



# FAMILY INDEPENDENCE ADMINISTRATION

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## POLICY BULLETIN #14-68-ELI

*(This Policy Bulletin Replaces PB #13-38-OPE, PB #03-86-ELI, and PB #03-54-ELI)*

### STANDARD UTILITY ALLOWANCE (SUA) ELIGIBILITY CHANGES

<b>Date:</b> June 25, 2014	<b>Subtopic(s):</b> SUA, SNAP Budgeting, Forms
<p> This procedure can now be accessed on the FIAweb.</p>	<p>The purpose of this policy bulletin is to inform Job Center and Non Cash Assistance (NCA) Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Center staff of the changes in the eligibility requirements to receive a heating/cooling Level I standard utility allowance (SUA) as mandated by the Agricultural Act of 2014. The changes apply to SNAP certification periods that begin on or after March 10, 2014.</p> <p>Section 4006 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (a.k.a. "The Farm Bill") limits the eligibility for a heating/cooling Level I SUA to those SNAP households that incur a heating or cooling expense that is separate and apart from the household's rent or mortgage or for households that have received Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) payments greater than \$20 in the current month or in the immediately preceding 12 months.</p> <p>SNAP households that reside in a HEAP eligible shelter living situation will no longer automatically qualify for a heating/cooling Level I SUA based solely upon reasonable anticipation that the household will receive a HEAP benefit within the next 12 months. The reasonable anticipation rule that previously allowed HEAP eligible SNAP households that incurred a shelter expense to be automatically credited with a heating/cooling Level I SUA has been eliminated.</p> <p>With the elimination of the HEAP benefit anticipation rule, a determination of whether a household incurred a separate expense for heating/cooling or received a HEAP payment greater than \$20 in the current month or in the immediately preceding 12 months must now be done. This determination must be made at application, recertification, and whenever a SNAP household reports a change in address or shelter expenses.</p>

#### HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS PROCEDURE?

Call 718-557-1313 then press 3 at the prompt followed by 1 or send an e-mail to *FIA Call Center Fax* or fax to: (917) 639-0298

To ensure that HEAP eligible SNAP households will have received HEAP payments of greater than \$20 in the current month or the immediate preceding 12 months, the Office of Temporary Disability and Assistance (OTDA) issued \$20 HEAP supplements to active SNAP households that initially received a \$1 HEAP payment and issued \$10 HEAP supplements to active SNAP households that initially received a \$20 or \$25 HEAP benefit for the 2013-14 HEAP season. The HEAP supplement qualifies these SNAP households for the heating/cooling Level I SUA.

The mass authorization of HEAP supplements were issued by OTDA beginning on March 14, 2014, and continued until all eligible households were issued the HEAP supplement.

HEAP payments can be identified in the Welfare Management System (WMS) benefit issuance screen by the following special grant codes:

- **80:** Emergency HEAP payment;
- **82:** Direct HEAP payment to LIPA (currently PSEG);
- **84:** NPA HEAP payment;
- **90:** Direct HEAP payment to Con Ed; and
- **91:** Direct HEAP payment to National Grid

There are three SUA levels:

#### Level I SUA

Revised eligibility factors for a Level 1 SUA.

The heating/cooling Level I SUA covers heating and air conditioning, utilities and telephone costs. It is available to households:

- that own their own home;
- that are regularly billed separately from their rent for heating and/or air conditioning (including residents of public or subsidized housing that incur a surcharge for the cost of air conditioning);
- that pay separately for electricity and owns and operates an air conditioner; or
- that have received HEAP payments greater than \$20 in the current month or in the immediately preceding 12 months.

Since some source of home heating is required for all homeowners in New York, if the SNAP household owns their own home, they are assumed to incur separate heating costs. Therefore, they are eligible for the heating/cooling Level I SUA.

Information provided by and attested to by the household during the application or recertification process regarding the SNAP household's home ownership or incurrence of a separate expense for heating or air conditioning is acceptable verification to qualify the household for a heating/cooling Level I SUA unless the information is questionable. This includes information provided on a signed application or recertification application or obtained during the application or recertification interview.

HEAP payments are intended to cover the expenses of the entire dwelling unit. Therefore, all SNAP households that are in shared living arrangements (e.g. secondary tenants residing in the same dwelling unit as the primary tenant) are entitled to a heating/cooling Level I SUA if HEAP payments greater than \$20 in the current month or in the preceding 12 months are made to or on behalf of a member of another household residing in the same dwelling unit.

Even if the household has moved from the dwelling where they lived when the HEAP benefit was issued, if the household's current residence is in a HEAP eligible shelter type, they remain eligible for the heating/cooling Level I SUA.

