



OFFICE OF POLICY, PROCEDURES, AND TRAINING

POLICY BULLETIN # 24-16-ELI

HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (HEAP) 2023-2024 COOLING ASSISTANCE COMPONENT OPENING DATE

Date: April 17, 2024	Subtopic(s): HEAP
	<p>The purpose of this policy bulletin is to inform Benefits Access Center (BAC), Non-Cash Assistance (NCA) Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Center, HIV/AIDS Services Administration (HASA) Center, and Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) staff that the 2023-2024 Cooling Assistance Component (CAC) of HEAP opened on Monday, April 15, 2024, and to inform staff of form changes for the 2023-2024 CAC. This policy bulletin is informational for all other staff.</p> <p>Applications for the 2023-2024 CAC must be accepted starting on Monday, April 15, 2024. Benefits will be provided on a first come, first served basis to eligible applicants through close of business (COB) on Friday, August 30, 2024 or until funding allocated to this component is exhausted.</p> <p>Note: Applications include online applications submitted via ACCESS HRA. The application was turned on and made available on April 15, 2024.</p> <p>Staff will be notified if there are any further changes to the benefits closing dates.</p> <p>The Home Energy Assistance Program Cooling Assistance Request for Benefit (LDSS-4992) form was updated for use with the 2023-2024 CAC.</p> <p>The revised form includes the following changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “To be completed by Certifying Agency only” moved to the top of the form • Removed “Applicant Information” language • Added “alternate phone number” • Added space to list the name of the person with medical condition

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- Added question: “Does the household have working central air conditioning?”
- Changed “Agency Use Section” to “Agency Review”
- Added boxes for documentation of medical condition
- Added space to notate medical condition and documentation hardship

The Home Energy Assistance Program Cooling Assistance Services Invoice (**LDSS-5044**) is used by both staff and the vendor. Vendors must submit a completed **LDSS-5044** with client signature for a payment to be authorized. Payments to vendors must not exceed \$800 for a fan, window unit, or portable air conditioner, or \$1,000 for an existing wall sleeve unit, once in a 5-year period to be determined from the installation date.

Both forms are available on LDSS E-Forms for ordering and/or downloading.

Applications for the 2023-2024 CAC must be processed in accordance with instructions found in [23-LCM-18](#), [New York State HEAP Manual](#) and [PD #21-01-ELI](#).

See [New York State HEAP Manual](#) for HEAP eligibility criteria

As a reminder, CAC benefits are available to HEAP eligible households containing at least one individual with a documented medical condition that is exacerbated by extreme heat and verified in writing by a physician, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner. Households that are unable to obtain required documentation within the requested timeframe may attest to having a medical condition that is exacerbated by extreme heat and that they are experiencing a hardship in obtaining medical documentation. Households containing a vulnerable member based on their age (elderly age 60 years or older, or young children under age six [6]) that meet all other component eligibility criteria may receive a CAC benefit without a corresponding medical need. No additional cash benefits are available for CAC. More information on CAC eligibility is included in **Attachment A**.

Additionally, the applicant household must not have a working air conditioner newer than five years old or an operational central air system, as reported by the applicant and verified by the vendor. Households whose central air system is inoperable may be eligible for CAC if all other eligibility criteria are met. Also, the applicant household must not have received a HEAP-funded air conditioner within the past five years, as outlined on page 2 and 3 of **Attachment A**.

Note: As the question on the **LDSS-4992** regarding central air conditioning is new, staff must ensure that they are capturing a response during the application/interview process.

If applicants/participants have questions about their HEAP Cooling Assistance application, they must be advised to call the HRA One Number at 718-557-1399 or 311 for assistance.

Staff will be notified if there are any additional program changes.

Reporting

As has been done in years past, HEAP staff must submit the number of HEAP CAC applications weekly beginning on April 19, 2024, to the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) HEAP bureau.

