs.

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**Soviet Jewish Refugees 415-20-10-52**  
**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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Approximately 8,000 Soviet Jewish refugees will be sponsored admission to the United States by the Council of Jewish Federations and the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society. These sponsors are responsible for ensuring that these refugees "do not require or financially qualify for publicly funded cash, medical or food stamp assistance" for two years after their admission to the U.S., or until they attain lawful permanent resident status, whichever comes first.

The I-94 card for these individuals will be stamped, "This refugee is sponsored by the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society and (name of local Jewish organization). Private resources are available. If public assistance is sought, please call (name of local agency) at (phone numbers)."

Prior to denying an application please call the number indicated on the I-94 card and inform the sponsor of the need request. If the sponsor is unable to meet the need please contact the LIHEAP administrator for the North Dakota Department of Human Services prior to taking action on the application.

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## **Foreign Students 415-20-10-55**

### **Foreign Higher Education Students 415-20-10-55-05**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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Foreign higher education students shall NOT be eligible for participation in LIHEAP. A foreign student sharing a housing unit with other persons who are U.S. citizens will not be considered a household member for LIHEAP purposes, his income and assets will not be counted, and any bedroom used exclusively by the foreign student will not be counted when determining the Estimated Cost of Heating.

It is necessary to determine the portion of the heating costs which are the responsibility of the foreign student. Payments on behalf of the LIHEAP eligible household members must be reduced by the amount of the foreign student's responsibility. These cases will usually need to be paid using the Miscellaneous Payment method.



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**Foreign High School Exchange Students**  
**415-20-10-55-10**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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Some foreign high school exchange students may be approved by the State LIHEAP administrator as members of their host U.S. family, depending upon the nature of the agreement between the U.S. host family and the student exchange program.

Factors taken into consideration include, but are not limited to, the amount of reimbursement, if any, for shelter and board costs, and the obligations of the host family as stated in the agreement.

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**Household Members Under House Arrest  
415-20-10-60**

**(Revised 10/01 ML #2711)**

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Any person who is a convicted offender but is under house arrest while serving court-appointed sentence will be considered part of the household.

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**Victims of Trafficking 415-20-10-65**

**(Revised 10/01 ML #2711)**

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The Trafficking Victims Protection Act states that victims of trafficking who are certified by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services are eligible for benefits to the same extent as refugees.

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## **Eligibility Determination 415-25**

**(Revised 11/02 ML #2829)**

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Eligibility for Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is based upon two criteria: 1) income eligibility, and 2) assets eligibility.

Applicant households must meet the eligibility criteria of both components to receive benefits under 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.

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### **Income Eligibility 415-25-05**

**(Revised 10/1/06 ML #3045)**

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Income is the first test of eligibility of LIHEAP. Adjusted gross income from all sources not expressly excluded in 415-25-05-30 are to be used in calculating the household's income.

The income from ALL persons living in the household must be included in the determination of household income with one exception: minor children still in school (**See 415-25-05-50**).

College students residing with their parents only on weekends and holidays will not be counted as members of their parent's household. (**See 415-25-05-55**.) Foster persons (415-25-05-60), persons who make a board and room payment to the household (415-25-05-45), and higher education foreign students (415-20-10-55), are not counted as members of the household.

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### **Deductions From Income 415-25-05-05** **(Revised 10/1/08 ML #3151)**

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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. Verified alimony and/or child support payments paid to or on behalf of persons outside the household. 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 since June 1 may be deducted.

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 check court reports, etc.

3. 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.
4. 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.

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5. Up to \$300/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.
6. Up to \$300/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.
7. 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.
8. Taxes withheld from pension payments.
9. Out-of-pocket child 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 since June 1 may be deducted.
10. Representative Payee Fees.

**Medical Expenses as Deductions 415-25-05-05-05**  
**(Revised 10/1/08 ML #3151)**

[View Archives](#)

Medical expenses incurred by any current member of the household may be considered when calculating medical deductions. A medical expense may be deducted only if it has been paid, OR there is an agreement with the medical vendor for a specific payment plan.

Projected medical expenses can be deducted from the income. The amount of projected expenses can be determined by using previous months bills or receipts to estimate an average monthly cost. (This method can be used for prescription drugs and other medical costs. If a household member is on a regular monthly prescription annualize the cost to the household so it can be deducted for the fuel season.)

NOTE: (A minimum of three consecutive months' bills should be used to determine an average monthly cost for medical expenses such as prescriptions and other recurring items. Multiply by 12 to arrive at an annual figure. Non-recurring items such as eyeglasses, and other cost items should only be deducted once during a fuel assistance season.)

If an incurred expense may be reimbursed by an insurance policy, it cannot be deducted as a medical expense for this program until the insurance company has processed payment and the household has a specific payment plan with the medical vendor or has paid the bill. This would include reimbursement from the Veteran's Administration or private insurance for pharmaceutical expenses.

Similarly, medical costs and/or Medicare premiums which will have been paid by the Qualified Medical Beneficiary Program may not be deducted from income as a medical expense to the household.



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Only payments made or scheduled between the previous June 1 and the following May 31 may be included.

The following list of allowable medical expenses is all-inclusive:

1. Medical and dental care, including psychotherapy and rehabilitation services.
2. Hospitalization or outpatient treatment, nursing care, and nursing home care, including payments by the household for an individual who was a household member, in the current heating season, immediately prior to entering a hospital or nursing home.
3. Prescription drugs and other over-the-counter medication (including insulin) when approved by a qualified health professional. Additionally, costs of medical supplies, sickroom equipment (including rental) or other prescribed equipment are deductible.
4. Health and hospitalization insurance premiums (includes nursing home insurance) but NOT disability or accident policies that are primarily for income maintenance. Premiums for other insurance to protect against the medical expenses defined in this section may be allowed, but consult with the state office. Only one premium for the same type of protection can be allowed.
5. Medicare premiums and any cost-sharing.
6. Dentures, hearing aids, and prosthetics.
7. Securing and maintaining a service animal, including the cost of food and veterinarian bills.
8. Eye glasses, prescription eyewear, and surgery for eyes.
9. Reasonable cost of transportation and lodging to obtain medical treatment or services. Medicaid rates in effect on October 1 of each year will be in effect for the entire fuel season beginning on that October 1.
10. Maintaining an attendant, homemaker, home health aide, or child care services or housekeeper necessary due to age, disability or illness.

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11. Premium amount and enrollment fee for Workers with Disabilities coverage.

## **Medicare Premiums - How to Deduct 415-25-05-05-10**

**(Revised 10/1/07 ML #3094)**

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The amount of the Medicare Part B premiums can be deducted from gross income, unless the individual has their premiums paid through the Medicare Savings Programs (QMB) (SLMB) & (QI1).

The actual out-of-pocket premiums for Medicare Part D may be deducted if the individual is responsible for paying them.

The Bendex screen makes information available regarding the income that a person receives from Social Security and also tells you if the state of ND pays the Medicare premium (See Premium Payer if **ND is there** the premium is paid by ND Medical Assistance).

If the **ND is there** a deduction cannot be made for the Medicare premium and the gross amount must be used to determine Social Security income. If the **ND is not there** then the premium amount can be deducted from the gross Social Security check.

If using TPQY look directly under "**BUYIN**" data under Part "B" and there is information for "**Start Date**" then the state is paying the premium for Medicare and it cannot be deducted.

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**Flexible Compensation Plans 415-25-05-05-15**  
**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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A number of employers are now making "Flex Comp." Plans available to employees. This allows the employee to have a regular deduction from gross income set aside in a special account, from which the employee can later receive reimbursement for medical and/or other qualified expenses. The Flex Comp Plans reduce taxable income, since the Flex Comp deduction is made before taxes are calculated.

LIHEAP still needs to use the gross income before the Flex Comp deduction is made. Then any actual medical expenses can be deducted from the gross income in the usual manner.

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**Income Eligibility Levels 415-25-05-10**  
**(Revised 10/1/11 ML #3276)**

[View Archives](#)

The income eligibility limits for heating assistance are based on 60% of the North Dakota median income. The monthly income eligibility levels are determined by dividing the annual amount by 12 months and rounding off to the nearest dollar (indicated by \*).

Therefore, the adjusted gross income eligibility limits for FY2012 are as follows:

Household <u>Size</u>	Annual Eligibility <u>Limit</u>	Monthly Eligibility <u>Limit*</u>
1	\$23,143	\$1,929
2	\$30,264	\$2,522
3	\$37,385	\$3,115
4	\$44,506	\$3,709
5	\$51,627	\$4,302
6	\$58,748	\$4,896
7	\$60,083	\$5,007
8	\$61,418	\$5,118
9	\$62,753	\$5,229
10	\$64,089	\$5,341
11	\$65,424	\$5,452
12	\$66,759	\$5,563

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### **Annualizing Income 415-25-05-15** **(Revised 10/1/07 ML #3094)**

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To determine a household's benefit level, LIHEAP compares a household's income to its estimated annual heat cost. This means that income must be converted to a yearly figure or "annualized." The LIHEAP Application (SFN 529) asks the client for information about his or her income in the current month, the previous month, and anticipated income for the following month. The difference in these figures will determine the method of annualization to be used. (References to the "current month" or the "month of application" will also apply to the month during which a reportable change requires a recalculation of the LIHEAP Share Percentage. [See 40-05.]

If the income between consecutive months is less than \$400 yet not exactly the same each month use the month of application and annualize.

1. If the difference between the current month's income and the previous month's income is less than \$400, the income would be annualized by the most appropriate of the following methods:
  - a. Regular income - This would include anyone on a fixed income, TANF recipients, wage earners who have not recently changed jobs, etc. Income in this category would **NOT** be averaged (See "B," of this section), even though the payroll schedule results in an additional paycheck during every two weeks will sometimes receive three paychecks in one month.

Annualization is done by multiplying a monthly payment by 12; a weekly payment by 52; a biweekly payment by 26; and a semi-monthly payment by 24.

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- b. Periodic income - Examples would include interest payments, land rent, farm payments, and some types of seasonal employment.

To annualize, multiply the amount received in a single payment by the number of times it is received in a 12-month period. Sometimes, payments for farm or other seasonal labor may fit into this category if the laborer is not paid regularly as the work is done.

- c. Annual employment contracts - These would typically, but not necessarily, apply to employees of a school district.

The total amount of income specified in the contract would be included, regardless of the amount received in the current month.

- d. Business/Farm Income - This would include most business and farm income, as reported on and verified by the most recent tax forms available.

To annualize, use the income from the most recent tax form that reduces gross income by the amount of necessary operating expenses. Use this amount regardless of the amount received in the current month. Each business/farm income is to be reported and computed separately. A reported income loss will be revised to zero income before adding to the income of another business or to other sources of annualized income.

- 2. If the difference between a household member's income (from a single source) in two consecutive months is \$400 or more, that member's income (from that source) would be annualized using a three-month average as follows:
  - a. The income from the month preceding the month of application,
  - b. The income from the month of application, and



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- c. A projection of income for the month following the month of application
- If income for the following month is known and verifiable, that income will be used. ("Known and verifiable" can include TANF, Unemployment Compensation, salaries and the like. It can also include the receipt of one paycheck [in the application month] from a new job, provided that it can be determined that the paycheck is representative of wages and hours in the following month.) If there is terminated source income, include the income in the three-month average.

### Example:

Application month is October. Household's job ends October. Use the regular earned income (from that source) for September. For October, use the actual amount received for that month. If there is no income predicted for November, then use 0.00. If there is income predicted for November, use the client's best estimate for income. Total the three months and multiple by 4, then you will have the annual income. The second example under 25-05-15-10 is a good example of how to handle terminated source income.

- If income for the following month is not known or cannot be verified, the income in the month of application will be used twice in determining the three-month average.

The earned income deduction will be applied to the sources of income to which it is appropriate. Then, the three monthly figures will be totaled, and the total multiplied by four to arrive at an annual figure.

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**NOTE ON AVERAGING:** Averaging is one method of determining a household's benefit level. The household must still be income eligible during any month for which LIHEAP benefits are to be paid. Income ineligibility during the month of application automatically disqualifies the household for that month and future months (See 415-30-20). Income ineligibility in the month before the month of application does not automatically disqualify the household, but benefits cannot be paid for that month. In other words, if averaging is called for, the prior month's income will be used in the averaging calculation, even if the household cannot receive a benefit for that month.

**EXAMPLE:**

Income Limit (monthly): \$1,000

Last Month's Income: \$1,200

Current Month's Income: \$ 600

Anticipated Income: \$ 600

Averaging would be used, resulting in an average of \$800 per month.

Averaging may also be appropriate if the household's income is at or near zero.

3. Whenever it can conclusively be demonstrated that the household income annualized in the manner described in "A" and "B" above is not the best indicator of the household's ability to pay their fuel costs, the State Program Administrator may approve or promulgate an alternative method that is reasonable and equitable.

**NOTE:** A \$400 difference caused solely by an additional check from a regular source of income does not trigger averaging.

Example:

Joe's Income - he applied in December.

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November \$350 - regular pay

December \$800 - regular pay because of extra paycheck

January \$350 - regular pay

This case is not averaged just because of the extra  
paycheck in December (since there are 5 pay periods).

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**Annualizing Income - Samples 415-25-05-15-10**  
**(Revised 10/1/05 ML #2988)**

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AVERAGING NOT CALLED FOR:

A household of four applies in November. The husband is a self-employed farmer who also cash rents a portion of his land, collecting the rent twice per year. He works during the school year on a contract basis as a bus driver. His wife has been unemployed several months and collects unemployment compensation weekly. They have a small trust account which earns interest quarterly. Their income is calculated as follows:

Farm Income (from most recent IRS: 5000 x 73%) =	\$ 3,650.00
Cash Rent (\$2,500 x 2) =	5,000.00
Interest Income (Trust Account) (\$25 x 4) =	100.00
Unemployment Compensation (\$50 x 52) =	2,600.00
Bus Driver Wages (\$2700 x 73%) =	<u>1,971.00</u>
Total Annualized Income	\$13,860.00

AVERAGING CALLED FOR (Change of more than \$400 per month):

A family of three, a woman with two small children, applies on February 5. The woman had worked in December but was laid off in January. She was paid \$1,000 in January. The client has received no income in February and none is anticipated. She is rehired for her job on March 1. She knows she will be paid \$4.25

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per hour, but she does not know how many hours she will work each week. Within the 45 days allowed for processing the application, the client provides verification that she has begun receiving regular weekly checks of \$170. The calculation would be as follows:

Income received in January ( $\$1,000 \times 73\%$ ) =	\$ 730
Income received in February =	0
Income anticipated in March ( $\$680 \times 73\%$ ) =	<u>496</u>
Total for three months =	1,226
Annual income (x 4) =	\$4,904

On the other hand, if she had received a check in February for a partial pay period (\$100), but her regular hours could not be established until later in March, the calculation would be as follows:

Income received in January ( $\$1,000 \times 73\%$ ) =	\$ 730
Income received in February ( $\$100 \times 73\%$ ) =	73
Income anticipated in March ( $\$680 \times 73\%$ ) =	<u>496</u>
Total for three months =	1,299
Annual income (x 4) =	\$5,196

If March's income could not reasonably be established within the time allowed, the same amount would be used for March as had been used for February.

If the client's situation calls for more immediate action, see "Emergency Application Procedures," 415-15-05-20.

**NOTE:** A household's income may include sources that must be averaged and also other sources for which averaging is not

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appropriate. For example, the household above may also receive a cash rent payment from a farm property every November. This amount would be added to the annual income calculated for the averaged sources, to arrive at the household's total annual income. (See Worksheet, SFN 530)

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**Income Counted When Household Composition  
Changes 415-25-05-15-15**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

[View Archives](#)

Some households may have had a change in household members prior to the month of application.

For LIHEAP eligibility and benefit calculation, do **NOT** count income received during the months prior to application of any person who is not in the household the month of application; and for any past month, do **NOT** count the income of any person who was not in the household during that month.

**Unpaid bills** incurred prior to the month of application for which the current household is held liable, may have the LIHEAP Percent Share of the bill paid if eligibility is established for those months based on the income of current household members.

Reimbursement cannot be paid for the LIHEAP percent of the bill incurred prior to the month of application unless the current household member can verify that previous members did NOT participate in the payment of those bills.

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### **Income to be Included 415-25-05-20**

#### **Earned Income 415-25-05-20-05**

**(Revised 10/1/10 ML #3231)**

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"Earned income" is income in cash, check or "in-kind" payment which is currently earned through the receipt of wages, salaries, tips, commissions or profit from activities in which a household is engaged through either employment or self-employment.

Earned income includes:

- Wages, salaries, commissions, bonuses, or profits received as a result of holding a job
- Sick leave pay or loss of time private insurance paid for the loss of employment due to illness
- Earnings for on-the-job training provided by Workforce Investment Act
- Earnings from student employment, which is different than work study
- Sheltered workshop employment wages
- Experience Works wages
- Compensation for jury duty
- Workforce Investment Act (WIA) minimum wage payments made for "entry employment," classroom, or work experience hours. (For disregarded WIA payments, See 415-25-05-30 Item 21(d)).
- Income from internships, or stipends, teaching assistantships, or fellowships which require work participation to receive the income
- Tips. If tips are not shown on the wage stub, the recipient's statement as to the amount of tips received each month is



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adequate if consistent with place, kind of employment and number of hours worked

- Variable Housing Allowance (VHA), Basic Allowance for Quarters (BAQ) and Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) paid to military personnel for housing costs
- Military re-enlistment bonuses can be paid as a lump sum payments or up to 50% of the bonus amount as an initial payment with the remainder paid in equal annual payments.

If the household receives the bonus as a lump sum payment, it is exempted as irregular income. The bonus is counted as a resource the month it is received.

If the income is received as initial payment with the remainder paid in equal installments the income is to be counted as earned income.

It is up to the branch of military service to decide which military grades/series get the bonus and how much they get.

Verification of bonus and payment must be obtained.

(**See 415-25-05-05** Item 3 regarding earned income deduction.)

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**In-Kind Income 415-25-05-20-10**  
**(Revised 10/02 ML #2812)**

[View Archives](#)

"In-kind" income occurs when something of value is received in lieu of a cash payment for the applicant's goods or services. The dollar amount must be included in the household income UNLESS it was required, without option, as a part of employment or as a gift. The value of the goods received may have been verbally negotiated or specified in a written document and must be verified. Otherwise, a mutually acceptable market value must be negotiated with the applicant. Small and irregular "in-kind" income is exempt. (**See 415-25-05-30**, Item 2.)

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**Income of Absent Household Member  
415-25-05-20-15**

**(Revised 10/1/05 ML #2988)**

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The head of household or spouse who must reside away from his permanent residence for employment/higher education purposes will be counted as a member of the household at his permanent residence, and his entire income will be counted in the eligibility of that household. That portion of his paycheck which is specifically identified as reimbursement or subsidy for subsistence costs of food, lodging, etc. away from home shall NOT be counted as income. **See 415-25-05-05** (5 and 6) for information regarding deduction for some work-site/educational expenses.

**Exception:** Additional pay received by military personnel as a result of a deployment to a combat zone is disregarded in determining eligibility. The individual's regular military pay continues to be countable income.

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### **Other Income 415-25-05-20-20**

**(Revised 10/1/10 ML #3231)**

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Income from all other sources not excluded by 415-25-05-30 must be included in the determination of the household's income.

1. TANF, Diversion Assistance and TANF Transition Job Retention.
2. Pensions dispersed upon retirement according to the pension plan (normally as monthly checks) from all sources such as railroad, veterans, social security, SSI, and private pensions.
3. Benefits such as unemployment compensation, worker's Compensation, veteran's compensation, and union compensation during strikes.
4. Dividends and interest from investments and trusts.
5. Disability benefits.
6. Need-related veterans benefits.
7. Child support and alimony payments. It is mandated by LIHEAP that the Child Support Enforcement System must be used to determine child support income.
8. Individual Indian monies. (**See 415-25-05-30 #17, n.**)
9. Mineral leases

Payments received from mineral leases are included as income. Bonus payments on mineral leases (usually a one-time payment) are also to be added to the annual income. Use the amount as shown on the most recent tax report if self-employed and a tax report is used. If a tax report is not used, the bonus is considered a one-time only payment described in (14) below.

**EXAMPLE:** If the lease payment for a five-year lease is made during the first year the status as income producing continues in years 2-5 even though there are no payments.

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### 10. Income-producing property

When calculating income from income-producing property, cash expenses of producing income and maintaining the property can be deducted. However, when the household obtained a loan to make a purchase and is making purchase payments on this property, ONLY the amount of the interest paid for the loan may be deducted as an expense, but NOT the amount paid on the principal.

### 11. Department of Defense Subsistence Supplemental Allowance for members of Armed Forces.

### 12. Income from rental of property

Profit from royalties or rental of property (gross receipts minus expenses) must be included in the determination of annual income. If the profit from royalties/rentals is being taken from IRS forms (Schedule E or Form 4835), it is necessary to add depreciation back in. If the household does not report royalty/rental income to the IRS, the following types of expenses may be deducted: advertising, cleaning and maintenance, insurance, interest, legal or professional fees, repairs, supplies, taxes (but not income taxes), utilities.

If the rental property is part of the household's primary residence and expenses for each portion of the property have not been separated, the household must provide a measurement of the rental portion and the household's living unit in order to establish a percentage of the expenses of the entire property which may be deducted from gross rent receipts.

### 13. Income from Contracts for Payment

The **interest portion** of payments received for any contractual right to receive payments (such as Contracts for Deed) must be included in the determination of annual income. If there are any costs to the deed holder, they may be subtracted from the interest earnings. The portion of the payment that reduces the principle of the contract is income from the sale of the property involved and is considered under the asset limitation.

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14. Inheritance and insurance settlements, and annual, periodic, or one-time payments (but not income from sale of property) received from any source between the previous June 1 and the following May 31, UNLESS specifically excluded under 415-25-05-30.
15. Profit from estates or trusts.
16. Profit sharing proceeds from Tribal Gaming operations.
17. Internships, stipends, and other income earned by higher education students that is compensation for work performed, with the exception of wages earned under the Federal Work Study Program. (**See 415-25-05-30, #12**)
18. Subsidized Adoption payments.
19. TANF Kinship Care children must be included in the household, therefore, TANF monthly maintenance payments must be counted as unearned income.
20. Annual, periodic, or one-time payments from annuities, received between the previous June 1 and the following May 31.
21. Deemed income from a spouse in a nursing home to the spouse in the community.

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### **Self Employment Income 415-25-05-25**

#### **Self Employment Income Consideration 415-25-05-25-05**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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Normally the county social service office will be using the most recent income tax return to evaluate self-employment income. During the early months of the LIHEAP program year (October through January), the only tax return available will be nearly one year old. By that time of the business year, most farmers/businessmen should have a fairly good idea about whether there have been substantial changes in the business income compared to the previous year. If there have been significant changes, using the IRS return may not be the best indicator of income (**see 25-05-25-10** Special Circumstances). If the applicant does not expect significant changes, it is appropriate to certify eligibility and establish benefits for the entire heating season using the most current income tax return for the month of application.

## **Self-Employment Income - Special Circumstances 415-25-05-25-10**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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Earnings from self-employment should normally be evaluated by reviewing the most recent IRS forms. However, in some cases using the IRS return may not be the best indicator of income. The business may have only recently been established so that the federal income tax return for the previous year does not reflect a full year's operations. Similarly, termination or severe reversal of the business may require special considerations in evaluating income available to pay heating costs. In these cases, income should be evaluated as follows:

1. **Business Not In Operation Complete Calendar Year**

The applicant will need to provide records of monthly business income and monthly expenses in order to estimate monthly business profit. Total the profit of all months and divide by the number of months of operation to find the average monthly profit. Annualize by multiplying the average monthly profit by 12.

If the business has some expenses which do not occur monthly, it may be easier to estimate annual business income by using SFN 1906 (**See 415-25-05-25-10** number 5).

2. **Partial Liquidation Of Business**

a. If a business sells some land, equipment, or other capital items to obtain money for current operating expenses and/or pay off a loan, but does not expect a substantial reduction in his self-employment income as a result of the sale, continue to look at the most recent income tax forms.



