

The 2013-14 Home Energy Assistance Program season is approaching. Please review the following information:

HEAP income limits have increased approximately \$40 per household size, which will qualify more for assistance this season.

The Heating Equipment (furnace) Repair and Replacement component is suspended until further notice. We will issue a notification if component becomes available. You will also receive a separate email outlining other options for clients seeking furnace assistance.

New this season, clients may apply for Regular HEAP benefits electronically by visiting MyBenefits.NY.gov

Mail in, in person, phone, and outreach access will also be available in keeping with procedures of last season.

Regular HEAP:

The HEAP mail out of “Early Access” applications to Households **that received HEAP last season** and have a Senior Citizen, Disabled, or vulnerable member, will commence on 8/26/13 and last approximately four weeks. Please advise clients/constituents who receive an application to mail it in, or submit an application through www.MyBenefits.NY.gov

- , as soon as possible. HEAP funding is limited and allocated on a first come, first served basis.
- Please advise your clients/constituents:
 - The only documentation needed from those who receive the early access application is copies of earned income (last 4 weeks proof of wages -pay stubs).
 - Returning applicants are not required to submit proof of Social Security, SSD, workers comp, unemployment, utility bills, or proof of residency.
 - New applicants (who may apply when the season officially opens 11/18/13), are required to submit documents supporting all income.
- Clients who are receiving Temporary Assistance (TA) or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) may have the Regular HEAP benefit processed and credited automatically to their heating bill in December or January. These TA or SNAP households do not need to apply by mail, in person, or via MyBenefits for Regular HEAP assistance. These Households will not receive an early access application.
- **TA or SNAP clients wishing to verify an automatic HEAP benefit may call the HEAP hotline (858-7644) on or after October 15th.**
- **The HEAP application request line (858-1969) will begin accepting requests on October 15th from households who believe they should have received an early access application but did not, and for those new to the HEAP program. However, we can not mail out or process applications from new applicants until official program opening date.**
- The mail in application is for a Regular HEAP benefit only, for household’s main source of heat. We will begin notifying companies of approvals from early access applications when program opens. The approval may restore service, or will create a 30 day hold from termination of service, or will result in a delivery of fuel, depending on the circumstances.

The HEAP season is scheduled to open 11/18/13.

The Home Energy Assistance Program is federally funded and designed to assist eligible households with home heating costs and energy conservation. HEAP program components

include benefit assistance for energy bills, weatherization referral & energy conservation repairs, and cooling assistance (based on medical necessity; in summer months). We are looking forward to another productive season. Last season, Erie County HEAP processed nearly 120,000 benefit payments.

A series of HEAP orientation meetings will be held in early November, and you will receive an invitation via email. We will continue to provide your office with program updates and information as we get closer to program opening. Outreach HEAP sites across the County will commence in December.

Emergency HEAP:

Households that received a Regular HEAP benefit towards their main source of heat, and then subsequently receive shutoff notice, or have a low heating fuel supply, may apply for an Emergency HEAP benefit beginning 1/2/14.

Households w/ a shut off notice on a “heat-related” electric bill (main source of heat is not electric, but if electricity is shut off, heat will be affected) may apply for assistance with that bill when Emergency HEAP opens.

The opening date for Emergency HEAP is 1/2/14.

Clients are encouraged to call the HEAP Hotline (858-7644) or visit <http://www2.erie.gov/socialservices/> for program information and advice.

2013-14 HEAP Income Eligibility Guidelines:

<u>HH size</u>	<u>Gross Monthly Income limit at or below:</u>
1	\$2175
2	\$2844
3	\$3513
4	\$4182
5	\$4852
6	\$5521
7	\$5646
8	\$5772
9	\$5897
10	\$6023