Effective Immediately

References:

[23-LCM-18](#)

[GIS 24DC014](#)

[New York State HEAP Manual](#)

Related Items:

[PD #17-27-ELI](#)

[PD #21-01-ELI](#)

Attachments:

Attachment A NYS Home Energy Assistance Program
Cooling Assistance Component Guide for NYC
Staff

New York State (NYS) Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) Cooling Assistance Component Guide for New York City Staff

A. Benefit Component

The Cooling Assistance Component (CAC) benefit is available to eligible households containing at least one individual with a documented medical condition that is exacerbated by extreme heat and verified in writing by a physician, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner. Households containing a vulnerable member based on their age (60 years or older, or children under age 6) that meet all other component eligibility criteria may receive a CAC benefit without a corresponding medical need. No additional cash benefits are available for CAC.

B. Application Requirements

Applicant households that received a Regular HEAP benefit greater than \$21 during the current program year, received a benefit equal to \$21 during the current program year and reside in government subsidized housing with heat included in their shelter costs, or are currently in receipt of ongoing Cash Assistance (CA) or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, **AND** who have not moved since receiving a current program year Regular HEAP benefit, may apply by completing, dating and submitting to the local social services district(s) the HEAP Cooling Assistance Request for Benefit (**LDSS- 4992**).

Government subsidized housing includes upstate Welfare Management System (WMS) and New York City (NYC) equivalent shelter codes 02 (Rent Public), 38 (Subsidized Housing Non-Certificate), 40 (Section 8 Voucher 30% Limit), 96 (SSI High Shelter), and 97 (SSI Low Shelter). Applicants who reside in group homes or congregate care shelter types, which qualifies them for a \$21 Regular benefit, are not eligible for CAC.

If only the **LDSS-4992** needs to be completed, the applicant can complete this process by telephone or in person at the certifying agency.

Applicant households for which the preceding does not apply, must complete both the HEAP Application ([LDSS-3421](#)) **and** the Cooling Assistance Request for Benefit (**LDSS-4992**). Districts must check the box for “Cooling” in the Agency Use section on the first page of the HEAP Application ([LDSS-3421](#)) upon receipt.

Residents of NYC may apply online for HEAP CAC through [ACCESS HRA](#).

- An authorized representative or an individual with power of attorney may apply on behalf of the applicant. The applicant must designate an Authorized Representative by completing Section 8: Authorized Representative on the HEAP Application ([LDSS-3421](#)), or with a dated and signed statement from the applicant authorizing the individual to request a Cooling Assistance benefit on their behalf.
- A designated authorized representative may sign the HEAP Application ([LDSS-3421](#)) on the applicant’s behalf if the applicant is unable to sign the application due to a physical

limitation or temporary absence. These circumstances must be notated and retained in the case record. Otherwise, the HEAP application ([LDSS-3421](#)) must be signed by the applicant.

- Districts must make reasonable accommodations for homebound applicants to apply for any HEAP benefit. This may include home visits.
- Applicants for the HEAP CAC who received a Regular HEAP benefit equal to \$21 and reside in government subsidized housing with heat included in their shelter costs or received a Regular benefit greater than \$21 during the current program year are not required to have an interview.
- Applicants for the HEAP CAC who did not receive a current program year Regular HEAP benefit must have an eligibility interview conducted either in person or by telephone.
- Applicants for the HEAP CAC that reside in New York City, can apply online through [ACCESS HRA](#).
- Applicants who are denied a HEAP CAC benefit may reapply for the HEAP CAC benefit.
- Applications must be date-stamped upon receipt and an eligibility decision must be made.

C. Eligibility Requirements

Applicants must meet all HEAP eligibility criteria to be eligible for the HEAP CAC.

In addition to basic eligibility, all applicants for the CAC must meet the following criteria:

- The applicant must currently reside in an eligible living situation which would qualify them to receive a Regular HEAP benefit:
 - Received a HEAP benefit for the current program year equal to \$21 and reside in government subsidized housing with heat included in their shelter costs or,
 - Received a HEAP benefit greater than \$21 for the current program year.
- The applicant or a household member must have a documented medical condition that is exacerbated by extreme heat.
 - The medical documentation must be issued in writing and signed by a physician, physician assistant, or a nurse practitioner and clearly state the applicant's medical condition.
 - The document must be dated within the previous 12 months from the month of application.