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- b. If the business liquidates a large enough portion of the business to result in an anticipated substantial reduction in the self-employment income, the income tax forms must be appropriately adjusted to accurately anticipate the current year's income.

Using the most recent IRS schedule C (business) or F (farm), review Part I (income) and subtract from total receipts any income attributable to the part of the business being liquidated. Similarly, subtract from the total of Part II (deductions) any expenses relating to the liquidated portion of the business. Now, subtract the remaining expenses from the remaining income and add back in the depreciation to arrive at an anticipated income for the current year of the unliquidated portion of the business.

If the estimated income is substantially different than the income shown on the most recent IRS forms, use the estimated income for LIHEAP purposes. If there is not a substantial difference, use the most recent income tax forms without adjustments.

Capital gains/losses on sale of property are counted as income.

- c. If the business expects to liquidate partially but has not done so yet, use the most recent IRS forms in their entirety until the liquidation takes place.
3. Severe Reversal Of Business

A farm/business may suffer severe reversals which are expected to be temporary and do not result in a liquidation of business (e.g. crop loss due to hail, etc.). However the reversal is expected to result in a significant reduction in income which may not be reflected on the most recent tax forms.

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In these cases, one of the following methods should be used:

- a. The applicant may choose to have an estimated tax return prepared for the current business year, including at a minimum the IRS forms used in the LIHEAP self-employment computation guide for business income.
- b. If the applicant is involved with lenders (FmHA, banks, PCA, etc.), the lender often prepares documents (such as farm plans) showing the current year's anticipated income and expenses. These documents may be used to arrive at current year's anticipated income. The "Anticipated Self Employment Worksheet" (#5 below) may be used as an additional guideline when using information from lender's documents. Anticipated capital gains/losses on sale of property are counted as income.

If the applicant does not choose to use one of these alternatives, the most recent tax forms must be used without adjustments.

#### 4. Termination Of Business

- a. If a business expects to completely liquidate but has not done so yet, continue to use the most recent IRS forms or one of the methods described in #3 above until the business has liquidated.
- b. If a business has been completely liquidated, tax forms cannot be used to evaluate the applicant's income available to purchase fuel. Use only whatever income is available on the current basis from other sources.

#### 5. Self-Employment Alternate Worksheet

If the current IRS forms are not representative of the current financial situation of small businesses and farms, Form 1906, "Anticipated Self Employment Worksheet" may be completed and signed by the applicant in lieu of using IRS forms.

## **Self Employment - Wages Paid to Family Members 415-25-05-25-15**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

[View Archives](#)

Wages paid to family members are included in the IRS forms as a business "expense" under the heading "labor hired." LIHEAP will allow this business expense.

However, with the exception of the earnings of dependent children, the wages paid to family members must be counted as part of the household income and treated as a source of income separate from the business income. The IRS forms identify the amount of "labor hired" but do not separate outside labor hired from wages paid to family members. The household will need to identify and verify the amount paid to family members (cancelled checks, W-2 forms, bank books showing transfer of funds). The "LIHEAP Self-Employment Computation Guide" provides IRS line references to "labor hired" and is updated annually.

"Legitimate wages" paid to family members who are dependent children shall NOT be counted as household income (415-25-05-50). To decide if the "wages" are "legitimate" and not merely a tax break, the following criteria are suggested:

1. The work should be a necessary part of the business which would require the time of an adult family member or the hiring of outside labor if the dependent child did not perform the work.
2. The amount should be reasonable for the type and amount of work performed.
3. The dependent child should be of a reasonable age and skill level to perform the work.

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**Federal Income Tax Forms - Guidelines for  
Gathering Income 415-25-05-25-20**

**(Revised 10/01 ML #2711)**

[View Archives](#)

Guidelines for gathering earned and unearned self employment, rental and royalty income information from the federal income tax forms will be issued annually. (See Forms Appendix for updated self-employment guidelines.)

FARM AND/OR OTHER SELF EMPLOYMENT INCOME:

Net Profit (or loss) from IRS forms

+Capital gains/losses on sale of property

+Depreciation

+Depletion

Total Business Profit

Information for each business must be calculated separately.

When the total business 'profit' as calculated above shows a loss, such loss will be calculated at zero income for purposes of this program. Gross income from other sources, such as wages, will be calculated at face value; that is, income losses from self employment cannot be used to offset or reduce income from other sources.

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### Example 1:

-4,000 Net loss from business

+5,000 Depreciation

+2,000 Depletion

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3,000 Net Business Profit

### Example 2:

-10,000 Net profit from business

+ 5,000 Depreciation

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-5,000 Net Business Loss =  
zero income

### PARTNERSHIP/FAMILY-CONTROLLED CORPORATION INCOME

For LIHEAP purposes the procedure for determining income from partnerships and family-controlled corporations is much the same as for other self employment. Some of the needed information is reported on a K-1 form which is then filed with the individual income tax forms to support the income reported on Schedule E. However, some items such as depreciation and depletion are already deducted from the partnership or corporation total income before the K-1 is completed, so it will be necessary to see the partnership/corporation IRS returns to calculate the applicant's share of these items. Contact the State Office for assistance in reading these returns, if you have problems locating the line references you need.

Losses from partnerships/family-controlled corporations will be converted to zero before they are combined with other sources of income, such as wages.

**NOTE:** A corporation is not required to distribute all income, at the time it is earned, to its shareholders. If the corporation elects to

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withhold the distribution of income, it is ordinarily not available to shareholders. An exception occurs when the shareholders who are able to control the corporate decisions are also applying for assistance. For purposes of LIHEAP eligibility, a household which controls a family-owned corporation is regarded as having received undistributed corporate income. Therefore the amount of income on the Schedule K-1 SHALL be counted as household income, whether or not it has been distributed.

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### **Income Not Counted 415-25-05-30**

**(Revised 10/1/10 ML #3231)**

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1. Cash over which the household has no control such as:
  - a. Reimbursement for expenses incurred in connection with employment.
  - b. Reimbursement for other expenses incurred, such as for medical expenses.
  - c. Payments made to others on the household's behalf, provided that such payments were not directed by the household, such as Housing Assistance Program (HAP) and other subsidized housing authorities, General Assistance (GA) Supplemental Payments, Energy Crisis Assistance Program payments, or mortgage payments directed by a divorce decree to a 3rd party.
  - d. Payments made directly to the household by Housing Authorities such as the HAP.
2. Cash which is administratively difficult to consider or compute, including but not limited to:
  - a. Small (under \$360/year) or irregular contributions from relatives or friends. "Irregular" is any income that arrives at unscheduled intervals.
  - b. Small income (under \$360/year) from sale of craft items, rummage sales, odd jobs, et cetera.
  - c. Irregular Income
  - d. Gambling and Bingo winnings. (Note: may be held as a countable asset at the time of application.)
3. Loans, including educational loans.
4. TANF grant amount for students away at college (the student is not counted as a member of the household either).

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5. Income tax refund, earned income tax credit, Homestead credit payment or rent refund, economic stimulus tax rebates by federal government, and property tax relief.
6. Retroactive payments such as from Social Security (government payments).  
**Example:** An applicant, applying in October, began receiving \$250/month for Social Security Disability. He also received in October a check of \$1,000 (\$250 x 4) as retroactive payments for June through September because his disability eligibility was established retroactive to June. The \$1,000 retroactive payment is NOT added to his annualized income, but his \$250 monthly income is annualized and counted.
7. Income from the developmentally disabled Family Home Subsidy. **See 415-25-05-60** (3).
8. Reimbursements for meals from Heartland or other such programs for meals provided by day care providers.
9. The value of free or reduced shelter costs that are received as a part of an employment agreement (no option), a gift, or through a governmental housing assistance program.
10. Children's earned income (**see 415-25-05-50**).
11. TANF special items of need and special allowances, Diversion Assistance special allowances, and Transition Assistance special allowances. These include child care special allowances, reimbursement for transportation, day care, health insurance, other employment or training costs under JOBS, etc. These items are disregarded because they are considered reimbursements.
12. All educational loans, grants, scholarships, wages earned under the Federal Work Study Program, regular contributions from parents or any other income made available on condition that the recipient continues as a bona fide higher education student.
13. The portion of a loss settlement obligated to replace the loss, pay off indebtedness, or otherwise obligated by the loss. Any portion of the settlement above indebtedness or replacement cost is unobligated and available and counted as unearned income.



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14. Payments made to a household providing adult or child foster care (**See 415-25-05-60**, #'s 2 and 5).
15. Any amount necessary for the fulfillment of a Plan for Achieving Self-Support (PASS) under Title XVI of the Social Security Act (SSI) will NOT be counted as income to the household. "PASS" plans allow people with disabilities to set aside specified amounts of income from SSDI, wages, etc., to build a source of funds to fulfill a self-support plan. The funds may be accumulated to purchase adaptive equipment and other services that will remove barriers to employment. The funds set aside are not counted as income when SSI eligibility is determined so SSI benefits can be used for living costs to replace other funds set aside in the PASS Plan.
16. Wages paid by the Census Bureau for temporary employment related to census activities.
17. Other payments to be disregarded.
  - a. Payments to volunteers.

Payments other than wages for supporting services or reimbursement of expenses to foster grandparents, senior health aides, senior companions, Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE), Active Corps of Executives (ACE), and any programs under Titles II and III of Section 418. Public Law 93-113.
  - b. Assistance to individuals other than wages, under Older Americans Act of 1965, Public Law 95-478.
  - c. Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), Public Law 94-105, and the National School Lunch Program, Public Law 90-302.
  - d. Work Force Investment Act (WIA) payments made to dependent children and below who are attending an elementary school or a high school half time or more are not counted.
  - e. Wages, allowances, or reimbursement for transportation and attendant care costs under Title VI of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Title II, Public Law 95-602).
  - f. Value of Food Coupons, Public Law 95-113, Food Commodities, Public Law 74-320.

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- g. Per capita payments to Native Americans will not be counted as income under P.L. 97-403. (**See 25-10-10-05** #5 for information regarding assets.)
- h. Payments received under the uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policy Act of 1970 (42 USC 4636).
- i. Payment to volunteers under the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973 (42 USC 5044 (9) (i)). This includes any payments to VISTA volunteers.
- j. Payments received under the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 by American-Japanese citizens displaced during World War II shall not be counted as income. (Public Law 100-383, Section 105 of Title I)
- k. Payments received under Public Law 101-201 Section 1 (a) and P.L. 101-239, Section 10405 regarding Agent Orange settlements.
- l. Payments received under the Aleutian and Pribilof Islands Restitution Act, Public Law 100-383, Section 206 of Title II for restitution made to Aleuts who were relocated by the U.S. Government during World War II.
- m. Payments made for major disaster and emergency assistance under the Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Amendments of 1988, Section 105 of Public Law 100-707 (42 USC 5141 et seq.).
- n. Up to \$2,000 per year of income received by individual Native Americans (Individual Indian Monies) which is derived from leases or other uses of individually owned trust or restricted lands. Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993. (**See 415-25-05-20-20** number 8.) Client statement will be accepted as verification of the amount in an IIM account unless one of the following applies.
  - 1. the amount is more than \$2000 in a year.
  - 2. the client statement is questionable.
  - 3. the IIM account includes countable income such as inheritance, bonuses, and other income that is not derive from leases, trust, or restricted land.

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- o. Payments received under Public Law 103-286, Subsection 1 (a) from a foreign government for restitution made to victims of Nazi persecution.
- p. Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) and Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) Flood Relief Program monies to assist in the needs of urban residents who experience property damage due to flooding. These monies are considered a reimbursement for a past or future expense.
- q. Payments received from Americorps for education award monies up to \$4,725 will not be counted as income. Monies received as a "living allowance" (stipend) of up to \$7,500 will not be counted as income. Americorps is administered by a corporation established by the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993 (NCSTA), which amended the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1990.
- r. Educational assistance paid directly to a family by the Fort Berthold Three Affiliated Tribes under the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act to help single parents pay for some of their child care costs. These payments are not considered as income, and the corresponding child care costs will not be allowed as deductions.
- s. Services provided to families under the Family Investment Center Program through the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Service includes such things as child care, employment training and counseling and similar services. The exclusion does not include wages or stipends paid under this program. [42 USCS Section 1437t(i)]
- t. Compensation made to crime victims under the Crime Act of 1984. (P.L. 103-322)
- u. Payments made pursuant to the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation Grand Coulee Dam Settlement Act. (P.L. 103-436)
- v. All income, allowances, and bonuses received as a result of participation in the JOBS Corps Program.

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- w. Payments to child of Vietnam veterans who are born with spina bifida, or to children of women Vietnam veterans who are born with certain covered birth defects, under 38 U.S.C. 1805 or 38 U.S.C. 1815.
- x. Payments to children who receive income through the subsidized Guardianship Program.
- y. Money received by the LIHEAP household as a result of a benefit or fund raiser. The money received should not be commingled with other household accounts.
- z. Additional pay received by military personnel as a result of a deployment to a combat zone is disregarded in determining eligibility. The individual's regular military pay continues to be countable income.
- aa. TANF supportive services that the TANF Kinship Care household may receive represents a reimbursement and is not counted as income.
- bb. Payments for care and maintenance of non-household member. When monies are received and used by a LIHEAP household for the care of a non-household member, the portion of the single payment that is **identified** as belonging to the non-household member is excluded.
- cc. Reimbursement for transportation, day care and other employment or training costs under Diversion Assistance.
- dd. Tax exempt portions of payments made as a result of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

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**Eligibility for Back Bills and Reimbursements**  
**415-25-05-35**

**(Revised 10/01 ML #2711)**

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If the household is eligible for months prior to the month of application and heating costs were incurred, 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 and asset eligibility did not exist.

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**Room Payments 415-25-05-45**

**(Revised 10/1/08 ML #3151)**

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For the purpose of determining LIHEAP benefits, a "room" arrangement exists if there is a negotiated agreement to make payments for room, in cash or in kind, regardless of whether the person making the payments is related to the client.

Monthly payments received by the client will be counted as annual income.

In a room arrangement, the person making room payments will not be counted as a member of the household, nor will his income be included when determining the applicable income eligibility level for the household. The bedroom of this person will not be counted. Conversely, the income of an individual living in the household who does not have a negotiated rate of payment for room will be included in the total household income, the individual person will be counted as a member of the household, and the bedroom of the person will be counted.

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**Children's Income 415-25-05-50**  
**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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The earned income of all dependent children age 19 and under and attending an elementary or high school 1/2 time or more will NOT be counted. (See 415-15-10-10)

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### **College Students Living Away from Home 415-25-05-55**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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Households who have a college student living away from home, except for weekends and holidays, may NOT count that student as a member of the household for purposes of establishing the appropriate income eligibility level.

NOTE: If the student is a spouse or head of household, that individual must be included in the household unit. (**See 415-25-05-05**, #5 for Deductions from Income).

College students living in congregate living arrangements such as dormitories, fraternity or sorority residences, or in housing owned and operated by the educational institution are excluded from participation in LIHEAP. (See complete definition of this exclusion in 415-05-05, #8a) Other college students may apply in their own behalf for their heating costs.

In many cases more than one college student will rent an apartment or house and divide the rental and utility costs equally. In these situations, one individual must be designated to apply as head of the household and all other residents, and their income, are considered as members of the household.

In evaluating the income of the college students, contributions from parents, educational loans, grants, scholarships, or any other income available on condition that the recipient continues as a bona fide higher education student may NOT be counted as income for LIHEAP purposes. (415-25-05-30, Item 12).



**Family Home Care, Family Home Subsidy and/or  
Foster Care or Sub.Adopt Payments 415-25-05-60  
(Revised 10/02 ML #2812)**

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1. Family Home Care Payments

Family Home Care is one of several services available under "Home and Community Based Services."

Family home care payments are paid to a parent, adult child, siblings, grandparent, or spouse who is providing in-home care to a family member who would otherwise require institutional care. For LIHEAP purposes, the disabled member WILL be counted as a member of the household and any social security, pension, etc., income received by the disabled person or on his/her behalf SHALL be counted in the total household income. His/her bedroom will be counted in computing benefits.

The Family Home Care Payment WILL be counted as earned household income; but if the care is provided by a source outside of the household, the cost of that care may be deducted from the household income as a medical expense.

2. Child Foster Care Payments

Foster care payments are made to a licensed provider to care for a child generally unrelated to the foster family. For LIHEAP purposes, the foster child will NOT be counted as a member of the household nor will his/her income or assets be included in the household's resources.

The Foster Care Payment will not be counted in the household's income.

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If a foster family is paid a "retainer" to have a room ready at all times for emergency placements, treat the foster payment exactly as you would if a child were there. That is, do not count the foster care payments as income, and do not count the bedroom maintained for the foster child, even if no foster child is currently in placement at the foster home.

### 3. Family Home Subsidy Program

The Family Home Subsidy is provided to caretakers of developmentally disabled persons under the age of 22. This program is handled through the Department of Human Services, Developmental Disability Unit.

The payments are almost entirely a reimbursement for actual expenses paid on behalf of the disabled person. These reimbursements will NOT be counted as income for the household.

The child for whom subsidy is being paid will be counted as a member of the household and his/her income will be counted in the total household income.

### 4. Subsidized Adoption Payments

Subsidized adoption payments will be counted on the household's income. The adopted child is a member of the household and any social security, etc. payments received by the child will be counted in the household's income.

### 5. Adult Foster Care Payments

Payments to the providers of adult foster care will not be counted as income.

The foster person is not a member of the household for eligibility purposes, and his/her income and/or assets are not counted.

The bedroom used by the foster person is not counted in computing benefits.

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**Asset Eligibility 415-25-10**

**(Revised 10/1/07 ML #3094)**

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Households applying for or receiving fuel assistance under LIHEAP may have real and personal property assets not to exceed an equity value of \$10,000, (plus \$5,000 for each household member 60 years of age and over). "Equity" is defined as the fair market value less encumbrances.

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**Assets - Real Property 415-25-10-05**  
**(Revised 10/01 ML #2711)**

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An equity in real property held by any member of the household will be included in the determination of total assets available to the household, unless that real property is producing income commensurate with prevailing rental or leasing rates in the community. Real property for which there is a demand but which produces little or no income should normally be offered for rental or sale before eligibility is established to ensure that the family avails itself of all available assets. Mineral rights should be treated as any other real property.

**Real Property NOT Counted 415-25-10-05-05**  
**(Revised 10/1/08 ML #3151)**

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1. Primary residence

A home which is owned and occupied by a family as its main place of residence is not subject to any limitation in value. A house, an apartment unit, duplex unit, or a mobile home, if used by the family for living purposes, is considered a "primary residence."

A "primary residence" is further defined as including the land on which it is located provided the acreage does not exceed 160 contiguous acres, if rural, and two contiguous acres, if located in town. Acreage in excess of these amounts, as well as a house, apartment unit, duplex unit, or mobile home owned but not occupied by the family are to be regarded as real property with equity which is an available resource to the family.

In some cases, city zoning laws prohibit a home owner from sub dividing his property below a minimum acreage. In these cases the primary residence may have more than two contiguous acres, not to exceed the minimum acreage required by city zoning laws for the section of the city in which the home is located.

2. Real property that is being farmed, produces rent, or is otherwise operated as a business by the applicant household is NOT counted in the determination of assets. The real property must be producing income commensurate with prevailing rental or leasing rates in the community. However, the income produced by this real property is included under the income limitations for eligibility.

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Payments received from mineral leases are included as income. Bonus payments on mineral leases (usually a one-time payment) are also to be added to the annual income. Use the amount as shown on the most recent tax report if self-employed and a tax report is used. If a tax report is not used, the bonus is considered a one-time only payment described in 415-25-05-20-20, #14).

**EXAMPLE:** If the lease payment for a five-year lease is made during the first year the status as income producing continues in years 2-5 even though there are no payments.

3. Contractual rights to receive money payments, such as the face value of a note, mortgage, or Contract for Deed (see - Contracts for Payment 415-25-10-25)
4. Real property which has been demonstrated to produce little or no income despite "good faith" efforts of the owner to rent and/or sell at acceptable community rates.

"Good faith efforts" may include but not be limited to repeated attempts to sell and/or rent the property at an acceptable community rate through classified ads, listing the property with appropriate realtors, banks, etc.

Any property NOT counted under this provision must be carefully reviewed at least annually to be certain the household is making every reasonable effort to produce income from the property.

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**Assets - Personal Property 415-25-10-10**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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The personal property of all members of the household is also included in the total assets available to the household including the equity value of all liquid assets and all non-liquid assets.

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### **Assets - "Liquid" 415-25-10-10-05** **(Revised 10/1/10 ML #3231)**

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"Liquid asset" is defined as any resource which can readily be converted to cash, and includes cash on hand, checking accounts, savings accounts, stocks (See **415-25-10-45**), bonds, pension plans (including IRA's, Keogh plans, and Simplified Employer Pension Plans), Individual Indian monies, and other negotiable instruments. Note that certain large deposits designated for future living expenses may temporarily distort the liquid assets (#8).

To arrive at the countable cash value for any account or plan that imposes penalties for early withdrawals, subtract the amount of the penalty (if any) from the value of the account or plan.

"Liquid Assets" NOT Counted:

1. Cash surrender and loan values of life insurance. NOTE that if a life insurance policy is cashed in, proceeds are NOT considered income. Instead, it is treated as a conversion of an asset, and only those proceeds which have been converted to a countable asset will be counted (as an asset).
2. The cash value of pension plans or funds **that involve** a contractual agreement with a third party, usually an employer. If withdrawn, they become an available asset in the month received.

#### **Examples:**

- State Retirement
- Teachers Retirement
- 457 plans
- 401(k) plans
- Federal Employee thrift savings plan



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- 403(b) Plans, and
- 401(c) (18) plans.

**NOTE:** If the withdrawn funds are “rolled over” into another exempt plan, such as those listed above, they remain exempt. However, if they are rolled over into a non-exempt plan, such as an IRA, they become an available asset.

3. The face value of an annuity, provided the annuity has provided income to the household between the previous June 1 and the following May 31.
4. Savings resulting from earnings plus up to \$250 resulting from gifts or other sources of each dependent child under age 19 who is still in elementary or high school.
5. The following loans held as liquid assets provided they are held in a separate account:
  - Business/farm operating loans for the current operating year only
  - Student loans for the current school year only
6. Per capita payments to Native Americans will NOT be counted indefinitely, as long as they are held in a separate account. If they are commingled with other funds, they will NOT be counted for six months from the date they are commingled, then counted as an available asset.
7. Payments received under the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 by American-Japanese citizens displaced during World War II. (Public Law 100-383, section 105 of Title I)
8. Payments received under Public Law 101-201, section 1(a) and P.L. 101-239, section 10405 regarding Agent Orange settlements.
9. Periodic or annual current income that exceeds a single month and is held in a liquid asset for future monthly living costs.
10. Payments received under the Aleutian and Pribilof Islands Restitution Act, Public Law 100-283, Section 206 of Title II for restitution made to Aleuts who were relocated by the U.S. government during World War II.

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11. Payments made for major disaster and emergency assistance under the Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Amendments of 1988, Section 105 of Public Law 100-707 (45 USC 5141 et seq.).
12. Any amount necessary for the fulfillment of a Plan for Achieving Self-Support (PASS) under Title XVI of the Social Security Act (SSI) will NOT be counted as an asset to the household.
13. Payments made to volunteers including VISTA volunteers under the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973 (42 USC 5044(9)(i)).
14. Payments received under Public Law 103-286, Subsection 1(a) from a foreign government for restitution made to victims of Nazi persecution.
15. Income acquired during a month cannot be considered as an asset in the same month.
16. Tools, machinery, and vehicles necessary to produce income.
17. Exempt assets as a result of Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

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### **Assets - "Non- Liquid" 415-25-10-10-10 (Revised 10/1/07 ML #3094)**

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"Non-liquid assets" are defined as the equity in any other assets that cannot be readily converted to cash. Examples are equity in snowmobiles, motorcycles, recreational vehicles, or such other things as grain in a bin, livestock that is ready for sale.

"Non-Liquid Assets" NOT Counted:

1. Clothing, personal effects and household goods, such as furniture and appliances (including satellite disks).
2. Grain necessary for seed, feed, and grain stored for a maximum of 12 months after harvest.
3. Livestock for dairy and breeding purposes.
4. Tools, machinery, and vehicles necessary to produce income.
5. Two licensed road vehicles.
6. Business inventory.
7. Burial plots, vaults, etc. which are not included in a prepaid burial contract and are not transferable.
8. Property which the household has been unable to convert to cash despite "good faith efforts" to do so. "Good faith efforts" may include but not be limited to repeated attempts to sell and/or rent the property at an acceptable community rate through classified ads, signs, etc.