SNAP households that were eligible for a heating/cooling Level I SUA at the time of the most recent application or recertification because they received HEAP payments greater than \$20, retain eligibility for the heating/cooling Level I SUA until the next recertification as long as they continue to reside in a HEAP eligible shelter type.

Supplemental heating

**Note:** Utility costs for the operation of a space heater, electric blanket, heat lamp, cooking stove and related items when used as a supplemental heating source do not qualify a household for the heating/cooling Level I SUA. In addition, the cost of an electric blower for an oil or gas furnace does not qualify a household for the heating/cooling Level I SUA.

To issue a heating/cooling Level I SUA to households, the Job Opportunity Specialist (JOS)/Worker must enter an "X" in the **FSUA:IND** field or make a numeric entry in the **TYPE** (Fuel Type) field on the **NSBL02** screen of the WMS budget if the household incurs a fuel for heating expense.

A washer or dryer expense (surcharge) can qualify for Level II SUA

### Level II SUA

The Level II SUA includes all utility costs (other than heating or air conditioning) and telephone expenses. It includes:

- electricity;
- cooking fuel;
- sewage;
- trash collection;
- water fees;
- fuel for heating water; and
- propane gas and/or the rental fee for a propane tank.

Households that do not meet the criteria for a heating/cooling Level I SUA and are billed separately for at least one of these utilities (other than telephone) are eligible for a Level II SUA.

Information provided by and attested to by the household during the application or recertification process regarding the SNAP household's incurrence of a separate expense for any of the utility costs listed above is acceptable verification to qualify the household for a Level II SUA unless the information is questionable.

To issue a Level II SUA, the JOS/Worker must enter an "X" in the **FSUT:IND** field on the **NSBL02** screen of the WMS budget.

### Level III SUA

The Level III SUA covers the cost of basic service plus tax for one telephone. WMS will automatically provide a Level III SUA for all Shelter Type Codes that do not meet the criteria for a Level I or II SUA even if they do not have a telephone:

The Shelter Type Codes below are only eligible for a Level III SUA:

- **06** Hotel/Motel Temporary
- **11** Room Only
- **13** Residential Programs for Victims of Domestic Violence (Less Than 3 Meals Per Day)
- **14** Residential Programs for Victims of Domestic Violence (3 Meals Per Day)
- **33** Homeless Shelter - Tier I or Tier II (Less Than 3 Meals Per Day)
- **34** Homeless Shelter - Tier II (3 Meals Per Day)
- **35** Homeless Shelter - Non Tier I Non Tier II

No SUA

The following shelter types are not eligible for any SUA level:

- **04** Room and Board
- **19** Approved Medical Facilities – Non Hospital
- **23** Undomiciled

Shelter Type Codes **04** and **19** are used on CA-only budgets where SUA eligibility is not applicable. Shelter Type Code **23** (undomicilled) cases are budgeted with a standard homeless shelter deduction.

WMS Update

Effective June 21, 2014 with software release 14.2, WMS has been programmed to eliminate the automatic authorization of a heating/cooling Level I SUA based on residing in a HEAP eligible dwelling and incurring a shelter expense.

POS Update  
See [PB #14-66-SYS](#) for POS release notes version 18.2 and [PB #14-67-SYS](#) for SNAP POS release notes version 8.2.

POS has also been programmed to reflect the changes in SUA eligibility and will require Job Opportunity Specialists (JOS)/Workers to determine a households eligibility for a heating/cooling Level I SUA based on the household incurring a separate heating/cooling expense or having received HEAP payments greater than \$20 in the current month or in the immediately preceding 12 months.

POS has updated the question regarding HEAP as follows:

Old question:

*“Did the household receive, or does it anticipate receiving HEAP this year?”*

New question

*“Did the household receive a HEAP payment totaling greater than \$20 in the current month or in the immediately preceding 12 months?”*

POS will do a check of benefit issuance in WMS to determine if a household has received HEAP payments greater than \$20 in the current month or in the immediately preceding 12 months.

Revised **W-205HH**.

Staff should use the Shelter Type Codes/Standard Utility Allowance (SUA) Levels Desk Guide (**W-205HH**) for help in determining the correct SUA level. The **W-205HH** has been revised to reflect the changes in the eligibility to receive a heating/cooling Level I SUA.

A sample of the revised **W-205HH** is attached.

Job Center Directors and NCA SNAP Center Directors must ensure that all previous versions of Form **W-205HH** are removed from circulation and recycled.