Attachment A

- Documentation older than 12 months may be used if it provides sufficient information to indicating that the applicant's medical condition is considered chronic; e.g., Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD).
- If the applicant household is having difficulty in obtaining medical documentation for at least one household member, the district may allow the applicant to attest that a household member has a medical condition and is experiencing hardship in obtaining medical documentation. The attestation may be verbal and must be notated on the HEAP Cooling Assistance Request for Benefit (**LDSS-4992**) (Rev 1/24) in the Agency Review Section along with the date of attestation.
- Households containing a vulnerable member based on age (60 years or older, or children under age 6) that meet all other component eligibility criteria may receive a cooling assistance benefit without a corresponding medical need.
- The applicant household must not have a working air conditioner newer than five years old, or an operational central air system as reported by the applicant during completion of the Cooling Assistance Request for Benefit (**LDSS-4992**). Households with a working central air system are not eligible for CAC. Households whose central air system is inoperable may be eligible for CAC if all other eligibility criteria are met.
- The applicant household must not have received a HEAP funded air conditioner within the past five years. The five-year time frame will be determined by calculating 60 months between the installation date of the applicant's last HEAP funded air conditioner to the date of the current year CAC application. If the installation date is unknown, the application date should be used and notated in the case record.
- Applicant households that received a current program year Regular HEAP benefit in an amount less than or equal to \$21 and do not reside in government subsidized housing with heat included in their shelter costs are not eligible for the HEAP CAC. However, such applicants who move into an eligible living situation may apply for this component using both the HEAP Application ([LDSS-3421](#)) and the HEAP Cooling Assistance Request for Benefit (**LDSS-4992**).

See the [HEAP Manual](#), Chapter 8 – Basic Eligibility

See the [HEAP Manual](#), Chapter 11 – Cooling Assistance Component Eligibility Criteria.

D. Documentation

Applicants must meet all HEAP documentation requirements to be eligible for the CAC.

- Applicants who apply using only the HEAP Cooling Assistance Request for Benefit (**LDSS-4992**) do not need to provide additional income documentation.
- Applicants who request a benefit using both the HEAP Application ([LDSS-3421](#)) and the HEAP Cooling Assistance Request for Benefit (**LDSS-4992**) must provide documentation of residence, identity for each household member, documentation of household income and a valid Social Security Number for each household member who is assigned one.

- Districts must use any permanent documentation available in the applicant's case record or within the agency.
- Applicants whose request for benefit is pending to provide required documentation to determine eligibility must be provided the Documentation Requirements (**LDSS-2642**) or the New York City Documentation Requirements equivalent (**HRA-208**) form. A copy must be retained in the case record.
- Districts may pend an applicant's benefit request for a maximum of 10 business days for documentation. If the applicant fails to provide the requested documentation by the due date, the benefit request must be denied in the HEAP system using code 10 (Your request for HEAP Cooling benefits is not approved. This is because you failed to provide the following information: _____)

E. Scope of Benefits and Specifications

CAC benefits are provided on a first come, first served basis to eligible applicants. The following is a list of benefit limits, equipment and services that are provided through the HEAP CAC.

- Benefits are not to exceed \$800 for a fan, window unit, or portable air conditioner, and up to \$1,000 per household for an existing wall sleeve unit once in a 5-year period. This includes the cost of the air conditioner or fan, administrative costs, labor, program support, materials, removal of the old unit and minor repairs essential for proper and safe installation. Funds may not be used for any other purpose.
- Vendors are required to charge the same rate for services performed for households not in receipt of HEAP.
- Vendors must notify the authorizing district if cooling assistance services cannot be scheduled and completed within three weeks of notification.
- Only one HEAP funded air conditioner or fan may be provided per eligible dwelling.
- Vendors are required to determine the most appropriate living space for the creation of a cooling room.
- Vendors are required to calculate the British Thermal Units (BTUs) of the cooling room to ensure the purchase of an appropriately sized air conditioner.
- In circumstances where an air conditioner cannot be safely installed, the vendor must provide a fan, at a reasonable cost, for the established cooling room.
- It is the responsibility of the client or dwelling owner to maintain the air conditioner. This includes removing, covering, storing, and reinstalling the unit.
- Vendors are required to register all warranties with the manufacturer and provide a copy of the completed warranty and the manufacturer's owner's manual to clients.