Any property not counted under this provision must be carefully reviewed at least annually to be certain the household is making every reasonable effort to convert the property to cash.

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**Equity Determination 415-25-10-12**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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Equity value, as opposed to face value, applies to non-liquid assets and liquid assets. The equity value of an asset is defined as the fair market value minus encumbrance. Fair market value and encumbrances shall be verified by reasonably available documents, statements of knowledgeable officials or citizens, or the household's statement, if reasonable.

Whenever an uncounted and a counted asset are combined as security for a single encumbrance, the fair market value of the uncounted asset shall first be applied against the encumbrance and the remainder of the encumbrance deducted from the fair market value of the nonexempt asset.

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**Joint Accounts 415-25-10-15**

**(Revised 12/1/03 ML #2895)**

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Assets owned jointly by separate households shall be considered available in their entirety to each household, unless it can be demonstrated by the applicant household that such assets are inaccessible to the household or that the funds are in fact the sole property of only one owner who has the generally recognized authority to direct disbursement. If the household can demonstrate that it has access to only a portion of the asset, only that portion shall be counted toward the household's asset limitation. The asset shall be considered totally inaccessible to the household if it cannot be practically subdivided and the household's access to the value of the asset is dependent on the agreement of a joint owner who refuses to comply. A "joint account" is one owned by two or more individuals as "joint tenants with right of survivorship" and may be designated "JTWRS." An individual's name may appear on an account signature card without causing that account to be a "joint account." If the client's name appears on a signature card, but no member of the household has an ownership interest in that account, funds in the account are not available as income or asset.

## **Contracts for Payment 415-25-10-20**

**(Revised 10/1/10 ML #3231)**

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A contractual right to receive money payments such as a note, mortgage, or contract for deed is usually received in exchange for real property, a business, or the sale of some other form of asset. Payments may be monthly, quarterly, or annually, and extend over a specified period of time. The payments will include both interest and a portion of the sale price of the property that was sold (principal) and must be calculated separately. The face value of the Contract that is producing income commensurate with prevailing community rates is NOT counted because it is producing income much like the asset that was sold.

The interest portion of each payment is considered income and must be included in the household's gross annual income.

The remainder of each payment, the portion to be applied on the principal amount owed for the sale of the property, continues to be an asset. To decide if it is included in the household's total assets, you will need to know if these funds are held in an available asset or in some form of uncounted asset.

**Conversion of Assets 415-25-10-25**  
**(Revised 11/02 ML #2829)**

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Proceeds from the conversion of an asset such as the sale of capital items (may be reported as capital gains/losses held more than one year on IRS returns) may be held in some form of asset at the time of application.

To decide if these funds must be counted in the household's total assets, it must be determined if they are held in some form of an available asset or in an uncounted asset.

Example #1: The household sells a tractor for \$3,000. If the seller still owed \$500 on the tractor, he has an equity of \$2500 which must be evaluated as an asset.

Proceeds from the sale of the tractor must be counted if held in a bank account at the time of application, but they would NOT be counted if used to purchase another machine used to produce income.

Example #2: A retirement account that is dispersed in a lump sum when a person changes employment would be counted as an "available" asset if held in a savings account, but would not be counted if used to buy a family car.

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**Insurance Settlements on Loss of Property**  
**415-25-10-30**

**(Revised 10/1/07 ML #3094)**

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The portion of a loss settlement obligated to replace the loss, pay off indebtedness, or otherwise obligated by the loss is NOT counted (Example: fire in a home). Any portion of the settlement above indebtedness or replacement cost is counted as an available asset unless it has been converted to another uncounted asset (i.e. used to purchase car, etc.). The amount of the loss settlement may be left in a separate account for one LIHEAP season.



**Disqualifying Transfer of Assets 415-25-10-35**  
**(Revised 11/02 ML #2829)**

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Any household member who knowingly transfers a counted asset after the June 1 preceding the current heating season, for the purpose of qualifying, attempting to qualify, or continuing to qualify for heating assistance benefits shall be denied heating assistance benefits for the heating season.

It is important to distinguish between a legitimate "spend-down" of assets and actual transfer of ownership. Using assets to purchase needed items or to pay off bills would NOT be considered a disqualifying transfer. However, transferring ownership of the resource to another party in order to qualify for heating assistance would be a disqualifying transfer.

It must be established that the household member "knowingly" transferred assets with the "intent" of qualifying for heating assistance. Comparing the date of the transfer with the date of application may be some help in establishing "intent." However, there are no absolute time frames which can be used to clearly identify "intent" to qualify. For example, if a household requests information about the eligibility requirements of the program, then transfers ownership of assets to another party, and applies for heating assistance within a few months from the date of the transfer, "intent" is much more likely to exist. However, if a transfer was made two or three years before application was made or if a transfer had been made to provide funds for a special purpose such as education of a child or grandchild, "intent" clearly does not exist.

## **Trusts 415-25-10-40**

### **When Trusts are Submitted to DHS for Review 415-25-10-40-05**

**(Revised 11/02 ML #2829)**

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When trusts are submitted to the Department for review, it is necessary to include all appropriate information in order for the trust to be reviewed in a timely manner. Following are instructions to follow when requesting a review of a trust document:

1. Submit all trusts (and verifications) directly to the Legal Advisory Unit.
2. Identify who is applying for which benefits (e.g. Medicaid nursing care, Medicaid on-nursing care, Food Stamps, TANF, etc.)
3. Send the complete trust agreement (signed, dated, and notarized) and all pages and attachments.
4. Provide verification of all assets owned by the trust;
  - The value of each asset;
  - When each asset was transferred to the trust; and
  - Who transferred the assets to the trust.
5. Provide any other documents or information you think may be relevant (like schedules, powers of attorney, financial statements, etc.

**When Trust Funds May be Considered as Available**  
**415-25-10-40-10**

**(Revised 11/02 ML #2829)**

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Funds held in trust are considered available to the household if:

1. A household member is the trust grantor and all trust beneficiaries are household members;
2. A household member is the trust grantor and the trust is revocable;
3. Any member of the household has the power to influence the amount or conditions under which distributions from the trust are made to beneficiaries who are members of the household;
4. The trustee or trustees have discretion to determine if distributions may be made to any beneficiary who is a member of the household; or
5. The trustee or trustees are required to make distributions to any beneficiary who is a member of the household.

**Amounts of Trust Benefits Determined to be Available Assets 415-25-10-40-15**

**(Revised 11/02 ML #2829)**

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The amount from a trust considered available to a household member who is a trust beneficiary is:

1. In the case of a revocable trust:
  - a. If a household member is the grantor, all of the trust assets; and
  - b. If a household member is not the grantor, only trust funds actually distributed to a household member;
2. In the case of an irrevocable trust where the grantor and all trust beneficiaries are members of the household, all of the trust assets;
3. In the case of an irrevocable trust where the grantor or at least one trust beneficiary is not a member of the household, the greatest of:
  - a. The amount actually distributed to any household member;
  - b. The amount the trustee is required under the terms of the trust to distribute to any household member;
  - c. The amount from a support trust that a trustee has discretion to distribute to the household member, assuming the fullest exercise of discretion to distribute the greatest amount permissible under the terms of the trust.

## **Consideration of Particular Trust Circumstances 415-25-10-40-20**

**(Revised 11/02 ML #2829)**

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1. In the case of a trust which requires or permits the trustee to take available public benefits into consideration in determining the amount distributed to a beneficiary who is a household member, the amount treated as available from the trust is the amount that would be available if the household was ineligible for LIHEAP benefits.
2. In the case of a beneficiary who has in good faith sought trust benefits including bringing an action against the trustee to secure a court order requiring distributions, and a court order, not reasonably subject to appeal, determines some lesser amount to be available, the amount determined by the court to be available will be treated as available for LIHEAP purposes.
3. In a case where a member of the household is a trustee, but no household member may be a beneficiary of the trust, no trust asset or income may be treated as available to the household.
4. A "support trust" is a trust which has, as an express purpose, provision of support to a beneficiary. The trust will include language stating a purpose such as "to provide for the care, support, and maintenance" of the beneficiary. No particular language is required, but words such as "care," "maintenance," "support," or "comfort" are usually present. The term includes trusts that afford the trustee "absolute" or "sole" discretion as long as it appears that the grantor had, as a purpose, assuring that the beneficiary was provided some reasonable degree of support and maintenance.

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**Consideration as Household Income**  
**415-25-10-40-25**

**(Revised 11/02 ML #2829)**

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To the extent funds available from the trust are derived from trust income, those amounts must be treated as other income under 415-25-05-20-20. Any available trust funds not treated as income must be treated as available assets.

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**Family-Controlled Corporate Shares 415-25-10-45**  
**(Revised 11/02 ML #2829)**

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Households with an interest in family-controlled corporations own shares in that corporation which may have equity. The household is responsible for providing information regarding the equity value of these shares, the name and credentials of the appraiser who determined the value, and a description of the basis used in establishing the value.

Suggested formula:

$$((\text{Assets} - \text{liabilities}) / \text{Outstanding share}) \times \text{client's shares.}$$

This formula will give you a rough estimate. However, the corporation's "equity" may be meaningful only if the corporation assets are liquidated. If the applicant is a minority shareholder, any computed "equity" may be meaningless. If you are unsure what to count, contact the State Office for assistance.

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### **Benefit Computation 415-30**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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The LIHEAP benefit level is expressed as a "LIHEAP Share Percentage" that will be paid on each authorized heating 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 calculated by first determining an annual dollar amount that an eligible household could reasonably be expected to pay for heating. This household heat share is then subtracted from an annual estimated cost of heating to determine an estimated annual LIHEAP cost. The estimated LIHEAP cost divided by the total estimated cost of heating and rounded up to the nearest 5% is the actual percentage LIHEAP will pay on each authorized bill. (LIHEAP Share % for electrically heated homes is capped at 70%.) (**See 30-02** for benefit minimum)

Whenever an appropriate household benefit level cannot be determined within the provisions of this section, the State Program Administrator will assign a benefit level that is reasonably related to similarly situated households.



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**Eligible Months - Computation 415-30-01**  
**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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Benefits will generally be computed on the basis of income received in the month an application was received in the county social service office, forward to May 31.

If the household has eligible months prior to the month of application, the LIHEAP Share Percentage and the household's co-payment percentage will be calculated based upon the actual income as of the month of application. However, the months the fuel dealer is authorized to bill LIHEAP on behalf of his customer may be adjusted to include months of prior eligibility.

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### **Benefit Minimum/Maximum 415-30-05** **(Revised 11/00 ML #2644)**

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If the LIHEAP Share Percentage calculates between 6-10%, the minimum LIHEAP Share Percentage which will be paid for eligible households will be 10%. If the actual calculated percentage is between 0-5%, a one-time minimum benefit of \$50 will be paid directly to the applicant. No vendor will need to be notified.

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. If the monthly renter benefit is less than \$5.00 a month, the household will receive at least a \$50.00 lump sum for the season regardless of what the payment would have been monthly.

If the Renter/Heat Paid household's heat share equals or is greater than the estimated cost of heat, or the LIHEAP Share percentage equals 5%, a one-time lump sum payment of \$50.00 will automatically be issued to the household.

When a minimum benefit is generated, the computer will automatically put the case into a status 10, which will prevent future payments and trigger appropriate messages on the Notice of Action. If the case must be changed at a later date to reflect a change that requires an adjustment, the computer will recalculate the LIHEAP Share Percentage based on the new data. If the new LIHEAP Share Percentage would also result in a minimum benefit, the system will recognize that this has already been paid, and will not generate a second minimum benefit. The system will automatically recode the payment type as '02', so the number of these cases can be tracked.

The LIHEAP Share Percentage will be capped at 95% if the calculated LIHEAP Share Percentage is between 95-100%.

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NOTE: LIHEAP pays up to 70% LIHEAP Share for households that use electricity.

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**Household Poverty Level Percentages Table  
 415-30-10**

**(Revised 10/1/11 ML #3276)**

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The poverty level percentage to be applied to each household's annual adjusted gross income will be calculated by the computer according to the level of their income and the number of persons in the household at the time of application. Therefore, it is essential to have accurate data in these two fields.

The Poverty Level Percentage Table used by the computer:

	<b>Household Share 2%</b>	<b>Household Share 4%</b>	<b>Household Share 6%</b>	
<b># of Persons</b>	<b>0-20% of Median Income</b>	<b>21-40% of Median Income</b>	<b>41-60% of Median Income</b>	
			<b>Annual Eligibility Limit</b>	<b>Monthly Eligibility Limit</b>
1	0 - 7,714	7,715 - 15,429	15,430 - 23,143	1,929
2	0 - 10,088	10,089 - 20,176	20,177 - 30,264	2,522
3	0 - 12,462	12,463 - 24,923	24,924 - 37,385	3,115

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4	0 - 14,835	14,836 - 29,671	29,672 - 44,506	3,709
5	0 - 17,209	17,210 - 34,418	34,419 - 51,627	4,302
6	0 - 19,583	19,584 - 39,165	39,166 - 58,748	4,896
7	0 - 20,028	20,029 - 40,055	40,056 - 60,083	5,007
8	0 - 20,473	20,474 - 40,946	40,947 - 61,418	5,118
9	0 - 20,918	20,919 - 41,836	41,837 - 62,753	5,229
10	0 - 21,363	21,364 - 42,726	42,727 - 64,089	5,341
11	0 - 21,808	21,809 - 43,616	43,617 - 65,424	5,452
12	0 - 22,253	22,254 - 44,506	44,507 - 66,759	5,563

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**Monthly and Annual Eligibility Limits (Adjusted  
Gross Income) 415-30-10-01**

**(Revised 10/1/11 ML #3276)**

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<b><u>NUMBER OF PERSONS</u></b>	<b><u>MONTHLY ELIGIBILITY LIMIT</u></b>	<b><u>ANNUAL ELIGIBILITY LIMIT</u></b>
1	\$1,929	\$23,143
2	\$2,522	\$30,264
3	\$3,115	\$37,385
4	\$3,709	\$44,506
5	\$4,302	\$51,627
6	\$4,896	\$58,748
7	\$5,007	\$60,083
8	\$5,118	\$61,418
9	\$5,229	\$62,753
10	\$5,341	\$64,089
11	\$5,452	\$65,424
12	\$5,563	\$66,759

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**Household Annual Heat Share 415-30-10-05**  
**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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The household's Poverty Level percentage will be multiplied times the household's adjusted annual gross income to calculate the annual household heat cost.

The annual heat share is calculated by the computer and is used only for the purpose of calculating the LIHEAP Share Percentage. It is not included in the Notice of Action that is sent to the household and the vendor and is not stored in the computer's Household Data Record.

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**Cost of Heating Computation from Cost/  
Consumption Tables 415-30-15**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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Use the appropriate cost of heating table for your county. Locate the sub-section for the type of home in which the household lives. Locate the primary type of fuel used by the household and read under the number of bedrooms to find the estimated cost of heating for the household.

Some municipalities sell oil or propane to several customers and serve as a "vendor." In these cases, the tables include a special matrix (cost/consumption table) for that vendor. Other vendors in that county are combined under the label "all commercial."



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**Cost of Heating - Wood, Coal, etc. 415-30-15-01**  
**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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If the household has a consumption record for the previous year, always use those records of actual consumption as the Cost of Heating. Use the Cost of Heating Tables only as a last resort when there is no usage history. On the "Household Data" screen, code the type of fuel as "07" (other) for kerosene.

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**Cost of Heating - Secondary Heat Source  
415-30-15-05**

**(Revised 10/1/08 ML #3151)**

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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, with exceptions for electric heating.

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

If the home with secondary electric heat can separate heat costs from general utility electricity, the LS percentage will be used to compute the amount paid.

Secondary electric heat that is not separate from electricity used as utilities will be paid at 50% of the bill times the LS percentage.

Example: Total bill divided by 2, times the LS percentage.

LIHEAP will not pay for non-installed appliances such as space heaters or electric fireplaces.

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: THERE ARE NO EMERGENCY PAYMENTS MADE FOR SECONDARY HEAT.**

## **Cost of Heating - Counting Bedrooms 415-30-15-10 (Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

[View Archives](#)

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. 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 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 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 household which rents out sleeping rooms on the main or upper floors of the house, may count only those bedrooms which are not rented, since the cost of heating the rented rooms should be covered by the rent received.

Do Not count any bedrooms used exclusively by any person not counted as a member of the household for LIHEAP eligibility purposes.

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If a household reports more than five bedrooms, use the matrix column for five bedrooms to determine the Estimated Cost of Heat.

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

If you have a situation which does not fit any of the situations described, contact the State Office for an interpretation.

If the household reports varying numbers of bedrooms for the same house from one season to the next, or the reported number of bedrooms is otherwise questionable, you have the right to question the count and/or to verify that the number of bedrooms reported is accurate. It may be that the household did not report all the bedrooms in previous years because they were previously used for some other purpose. In that case, it would be legitimate to allow the additional bedrooms. When trying to make a fair decision, the guideline should be to count the number of rooms structurally intended for bedrooms.

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**Cost of Heating - Different in Months Prior to  
Application 415-30-15-15**

**(Revised 10/1/08 ML #3151)**

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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.

NOTE: See exception to this policy in 415-30-15-20.

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 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 they 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.

## **Cost of Heating - High Fuel Consumption Due to Age, Disability, or Health 415-30-15-20**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

[View Archives](#)

Persons who must maintain a home temperature significantly higher than normal due to age, disability, or health which might predispose them to hypothermia may need more fuel than the Estimated Cost of Heat indicates. Therefore, the household's actual co-payments may be more than the household is able to afford.

These households may receive additional LIHEAP payments for their heating costs if their actual heating costs (use previous year's records if necessary) exceed the LIHEAP Estimated Cost of Heating.

To assist these households, the goal is to reduce their Co-payment Percentage to a level that reflects their ability to pay in relation to their true heating costs:

1. Obtain the household record of actual heating costs, and compare it to the LIHEAP Estimated Cost of Heating table.
2. If the actual heating costs are higher, use the actual heating costs for the prior LIHEAP heating season in place of the estimated amount from the LIHEAP tables. In some cases, you may be aware of this situation when you are first calculating the case, and entering the actual heating costs in place of the LIHEAP Estimated Cost will result in the correct LIHEAP Share Percentage from the start. If the issue is raised after the case has already been established on the computer, entering this information as a change will cause the LIHEAP Share Percentage and the customer's Co-payment Percentage to be recomputed. The effective date of the revised LIHEAP Share Percentage will be 5 days from the date the change is entered.

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3. If the household does not contact you until some bills have already been paid, you can use miscellaneous payments to increase the amount of the LIHEAP payment on prior bills.

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**Authorization Period Computation 415-30-20**  
**(Revised 10/02 ML #2812)**

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The purpose of the authorization period is to prevent the designated vendor from billing for 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 descriptions which follow provide examples of the correct use of the authorization period to achieve that purpose.



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**Payments Not Required Prior to the Month of  
Application 415-30-20-05**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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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.

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### **Payments Required for Bills Incurred Prior to the Month of Application 415-30-20-10**

#### **Bills Owed to Current Heating Vendor 415-30-20-10-05**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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The authorization period 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."

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**Bills Owed to Different Vendor 415-30-20-10-10**  
**(Revised 10/1/08 ML #3151)**

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**(Refer to Example in 415-30-20-10-05.)**

If unpaid back bills were with a different vendor, 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."

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**Reimbursements for Paid Bills 415-30-20-10-15**  
**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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If the household is requesting a reimbursement for bills paid prior to the month of application, and the household has been determined eligible during the months those bills were incurred, the authorization period will NOT be adjusted retroactively, but will begin with the month of application. The reimbursement will be paid with the "Miscellaneous or Emergency Payment" screen. This prevents a supplier from billing again for a delivery already reimbursed to a client by LIHEAP.

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**Eligibility Established Only for Months Preceding  
Application 415-30-25**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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A household may apply for LIHEAP and be determined ineligible in the month of application, but may have had eligibility in months prior to the month of application. In this case, use the most recent eligible month's income and Estimated Cost of Heating as a base to determine the benefit level for all eligible months.

**Renter Benefits Computation 415-30-30**  
**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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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 TWO EXCEPTIONS:

1. An additional calculation for the estimated cost of heating is necessary. The estimated cost of heating will be the smaller of the amount taken from the appropriate cost of heating tables OR 25% of the annualized rent payment. (See lines 7a and 7b of SFN 530, "Eligibility and Benefit Worksheet.")
2. For renter/heat paid households using electricity as the primary heat source, the computer will NOT perform the calculation which reduces the LIHEAP Share Percentage by 25% to account for non-heating electricity. That is because the Estimated Heat Cost computed in #1 above is already based on a presumed heating cost being 25% of the total rent. Applying the additional 25 % reduction to the LS percentage would be duplication.

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**Renter Benefits - Authorization Period  
415-30-30-05**

**(Revised 10/1/07 ML #3094)**

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The renter checks are printed the third week of each month. Therefore, the authorization period for renters should normally begin with the first eligible month in which a renter payment can be made and should end with the last eligible month.

The computer will continue to make monthly renter payments ONLY as long as the case is open and the renter payment date falls within the authorization period.



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**Renter Benefits - Computation of Monthly Payment  
415-30-30-10**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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

The cost of heating will be multiplied by the LIHEAP Share Percentage and the result will be divided by 8 to establish a monthly benefit. The monthly benefit will always be rounded off to the nearest dollar: \$50.49 = \$50/Mo. and \$50.50 = \$51/Mo. If the monthly renter benefit is less than \$5.00 a month, the household will receive at least a \$50.00 lump sum for the season regardless of what the payment would have monthly. The "lump sum" is paid in one check to the renter, and the case goes automatically to a status '10', which prevents any further payments.

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**Renter Benefits - 'Catch-up' Payments**  
**415-30-30-15**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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The computer never goes back to pick up a monthly renter payment that was missed for any reason. The county worker will need to issue a miscellaneous payment. The delivery date entered for the miscellaneous payment should be the date of the third Tuesday for the month the payment is intended.

## **Renter Benefit for New Case with Old Vendor Bills 415-30-30-20**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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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 LIHEAP Share Percentage will be calculated the same, but the amount which will be paid out in miscellaneous payments for unpaid back bills or reimbursements will be determined using the LIHEAP Share Percentage that is calculated for the current living situation.

**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.

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**Renter Benefit - New Vendor 415-30-30-25**  
**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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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.

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### **Payment Procedures 415-35** **(Revised 10/01 ML #2711)**

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The applicant's responsibility for the energy bill must be established before any payments can be made by LIHEAP, especially if the bill is not in the applicant's name. The vendor and LIHEAP need to agree that it is appropriate to have other than the head of the household's name on the bill. Once responsibility is established there are several options to make the payment:

1. The vendor can bill LIHEAP directly if the company is able to assure proper credit to the LIHEAP household even if the bill is in another name (415-35-10);
2. The county can generate the payment to the vendor if the vendor can assure proper crediting and if the household agrees that sending the check to the vendor will not cause problems with old bills (415-35-20-15-05.3);
3. The county can generate a reimbursement to the household if the family pays the bill first (415-35-20-20-05);
4. The county can generate the payment to a third party under certain conditions (415-35-40);
5. The county can generate a payment to the household even if the family hasn't paid the bill, as long as the county has a means of assuring that the payment will get to the party who provided the energy services (415-35-20-20-20).

Options #4 and 5 should be used only as a last resort.

## **Payment Methods - How to Choose 415-35-05 (Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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There are three basic payment methods.

1. Automated Vendor Billing Payment

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

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, October through May (415-35-15).

3. On-Line Payments

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.

## **Automated Vendor Billing/Payment - Procedures for Designated Primary Vendors 415-35-10**

**(Revised 12/1/03 ML #2895)**

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

This method should be the most widely used when the household buys their fuel regularly from the same vendor. Generally, if the household uses two forms of heating fuel, one will be designated as the primary fuel, and the provider of that fuel will be the designated primary vendor.