*Effective Immediately*

**References:**


GIS 14 TA/DC011  
 GIS 14 TA/DC023  
 ABEL Transmittal 14-2  
 Budgeting Manual Public Assistance Program, pages A-1 – A-12  
 Budgeting Manual NPA SNAP (FS) Program, pages A-1 – A-12  
 WMS/HEAP Coordinator Letter (March 12, 2014)  
 USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – Section 4006  
 Agricultural Act of 2014 – Implementing Memo (March 5, 2014)  
 GIS 05 TA/DC008  
 92 ADM-47  
 00 INF-18

**Related Items:**

[PB #14-66-SYS](#) POS Release Notes Version 18.2  
[PB #14-67-SYS](#) SNAP POS Release Notes Version 8.2

**Attachment:**

**W-205HH** Shelter Type Codes/Standard Utility Allowance  
 (SUA) Levels Desk Guide (Rev. 6/25/14)

 Please use Print on Demand to obtain copies of forms.

### Shelter Type Codes/Standard Utility Allowance (SUA) Levels Desk Guide

Shelter Type Code	Description	Does the household incur an air conditioning expense?  (1)	Does the household pay separately for heat?  (2)	Has the household received HEAP payments greater than \$20 in the current month or in the past 12 months?  (3)	Does the household pay separately for utilities?  (4)
01	Unfurnished Apartment or Room	<p style="font-size: 2em; color: blue; opacity: 0.5;">SAMPLE</p> <p>If Yes, give Level I SUA – Enter an X in the FSUA:IND field.</p> <p>If No, go to column 2.</p>	<p>If Yes, give Level I SUA – Enter an X in the FSUA:IND field or a numeric Heat Type code.</p> <p>If No, go to column 3.</p>	<p>If Yes, give Level I SUA – Enter an X in the FSUA:IND field. See reminders below.</p> <p>If No, the household is not eligible for Level I SUA; go to column 4.</p>	<p>If Yes, give Level II SUA – Enter an X in the FSUT:IND field. See reminders below.</p> <p>If No, Level III SUA will be granted automatically.</p>
02	NYCHA Apartment – Utilities Included				
03	Own Home (Includes Trailer)				
24	NYCHA Apartment – Utilities Not Included				
25	Rented Private Home				
26	Furnished Apartment				
38	Subsidized Housing – Deep Subsidy – Voucher Program/Project Based Section 8				
39	Subsidized Housing – Shallow Subsidy – Section 236/Section 202				
40	Section 8 Voucher – 30% Limit				
43	Congregate Care Level 2 – OMH/OMRDD Supervised/Supportive Apartments				
44	Supportive/Specialized Housing				

**Reminders:**

- SNAP households that are in shared living arrangements (e.g. secondary tenants residing in the same dwelling unit as the primary tenant) are entitled to a heating/cooling Level 1 SUA if HEAP payments greater than \$20 in the current month or in the past 12 months are made to or on behalf of another SNAP or non SNAP household residing in the same dwelling unit.
- If household incurs a nonheating/cooling expense such as washer/dryer or freezer and is not eligible for Level I SUA, give Level II SUA.

### Shelter Type Codes/Standard Utility Allowance (SUA) Levels Desk Guide

Shelter Type Code	Description	Has the household received HEAP payments greater than \$20 in the current month or in the past 12 months?	
15	Congregate Care Level 1 (NYC/Nassau/Suffolk/Westchester/Rockland)	<p style="text-align: center;">If Yes, give Level 1 SUA – Enter an <b>X</b> in the <b>FSUA:IND</b> field.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">If No, Level III SUA will be granted automatically.</p>	
16	Congregate Care Level 2 – State Certified (NYC/Nassau/Suffolk/Westchester/Rockland)		
17	Congregate Care Level 2 – State Operated		
27	Residential Treatment Facility – Non-Level 2		
28	Congregate Care Level 1 – (Rest of the State)		
29	Congregate Care Level 2 – State Certified – (Rest of the State)		
30	Scatter Site Homeless Housing Non-Tier I/Non-Tier II (Less Than 3 Meals Per Day)		
31	Residential Treatment Facility – Level 2 Facility– (NYC, Nassau, Suffolk, Westchester, and Rockland)		
32	Residential Treatment Facility – Level 2 Facility– (Rest of the State)		
42	Congregate Care Level 3 – Adult Homes and DOH Enriched Housing		
06	Hotel/Motel Temporary		<p style="text-align: center;">These shelter types will automatically receive a Level III SUA.</p>
11	Room Only		
13	Residential Programs For Victims Of Domestic Violence (Less Than 3 Meals Per Day)		
14	Residential Programs For Victims Of Domestic Violence (3 Meals Per Day)		
33	Homeless Shelter – Tier I or Tier II (Less Than 3 Meals Per Day)		
34	Homeless Shelter – Tier II (3 Meals Per Day)		
35	Homeless Shelter – Non-Tier I/Non-Tier II		

**Reminders:**

- Shelter Type codes **04** and **19** are used on CA only budgets in which SUA eligibility is not applicable.
- Shelter Type code **23** cases are budgeted with a standard homeless shelter deduction and are not eligible for any SUA.