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

### 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."

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### Step 2:

#### For New Vendors Only

When a LIHEAP household designates a heating vendor that is not already listed in the computer vendor file, the county will need to request the State Office assign a vendor ID and enter the new vendor into the computer file. The county also needs to tell the State Office when the household file using the new vendor ID will be entered on the computer.

The State Office will automatically send to the vendor a computer printout entitled "Request for Payment." 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 one blank page 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, social security 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 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 the 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 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 a 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 he is receiving payments, and a "Remittance Advice" will break down the amounts that are to be credited to each customer's account. 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,

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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.

**"Request for Payment" Printout 415-35-10-05**  
**(Revised 12/1/03 ML #2895)**

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The following is a very general statement of the billing process. For details and to answer specific questions from vendors, refer to the "Billing Instructions" section of the Vendor's Billing Manual Chapter 416-01.

1. Information Given on the Report

In the upper left-hand corner will be printed the vendor's name, address, telephone number, and the vendor identification number. The vendor ID number is a seven-digit number.

At the top center of the report is given the name of the report and the date on which the report was printed.

In the upper right-hand corner will be printed the instructions to the vendor for completing the billing section.

The information for each customer is listed in alphabetical order of the customer's last name. It includes the name and social security number of the customer. If the customer account number was included on the "Household Data" screen, it will be included on the report. (Customer account numbers for MDU, Xcel Energy, Ottertail, and Ferrellgas are submitted on their tape billing.) The customer's co-payment percentage, the LIHEAP benefit percentage, and the authorization period are given on the report.

2. Completing the Billing Section

To the right of the customer's social security number are blanks for the vendor to use to write in the amount of unpaid bills. The vendor MUST complete the date of delivery, write

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in the code for the type of fuel provided, the amount of product (gallons, KWH, etc.) and enter the cost of the delivery. Vendors of fuel oil, propane, etc., will be asked to submit the invoice number of the delivery ticket. This will NOT apply to utility companies who do not use delivery tickets. Vendors will also be asked whether they have billed the "cash" price, by entering a Y (yes) or N (no). This also will not apply to utilities. The vendor may submit one bill on each line, and there are two lines provided for each customer, so he may bill for up to two deliveries for each customer. The vendor may NOT combine more than one delivery on each line. (**See 415-35-10-15** for how to bill more than two deliveries.)

The date of delivery must be completed with a total of six digits as follows: 01-01-95. The date of delivery must be the date the fuel was provided to the household, or if it is a metered fuel such as electricity or natural gas, the date of delivery must be the date the meter is read. The computer will not accept a delivery date if it has been submitted previously.

The computer will go through a series of edits to determine if a bill is a "duplicate" that should be rejected. If the delivery date is the same as a bill already paid, the system will check for a different invoice number or a different fuel type. If so, the bill will be accepted for payment. This computer capability at the time of vendor billing should greatly reduce the number of miscellaneous payments county staff must handle.

The code for the type of fuel must be WRITTEN IN . . . ONE type of fuel for each delivery date. If a customer changes type of fuel within the authorization period and the dealer is the same, you will need to enter unpaid bills as miscellaneous payments for the previous fuel type. However, if a customer uses two types of fuel, and you have

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authorized both on the computer, both deliveries can be on the same form when the vendor is the same for both:

<u>Customer</u>	<u>Delivery Date</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Invoice</u>	<u>Quantity Delivered</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Cash Disc</u>
JOHN JONES	10-11-94	03	1434	300	\$250.63	Y
501-08-0000	11-09-94	01	1435	275.25	\$275.40	Y

The codes translate as follows:

- 01. . . . . Oil
- 02. . . . . Natural Gas
- 03. . . . . Propane
- 04. . . . . Electricity
- 05. . . . . Wood
- 06. . . . . Coal
- 07. . . . . Other
- 08. . . . . Tank Rent
- 16. . . . . Hook Up

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The cost of the fuel must be that for a single delivery of fuel only. The vendor may enter the exact amount of the delivery including the cents. He may also add in any normal delivery charges, but not finance charges. Deposits may NOT be included.

If he chooses, the vendor may hold the "Request for Payment" until all customers listed have a bill to be submitted, although most vendors will likely want to submit bills for those customers owing money at least once per month, if not more often. Those customers who do not owe a bill at the time the report is completed may simply be left blank. Their names will appear again on the next updated "Request for Payment."

### 3. Mailing the Report and Vendor Signature

Instructions for mailing the "Request for Payment" are printed on the left side at the bottom of the list of names on the last page of the report if the list of approved customers is more than one page long.

The vendor agreement is printed on the right side at the bottom of the list of names on the last page of the report.

The vendor **MUST** sign and date the "Request for Payment" before it will be processed.

## **Billing for Approved Customers not on the "Request for Payment" 415-35-10-10**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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A "Request for Payment" printed near the beginning of the month will not show the names of customers newly approved later in the month, even though the vendor may have his copy of the "Notice of Action," which identifies them as approved LIHEAP customers.

These new customers will appear on the next "Request for Payment" once he mails in the current list he is holding. There is less chance of error if the vendor can wait to submit a billing for these new customers until he receives an updated "Request for Payment" which includes their name. However, a blank form will be provided to the vendor each time a new "Request for Payment" is sent to him, so he may write in the names of these new customers and submit a bill for them. If he chooses to do this, he must write in the customer's name, with the last name appearing first. He must also write in the customer's social security number, which will be printed on the "Notice of Action." Completing the rest of the billing section and the signature is identical to billing for those customers whose names appear on the printed "Request for Payment."

Some vendors who have only a very few LIHEAP customers may find that at some point during the middle of the season, all the LIHEAP customers cases are closed or their authorization period has expired so that their names no longer appear on the "Request for Payment" list. This vendor will NOT automatically receive a new "Request for Payment" list if a new customer is approved later.

Therefore, the vendor should save one of the blank "Request for Payment" forms and can use this to write in the name of any new customer added later. When he sends in this write-in, the

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automatic process of sending an updated "Request for Payment" will begin again and continue each time he requests a payment until all his cases are closed once more.



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**Billing for More Than Two Deliveries 415-35-10-15  
(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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Vendors must NOT try to write in more than two deliveries in the spaces provided beside each customer's name on the printout.

Instead, the vendor may use the "blank" page for additional deliveries. He must write in the customer's name and social security number and complete the billing section for delivery date, type of fuel, and cost.

If the vendor has more than four deliveries to submit at once, he may simply repeat the above process. (NOTE: The name and social security number must be repeated for each set of two deliveries.)

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### **Renter Payments 415-35-15**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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Renters whose 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 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 if the monthly renter benefit amount is \$5.00 or more. If the monthly renter benefit is less than \$5.00 a month, the household will receive at least a \$50.00 lump sum for the season regardless of what the payment would have been monthly.

If the Renter/Heat Paid household's heat share equals or is greater than the estimated cost of heat, or the LIHEAP Share percentage equals 5%, a one-time lump sum payment of \$50.00 will automatically be issued 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.

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**Miscellaneous On-Line Payment Procedures  
415-35-20**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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Miscellaneous payments authorized by the county social service office are sent directly through the State Office 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.

The following formula may be used to assist in calculating a Miscellaneous Payment:

Delivery Date    Cost of Delivery X LIHEAP % = LIHEAP MISC.  
PAYMENT

\_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_ x \_\_\_\_\_ % =  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_

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If a correction must be made to a payment already processed, the following formula may be used to assist in calculating the underpayment:

Delivery Date	Correct LIHEAP - Payment	LIHEAP Payment Issued	=	UNDERPAYMENT
_____	\$ _____	\$ _____	=	\$ _____

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**Miscellaneous Payments - Documentation in Case  
File 415-35-20-10**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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Any miscellaneous payments must be supported in the case file by case narrative and by retaining copies of the fuel bills.

Any heating costs paid by miscellaneous payments must be verified.

## **Miscellaneous Payments to a Vendor 415-35-20-15**

### **Miscellaneous Payments - To a Designated Primary Vendor 415-35-20-15-05**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

[View Archives](#)

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.)

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**Miscellaneous Payments to a Non-Participating  
Vendor 415-35-20-15-10**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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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.

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**Miscellaneous Payments - To a Secondary Vendor  
415-35-20-15-15**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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A miscellaneous payment will always be used if a payment is to be made to a secondary vendor. This might occur if the household switched vendors during the heating season, or if the household uses more than one type of fuel to heat the home, or pays a coal company and coal hauler separately. (Use service code for coal when paying a hauler.)

NOTE: If the designated primary vendor supplied more than one type of fuel during the heating season, it is NOT necessary to use a miscellaneous payment for the secondary heating fuel. As long as the delivery was made during the authorization period, and the secondary fuel type is coded on the Household Data Record, the primary vendor can bill that delivery on the computer "Request for Payment" as he would any other delivery made within the authorization period.

Payments to the secondary vendor are entered on Option F, "Miscellaneous or Emergency" screen. The primary vendor will use the computer printout, "Request for Payment" to make direct billings to the state. The code for Payment type (01) and the vendor ID of the primary vendor will be entered the same on the computer as already outlined in 415-35-10.



## **Miscellaneous Payments to the Household 415-35-20-20**

### **Miscellaneous - Reimbursements to the Household 415-35-20-20-05**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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All reimbursements to households for PAID 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 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.

## **Miscellaneous - Reimbursements for Monthly Payment Plans 415-35-20-20-10**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

[View Archives](#)

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.

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**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.

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**Miscellaneous - Renter "Catch-Up" Payments 415-35-20-20-15**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

[View Archives](#)

"Catch-up" payments for missed renter payments 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.

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**Miscellaneous - To Household When Bill Not in  
Applicant's Name 415-35-20-20-20  
(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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Occasionally, the applicant will be responsible for the heating bill, but for some reason the bill is not in the applicant's name 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.

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**Premium Payments - On-Line Payment Procedures  
415-35-25**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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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.

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**Furnace/Chimney Cleaning and Service Efficiency  
Maintenance 415-35-25-05**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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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 county staff on the computer using Reason Code N, and service code 14 (Prevention/Safety). The county must retain a copy of the invoice in the case file.

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**Emergency Payment - On-Line Payment Procedures  
415-35-30**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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



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**Emergency Payment - Approved Application on File  
415-35-30-05**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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

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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 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.

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**Emergency Payment – Denied Application on File  
415-35-30-10**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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If the heating assistance application already on file was a denial, and the household now qualifies for heating 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.

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**Emergency Payment - No Application on File  
415-35-30-15**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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If there is no application on file for the 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.

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### **Special Handling Payments 415-35-35**

#### **Duplicate Dates 415-35-35-05**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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The 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 himself.

The delivery date must NOT be changed. A special handling payment can be issued by the county worker using the correct date. 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."

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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**)

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**Emergency Payments for Old Bills 415-35-35-10**  
**(Revised 10/1/05 ML #2988)**

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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.

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### **Third Party Payments 415-35-40**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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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;
2. A relative or other person has paid an eligible bill on behalf of a LIHEAP recipient and cannot be reimbursed by normal payment procedures; or
3. Other circumstances as deemed appropriate by the State LIHEAP Administrator.

Third party payments are entered on-line by using Option F "Miscellaneous or Emergency" screen.

The third party payments require a special vendor ID number with a prefix code of "05" which must be assigned by the State Office.



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## **Changes 415-40**

### **Definitions (Changes) 415-40-01**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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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.

## **Household Reporting Requirements 415-40-05** **(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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Households 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 and Assets 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.
5. Change in assets.

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, assets AND income should be reviewed. A change in income may result in an adjustment to the LIHEAP share percentage.

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

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the LIHEAP eligibility worker. **All changes must have the required verifications attached.**

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### **County Social Service Response to Change/ Deadlines 415-40-10**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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The eligibility worker has 10 days to review the reported change and to recompute the benefit if necessary, and enter the new information on the Household Data Record. The "Notice of Action" must be sent within 10 days from the date the household reported and verified the change.

The effective date of the change (LIHEAP Share Effective Date or Action Date) will vary depending on the reason for the change and if the change was reported within 10 days.

If the worker is unable to recalculate the change within 10 days, and the household co-payment percentage decreased, the worker will need to make miscellaneous payments for fuel that was delivered between the time the change was reported and the LIHEAP Share Effective Date. If the household's co-payment percentage increased, an attempt must be made to collect any overpayment that occurs due to the worker failing to process the changes on time.

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**Change in Household Members - Effective Date  
415-40-10-05**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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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 5 days from the date the change 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 5 days from the date the change is entered into the computer system and the notice was 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.

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**Changes Affecting Eligibility 415-40-10-05-05**  
**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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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 assets or 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 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.

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### **Moves or Changes in Heating Source - Effective Dates 415-40-15**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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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.

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**Moves or Changes in Heating Source Affecting  
Eligibility 415-40-15-05**

**(Revised 12/1/03 ML #2895)**

[View Archives](#)

If the household had previously been determined ineligible, and reports a move or change in heat source which would make them eligible, a new application shall be taken and eligibility determined.

Likewise, if a household which has been previously determined eligible and is receiving LIHEAP benefits reports a move or change in heating source which would make the household ineligible, the case shall be closed effective the date of the move or change in heating source. The possibility of overpayment will need to be reviewed if benefits were paid after the date of the move or change in heat source.



## **Changes Affecting Bills Already Paid or Incurred 415-40-20**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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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 computer will determine benefit payments based on the LIHEAP Share Effective Date.

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 date 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.

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**Benefits Levels - Adjustments 415-40-25**

**(Revised 10/1/07 ML #3094)**

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If the change in the family's circumstance only affects the estimated cost of heating but not the income, the re-computation of the benefits can begin on page two of SFN 530 "Eligibility and Benefit Worksheet."

If the change in circumstance affects the income of the household, you must re-compute both pages of SFN 530. NOTE: Be sure to include any allowable deductions in the calculations (lines 1-4).

NOTE: When mandatory changes are reported, assets AND income should be reviewed. A change in income may result in an adjustment to the LIHEAP share percentage (see 415-40-05).

**Transferring a Case to a Different County 415-40-30  
(Revised 10/1/07 ML #3094)**

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If the county social service office learns that a family is moving, the case should be closed effective the day of the move.

The original county will need to advise the household that they will need to reapply in the new county.

Although it is the responsibility of the household to notify the vendor that they will be moving, the original eligibility worker will want to confirm that the vendor has been notified in order to avoid complications at a late date for the new county. The possibility of overpayments will exist if the household failed to notify the original county or the vendor of the move and renter benefits were paid or fuel was delivered after the date of the move.

The new county will need to notify the original county when the new application has been received. The original county will need to remove the worker ID, so the new county can register changes to the computer Household Data Record. A copy of the original application and other verifications may be forwarded to the new county.

If an overpayment exists or may exist, it will be the responsibility of the new county to pursue the overpayment.

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**Transfers - Processing 415-40-30-05**  
**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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If the household wants to continue participation in LIHEAP after moving to a different county, a new application is required, and eligibility and benefits must be recomputed on Form 530, "Eligibility and Benefit Worksheet." (See 415-15-05-30-10)

Any information which has changed or is new must be submitted to the computer "Change Household Data" screen.

NOTE: Computer changes: The former county must delete their worker number. The "receiving" county can then go into the file through Option "B" by entering the fiscal year and social security number. You will leave the worker ID field blank in order to get into the file. You can then add your worker ID on the file and change the case number to reflect your county number.

**Transfers - Unreported Moves 415-40-30-10**  
**(Revised 10/01 ML #2711)**

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Many families will move without notifying the original county. If this county subsequently learns the forwarding address of the household, the procedure shall be the same as that already outlined.

However, if the household applies for LIHEAP benefits in their new county, and does not mention their previous location, the second county will receive a rejection message of "Record already on file" when they attempt to enter the case on the "Add Household Data" screen.

It is then the responsibility of the new county to request that the original county close their case. Again, it is very important that the original county immediately contact the original vendor to be sure all eligible bills have been paid, and if not, to obtain a copy of the bill and enter it as a miscellaneous payment. Prompt action is important since the new vendor will be waiting to process the bills accumulating in the new county.

Once the case is closed in the original county, the new application can be processed. The LIHEAP Share Effective Date may need to be negotiated if the household failed to notify the original vendor. The LIHEAP Share Effective Date will need to be later than the closing effective date used by the original county.

## **Change in Head of Household 415-40-40** **(Revised 12/1/03 ML #2895)**

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Occasionally, due to death or divorce, a family may acquire a different head of household than what is already entered on the computer. Depending upon the circumstances it may be necessary to make adjustments to the computer file.

1. Head of Household Dies
  - a. If the remaining family members do not plan to change the name on the supplier's account, it is not necessary to create a new computer file until the next fiscal year. The existing file should be adjusted to reflect change in number of persons, income and benefits.
  - b. If the family wants to change the name on the supplier's account, the case for the original head of household should be closed, a new application taken, and a new case set up on the computer using the social security number of the new head of household. Benefits will be calculated using only the income of the new household and authorized from the month of application to the end of the season.
2. Head of Household Leaves

If there is the potential of two households requiring LIHEAP, as in a divorce situation, it will be necessary to take a new application for the new head of household and proceed as described in 1 b above.

If the original head of household continues to be eligible for LIHEAP also, the household characteristics must be corrected appropriately on his computer file, and benefits changed to reflect any change in living circumstances (such as change of residence) and/or income.

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If the original head of household does not require LIHEAP, close his case after making appropriate changes in household characteristics on the computer file.

Case closing effective dates should be timed to ensure the supplier can collect payments due him, without overlapping months of authorization for the two households.

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### **Computer Output 415-45** **(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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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



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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.

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### **Pending Cases 415-45-01** **(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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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 W 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

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"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.

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**Pending Reapplications 415-45-01-01**  
**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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Reapplications, such as when a denied household reapplies or when a household moves to a different county, cannot be entered as "pending" cases. The Option B, "Change Household Data Record" is programmed to reject any attempt to change the status to "pending".

However, the Option B screen will allow a "pending" status code to remain in the record if it was first entered on the Option A "Add Household Data Record."

Therefore, you can add/change other data on Option B and leave the case "pending." Once the status code has been changed to anything else, it cannot be changed back to "pending."

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### **Remittance Advice 415-45-05** **(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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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 social security number, the customer account number (if one was entered on the 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 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 those codes is outlined in section 45-15.

The Payments section will include vendor-billed or County generated payments. Also included in this section will be 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 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.

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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 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.

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**Payment Rejection List (State Office Use Only)**

**415-45-10**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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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 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 FIRST if they feel there is an error. The county office should be able to resolve most problems from information in the case file. If the problem is not apparent, the county social service board can contact the State Office for assistance.

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### **Rejection Messages, Probable Problems, Resolution 415-45-10-05**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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1. 'Case Not Open': This message will be generated whenever the status in the 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. '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 computer file, the bill will reject and should NOT be resubmitted.

If the 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 county must correct the authorization period, and the vendor may either resubmit the bill or the county may need to pay the bill as a "Miscellaneous Payment." (See 415-35-20-15-05 #1)



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4. 'Payment Made Previously for This Delivery Date': The 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 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 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 computer can recognize two different payments on the same billing date.

5. 'You are Not the Authorized Supplier': If a vendor other than the one designated by the county on the 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 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. 'Master Record Not Found' or 'Case Not On File': This message tells the supplier our computer could not find a match for the social security number he submitted. If the number he used matches the number on the "Notice of Action," he should notify the county office. If the case has not been entered on the computer yet, the supplier can be told when this will be done so he can resubmit the bill. If the

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supplier used an incorrect number, he can resubmit the bill immediately with the correct number.

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

7. '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 county social service office. The county will need to determine if the 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. '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 county has forgotten to remove the "pending" status code when approval information was added to the computer case record. The bill can be resubmitted once the computer file is corrected.

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**County Voucher Printout 415-45-15**

**(Revised 12/1/03 ML #2895)**

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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 social security 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.

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### **Notices to Client 415-45-20**

#### **Record of Payments 415-45-20-05**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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The Record of Payments notice to the client is generated by the computer whenever a case is closed either by the county or automatically by the computer. IT DOES NOT TAKE THE PLACE OF THE NOTICE OF ACTION THE COUNTY IS TO SEND TO THE FAMILY WHEN THE CLOSING IS NOT DONE AUTOMATICALLY BY THE COMPUTER (closing codes 04-07).

The Record of Payments notice will tell the customer what payments LIHEAP has made. It will identify the amount of the payment, who the payment was paid to, the fuel type or service, the date paid, and the date of the bill.

If an emergency or premium payment is listed, a message explaining the emergency and premium payments will be printed.

If the payment is a correction, the "paid for" field will appear with "adjustment." If the correction is a refund or cancellation, the negative sign will be printed beside the amount paid.

The notice instructs the recipient to compare the payments on the notice with the household's records to assure correctness and to contact the county social service office if there are any questions.

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**Weatherization Referral 415-45-25**  
**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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A computerized referral will be generated for the appropriate Community Action Agency whenever the client has signed an application.

The referral tells the Community Action Agency the name, phone, social security number, and address of the client; the county the client lives in; whether the application was approved, denied, or withdrawn and the date action was taken; the target group, building type, fuel type; the estimated cost of heat; number of people in household, the ownership of the residence, income, and payment type.

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**Random Sample 415-45-30**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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Periodically the State Office requests the computer to generate a list of payments made to a random sample of LIHEAP recipients. The recipient is asked to contact the State Office if they feel any of the payments listed are in error.

## **Emergency Home Energy Assistance 415-50** **(Revised 10/1/09 ML #3195)**

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

Requests for emergency assistance may be received and processed by the county social service offices 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 a residential dwelling.

Usually Emergency Home Energy Assistance is considered a last resource that will only be used after the household's personal resources are depleted and other community resources are not available. 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. The household's personal resources are considered depleted when all household credit, counted liquid assets (except each household member over age 60 may retain \$5000 in counted assets), and the household net income will be consumed by basic shelter, utilities, employment, food, medical and other essential costs.

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Although these funds are limited to the purchase of home 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 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.



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**Emergency Response Procedures 415-50-02**  
**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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The county social service office must establish emergency procedures that will permit a response within 18 hours to a report of a life-threatening crisis and no later than 48 hours of the receipt of all requests for Emergency Assistance.

These procedures will permit needed home visits, counseling, referrals, communication with suppliers, etc.

The availability of emergency assistance must be included in all outreach activities and public announcements regarding the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program. A 24-hour, continuously available telephone number must be publicized for requesting emergency assistance or reporting a crisis.

## **Crisis Prevention 415-50-02-05**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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The county social service office is encouraged to identify a potential crisis situation and to initiate and maintain contact to prevent the crisis, whenever possible. Early intervention has the best chance for success. If contacted before a serious payment delinquency occurs, most vendors are willing to establish payment plans within the means of the household. Regulated utilities are required by the Public Service Commission to arrange deferred payment plans if the customer makes a contact prior to actual shut-off. Once service has been disconnected, however, they are allowed to require full payment of all past due and current usage, reconnection fees, and deposits.

Although many households do not inquire about Emergency Assistance until they are without fuel or a shut-off is imminent, it is possible to identify some "high risk" households at the time the Heating Assistance application is taken. These may include households who have a very low and/or decreasing income, who have a past history of poor financial management and/or dependence on Emergency Assistance, who buy fuel from a vendor operating strictly on a cash-on-delivery basis, etc.

The purpose of a "preventive service" interview is:

1. To identify factors which may potentially cause a crisis;
2. To encourage and assist the household to develop and honor realistic payment agreements with the vendor;
3. To inform the household about Emergency Assistance and to encourage them NOT to delay application until shut-off is imminent;
4. To discuss potential payment problems, deferred payment options, or other appropriate financial management measures;

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5. To arrange for financial management counseling, if appropriate; and
6. To encourage and/or arrange referrals designed to resolve underlying causes of economic crises. Because the resolution of the crisis, and factors causing the crisis, is an important goal, the services required to identify and resolve the household problems leading to or causing the energy crisis, such as a social evaluation, budget counseling, skill training, and other services may be provided by county social service staff, purchased on an individual household basis as needed or by agreement with a State or community based resource.

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**Emergency Services Available 415-50-05**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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ONLY the amount needed to pay actual bills at the time of the emergency should be authorized.

The county office may authorize, without State Office approval, additional payments up to the seasonal maximum allowed for each emergency service should another crisis occur and the household is again eligible for Emergency Assistance.

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**Supplemental Fuel 415-50-05-05**  
**(Revised 10/1/06 ML #3045)**

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An eligible household may receive up to \$500.00 per season for heating costs (including re-connection charges) if the household is financially unable to contribute all or part of their co-payment percentage to the purchase of the fuel. (For exceptions, **see 415-50-15**).

**A shut off or disconnect notice is NOT required to be eligible for Emergency Assistance.** In fact, requiring a shut off may discourage or delay the household from attempting to negotiate reasonable payment plans with the vendor, because of a mistaken belief the only way to receive even partial assistance from LIHEAP is to wait until a disconnect is threatened. By this time, the unpaid bill is much older, larger, and less manageable than it would have been if addressed when the customer first realized the difficulty of paying all the co-payment percentage.

The evaluation of the household income and assets on the Emergency Assistance application will determine whether the household is financially able to pay any portion of the co-payment percentage.

The eligibility worker should assist the household to arrange a payment plan with the vendor for any portion of the heating costs which household is able to pay. Any portion of the heating costs which the applicant is unable to pay is eligible to be considered for Emergency Assistance.

Options for Emergency/Assistance Benefits:

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**Long Term crisis.** . .These are households whose financial crisis and need for assistance is expected to continue for some time, and whose reduced income places them in a lower poverty level percentage. A benefit computation would alleviate or avert a crisis such as a shut off.

1. Establish Emergency Assistance eligibility with the Emergency Assistance application, SFN 62.
2. Enter Emergency Assistance Application on to emergency screen of the LIHEAP system.
3. Emergency LS % Recalculation...Enter the new, reduced income into the Household Data Change screen to prompt the computer to recalculate the LIHEAP Share Percentage.
4. Pay Emergency Assistance if necessary to get the household current with the supplier.
5. Send a Change Notice of Action to assure the designated vendor begins billing LIHEAP again.
6. Retain the Emergency Assistance application to document the reason for a LIHEAP Share Percentage.

**Short Term Crisis...**These are households who do not expect their financial shortfall to continue.

1. Establish Emergency Assistance eligibility with the Emergency Assistance application, Form 62.
2. Enter Emergency Assistance Application on to emergency screen of the LIHEAP system.
3. Pay only those bills needed to resolve the current crisis, and send corresponding Emergency Notices of Action.

**Deny...**These households do not meet the requirements for Emergency Assistance eligibility. Send Emergency Notice of Action for a denial.

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### **Minor Repairs 415-50-05-10**

**(Revised 10/1/06 ML #3045)**

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Minor energy related home repairs (cannot be an addition to the property) to a home or heating plant cannot be purchased through the basic LIHEAP heating assistance program. Therefore, emergency fuel assistance can be made available to an individual homeowner, or an eligible renter with verifiable responsibility for such costs, up to \$400.00 per season (for exceptions, **see 415-50-15**), to replace damaged windows and doors or other home repairs, or to make minor repairs to the household's **heating plant or chimney** (other than normal maintenance -- see 415-20-05-10-05), but only if these services cannot be provided through Weatherization Services administered by the Community Action Program. See 415-50-05-15 for furnace replacement policy.

#### Emergency Furnace repairs:

The State Administrator may choose to delegate performance of services to the Division of Community Services that oversees local Community Action Agencies.

Community Action Agencies will do repairs when the heating system:

1. is not functional; or
2. poses a threat to the household's health and safety.

County Social Service Boards refer households who are eligible to the local Community Action Agency. Every household who is eligible for LIHEAP is eligible for Emergency furnace repair. Households may also take the approval letters from LIHEAP to the Community Action Agency.

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When the county is responsible for emergency furnace repairs the county needs to take the following steps:

1. Insure that the furnace is not functional or poses a threat to the household's health and safety.
2. Have the household fill out an application for emergency assistance
3. Determine whether the household is eligible (income and asset)
4. Contact a vendor to repair the furnace (two bids are not needed for furnace repair)
5. 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 county immediately on Monday. Households should contact the office in a timely manner to have emergency furnace repair bills paid or reimbursed. Prudent judgment will enter into the decision of whether or not to make a payment.

Example: A very elderly person living alone may not realize that the county needs to be contacted about a furnace repair that has been completed during the week.

6. Bills should be paid in the LIHEAP system by the county if steps 1 – 5 are completed.



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### **Furnace Replacement 415-50-05-15**

**(Revised 10/1/08 ML #3151)**

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Emergency Assistance may be made available for a LIHEAP eligible individual home owner or an eligible renter with verifiable responsibility for maintenance of their furnace.

LIHEAP can only replace furnaces that:

1. are unsafe,
2. are not operating,
3. and/or cannot be repaired, and
4. wouldn't be cost-effective to repair.

Requests for furnace replacement must first be carefully reviewed by the county social service staff using the guidelines in this manual section. County staff should only pay for furnace replacement if Community Action Agency staff are not available to replace the furnace. If the county staff concludes the request is not eligible under these guidelines, the request should be denied, and referral to the State LIHEAP Administrator is NOT necessary. If the county staff recommends approval of the request, the "Emergency Assistance Application," with all the supporting data, must be referred to the State LIHEAP Administrator for approval through the LIHEAP Emergency System.

The State Administrator delegates the performance to Division of Community Services, eligible LIHEAP clients will be referred to a local Community Action Agency (CAA) for furnace replacement. No "Emergency Assistance" application is needed if the client is a current client of LIHEAP. Notification to the CAA can come from the County Social Service Board or the client. An approval letter is made available to client if he would like to contact the CAA himself.

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Clients will be required to share in the cost of the furnace replacement as follows:

Clients at 41% - 60% of the poverty level 30% of the cost

Clients at 21% - 40% of the poverty level 15% of the cost

Clients at 20% of the poverty level or below 0

Clients in the 4% and 6% poverty levels will have their share of furnace costs capped at \$500. Clients unable to raise their share of the furnace replacement costs may request a waiver from the local CAA.

The client's share may come from other sources, but not LIHEAP or General Assistance funds. CAA's will assist clients in identifying and applying for other sources of federal, state, or private funds.

Temporary shelter, when necessary, will be the responsibility of the CAA.

Of course emergency situations will still occur that must be resolved before we can carefully negotiate a payment plan. We may need to make an immediate payment commitment to the supplier. But, the household must fully understand these guidelines. They should at least appear to be eligible, and you should be confident they will assume their responsibilities if some other payment plan is more appropriate. Or, to gain the necessary time, you may need to authorize payment of temporary alternative living arrangements for the household (See 415-50-05-15).

**Note:** LIHEAP will not pay to install a furnace as part of new construction or where the client has knowingly purchased a home that does not have a heating system unless the need for a

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replacement furnace is associated with a state or federally declared disaster.

If Community Action Agencies (CAA's) do not have money for furnace replacements, take the following steps:

1. Household fills out emergency assistance application if they are presently on the fuel assistance program. If the household is not on fuel assistance, you will need to get a regular application and an emergency application.
2. Determine eligibility for regular LIHEAP and for emergency assistance. Remember that for emergency assistance you only look at the income for the current month.
3. If the household is eligible for emergency assistance and is requesting assistance with furnace replacement then you need to:
  - a. Ask the household to contact two vendors to bid on the cost of the furnace and putting the furnace in. Vendors, if possible, should be close to the house that needs a furnace. The costs are lower when vendors are in the same community. You can ask the household if they have any ideas for vendors.
  - b. Provide household temporary shelter if needed.
  - c. Send a copy of the two bids to the state LIHEAP Administrator or Policy Analyst and a bid will be selected.
  - d. Let vendor know that he was the one selected and work closely with him to insure that the furnace is put in quickly.
  - e. Make payment (after the bill is received with detail on it) once the vendor has completed the furnace replacement, the furnace is working well and the household is satisfied. Use payment codes 13 and I to pay the vendor.

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**Consumer Goods 415-50-05-20**

**(Revised 10/1/08 ML #3151)**

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An emergency may occur in which an eligible household needs to purchase or rent additional temporary or supplemental heating or cooling devices, or needs temporary shelter outside their home. Up to \$100.00 (for exceptions, **see 415-50-15**) per season may be authorized for this purpose. Consumer goods such as blankets or warm clothing should not be authorized as normally these are available through other community resources.

If funds are available, the State Administrator may choose to replace or repair water heaters that:

1. are not operating,
2. and/or cannot be repaired.

This service may be provided through Community Action Agencies or County Social Service offices, as circumstances dictate.

Households share of water heater replacement will be no more than \$500.

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### **Electric Utilities 415-50-05-25**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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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, 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, and enter one payment under Emergency as Service Code 04.

LIHEAP has maintained the computer capability of making payments for electric utilities. However, these payments will be entered into the LIHEAP computer ONLY if the Energy Share Board has certified to the State LIHEAP Administrator that Energy Share funds are depleted and a written agreement is made between LIHEAP and Energy Share for such funding participation by LIHEAP.

In this event, Energy Share will continue to accept applications, determine eligibility and benefits approved for utility payments, and will provide all information needed to make the approved payment through the LIHEAP computer.

LIHEAP cannot issue electric utility payments under any circumstance for applicants whose income and assets do not meet LIHEAP Heating Assistance eligibility guidelines at the time of the application for utility payment, or at some point during the current

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fiscal year, or for utility bills which would have no effect on the operation of the heating system.

## **Ineligible Energy Costs 415-50-05-30**

**(Revised 10/1/04 ML #2936)**

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The energy-related costs identified in this section are NOT ELIGIBLE for payment under the LIHEAP Emergency Assistance Program.

1. Any energy costs not incurred in the current living unit.
2. Costs not incurred as a residential expense. If the residential costs and business or other non-residential costs are combined, they must be reasonably separated and justified. If it is impossible to separate the costs, Emergency Assistance will be limited to 25% of the total cost or \$200, whichever is less. When the cost in question is for electricity, the residential portion will be established first as described, then the presumed heating cost of 75% will be applied. For example, if the total combined bill is \$800, \$200 will be the presumed residential cost (25%). Of this \$200, 75% or \$150 will be the presumed heating cost. The first \$600 is business cost, and the last \$50 is residential utility cost and are not eligible for LIHEAP payment.
3. Other utilities such as water, sewer, garbage, and telephone are not eligible. Also, ineligible are non-heating costs for natural gas or propane for stoves, hot water heaters, etc. when these fuels are not also used by the household for heating.
4. Deposits are not eligible. (**See 415-50-20.**)
5. Arrearages defined as unpaid home energy costs, incurred more than 90 days prior to the date of request for Emergency Assistance are not eligible. If the arrearage is for a metered fuel bill, consider the costs billed for not more than the three most current monthly meter readings. For alternatives, **see 415-50-10-20.**
6. Current costs that will not maintain or restore home energy services due to shut-offs occurring as a result of unpaid arrearages are not eligible.

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### **Eligibility for Emergency Fuel Assistance 415-50-10**

#### **Application 415-50-10-05**

**(Revised 10/1/05 ML #2988)**

[View Archives](#)

Requests for emergency assistance will be accepted from 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 heating assistance must be processed to first certify that the applicant's income and resources meet LIHEAP Heating Assistance requirements at the time of the Emergency Assistance request.



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### **Eligibility Guidelines 415-50-10-10** **(Revised 10/1/10 ML #3231)**

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The applicant's income and assets must be within the limits specified by the 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 county social service 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.
2. Assets: All counted liquid assets of the household, as described in 415-25-10-10-05, are considered an available personal resource and must be considered. (Except each household member over age 60 may retain \$5000 in counted assets.)

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3. Income: For emergency assistance purposes, income is defined as the household's net income or the actual amount of funds available from any source that can be used for the household's basic living costs (see below), including heating fuel and utilities.

Do not make the deductions from income described in 415-25-05-05. The appropriate deductions will be accounted for in basic living costs described below.

All sources of income are considered available unless exempt by law, or it is the children's earned income described in 415-25-05-50, or it is a reimbursement of an expense paid from income previously counted, or it is restricted for some other specified expense. (Note. A portion of some types of income are restricted for the costs of producing the income.)

4. Available Credit: Credit or loans that may be available to an applicant household is also considered a resource. For example.
  - The dealer's credit policy for all of their customers may include the applicant household.
  - Bank loans may be available depending on the household's credit rating or equity of uncounted or counted assets that can be used as collateral.
  - Some business/farm operating loans include daily living expenses and could be released to purchase fuel.
  - Even unsecured personal loans may be available from an individual or organization in the community.
  - The household should be cautioned not to accept a loan if they do not have the realistic capability to repay the loan with interest.
5. Basic Living Expenses: Although not required, eligibility for emergency assistance is usually established if the assistance available from community sources combined with the household's income, assets, and credit, is equal to or less than total monthly basic living expenses.

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- Food--To determine actual household food costs the Food Stamp Thrifty Food Plan may be used as a guide, minus the value of any food stamps the household receives. Add any special food costs.
- Shelter--Actual cost of rent or mortgage payment (include taxes and home insurance costs), and/or mobile home lot rent. Only the portion of the rent the household pays themselves should be counted if they are in subsidized housing.
- Utility bill--Include only current basic bills for water, sewer, phone (one land or wireless telephone line, up to \$75 per month), and lights that the household is obligated to pay the month of the emergency application. Do not include accumulated unpaid back bills.
- Child support and/or alimony actually paid.
- Paid medical bills--Include insurance premiums (See 25-05-05-05).
- Child care costs--Out-of-pocket child care costs related to work, training, or educational purposes that are not reimbursed to the household from any source.  
CAUTIONS: See 415-25-05-05 #9.
- Transportation costs--The actual monthly payment for one car, up to \$300/month, plus actual insurance cost/month for one car, plus up to \$200/month maintenance and gas. (If the household happens to pay the entire premium for several months during the emergency assistance application month then it can be deducted.)
- Employment costs--Up to \$100/month for costs that must be paid to retain employment.
- Miscellaneous--Up to \$100/month for up to three persons; up to \$200/month for more than three persons.
- Absent Student Expense--Up to \$300/month may be deducted from household income for a head of household or spouse who must reside away from home

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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.

- Absent Worker Expense--Up to \$300/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.
- Other--Any other mandatory expense which affects the household's basic living needs. Installment payments must be evaluated to determine if they are pertinent to basic living costs, even if they are mandatory.

6. Action Plan: Following an analysis of the household basic living costs and total expenditures, especially unusual or impractical amounts, the county social service board may need to assist the household to develop a financial management plan that will prevent the reoccurrence of the energy crisis in the future. Frequently, authorizing emergency assistance is all that is necessary for the household to be self sufficient again. Conversely, authorizing emergency assistance may only provide temporary relief of the crisis and may or may not be cost effective or assure continued service.

The basic cause of the crisis must be identified and an appropriate resolution implemented. In this regard, the household may need assistance to negotiate a realistic credit or payment plan with the fuel supplier or other creditors. A monthly payment plan throughout the year to level out fuel and utilities cost could be beneficial. Or, the household budget deficiencies may be so extensive that credit or financial counseling must be secured by the household.

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Referral for employment counseling, case management services, or other problem-solving counseling or for a social evaluation and follow up services may be needed. Specific actions designed to solve the cause of the crisis may be required as a condition of the receipt of emergency benefits. In any event, the household situation must be carefully considered to assure that emergency assistance is appropriate, and the household is given the opportunity to become self sufficient whenever possible.

SFN 11, "Emergency Assistance Action Plan," shall be used, whenever the worker and applicant identify problems to self-sufficiency and agree upon a plan of action to work toward improved self-sufficiency or that will diminish the occurrence of future crises.

When an Emergency Assistance application is denied, or when no action is required, possible, or practical, a comment to that effect should be entered on SFN 62 and the SFN 11 is not required.

## **Emergency Payments on Old Bills 415-50-10-20 (Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

[View Archives](#)

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 are 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.

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.

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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.

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**Exception to Limitation for Emergency Services  
415-50-15**

**(Revised 12/03 ML #2895)**

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Whenever an eligible household has an emergency fuel assistance need that exceeds the county 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.



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### **Deposits 415-50-20** **(Revised 11/02 ML #2829)**

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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 heating bills, it is preferable that the vendor and the customer arrange for the customer to pay the required deposit himself, on an installment basis if necessary, during the time period that LIHEAP is paying his heating bills. The amount of the installments can be set so the deposit is on record by the time the 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.

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**Notification of Action Taken on Emergency  
Assistance 415-50-25**

**(Revised 11/02 ML #2829)**

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An "Emergency Assistance/Notice of Action" must be sent to the applicant to notify him of his approval/denial for Emergency Assistance.

**Emergency Assistance - Appeal Process 415-50-30**  
**(Revised 10/1/06 ML #3045)**

[View Archives](#)

If a household believes the decision made on their **Heating Assistance** or **Emergency Assistance** application may be wrong, or if they do not receive a written notice of the action taken on your Heating Assistance application within 45 days from the date their application is received, they should **first** contact their county social service office to be sure they have all the information they need to correctly determine your eligibility.

If the household still believes the decision is wrong for some reason, they are entitled to request a hearing before the North Dakota Department of Human Services.

Contact the county social service office for instructions on how to request a hearing. The household's request for a hearing must be received within 30 days of the date of the notice of action. The household can have an attorney, relative, friend or other person assist them at the hearing.

If a household's hearing request is received within that time, their benefits will not be changed until a decision is reached. However, the household will be required to pay back any excess benefits received if the appeal is not successful.

A hearing officer will contact the household to arrange a hearing time and place that is convenient for them.

The household will receive a written decision from the North Dakota Department of Human Services.

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### Nondiscrimination

The household has the right to file a written complaint if they believe they have been discriminated against because of race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender, disability or status with respect to marriage or public assistance. The written complaint may be filed with the county social service office; the North Dakota Department of Human Services Office for Civil Rights, 600 E Boulevard Ave., Dept. 325, Bismarck, ND 58505; or the Office of Civil Rights, Department of Health and Human Services, Federal Office Building, 1961 Stout St., Denver, CO 80294.

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**Fraud and Recovery Procedures 415-55**

**Underpayment Adjustments 415-55-05**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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Underpayments must be discovered and resolved as early as possible by adjusting the household benefits, reimbursement to the household, and/or an additional payment to the household's fuel supplier.

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**Recovery of Overpayments 415-55-10**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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The county social service board staff will first determine if the overpayment is a result of suspected fraud or administrative/client error. Then follow the appropriate procedure described in 55-10-05 or 55-10-10.

**Fraud 415-55-10-05**  
**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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In instances in which there is suspicion that an applicant committed fraud for the purpose of obtaining assistance to which he is not entitled, the county social service office is obligated to refer the matter to the states attorney. However, the county social service office, in its investigation of possible fraudulent actions, must respect the legal rights of the applicant by giving the person notice of the unresolved questions, offering the person the opportunity to reply, advising the person of his right to a fair hearing (if proposed county action will result in the suspension, reduction, discontinuance, or termination of LIHEAP benefits), and of the need to refer the matter to the states attorney. Copies of referrals to the states attorney shall be sent to the State Administrator of LIHEAP.

1. Overpayments resulting from proven fraud will be recovered in accordance with the official court order.
2. If fraud cannot be proven, or the charges are dismissed by court order, or the County State Attorney declines to prosecute, the overpayment will be recovered in accordance with 55-10-10.

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**Suspected Fraud Guidelines 415-55-10-05-05**  
**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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1. Evidence of willful withholding of information about income, resources, or circumstances affecting the applicant's benefits.
2. Evidence that intentional false statements or misrepresentation of the facts were provided by the applicant.
3. The extent that such factors as advanced age, physical and mental limitations, language difficulties, lack of program understanding, et cetera, contributed to the above.
4. The extent of the objective factual evidence available and the extent that it can be substantiated, if necessary, in court.



## **Overpayments Due to Administrative and/or Client Error 415-55-10-10**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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1. To recover an overpayment, immediately notify the household by letter of the cause and amount of the overpayment; clearly request a full repayment or a response to the letter to schedule an interview to discuss repayment options (include the office telephone number and address); advise the clients of their right to be represented at the interview. This may be all that is needed to resolve the overpayment. If a response is not received in a reasonable period of time, one or two follow-up letters may be necessary. If so, include all of the above information in each, plus a response deadline date. Copies of all letters are to be sent to the State Administrator of LIHEAP.
2. Unless a full and immediate repayment is received, an interview with the household may be necessary to complete a repayment agreement. An agency witness during the interview may be desirable. The client may be represented by an attorney, friend, relative or other individual of his choice. The repayment options, in order of preference, are:
  - a. Full and immediate repayment.
  - b. Full but delayed repayment. Six months from the date the error was discovered is a reasonable deadline. \*See Time Limits.
  - c. Installment Payments. Administrative cost effectiveness and efficiency decreases in direct proportion to the number of payments required. \*See Time Limits.
  - d. Any combination of the above options. \*See Time Limits.

### **\* Time Limits**

Refunds of overpayments, regardless of the repayment option selected, should be received by the State Office before the end of the federal fiscal year that follows the

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year in which the payment was made. Collections made after that date cannot be retained by the state. Hardship exceptions should be requested as described in 415-55-15.

3. A copy of the repayment agreement will be forwarded to the State Administrator of LIHEAP.

4. Collection

Whenever the repayment is not received through the above procedures, the County States Attorney may be willing to represent the county in a civil action in county court or small claims court. If so, the request should be transmitted in writing with a copy to the State Administrator of LIHEAP.

Other collection actions, such as referral to a private collection agency, may be appropriate but the cost and other effects must be carefully considered.

**Discontinuation of Collection Efforts 415-55-15**  
**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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The county social service office may recommend, in writing, that the State Administrator of LIHEAP approve temporary suspension or permanent discontinuation of collection efforts and/or payments. The justification for this action may include, but is not limited to:

1. The overpayment, or realistic installment payments, are small and collection costs are too great to be cost effective.
2. Full or partial repayment would be an extreme or undue hardship for the household at this time.
3. The client did not respond, rejected an interview, refused to execute a repayment agreement, or defaulted on the agreement, and further collection efforts cannot be justified.

Whenever payments or collection efforts are suspended or discontinued, the household must be notified in writing. The letter to the client must include any special conditions, reasons, time limits, or if the household is expected to resume payment whenever the household is able to do so.

Circumstances of the case may warrant a periodic review of the decision to discontinue collection efforts, especially if conditions may be expected to change which would make collection at a later date feasible. If the county social service office becomes aware that circumstances have changed favorably, the household should be notified in writing that collection efforts will resume.

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**Transmittal of Recoveries 415-55-20**  
**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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The county social service office will receive all recoveries and transmit them to the State Department of Human Services with a cover letter identifying the client by name and social security number and identifying the fiscal year to which the payment is to be credited. All checks must be made payable to the North Dakota Department of Human Services and transmitted to the North Dakota Department of Human Services, Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, State Capitol Building, Bismarck, North Dakota 58505.

**Underpayment Adjustments and Recover of  
Overpayment from Recovery Vendors 415-55-25  
(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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The State Office must be notified as soon as an error resulting in an overpayment or underpayment to a vendor is discovered. Such errors can usually be corrected through communication with the vendor and future payment adjustments. If not, the coordinated action of State and County offices will be developed as needed for each separate occurrence to resolve any conflicts appropriately.

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**Documentation in Case File 415-55-30**  
**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

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The county social service office case file will include all correspondence and a narrative description of the overpayment and recovery process.

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### **Cooling Assistance Program 415-60**

**(Revised 12/1/03 ML #2895)**

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

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

Clients who did not apply for LIHEAP services during the heating season may apply for a cooling device. The county worker processes a LIHEAP Heating Assistance application to determine income and asset eligibility. If there is not a LIHEAP case open, it may be because the client lives in subsidized housing, the case was denied for lack of vulnerability or the household never applied during the regular heating season.

If a complete application is received on or before May 31, the household may be eligible for other benefits as well. If the application is taken after May 31, the household will not be eligible for other benefits.

Current clients who have received heating assistance during the heating season are referred to Community Action Agencies by providing a copy of their approval letter.

Those who have not been on heating assistance but are income and asset eligible will have a free form letter sent to the

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Community Action Agency. The free-form letter, sent by the County Social Service Board, will state that they are income and asset eligible and are, therefore, eligible for a cooling device but are not eligible for heating assistance benefits.

The LIHEAP application form has a release of information to permit sharing of information between the Community Action Agencies and LIHEAP. Community Action Agencies are responsible for obtaining verification of medical need.

If household comes in before May 31 and they were eligible for Heating Assistance, code the case as status 01. For those who were on Heating Assistance during the year you only need to send a copy of the approval letter from the current heating season to show their eligibility.

When households apply after May 31 and they have not been on LIHEAP during the regular season because they had been denied during the year, live in subsidized housing or never applied in the heating season, you code the case as status 13 in the system. Only the first page of the application screen on the system needs to be completed to determine eligibility for cooling device.



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**Forms Appendix 415-65**

**SFN 529, Application 415-65-05**

**(Revised 12/1/03 ML #2895)**

[View Archives](#)

This form is available through the Department of Human Services and may also be obtained electronically via E-Forms (370kb pdf).

For Office Use Only

Date Received: Enter the date a completed and signed application is received in the county social service office. This is the date which will later be entered on the computer "Household Data" screen as 'Date of Application.'

Case Number: The use of a case number for LIHEAP is NOT mandatory. However, if no case number is used, the two-digit county identification number MUST still be entered on the computer "Household Data" screen. The case number must include at the beginning the two-digit identification number of the county.

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Part I

- Name: Enter the name of the head of the household.
- Social Security #: Enter the Social Security number of the head of the household. If the applicant has no social security number, leave it blank and request that a "dummy" number be assigned by the State Office and the county informed.
- Phone, Address, County: Enter for the home to be heated.
- Length of Residence: Self explanatory. This is to help the county identify households who may have applied previously or in another county.
- Race, Sex, Age: Complete for the head of the household ONLY. This section is for reporting purposes only. If an applicant refuses to complete it, he cannot be required to do so. There will be special codes to handle unavailable information on the computer "Household Data" screen.

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## Part II

**Household Members:** The head of the household should NOT be listed again in this section. All other members of the household should be listed. Again, information regarding age cannot be required, but it is important to obtain this information if the applicant is willing because it is necessary to identify the age of the oldest member of the household for reporting and other administrative purposes. Obtaining the social security number is not mandatory unless it is needed to assist in the income verification process.

Do you currently receive or have you recently applied For (Check X, if yes)  
Medical Assistance, General Assistance  
Food Stamps, Child Care Assistance  
Housing Assistance, TANF.

**Disability:** This question is also for reporting and administrative purposes only and cannot be required if the applicant objects to answering it. The definition of handicapped or disabled is included in the definitions section of this manual. (See 05-05, Item 5.)

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Part III

Income: Check "yes" or "no" to each type of income, enter the amount of income, and indicate whether it is received weekly, monthly, quarterly, or annually.

It is not necessary to identify which members of the household have income; however, the income from all members of the household must be included in this section.

Part IV

Assets: Check "yes" or "no" to transfer of assets (see 25-10-35)

Check "yes" or "no" to each type of asset listed and give the amount. The assets listed must be the total assets held by all members of the household. It shall be the responsibility of the county social service office to decide which assets are not counted.

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## Part V

- Type of Home: Be sure one of these is checked, as it is needed to determine the amount of benefits.
- # of Bedrooms: This is to include the number of rooms in the living unit which are designed to be sleeping areas. Indicate the number of bedrooms on each floor. If, however, the apartment does not have a separate sleeping room such as in some "efficiency" apartments which have only a "hide-a-bed" in the main living area, the home would count one bedroom. The number of bedrooms establishes the size of the dwelling for purposes of finding the average cost of heating from the cost/consumption tables.
- Own/Rent: Check whether the household rents or owns its living unit.
- Include Heat: Check whether the rent payment includes the cost of heating. If the rent payment DOES include the cost of heat, the ONLY information completed in Part VI will be the type of fuel, which is needed to compute benefits. The applicant in these cases receives a DIRECT payment rather than a payment through a vendor.

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Rental Assistance: If the renter DOES receive rental assistance, it will be necessary to evaluate as described in 20-10-30 whether this household is eligible for the purposes of this program.

Amount of Rent: Indicate amount of rent tenant pays per month.

Landlord's Name: Provide landlord's name, address, phone.

Part VI

Type of Heat: The type of heat should be that which the applicant expects to be using the balance of the heating season. (NOTE: This is the ONLY question in this section which must be completed if the applicant is a renter whose rent payment includes the cost of heat -- See Part VI.)

If more than one type of fuel is used, label which type is the "primary" source of heat. If a primary source cannot be identified, benefits will be established using the type of heat which is the more costly. Both primary and secondary heat sources will be identified on the computer "Household Data" screen.

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Non-residential:	Non-residential Besides providing heat for your house, does this source provide fuel and/or power for any other buildings, machinery, vehicles, or any other uses, yes or no.
Shut-Off Notice/Need Fuel:	These two questions are to assist the county social service board in determining when an application must be processed under the emergency procedures outlined in 15-05-20.
Supplier name, address:	This should be the supplier of the <u>primary</u> source of heat that the applicant intends to use for the balance of the heating season.
Name on Bill:	Enter the name of the household member whose name is on the heating supplier's account.
Account #:	This should be obtained if at all possible whenever the supplier uses customer account numbers. It is mandatory for Xcel Energy, MDU, Ottertail, and Ferrellgas.

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The applicant must provide copies of ALL heating bills, paid or unpaid, incurred since October 1 of the current fiscal year, for which a Miscellaneous payment will be made. (See 35-20-10.)

### Part VII

Weatherization:

Weatherization and Other Services to:

If you are determined eligible your signature on this application will permit the Community Action Agency in your area to contact you with information about weatherization services that can save you money on energy costs. There is no cost to you, and you are under no obligation. Community Action Agencies also offer other services which may be of help to you. The Self Reliance Program can help you with budget counseling and other needs. Energy Share can help with non-heat utility bills in emergency situations. Ask your county worker for more information.



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Would you like to request that  
your furnace be cleaned?  Yes  No  
If YES, please specify the vendor you  
would prefer \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to have  
your chimney cleaned?  Yes  No  
If YES, please specify the vendor you  
would prefer \_\_\_\_\_

Part VIII - Expenses

Medical: Check "yes" or "no" to any medical  
expenses incurred since the previous  
July 1. Proof of the expenses must be  
provided. See 25-05-05-05 for the  
complete list of allowable expenses.

Alimony: Check "yes" or "no" to alimony/child  
support paid and provide the amount.

Child Care Check "yes" or "no" enter the amount,  
and indicate how often (weekly,  
monthly, etc.) it is paid. NOTE: child  
care eligible for deduction must be  
related to work, education, or training.

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## Part IX

Reimbursements: Asks the applicant if he/she has paid for any fuel delivered since October 1. The county should review the applicant's responses to determine if reimbursements may be appropriate.

Certification and Authorization to Release Information: The county social service office should draw the attention of the applicant to the certification statement whenever there is a face-to-face or telephone contact. When the application is received in the mail, and there is any indication that the applicant may not understand the full implication of his responsibilities as stated in the certification statement, the county worker should contact the applicant and discuss the applicant responsibilities with him.

**This does not include confidential protected health information.** This statement was added because this release does not cover medical information that LIHEAP must request. SFN 1059 must be used to receive medical information.

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Signature:	The application must be signed by a member of the household before the application can be approved.
Worker Signature (if no signature on SFN 530):	This must be signed by worker after determining eligibility for case if SFN 530 was not signed.
Right to Appeal:	The county social service office representative should briefly give the applicant a verbal explanation of his rights to appeal and should draw his attention to the written statement of his rights to appeal which will be mailed with his "Notice of Action."

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**SFN 530, Eligibility and Benefit Worksheet  
415-65-10**

**(Revised 12/1/03 ML #2895)**

[View Archives](#)

This form is only available (electronic as of 10/01/03) electronically via E-Forms (771kb pdf).

It is not necessary to complete Form 530 "Eligibility and Benefit Worksheet" for each month of the LIHEAP heating season prior to the month of application. However, it is necessary to establish and verify the income available to the household during those months if a reimbursement or back bill incurred in an earlier month is to be paid by LIHEAP.

The income eligibility information must be entered on the Form 530 for the month of application as in the following example for a family of four (be sure to subtract deductions before deciding eligibility):

Prior months eligibility (wage stubs on file):

October: Earnings of \$1600/mo. x 12 x 73% = \$14,016 - \$1,200 = \$12,816 - ineligible

November: Earnings of \$1500/mo. x 12 x 73% = \$13,140 - \$1,200 = \$11,940 - eligible

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**SFN 530, Identification and Part I, Assets  
415-65-10-05**

**(Revised 12/1/03 ML #2895)**

[View Archives](#)

1. Identification Information
2. New Application: Enter the month of application.  
Re-computation: Enter the month of re-computation.
3. Part I, Assets  
Determine which of the declared assets as shown in Part IV of the SFN 529 Application are counted assets and enter the total counted assets in Part I of SFN 530. If this amount is less than \$8,000.00, check that the family does not have excess assets.

Use the extra space in the box to indicate whether the applicant's statement of assets was accepted, or whether additional verification was necessary. If additional verification was secured, identify the verification source. In the event the verification inquiry validates that the amount of household assets declared was not accurate, enter the accurate amount of verified assets.

This form is available through the Department of Human Services and may also be obtained electronically via E-Forms (771kb pdf).

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**SFN 530, Part II, Income Deductions 415-65-10-10  
(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

[View Archives](#)

In Section A, enter the name of the medical vendor and the verified annual amount of the medical bill or cost for each medical expense allowed. Indicate how each was verified (statement from vendor, viewed bill, cancelled check, receipt, et cetera).

Enter the total of all verified allowable medical expenses on line 1.

In section B, enter the amount of any verified, paid alimony or child support. If it is documented that the alimony/support is being paid on a regular basis, it may be annualized and the applicant given a full year's deduction even though the entire amount has not actually been paid yet. Enter annualized total on line 2.

Enter the annualized amount of child care deduction in section C, line 3.

Enter any other deductions (415-25-05-05) in Section D and total on line 4.

Combine all deductions on line E.

NOTE: The annual deductions must be deducted from the annual gross income each time the benefit level is recomputed due to a change in the income status.

This form is available through the Department of Human Services and may also be obtained electronically via E-Forms (771kb pdf).

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**SFN 530, Part III, Income Received 415-65-10-15  
(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

[View Archives](#)

Computing Annualized Income:

For each source of income the household receives during the month of application or re-computation, enter the source of income, how it was verified, and the amount/unit (month, week, year). Multiply the amount/unit times the correct annualizing figure as described in 415-25-05-15. This annualized income is then multiplied by 73%, ONLY IF IT IS EARNED INCOME, to arrive at the annualized amount for that source of income.

Note (\*) that a deduction for a worker living away from home is made only from his earnings and is deducted after the 20% earned income deduction has been calculated.

Once each source of income has been annualized, all are totaled on line 5.

Use the "Notes" space to show the income received in months prior to the month of application.

This form is available through the Department of Human Services and may also be obtained electronically via E-Forms (771kb pdf).

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**SFN 530, Part IV, Summary 415-65-10-20**  
**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

[View Archives](#)

Enter the total annual income from line 5 and subtract the total deductions from line E to arrive at the Adjusted Annual Income on line 6. This is the amount which will be used to compute the household heating share and benefits.

Enter the number of persons in the household, the Maximum Income from the income eligibility guidelines in 415-25-05-10. Check any ineligible months determined for this household.

This form is available through the Department of Human Services and may also be obtained electronically via E-Forms (771kb pdf).



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**SFN 530, Part V, Heating Benefit Level  
415-65-10-25**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

[View Archives](#)

Line 7: Enter the smaller of 7a or 7b.

Line 7a: Enter the Estimated Cost of Heating from the Heating Matrix.

Line 7b: Compute this line ONLY if this is a renter/heat paid case. Enter the amount of the monthly rent payment, multiply times 12, then multiply this annualized rent times 25%.

This form is available through the Department of Human Services and may also be obtained electronically via E-Forms (771kb pdf).

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**SFN 530, Part VI, Authorization Dates 415-65-10-30  
(Revised 10/1/05 ML #2988)**

[View Archives](#)

The Authorization Date must begin with the first month of continuous eligibility through the last date a vendor can bill or renter/heat checks will be paid by computer. These dates are transferred to the computer "Household Data" screen. (Note that the authorization period is NOT needed if the type of payment will be either Miscellaneous Only or Emergency Only.

This form is available through the Department of Human Services and may also be obtained electronically via E-Forms (771kb pdf).

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**SFN 530, Part VII, Effective Date 415-65-10-35**  
**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

[View Archives](#)

This must be the date the LIHEAP Share Percentage is effective and determines the benefit level paid on a specific bill. For a case opening, this would be the first day of the first month a vendor bill or renter check can be paid.

This form is available through the Department of Human Services and may also be obtained electronically via E-Forms (771kb pdf).

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**SFN 530, Computerized Calculations 415-65-10-40**  
**(Revised 12/1/03 ML #2895)**

[View Archives](#)

This form is available through the Department of Human Services and may also be obtained electronically via E-Forms.

Lines 8-13 are calculations the computer will automatically compute based on the amounts from Lines 1-7 which the eligibility worker entered on the "Household Data" computer screen.

- Line 8: The estimated Household annual heating share is calculated based on the Poverty level Percentage (415-30-05) times the adjusted household income from Line 6.
- Line 9: The estimated annual LIHEAP share is calculated using the cost of heat, Line 7, minus the household heat share from Line 8.
- Line 10: Enter either the LIHEAP percentage from Line 10a or the adjusted percentage from Line 10b if the household has electric heat only. The computer will round up to the nearest 5% but no higher than 95%. If the percentage calculation is between 0-5%, a lump sum payment of \$50 will automatically be generated and the case will go to a status 10. If the percentage calculates between 6-10%, the percentage will round to 10%. (See 415-30-02)

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Line 10a: The annual LIHEAP Share from Line 9 is divided by the Cost of Heat from Line 7 and rounded up to the nearest 5%.

Line 10b: If the household has electric heat only (does not apply to electric renter/heat paid), Line 10a is multiplied times 75% to determine a single percentage of the total residential bill which is the LIHEAP share of the heating portion of the total bill. This figure is rounded up to the nearest 5%.

Line 11: The customer co-payment is 100% minus Line 10 and then rounded to the nearest 5%.

Line 12: For Renter/Heat Paid cases, the Cost of Heating from Line 7 is multiplied times the LIHEAP Share percentage from Line 10 to determine the Estimated Annual LIHEAP Cost for the renter.

Line 13: Line 13 is divided by 8 months (length of the heating season) to determine the monthly renter payment and is rounded off to the nearest dollar. If line 13 is less than \$5 a month, the household will receive at least \$50 lump sum for the heating season regardless of what the monthly benefit would have been. If the Renter/Heat Paid household's heat share equals or is greater than the estimated cost of heat, or the LIHEAP Share percentage equals 5%, a one-time lump sum payment of \$50.00 will automatically be issued to the household.

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**SFN 1540, Income Averaging/Annualizing  
Worksheet 415-65-15**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

[View Archives](#)

This form is optional and may be used to help document frequent income changes.

This form is available through the Department of Human Services and may also be obtained electronically via E-Forms. (353kb pdf)

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**SFN 1540, Part I, Income Received by Month  
415-65-15-05**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

[View Archives](#)

Each month of the calendar year has a space on the form to enter and annualize each source of income received, indicate how it was verified, and enter the amount/unit monthly, weekly, etc.) received. Multiply the amount/unit times the appropriate annualizing figure as described in 415-25-05-15.

This annualized income is then multiplied by 73%, ONLY IF IT IS EARNED INCOME, to arrive at the annualized amount for that source of income. Once each source of income for the month has been annualized, total them and enter the result in Part II for that month.

Repeat this process for each month prior to the month of application backwards to July.

This form is available through the Department of Human Services and may also be obtained electronically via E-Forms. (353kb pdf)

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**SFN 1540, Part II, Annualized Income by Month  
415-65-15-10**

**(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

[View Archives](#)

Use the space in Part II to subtract any deductions on Line E of SFN 530 which must be considered before eligibility can be determined for that month. If the adjusted annualized income falls below the income guidelines, put a check in the "eligibility" column.

This form is available through the Department of Human Services and may also be obtained electronically via E-Forms. (353kb pdf)



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**SFN 1681, Near Zero Income Worksheet 415-65-20  
(Revised 10/00 ML #2629)**

[View Archives](#)

SFN 1681 is an optional form which may be used in place of or as a supplement to case narrative required on 415-05-35(e) when a household reports zero or near zero income. The "Near Zero Income Worksheet" may be completed by the applicant, county staff, or both.

Another potential use of Form 1681 is to provide an interviewing tool to:

- Identify unmet needs and potential service and/or economic assistance referrals.
- Identify discrepancies in income/asset/expense reporting.
- Document a realistic appraisal of budgeting needs which may encourage an applicant to follow through on referrals.

Instructions are printed on the back of the form.

This form is available through the Department of Human Services and may also be obtained electronically via E-Forms. (203kb pdf)

## **SFN 11, Emergency Assistance Action Plan 415-65-25**

**(Revised 12/1/03 ML #2895)**

[View Archives](#)

The "Emergency Assistance Action Plan" is a form which may be used to assist the emergency assistance applicant and county LIHEAP eligibility worker to address problems that contributed to an energy crisis. It is designed to be used in combination with financial assistance from the Emergency Assistance Program of either LIHEAP or Energy Share of North Dakota with those applicants who are capable of making changes to improve their economic situation.

The first section explains the purpose of the Emergency Assistance Program. Space is provided for the worker to explain what emergency assistance has been approved.

The worker is to CIRCLE either "LIHEAP" or "Energy Share" to indicate which agency is completing the form.

### Problem Statement

This section should be used to identify problems the worker and customer agree have contributed to the crisis. Examples might be lack of education/training for a higher paying job, lack of transportation for job search, problems with developing and following a budget, shelter costs are too high for income available, etc.

### Action Plan

This section is used to identify possible referrals or other actions the customer can take to begin resolving the problems identified. For example, someone whose shelter costs are too high might be referred for weatherization services or to Low Income Housing. Use

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the "Comments" block to explain any details about the Action Plan. For example, the plan might include an application for Low Income Housing, but if there is a long waiting list, a referral to weatherization services can be made for the current residence as well as a referral to the energy supplier to negotiate a year around monthly payment plan. The worker can write in the phone numbers and/or addresses of the referred agencies or the appointment dates if the worker helps set up the first appointment.

The Action Plan will be most effective for the cooperative customer who wants to make improvements. However, it may also be used with the more reluctant customer who may not have given much thought to the reasons for his repeated crises.

When a customer is uncooperative or has few skills, it is especially important to set small goals. If he/she is overwhelmed by too much at once, he/she is more likely to do nothing.

The "Action Plan" cannot be used as a referral form, because it may contain more information than the referred agency needs, especially if multiple problems are identified. The actual referrals to agencies identified in the Action Plan should be made by separate letters. The Release of Information may be completed by the worker by filling in the agency name (CIRCLE either Energy Share or County Social Services, as appropriate) and the customer name.

### Signature

The customer and worker both sign and date the "Action Plan."

### Distribution

The customer receives the original copy and the yellow copy goes to the agency case file.

This form is available through the Department of Human Services and may also be obtained electronically via E-Forms. (69kb pdf)

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**SFN 62, Emergency Assistance  
Application/Assessment 415-65-30  
(Revised 10/1/09 ML #3195)**

[View Archives](#)

SFN 62 is to be used by LIHEAP and for referral to Energy Share of North Dakota. If the customer needs assistance from Energy Share, the LIHEAP worker should make a copy of the form and send it to Energy Share.

There are two sections of the form: 1) Application and 2) Agency Use Only. The "APPLICATION" section is to be completed by the household. The "Agency Use Only" section is completed by the worker.

The worker should check for completeness. Incomplete applications are not acceptable. The worker should assist the household to complete the application. No uncompleted applications or unsigned applications will be entered into the LIHEAP system.

**"APPLICATION"**

**Identification**

The name and social security number should be the same as the head of household used for the Heating Assistance Program.

County: Enter the county of residence.

Address: Enter the mailing address.

Phone: Enter a number at which the family can be reached.

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Ages: Enter the ages of all the household members. The head of household should be entered first.

### **Emergency Assistance Needed**

The household will fill in the services that are needed.

### **Name Of Company That Fuel Is Purchased From**

Who do they receive fuel from.

### **Name On Account, Account Number**

Household should list whose name is on the account and an account number if there is one. If there is not account number, "none" should be written.

### **Dollar Amount Of Emergency Assistance You Are Applying For**

LIHEAP needs to know exactly how much the household needs to take care of the emergency only.

### **How Much Have You Paid On Your Energy Bills In The Last 6 Months?**

Household needs to tell LIHEAP this because it may be a determining factor whether they receive emergency assistance or not.

### **List The Reasons You Are Applying For Emergency Assistance**

Allow the household to explain what happened that caused the emergency. This perception of the causes can be a starting point for later discussion regarding an "Action Plan" (SFN 11), if appropriate.

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### **Household's Efforts To Resolve Crisis (Next Two Lines)**

Have the household describe what he/she has done to handle the crisis, especially any contacts with the supplier.

### **Plan**

Household should describe in his/her own words what can be done to prevent future crisis. This will be helpful later in developing an "Action Plan" (SFN 11).

### **List Net Income Of Each Household Member For The Month Of Emergency Application**

Household should list income information for all household members for the current month, including who received the income and its source and employer. This should be net, "take home" pay.

### **List Assets of Each Household Member**

Request information regarding checking, savings and other account balances.

### **Expenditures For The Month Of Application**

Expenses should be only those for the current month and should not include any arrearages so you have an accurate picture of usual, on-going expenses. Payments required on arrearages can be noted as "other mandatory expenses."

If the household receives housing assistance or food stamps, only the amount the applicant pays "out-of-pocket" should be listed.

See Eligibility Guidelines 415-50-10-10 to determine the allowable expenses for one month.

**Note:** Verifications are only needed if information is questionable.

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### **Signature**

Have a household member sign and date the application.

### **"AGENCY USE ONLY"**

**Local Action:** Check whether approved or denied and describe what is to be paid.

If the assistance requested would require State Office approval, the county worker must first decide whether the county recommends approval. If the county does not recommend approval, the State Office does not need to be contacted. If the county recommends approval, the emergency application needs to be completed on the LIHEAP System so the State Office can view, to approve or not approve.

If the application is denied the worker should:

1. Send the household a denial notice.
2. Inform the person of their right to appeal
3. Keep the application with the case file and narrate on the LIHEAP system why the application was denied.

### **Signature Of LIHEAP Representative**

Worker should sign the date the action is taken.

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## **Emergency Assistance Payments**

Payments should be no more than **90 days from the date of the emergency assistance application.**

Pmt Date	Reason Code	Heat Type	Usage	Invoice No.	Amt Requested	Amt Paid

Use the above guide (SFN 62) to help you monitor the payments that you paid for the household. If another county worker assists the household then they will know the emergency assistance history.

## **Questions to ask about the household**

1. Does this bring household current? Current costs that will not maintain or restore home energy services due to shut-offs occurring as a result of unpaid arrearages are not eligible. Ineligible Energy Costs 415-50-05-30
2. Referred for Self Reliance? If the household is having difficulty making ends meet do they need help to reduce their monthly costs or do they need employment etc.?
3. Referred for Energy Share? Do they also need assistance with their non-heat costs? The referral should be sent to the nearest Community Action Agency. Electric Utilities 415-50-05-25
4. SFN 11 Completed? SFN 11, "Action Plan" completed? Check "yes" or "no". NOTE that completion of SFN 11 is mandatory if the worker is making any referrals or recommendations for action on the part of the household. If your assessment is that no action is needed or feasible at this time, check "no"



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and do not complete SFN 11. Although we would like to see all households independent, it is important to recognize which people have reached the highest level of independence possible for them. Likewise, there may be justifiable reasons the household cannot work on problem areas such as inaccessibility of services, mental or physical illness, etc. Note the reason an Action Plan is not appropriate at the time of the Emergency application.

- 5. List Other Agencies Referred To? What other agencies can they be referred to? If you are going to refer them to Self Reliance make some suggestions to Self Reliance about problem areas.

**"ASSESSMENT"**

Assessments are to be completed on the LIHEAP System under Emergency Assistance. There is a screen on the system where you can type your assessment.

08/23/2005 DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES SS4-614-M3  
LIHEAP EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE APPLICATION

NAME: SSN: APPL DATE:  
INITIAL CONTACT DATE: TYPE OF CONTACT: RESPONSE DATE:  
TYPE OF ASSISTANCE REQUIRED: TOTAL BILL:  
ENERGY SHARE REPAIRS FUEL (FUEL TYPE)  
FURNACE REPLACEMENT WATER HEATER OTHER  
AMOUNT PAID ON ENERGY BILLS LAST 6 MONTHS: VENDOR#:  
INCOME THIS MONTH: EXPENSES THIS MONTH: ASSETS:  
  
HTNG ASSIST: EMERG ASSIST: ENERGY SHARE:  
HH PAID: DATES: DATES:  
OTHER ASSIST: PREMIUM ASSIST:  
  
PREVIOUS PLAN (Y/N) IF Y, FOLLOW THRU? (Y/N) IF N, WHY NOT?  
PLAN DONE NOW (Y/N) IF Y, ELEMENTS? IF N, WHY NOT?  
  
COUNTY ACTION: APPROVED DENIED RECOMMEND STATE APPROVAL:  
WORKER ID: DATE: AMOUNT PAID:  
STATE ACTION: APPROVED DENIED REQUEST MORE INFORMATION  
STATE ADMIN. DATE:

PR3 RETURN TO MENU ENTER NARRATIVE (Assessment)

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When you write an assessment consider the following factors to determine eligibility:

- **Income-** Determine eligibility by using the net income in the month of application. Do not average 3 months.
- **Expenses-** Look at the expenses the household claims to have for the current month.
- **Assets-** Households should have no assets except \$5000 each for each person over 60 years of age.

Include your assessment of all financial data including credit and **payment record**.

Include your assessment of the household's efforts to arrange payments with the supplier or secure assistance from other sources. Identify any factors that contribute to the emergency or the household's ability/inability to improve circumstances, and to your decision to approve/deny the application.

If appropriate add information about making household current with vendor, referral to Self Reliance, referral to Energy Share, completion of the SFN 11, and other agencies the household is being referred to.

### **Evaluation and Plan**

Summarize your recommendations for referrals or other action plan, and evaluate the household's motivation and outlook for self-sufficiency.

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**SFN 1906, Anticipated Self-Employment Worksheet  
415-65-35**

**(Revised 10/02 ML #2812)**

[View Archives](#)

This form may be used as an alternate to the IRS tax forms as described in 415-25-05-25-15, #5.

It is designed to be completed, signed, and dated by the applicant. The information must be supported by the farm/business records, farm/business cash flow plans, receipts, cancelled checks, etc.

One side of the form is designed for use by farm operators, and the other side is for other business.

This form is available through the Department of Human Services and may also be obtained electronically via E-Forms. (262kb pdf)

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**SFN 1059, Authorization for Release of Information  
415-65-40**

**(Revised 12/1/03 ML #2895)**

[View Archives](#)

This form is available through the Department of Human Services and may also be obtained electronically via E-Forms. (212kb pdf)

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**LIHEAP Self-Employment Computation Guide  
415-65-45**

**(Revised 10/02 ML #2812)**

[View Archives](#)

The LIHEAP Self Employment Computation Guide is available through the Department of Human Services.

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**Regional Benefit Matrix Appendix 415-65-50**  
**(Revised 12/1/03 ML #2895)**

[View Archives](#)

The Regional Benefit Matrix is available in hard copy.

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### **Heating Vendor's Billing Procedures 416-01**

#### **General Information (Billings) 416-01-01**

**(Revised 10/99 ML #2539)**

[View Archives](#)

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is a federally funded program which is administered by the North Dakota Department of Human Services with the county social service boards providing local administration, outreach, and delivery of services.

The four Indian tribes located on North Dakota reservations each administer their own heating assistance program.

LIHEAP is NOT designed to pay total fuel costs for eligible households. Each household is expected to pay a percentage of each heating bill. This co-payment depends upon the household's income. The purpose of LIHEAP is to protect the lower income household from paying an excessively high percentage of its income for heating cost.

Since poorly winterized homes and energy wastefulness cause inefficient usage of LIHEAP funds, households are given information about conservation and weatherization programs. If you have a customer whose fuel consumption seems excessive, please contact the county social service office so they can encourage the customer to have the home weatherized. Households that need weatherization services are referred to the Community Action Agencies

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**Confidentiality 416-01-05**

**(Revised 10/99 ML #2539)**

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FUEL SUPPLIERS MUST NOT GIVE OUT NAMES OR INFORMATION ABOUT PERSONS APPLYING FOR OR RECEIVING ASSISTANCE UNDER ANY PROGRAM ADMINISTERED BY THE NORTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES.

In the past, some suppliers have been asked to provide a list of the names of fuel assistance customers to other persons or agencies. To do so is a violation of the law.



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**Application 416-01-10**

**Who Should Apply 416-01-10-05**

**(Revised 10/99 ML #2539)**

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1. Anyone who is responsible for buying their own heating fuel, whether they rent or own their home, should apply.
2. Renters whose rent payment includes the cost of heat should apply. Since the landlord passes through the heating costs to the rent payment, these renters are also affected by heating cost. If they receive rental assistance, however, they may not be eligible.

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**When to Apply 416-01-10-10**

**(Revised 10/99 ML #2539)**

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Your customers must reapply every year.

Applications must be received between October 1 and May 31 for heating assistance.

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### **Where to Apply 416-01-10-15**

**(Revised 10/02 ML #2809)**

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All applications must be processed by the county social service office. If you would like to have blank applications on hand to give to your customers, call the county social service office or the State Office (701) 328-2065.

Your customers can also obtain application forms and assistance to complete the form from community action agencies and senior services outreach workers.

Once the county office has taken action on the application, the State Office is notified of who is eligible, the amount of benefits, months payments are authorized, and the authorized heating vendor. The State Office receives the bills and generates all payments.

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**Benefit Programs 416-01-15**

**(Revised 10/02 ML #2809)**

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LIHEAP has two benefit programs, the Heating Assistance Program and the Emergency Assistance Program. Each have different eligibility requirements. See Section 416-01-50 for an explanation of the Emergency Assistance Program.

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### **Heating Assistance Program 416-01-15-05**

#### **Eligibility Requirements 416-01-15-05-05**

**(Revised 10/02 ML #2809)**

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Eligibility for heating assistance benefits is based upon income and assets. The income standards are based upon the poverty levels established by the Federal Office of Management and Budget. These levels are adjusted each year and are published by the Department of Human Services in a brochure. Copies of the updated brochure are available through the local county social service offices or the State Office (701) 328-2065. We encourage you to obtain copies to give to your customers.

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**Benefit Amounts 416-01-15-05-10**  
**(Revised 10/99 ML #2539)**

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The amount of benefits is determined from Cost/Consumption Tables which take into consideration the size of the home, the type of building, the type and cost of fuel and the number of heating degree days in the area in which the customer lives. Once the estimated cost of heating the customer's home is established from these tables, a percentage of the annual gross income is deducted from the cost of heating to arrive at an estimated household heat share. A lower percentage is deducted for the lowest income families.

Example:

Family of 3 people, 3 bedroom house, using propane, in county XX:

Annual income = \$5,000  
Family heat share % x4%  
\$ 200 (Family annual share of heat)

Annual estimated heat cost = \$1,000  
Minus family heat share = \$ 200  
\$ 800 (Estimated annual LIHEAP cost)

Estimated LIHEAP cost = \$ 800  
Divided by cost of heat = \$1,000 = 80% (LIHEAP share percentage)

The customer co-payment percentage=100%

- 80% (LIHEAP share%)  
20% (Customer co-payment)

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### **Elderly/Disabled Customers 416-01-15-05-12**

**(Revised 10/99 ML #2539)**

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Elderly or disabled customers often need a higher heating temperature than our cost of heating estimates would indicate. If a customer uses more heat than normal we can use your records of the actual consumption for the past LIHEAP heating season period instead of our estimated heating cost matrixes to calculate a higher benefit level.

SPECIAL NOTE ABOUT HYPOTHERMIA: Occasionally we hear about an elderly or disabled person who is trying to be conservative with their heat usage. Elderly and other persons with mobility disabilities are particularly vulnerable to hypothermia, even at moderate temperatures in the 50-65 degree range. They should not usually have their thermostat set below 70 degrees. They can easily become chilled without being aware of it, since one of the early symptoms of hypothermia is mental confusion. People who are trying to conserve costs may be especially tempted in early spring or fall to "get by" with little or no heat. If you have occasion to be in a house and notice it is being kept too cool, please encourage the customer to turn up the thermostat. If the customer seems unusually confused and the house is cool, contact someone who can get them to medical care or at least stay with them until they are re-warmed and out of danger. Hypothermia can quickly become life threatening.

## **Services Covered 416-01-15-05-15**

**(Revised 10/02 ML #2809)**

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### 1. Heating Fuel

LIHEAP heating assistance will only pay for fuel used for heating (oil, propane, natural gas, electricity, wood, coal, kerosene). We cannot pay for utilities, hot water heating or cooking UNLESS the service meters for the heating are combined with other services so that the costs cannot be reasonably separated. The Heating Assistance/Notice of Action you receive from the county social service board will identify the type of heating fuel(s) authorized for LIHEAP payments. Bills for fuels not authorized will be rejected. We can also pay delivery charges, propane tank rental and hook-up, and reconnect fees. (See section 01-40.) We do not pay any installment payments for tanks which are on a purchase contract. We do not pay deposits.

Electric Heat: Since most homes have only one meter for electricity which records and bills for general utilities and heating usage, LIHEAP will pay the established LIHEAP share percentage of 75% of the total electric bill. This will be the "presumed heating cost." The remaining 25% will be the "presumed general utility cost." This calculation will be included in the formula that determines the LIHEAP share percentage, so you and your customer will not need to calculate it separately.

### 2. Unpaid Bills Only

Heating vendors are authorized to bill LIHEAP ONLY for bills that are UNPAID\* and for fuel that has been delivered. The county social service board can reimburse the customer for bills he has paid if he provided evidence he paid the bill. However, the heating vendor should NEVER submit bills the customer has already paid in order to help the customer collect benefits by establishing a credit on his account. For



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information on account credits and even monthly payments plans, see Section 01-40-50 and 01-40-55.

- See 01-30-05, #5 for special instructions regarding electric heat.

### 3. Primary Residence

LIHEAP benefits are to be used only to heat the home where the customer is living. Do NOT allow a customer to convince you to bill for fuel delivered to a second home (e.g. a farm home when he lives in town during the winter). We also do not pay bills if the home has been vacated (e.g. customer goes south for the winter).

### 4. Stockpiling Prohibited

It is permissible to bill for larger amounts of fuel delivered to homes which normally have storage tanks due to poor roads in the winter months, as long as these storage tanks are connected to the primary residence. Do NOT bill LIHEAP for fuel delivered to storage tanks not connected to the house. Customers are not allowed to add storage tanks.

It is NOT permitted to bill LIHEAP for fuel that has not been delivered in order to build a credit on the account and use up LIHEAP benefits.

Tanks may be "topped off" at the end of the heating season (deadline is May 31) provided that the customer has either requested or authorized the fuel delivery. LIHEAP will not honor bills if the customer informs us he/she did not want the fuel or if the customer has moved prior to the delivery.

If you have doubts about something a customer is asking you to do, contact the county social service board.

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### **Deadline for Deliveries 416-01-15-05-20** **(Revised 10/99 ML #2539)**

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All deliveries for heating fuel must be made by May 31 to be eligible for LIHEAP payment. We do NOT accept bills for fuel delivered prior to October 1.

For metered fuels (electricity, natural gas), the date the meter is normally read is the date which should be used as a delivery date . If the meter is read before October or after May 31, LIHEAP will NOT pay the bill. Do NOT attempt to pro-rate the bills. Do NOT make extra meter readings outside the usual reading cycle solely to bill more usage cost to LIHEAP before the customer's authorization period expires. This creates unnecessary confusion and work for you. Since we accept bills with meter reads of October 1 (some or all of the fuel supplied in September), we feel the customer does receive full opportunity to use his LIHEAP benefits. (Naturally, "out-of-cycle" meter readings are sometimes necessary when a customer changes residence, a previous reading needs correction, etc. These meter readings may be billed if the customer was eligible.)

Rural electric cooperatives and other utilities whose customers generally read their own meters may have difficulty establishing the date the meter is read. If the customer is required to report the read date, this should be used. If not, you can use the date it is received in your office. Do NOT use the billing date or the date payment is due, as this would make the delivery date one to two months later than the actual month of service.

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### **Premium Payments 416-01-15-05-30** **(Revised 10/02 ML #2809)**

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"Premium" benefits are available from October 1 through July 31 to customers eligible for LIHEAP Heating Assistance at some point during the current fiscal year without additional eligibility requirements.

#### 1. Furnace/Chimney Cleaning

LIHEAP will pay up to \$100 toward the cost of furnace cleaning. Costs of routine parts replacement (filter, nozzle, thermocouples, etc.), labor, and travel may be included; however, any amount of the total cost that exceeds \$100 will be the responsibility of the customer. This should be discussed in advance with the customer.

An additional \$100 for chimney cleaning may be authorized when necessary for safety and/or efficient operation.

Any parts or labor which are related to repair cannot be billed to LIHEAP as part of furnace/chimney cleaning. The customer will be responsible for any costs of repair, which may be discovered during the routine cleaning. The customer may apply for Emergency Assistance for repair costs, if necessary. However, repair costs approved for payment under Emergency Assistance must be invoiced and billed separately from the furnace/chimney cleaning.

LIHEAP does not pay for routine furnace/chimney cleaning performed more than once per year.

LIHEAP does not pay for furnace/chimney cleaning to homes in which the heat costs are included in the cost of the rent,

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nor for heating units which provide heat to more than one living unit.

LIHEAP customers who wish to take advantage of this furnace/chimney cleaning service should request that an "Authorization for Furnace/Chimney Cleaning" form to be sent to their choice of vendor from their county social service office. This form lists an authorization period during which the furnace/chimney cleaning should be done.

The authorization form must be completed and signed by the vendor and customer. The completed form and the vendor's invoice must be sent to the county social service office who will process the payment. You cannot directly bill the furnace/chimney cleaning on the "Request for Payment" printout used for billing fuel deliveries.

## 2. Heating Cost Reduction Services

Households who heat with electricity may be able to reduce their costs by installing devices which will qualify them for reduced electric rates, such as demand control, dual heating systems, submetering, etc.

To encourage LIHEAP customers to take advantage of these rate reduction devices, the LIHEAP State Office will accept requests for funding assistance with the installation costs. The funding plan approved may:

- a. Provide funding from "premium" benefits;
- b. Require partial funding participation by the applicant, utility, and/or other sources; or
- c. Develop a combination of the above.

To access this benefit, the electric heating vendor and customers must jointly prepare a written proposal to be sent to the State LIHEAP Administrator. No payment of installation costs can be assumed without prior approval of

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the State LIHEAP Administrator. The proposal should include at a minimum the following:

- a. Customer name, address, social security number, county of residence;
- b. Vendor name, address, phone number, and contact person;
- c. Estimate of annual heating cost without the device, estimated annual dollar savings;
- d. Copy of previous 12 months actual consumption and cost;
- e. Type of cost reduction system selected and why;
- f. Total cost of installation, availability of loan or other incentive programs from the company or other agency which will participate in installation costs, amount of customer's annual installment payments;
- g. Who will own the equipment installed and be responsible for repair/maintenance; and
- h. Proposed installation date.

The State Administrator will notify the customer and vendor in writing of the action taken on the proposal.

## **Notifying the Customer 416-01-20**

### **Heating Assistance/Notice of Action 416-01-20-05 (Revised 8/00 ML #2622)**

[View Archives](#)

After the county social service board has reviewed an application and made a decision regarding eligibility and benefits, a "Notice of Action" letter is sent to the customer. If the customer is approved for LIHEAP benefits, a similar letter is also sent to the vendor the customer has designated as his heating supplier. The "Notice" letter will tell the customer (and you) the amount of LIHEAP share %, the customer co-payment % and the effective date of the LIHEAP share %. We strongly urge you to arrange monthly installments for the customer's share as described in **section 01-40-55** of this manual.

The letter also tells you the type of heating fuel which can be billed and the months authorized for billing. All delivery dates and/or meter read dates must lie within this authorization period.

A separate letter, "Emergency Energy Assistance/Notice of Action," is used to notify the customer when Emergency Assistance payments have been approved. The designated vendor will normally receive a copy of that notice only if the Emergency Payment is to be made to him. (See 01-20-10.)

If you have any questions about the information appearing on a Notice of Action letter, call the county social service office.

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**Emergency Energy Assistance/Notice of Action  
416-01-20-10**

**(Revised 8/00 ML #2622)**

[View Archives](#)

After the county social service board has reviewed an application for Emergency Assistance and made a decision regarding eligibility and benefits (**see Chapter 01-50**), a "Notice of Action" letter is sent to the customer. If the customer is approved for emergency benefits, a similar letter will also be sent to the vendor(s) who will receive the approved emergency payment(s).

The letter will identify the type and amount of Emergency Assistance approved.

NOTE: You CANNOT bill for services or products approved under Emergency Assistance on the "Request for Payment" printout or by modem as described in chapter 01-25. These emergency payments will be generated by the county social service office after they receive a copy of the invoice from you or the customer.

The "Comments" section of the Notice of Action will be used to further explain approved payments or conditions of payment, if any.

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**Premium Payments/Notice of Action 416-01-20-12**  
**(Revised 8/00 ML #2622)**

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Approval for payment of "Premium" services will be sent to both the LIHEAP customer and the vendor who will receive payment by a letter, which will specify the amount and type of service, approved.



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### **Billing Statements to the Customer 416-01-20-15 (Revised 10/99 ML #2539)**

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We realize that some customers become confused about what LIHEAP will pay and what their obligation is. However, for your own protection and the customer's information, you should continue to give the customer a statement of what fuel has been delivered to his home, the total cost of the fuel, and the amount you have billed to LIHEAP.

The State LIHEAP office sends each customer an accounting of the benefits we have paid on their behalf. This is done approximately 30 days after the case is closed or the authorization period expires during the heating season or at the end of the program year. The 30-day delay in mailing this "Report of Payments" allows you time to request payment for the final eligible heating bills. Occasionally, a customer disputes that he received the fuel for which LIHEAP was billed. It is easier to resolve these conflicts if the vendor has sent the customer a statement of fuel delivered and what is being billed to LIHEAP at the time of the delivery or in a regular monthly statement.

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### **Payment Procedures 416-01-25**

#### **Summary of the Payment Process and Timetables 416-01-25-05**

**(Revised 10/99 ML #2539)**

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Once the customer has been approved for Heating Assistance, the county social service board enters the "Household Data Information" into the computer. Until this takes place, no payments can be made on behalf of the customer. The benefit level, the designated vendor, the period of time that payments are authorized for direct billing from the vendor, and the type of payments authorized are included in the information entered into the computer.

A computerized billing form, called the "Request for Payment" will be sent to the designated vendor. (See Section 01-30 for information on completion of this billing form).

When the billing forms from the vendors arrive in the State LIHEAP office each day, they are batched and sent to the computer room for keypunching. The information is then stored on a computer tape until Tuesday night when all the bills and the other documents which have been accumulating during the previous week are run through the computer. The checks for bills approved for payment are printed on Wednesday night and returned to Finance for stuffing Thursday afternoon. Most of the checks will be mailed by Friday afternoon, but during the busy season the stuffing process may take until Monday.

You will receive one check for all the customers whose bills were processed in the computer run. It will include payments for the bill you submitted on the "Request for Payment" printout and payments for bills submitted directly by the county office on behalf of the customer. You will receive with the check, a Remittance Advice

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which gives a breakdown of the amount to be credited to each customer, a Payment Rejection List, and an updated "Request for Payment" printout including a new blank page for write-ins.

NOTE: If the only payments included on a check are for bills submitted directly by the county office, you will receive only the Remittance Advice with the check. The updated "Request for Payment" printout and the Payment Rejection List are only produced when you mail in bills on the "Request for Payment" printout.

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**Start-Up Procedures for Previous Vendors  
416-01-25-10**

**(Revised 10/99 ML #2539)**

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Each vendor who participates with LIHEAP has been assigned a 7-digit vendor identification number. This ID number is carried over in our computer's vendor file each year unless we are notified that the business is sold or consolidated with another business.

Each fall, usually in late October, a blank "Request for Payment" printout is mailed to every vendor in the computer's vendor file.

To begin the Payment Process:

1. Write in the names, social security numbers, and bills for a few of your approved customers and mail the printout to the State LIHEAP Office for payment.
2. When you receive the check, you will also receive a new printout, which will list the names and social security numbers of all your approved LIHEAP customers on our files as of that date.

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**Start-Up Procedures for New Vendors 416-01-25-15  
(Revised 10/99 ML #2539)**

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If you have never participated with LIHEAP before, the initial "Request for Payment" printout will be sent to you when we first assign your vendor identification number. Once you send bills to us using this initial form, the process is the same as in #2 above (Section 01-25-10).

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### **Remittance Advice and Check 416-01-25-20** **(Revised 10/99 ML #2539)**

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Whether the bills are submitted by you on the "Request for Payment" printout or by the county social service office, payment for all bills will be compiled into one check.

A Remittance Advice will arrive with the check to tell you how much is being paid for each customer. Your vendor ID number appears in the upper right corner, followed by your name and address to the left. The list of payments for each customer is alphabetized by last name.

The Remittance Advice may be separated into three sections: Payments, Premium and Emergency Payments, and Energy Share Payments. Each section will have the payments listed alphabetically and will include the customer's name, social security number, customer account number (if one was submitted to LIHEAP by the County), delivery date or memo number (if applicable), reason code (if Premium or Emergency payment), the amount of the payment, product quantity (if applicable), and the LIHEAP share percentage. If the vendor is receiving a payment for more than one delivery date for the same customer, the customer's name will appear for each delivery date.

The following are reason codes which indicate why an adjustment is being made:

- A. Premium Payment Adjustment
- B. Heating Payment Adjustment
- C. Emergency Payment Adjustment
- G. Miscellaneous Payment (Heating Bills)
- I. Emergency Payment
- N. Premium Payment

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- The Payments section will include vendor-billed or County generated payments. Also included in this section will be 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 County generated payments or adjustments to the vendor for premium services or payments made under the 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 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 your check.

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### **Payment Rejection List 416-01-25-25 (Revised 10/99 ML #2539)**

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Attached to the Remittance Advice will be a list of any bills you submitted which were rejected for payment. The Payment Rejection List is arranged in the same manner as the Remittance Advice, except the "amount of payment" will be the amount of the bill you submitted, and a message will follow telling you why it was rejected.

In all cases, if you question the message you have received, CALL THE COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICE OFFICE FIRST, since they will know if changes are being made in the case which might explain the rejection. They will also have the ability to use their computer terminals to look at the computer's case file to identify and/or correct wrong information which might be causing problems. They can call the State Office if further help is needed.

Following are the messages you might see:

1. 'Case Not on File'...We identify the customer's case file in the computer by social security number. The social security number you submitted does not match with any social security number we have on file.
2. This is the only Rejection Message which cannot print out the customer's name for you. Since we do not keypunch the names from the "Request for Payment" printout, the name is taken from the customer's computer file, and in this situation we cannot find his file.



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If the number was correct, try to resubmit the bill one more time. If you receive the same message again, contact the county social service office for assistance.

2. 'Case Not Open'...The case has not been approved for payment in the computer file. Do not resubmit unless the county office tells you changes are being made.
3. 'Case Not Open as of (Mo/Da/Yr)...The case has been closed. The computer will only pay bills with delivery dates on or prior to the date given in the message.
4. 'Delivery Date Not Within Authorization Period'...The county office tells the computer which months are approved for payment of bills. If the delivery date you submit does not fall within those approved months, it will be rejected.

Check to be sure you did not make an error on the date (a common error is using the wrong year, especially during January), and resubmit the bill if this is the problem. If your Notice of Action from the county office shows that the date you submitted should be acceptable, ask the county office to check the computer file for errors.

5. 'Payment Made Previously for This Delivery Date'...A payment has already been made for this same delivery date. The computer will not accept another bill for this date.

DO NOT CHANGE THE DATE! If you originally received only a partial payment for the bill, or two services were provided on the same date, and you are trying to collect the balance, the State LIHEAP office can issue a supplemental check to you without changing the date. It is very important for audit purposes to use the actual date of delivery. See Section 01-40-27 for instructions on collecting the balance of the bill.

If this is not a partial bill and you have checked your records to be sure you have not already received payment, contact the county office for assistance.

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6. 'You are NOT the Authorized Supplier'...Your vendor ID number does not match up with the designated vendor ID number in the customer's computer file.

Ask the county office to check for a possible error on the computer file, if you have received a "Notice of Action" telling you that you are authorized to bill.

7. 'Type of fuel billed not authorized for payment'. . .The bill you submitted was coded for a type of fuel that was not included on the Notice of Action letter as the "authorized" fuel. Check the fuel type code you billed against the fuel authorized on the Notice. If you used an incorrect code, just resubmit the bill. If the code you used matches the fuel you delivered but does not match the fuel authorized, and you believe the fuel authorized is incorrect, contact the county social service board about the discrepancy.

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### **Request for Payment Printout 416-25-30 (Revised 8/00 ML #2622)**

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Once the payment process has begun as described in Section 01-25-05, you will receive a new printout each time you receive payment for bills you have submitted. Each new "Request for Payment" will give you a current list of LIHEAP customers whose computer files are approved for payment and who have designated you as their heating vendor. Two blank pages are attached to be used for additional billings.

The names of customers whose cases have been closed will not appear on the list.

PLEASE SAVE AT LEAST ONE BLANK PAGE in case you mislay the preprinted "Request for Payment" form. You can use the blank page to write in a customer's social security number and bills to start the automatic process again.

At the top center of the printout is the name of the form and the date on which it was printed.

Your vendor name, address, telephone number, and your vendor identification number will be printed in the upper left-hand corner of the form.

In the middle column will be the instructions for completing the billing section, which runs directly below the block of instructions.

On the printed page, your customers are listed in alphabetical order, with the social security number printed below each name. If the customer account number was submitted by the county office, it will be printed at the right side of the page across from the customer's

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name. LIHEAP percent share, months authorized for payment, and the customer co-payment percent share, are printed to the right of the account number.

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**Billing Deadline 416-01-25-35**

**(Revised 10/03 ML #2809)**

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Prior to the end of the current heating season, each vendor will receive written notification stating the deadline for submitting bills for fuel delivered during that heating season.

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**Billing Instructions 416-01-30**

**(Revised 8/00 ML #2622)**

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Since all payments made by LIHEAP must go through a computerized system, the bills must always be entered in the same way. For this reason, we must require that all bills be submitted on the "Request for Payment" printout. We cannot make payments from your invoices or billing statements.

Most heating vendors will be submitting all bills manually on the "Request for Payment" printout. A few large companies with compatible computer systems are now able to submit the "Request for Payment" via modem.

## **Billing by "Request for Payment" Printout 416-01-30-05**

**(Revised 10/02 ML #2809)**

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If you are using the blank page, such as for start-up procedures in fall, you need to fill in the name and social security number of the customer in the lines provided at the left of the page. Enter the name on the long line, and the social security number on the short line below the name. The name is not entered into the computer and is used only as an aid in identification if we have a problem with the bill. The social security number is the "key" into our computer. If the social security number is wrong or incomplete, we will not be able to find the case in order to pay the bill, or we may pay the bill from the wrong customer's account. Please be sure you are using the correct number.

NOTE: It is NOT necessary to fill in the customer's account number, on the blank page.

1. Delivery Date: For audit purposes, it is important that we are able to trace a payment back to the correct delivery date.
  - a. Enter the date the fuel **was delivered**.
  - b. DO NOT combine deliveries. Exception: If two deliveries were made the same day (for example, because the truck ran out of fuel and needed to go back to town to get more to fill the tank), put both deliveries on the same invoice ticket.
  - c. Do NOT write bills between the lines. We do not know which customer the bills belong to, and payments may be made out of the wrong account.

If you have more than two deliveries for the same customer, use the blank page to write in his name and social security number as many times as you need to bill additional deliveries.

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- d. For metered fuels (natural gas, electricity, metered propane) use the date the meter is read.
  - e. Use six digits in the date: 01-02-94 (Using a 'dash' (-) in the date seems to work better than the 'slash' (/), since the slash mark will sometimes be misread as a '1'.)
  - f. For customer-read meters when a "credit-back" discount is available for submetered heating, do NOT bill estimated readings. Although we prefer to get monthly bills, we would rather wait for a correct reading that includes the discount than to overpay on a non-discounted estimate and have to collect a refund later when the meter is read and actual cost is computed
2. Type of Fuel: Enter the code number of the type of fuel provided. Please note that we do not distinguish between fuel oil #1 and #2. Please use code 01 for all fuel oil.

If your customer has been approved for two types of fuel, such as propane and oil, you may use the same form for both deliveries.

Example:

<u>Delivery</u> <u>Date</u>	<u>Fuel</u> <u>Code</u>	<u>Invoice</u>	<u>Quantity</u> <u>of</u> <u>Product</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Cash</u> <u>Discount</u>
10-11-99	01	25091	294.3	\$250.16	Y
10-25-99	03	130984	234	\$149.76	Y

NOTE that the computer is programmed to accept only those fuel codes which were authorized on the Notice of Action. Others will be rejected.

Please note that connection or reconnection charges are Code 16. Special delivery charges (for after hours delivery) should be added into the fuel delivered cost, and the fuel



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code should be that of the fuel delivered. (Example: Fuel oil = 01, Propane = 03, etc.)

The types of fuel codes are listed on the "Request for Payment" printout.

3. Invoice #: Enter the invoice number of the delivery ticket, if any. If there are two invoices for the same delivery date which must be combined, use only one of the invoice numbers.
4. Quantity Delivered: This amount is required if the fuel code is 01-06. The quantity amount entered will vary based on the type of fuel. For example, coal may be in pounds or tons, fuel oil in gallons, electricity in kilowatts, or natural gas in cubic feet or decatherms.

Please note the quantity may include a fractional amount. For example, a fuel oil delivery could be entered as 213.64.

5. Cost of Delivery: Enter the cost of the delivery.  
Since the computer will pay the correct LIHEAP share of any bill you submit you need to submit the entire bill to LIHEAP even if part of it has been paid by the customer. However, if the customer has paid ALL of the bill, you should submit NONE of the bill to LIHEAP.

If a customer who heats with electricity has the heat submetered, you should still submit the entire residential metered bill, including general non-heating usage and the submetered heating usage as long as the bill was not estimated. (See 01-30-05 Item #1-f.) Do NOT bill non-metered charges such as yard lights or metered business usage if it is metered separately from the customer's residence.

6. Cash Discount: If the fuel code is fuel oil (01) or propane (03), indicate if the customer was given the cash discount price on the delivery by placing (y) in the Cash Discount column.

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7. Signature: Be sure to sign the form. Since this is your certification that the bills you are submitting are accurate, unsigned forms will be returned to you for completion.
8. Carbon Copy: The carbon copy is for your records. Please send ONLY the ORIGINAL copy to LIHEAP.
9. Mailing Address: Our mailing address is on the form on the left side at the bottom of the list of names.
10. When to Bill: You do NOT have to hold the billing form until all the customers have a bill to enter. Many vendors choose a specific time once or twice a month to submit accumulated bills. We encourage billing at least once per month or more often if your accounting system can do so.

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### **Billing by Modem ("Expedite") 416-01-30-10** **(Revised 8/00 ML #2622)**

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You first send the billing information to your data processing unit in the manner required by your company. Your data processing unit compiles the billing information for all the divisions in your company and sends it to LIHEAP by modem. (If you have any questions, you may call the Expedite Program Manager for LIHEAP at 701-328-2060.) The information we receive is the same as if you had sent it manually on the "Request for payment" printout for your customers. You will receive your check, a Remittance Advice, Rejection Notice, and an updated "Request for Payment" printout for your customers.

If your computer system does not accommodate picking up back bills on fuel assistance customers, you will need to manually submit them on the "Request for Payment" printout.

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**Billing Problems 416-01-40**

**(Revised 10/99 ML #2539)**

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This section will explain how to solve special billing problems.

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**Finance Charges 416-01-40-05**

**(Revised 10/99 ML #2539)**

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Once LIHEAP payments have begun and payment on the account is assured, there should be few occasions when interest charges are assessed on LIHEAP accounts, since the turnaround time during the busiest part of our year is 5-15 days between the date we receive a bill and the date payment is mailed. LIHEAP DOES NOT PAY INTEREST CHARGES.

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**Delivery Charges 416-01-40-10**

**(Revised 10/99 ML #2539)**

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Special delivery charges (after-hours delivery, hook up, etc.) may be billed to LIHEAP if you normally charge extra for these services. If you would not normally charge extra to other customers, you should not bill LIHEAP either.

Since these charges will normally accrue at the same time a fuel delivery is made, they can be combined with the amount of fuel and billed together.

LIHEAP would not consider a local hook up/delivery when all heating equipment is already in place, to be an "after-hours" service if the hook-up/delivery was ordered by 4:30 p.m. on a regular business day.

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**Propane Tank Rental/Hook-up 416-01-40-15**  
**(Revised 10/99 ML #2539)**

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Installment payments on a purchase contract may NOT be billed to LIHEAP.

Tank rental and hook-up charges may be billed to LIHEAP. If these charges take place on the same day as fuel is delivered, the tank rent and/or hook-up charges are billed separately using Code 08 for tank rent and Code 16 for hook-up charges along with the invoice numbers.

If a tank rental charge is assessed at some other time, use the date it was charged to the customer and use the "type of fuel" Code 08 and invoice number.

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**Reconnect Fees 416-01-40-20**  
**(Revised 10/99 ML #2539)**

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Non-refundable fees for reconnect services may be billed to LIHEAP.

Enter the date of reconnection as the delivery date. The "type of fuel" code should be 16.



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**Deposits 416-01-40-25**

**(Revised 10/99 ML #2539)**

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LIHEAP does not pay for deposits because they are usually refundable after good credit is established.

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**Duplicate Delivery Dates - Special Handling  
Required 416-01-40-27**

**(Revised 10/99 ML #2539)**

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A payment request can be made to correct an underpayment to a vendor for a previously billed delivery that has been paid by LIHEAP.

To correct the underpayment, DO NOT submit a bill for the balance owed or change the delivery date. The County Social Service office can request special handling so the correct balance owed can be issued to you. Contact the County office with the following information:

1. Copy of the invoice along with all of the billing information required for payment processing;
2. Name and social security number of customer;
3. Name of vendor to be paid. Include the LIHEAP Vendor ID number if you know it;
4. Brief explanation of the circumstances of the bill.

**Duplicate Delivery Dates - Direct Billing**  
**416-01-40-29**

**(Revised 10/99 ML #2539)**

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If the payment request is for tank rental, hook-up, or reconnect services that have the same delivery date as a fuel delivery being processed or already paid, the service delivery date can be entered with the appropriate fuel service code, reason code, invoice number (if any), and total bill. The vendor can submit the duplicate date request for these services on the "Request for Payment" form.

If the payment request is for a second meter reading or two fuel deliveries made on the same day, there must be an invoice number for each delivery. The vendor should enter each delivery separately on the "Request for Payment" form. The same delivery date should be used for each entry along with the fuel code, reason code, invoice number, product amount and total bill.

The computer will recognize that these requests are for separate payments by the unique invoice numbers.

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### **LIHEAP Benefit Changes 416-01-40-32** **(Revised 10/99 ML #2539)**

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LIHEAP in North Dakota does adjust the annual LIHEAP benefit when there are significant changes to the customer's circumstances, such as the type of heating fuel or size of the living unit. This allows us to be as accountable as possible to current needs. However, when the changes require a decrease in benefits, problems can result.

(Customers are not required to refund benefits received before the change in their circumstances took place as long as changes are reported promptly.)

To minimize adverse effects, LIHEAP provides a 5-day advance notice of a change to the LIHEAP benefit level unless the family has moved. In that case, a reasonable effort will be made to negotiate a fair payment and closing date.

Furthermore, changes to the LIHEAP share percentage are retained in our computer history along with an effective date of the change. The computer will be able to pay a bill using the correct LIHEAP share percentage in effect when the fuel was delivered.

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**Lost Billings Forms 416-01-40-35**

**(Revised 10/99 ML #2539)**

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If you lose the printed "Request for Payment" form, you may use a blank form and write in the social security numbers, names and bills of those customers who have bills. When you receive payment on these bills, you will receive a new printed form.

If there are too many customers to write in, you may write in only one or two, submit the form, and wait to bill for the rest until you receive a new printout.

If you do not have a blank "Request for Payment" to use, call the State LIHEAP office at (701) 328-2065 to request that a new printout be sent to you. A new form will be requested from the next scheduled computer run.

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**Lost Checks 416-01-40-40**  
**(Revised 10/99 ML #2539)**

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If you have misplaced a LIHEAP check or if it was omitted from the envelope containing your new printout, Remittance Advice, etc., please contact the State LIHEAP office immediately. If the original check has not been cancelled, the State Treasurer will send you an affidavit to sign certifying that you did not receive it and a stop payment will be requested for the original check. Once the affidavit has been returned, the State Treasurer will issue a replacement check to you. If the original check turns up during the process, DO NOT ATTEMPT TO CASH IT. Contact the State Office at 701-328-2065 for instructions.

The entire process may take up to a month, so it is best to report a missing check promptly.

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**Address/Business Changes 416-01-40-45**  
**(Revised 10/99 ML #2539)**

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An address correction form is included in this manual. Please let us know if the address we are using is not correct.

If you have more than one station which we have been treating as separate businesses and it would be easier for you to have all your LIHEAP customers appear under one vendor ID number on one "Request for Payment" printout, please use the form provided to notify us that you would like the vendor ID numbers consolidated.

If your customers presently appear on one printout and you prefer to have them separated for each substation, we can also assign a vendor ID number for each station.

## **Overpayments and Refunds 416-01-40-50**

**(Revised 10/99 ML #2539)**

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Occasionally, you may receive an overpayment on an account due to your error or ours. These overpayments must always be refunded to LIHEAP. Please include the customer's social security number, the delivery date of the erroneous payment, and the circumstances causing the overpayment. Refund checks should be made payable to: Department of Human Services.

If the customer has another unpaid bill, do NOT simply apply the amount of the overpayment from one bill to the unpaid balance of another delivery. Please contact the State LIHEAP Office. We may be able to adjust the customer's account to avoid the inconvenience of refunding the overpayment and billing the new delivery. However, we need to know about the overpayment so the customer file can be corrected.

Sometimes the customer sends a payment for a delivery at the same time you receive a payment from LIHEAP. You should:

1. Contact the customer to see if he wants his payment to remain on the account as a credit, refunded to him, or possibly applied to other bills not eligible for LIHEAP payment; and
2. Contact the State LIHEAP office regarding the overpayment and the customer's preference, since we may know of other circumstances in the case which would require a refund to LIHEAP instead (these would be unusual situations).



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**Unused Fuel Credits 416-01-40-50-05**  
**(Revised 10/99 ML #2539)**

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If the customer dies or moves and the fuel purchased by LIHEAP can reasonably be pumped out, the refund, less any pumping charges, must be returned to LIHEAP. The customer may NOT sell any fuel purchased by LIHEAP, nor receive a refund from the vendor for any fuel purchased by LIHEAP.

County staff are instructed to obtain an estimate from you of the cost to recover the fuel vs. its value before they request or authorize an attempt to recover fuel LIHEAP purchased.

## **Monthly Payment Plans 416-01-40-55** **(Revised 10/99 ML #2539)**

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We encourage our customers to take advantage of average monthly billing plans whenever they are available. However, even this amount may be too much to handle if it is computed strictly as an average of the annual consumption, since it does not take into consideration the amount of LIHEAP benefits. Many LIHEAP customers drop the average monthly payment plan when they receive LIHEAP, and consequently, they fall behind on their co-payment of the cost we don't cover.

Therefore, to keep customers budgeting year around for their energy needs we strongly encourage you to consider modifying your average monthly payment plan to factor in the LIHEAP benefit.

We recognize that it is very difficult to convince customers to use plans which will put credit on your books. If your company is able to offer incentives such as paying a small amount of interest on account credits or assuring them that excess credits will be refunded if the estimated annual consumption turns out to be too high, perhaps LIHEAP customers can be persuaded to try such a plan. In some cases, customers who frequently apply for Emergency Assistance because they did not budget for their share of energy costs, may be required to arrange such a plan with you as a condition of Emergency Assistance approval.

Since LIHEAP does not pay all of any bill and the customer always has at least a small share to pay, your monthly payment plans may help spread out the customer's cost into more manageable amounts.

If you decide to try this plan, please notify the county social service office(s) in your service area with the details of your particular

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payment plan. The county staff can help you encourage your customers to participate.

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**Emergency Assistance Program 416-01-50**

**Application Deadline - Emergency Assistance  
416-01-50-05**

**(Revised 10/99 ML #2539)**

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Applications for Emergency Assistance are taken from October 1 through September 30 of each fiscal year.

Eligibility for Emergency Assistance is not automatic. The decision to recommend approval or denial of an Emergency Assistance application is made by the county social service board.

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### **Eligibility - Emergency Assistance 416-01-50-10 (Revised 10/99 ML #2539)**

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Eligibility for Emergency Assistance is much stricter than it is for Heating Assistance. All liquid assets counted for LIHEAP are considered available (except \$2000 for each household member over age 60) and the customer cannot be eligible for assistance from any other community resource. His basic living expenses (defined as food, shelter, utilities, medical expenses, transportation costs, and child care for employment) must equal or be greater than his net monthly income.

In addition, the county social service board may consider:

1. What portion of any anticipated income can reasonably be committed by the customer to his energy needs.
2. The customer's effort and ability to pay these costs at the time they were incurred.
3. The customer's effort to negotiate and honor a reasonable payment plan with the supplier.
4. The energy supplier's collection efforts, cooperation in extending credit, and offering reasonable payment plans.
5. A reasonable expectation that such payment will alleviate the household's payment problem. The purpose of Emergency Assistance is to ensure uninterrupted service. Therefore, if the amount of the LIHEAP payment will not avert shut-off, Emergency Assistance will not be used solely to reduce the customer's debt, and the emergency application will be denied.

Although a customer may be found eligible for Emergency Assistance after a service has been provided, LIHEAP payment cannot be guaranteed unless the customer has prior authorization.

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### **Services Covered - Emergency Assistance 416-01-50-15**

**(Revised 10/99 ML #2539)**

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#### Supplemental Fuel

The Cost/Consumption Tables LIHEAP uses to calculate heating assistance benefits may not reflect heating costs accurately for a customer who has a large or poorly insulated home. If the customer is eligible for emergency services, additional heating benefits may be approved.

#### Minor Repairs or Consumer Goods

Occasionally, a heating plant will require minor repairs which can be covered by Emergency Assistance. If the heating plant is temporarily inoperable, Emergency Assistance can be used to provide temporary shelter or to rent space heaters until the furnace is repaired.

#### Utilities

Non-heating electrical utilities will NOT be paid by LIHEAP Emergency Assistance unless the household also uses electricity for primary heating.

Energy Share of North Dakota has assumed responsibility for electric utility emergencies when electricity is not used for primary heating.

#### Deposits

Deposits CANNOT be paid by LIHEAP.

Deposits do not reflect an actual consumption of energy. If a customer will be receiving LIHEAP benefits for upcoming bills, you and the customer will need to arrange for the customer to pay the

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required deposit himself, on an installment basis if necessary, during the time period that LIHEAP is paying his energy bills. The amount of the installments can be set so the deposit is on record by the time LIHEAP benefits are exhausted. This keeps the customer involved.

A referral to the county social service board may be helpful, if you and your customer are unable to reach a realistic payment plan. Although LIHEAP cannot pay deposits, the county may know of other Emergency Assistance or other community financial or counseling resources which will help the customer meet his budget and allow for payments on the deposit.

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**Amount of Emergency Benefits 416-01-50-20**  
**(Revised 10/99 ML #2539)**

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The amount of emergency benefits is very individualized depending upon the type of service needed and how much money the customer is able to pay himself. The county social service offices are limited in the amount of emergency expenditures they can authorize. If more benefits are needed to resolve the emergency, the county office must submit a written recommendation to the State LIHEAP Administrator for approval.



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### **Arrearages 416-01-50-25**

**(Revised 10/99 ML #2539)**

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LIHEAP defines "arrearages" as unpaid costs for home energy incurred (date of delivery or date meter is read) at least 90 days before the date of request for Emergency Assistance.

LIHEAP will NOT pay off the total amount of arrearages. The customer and vendor must negotiate a reasonable deferred monthly payment plan for the arrearages. If the customer is eligible for Emergency Assistance and unable to pay one or more of his deferred payments, LIHEAP Emergency funds may be used to assist the customer in paying part or all of his deferred payment until he is able to resume payments himself.

With the customer's permission, the county LIHEAP eligibility staff may assist the customer and vendor to arrive at a feasible payment plan based on information included in the customer's LIHEAP Emergency Assistance file.

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**Summary of Uncovered Costs 416-01-50-30**  
**(Revised 10/99 ML #2539)**

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Services NOT covered by LIHEAP Emergency Assistance include, but are not limited to:

1. Deposits;
2. Utility costs for water, sewer, garbage, telephone, security lights, business utility costs;
3. Also ineligible are non-heating costs for electricity, natural gas, or propane for lighting, stoves, hot water heating, etc. when these fuels are not also used by the household for heating;
4. Arrearages;
5. Costs incurred by persons who are not a member of the customer's household;
6. Costs incurred at a previous residence;
7. Any costs which if paid by LIHEAP will not maintain or restore energy to the household.

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**Emergency Assistance Payments 416-01-50-35**  
**(Revised 10/99 ML #2539)**

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Bills for approved emergency benefits must be sent to the county social service office for computer entry.

You cannot send these bills directly to the state LIHEAP office.

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**Forms Appendix 416-01-60**

**Pre-printed "Request for payment" Billing Form  
(Sample) 416-01-60-01**

**(Revised 10/02 ML #2809)**

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This form is available through the Department of Human Services.

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**Extra "Request for Payment Billing Form (Sample)  
416-01-60-03**

**(Revised 10/02 ML #2809)**

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Use for customers with more than 2 bills on newly approved customers not on pre-printed form.

This form is available through the Department of Human Services.

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**Remittance Advice (Sample) 416-01-60-05**  
**(Revised 10/02 ML #2809)**

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**Bill Rejection Notice (Sample) 416-01-60-07**  
**(Revised 10/02 ML #2809)**

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**Notice of Approval to "Authorized" Supplier  
(Sample) 416-01-60-09  
(Revised 10/02 ML #2809)**

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**Notice of Approval to "Secondary" Supplier  
(Sample) 416-01-60-11  
(Revised 10/02 ML #2809)**

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**Change Notice to Authorized Supplier (Sample)**  
**416-01-60-13**

**(Revised 10/02 ML #2539)**

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**Notice that Customer has Changed Supplier  
(Sample) 416-01-60-15  
(Revised 10/02 ML #2809)**

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**Notice that Customer's Case has been Closed**  
**(Sample) 416-01-60-17**  
**(Revised 10/02 ML #2809)**

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**Notice of Miscellaneous Payments (Sample)**  
**416-01-60-19**

**(Revised 10/02 ML #2809)**

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**Notice of Premium Payments 416-01-60-21**  
**(Revised 10/02 ML #2809)**

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**Notice of Emergency Assistance Payment (Sample)**  
**416-01-60-23**

**(Revised 10/02 ML #2809)**

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This form is available through the Department of Human Services.

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**Address Change/Request for Consolidation  
416-01-60-25**

**(Revised 10/02 ML #2809)**

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This form is available through the Department of Human Services.



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**LIHEAP Vendor's Billing Procedures Manual Order  
Form/Heating Assistance Poster Order Form  
416-01-60-27**

**(Revised 10/02 ML #2809)**

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This form is available through the Department of Human Services.