- With client consent, vendors are required to remove and properly dispose of old air conditioning units.
- Recipients of the HEAP CAC should be directed to contact the vendor directly for any issues that arise with the unit after installation.

If an eligible applicant received a HEAP funded fan when an air conditioner could not be safely installed, and subsequently moves into a dwelling that will support an air conditioner, one may be provided using HEAP funds. A new application is required.

F. Processing Timeframes and Client Notification

Districts must determine an applicant's eligibility for the HEAP CAC within 30 business days of receipt of the completed HEAP Application ([LDSS-3421](#)) and/or the HEAP Cooling Assistance Request for Benefit (**LDSS-4992**). Requests for HEAP CAC benefits may be pended for missing or additional documentation for up to 10 business days if necessary. If the applicant fails to provide the requested documentation by the due date, the benefit request must be denied using code 10 in the HEAP system.

Applicants approved for HEAP CAC must be provided with a written notice of the eligibility decision no later than 30 business days from the date of receipt of the final vendor invoice for payment. Applicants denied for HEAP CAC must be provided a notice of the eligibility decision no later than 30 days from the date of application.

Manual notices must be used for the approval or denial of the CAC benefit when CNS is not available. Districts must provide recipients with a completed Home Energy Assistance Program Notice of Eligibility Decision – Approval (**LDSS-3494A**) or the New York City Approval equivalent (**HRA-208a**), or completed Home Energy Assistance Program Notice of Eligibility Decision – Denial (**LDSS-3494B**) or the New York City Denial equivalent (**HRA-208b**) when using a manual notice for the CAC benefit.

G. Vendor Participation

All vendors providing CAC services must have a signed HEAP Cooling Assistance Services Vendor Agreement on file with the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) HEAP Bureau. This legally binding document provides both OTDA and participating vendors with assurances that vendors understand the scope of the work to be performed. In addition, it requires participating vendors to abide by the provisions set forth in the document. Vendors must be directed to contact the OTDA HEAP Bureau at: (518) 473-0332 or 1-866-270-HEAP (4327) to become a provider of CAC services.

Each district can find a list of all HEAP CAC participating vendors in the HEAP Participating Vendor list found on the OTDA website. This list is updated daily, and districts must confirm vendor participation using this list prior to the applicant selecting a vendor and authorizing a CAC benefit.

H. Cooling Assistance Installation Scheduling

Once notified by the district of an approved applicant, HEAP CAC vendors are responsible for contacting eligible households to schedule installation. If a vendor cannot schedule an installation with the household within 10 business days of the referral, the vendor must notify the district. The district must then send the household a Documentation Requirements (**LDSS-2642**) or the New York City Documentation Requirements equivalent (**HRA-208**) form with the “Other” box checked and the following language, “(Vendor name) tried to contact you to schedule installation of cooling equipment, but was unsuccessful. Please contact us by (date) to resolve.”

If the client does not contact the district within the pending period to arrange installation, the case must be denied using denial reason code 150 Workers should cite “you failed to make arrangements for installation of your cooling equipment by the due date of (date)”.

I. HEAP Cooling Assistance Services Invoice

The HEAP Cooling Assistance Services Invoice form, (**LDSS-5044**) is used by both the district and the vendor.

Districts use this form to notify a vendor that an applicant is approved for services. Districts must complete the following sections:

- Customer contact section, which is used to communicate approved applicant information to the vendor; and,
- Agency Use Section, which is used to record the Application Date, Date Approved, Invoice Date Received and date of Collateral Contact with Client to confirm the satisfactory installation and operation of the cooling equipment upon job completion.

To receive payment, vendors must return the completed form to the districts, with the client’s signature. The sections to be completed by the vendor are:

- Services Provided checklist, used to identify services performed by the vendor;
- Invoice section, used to itemize the labor and parts including the model and serial number of the unit installed, the BTUs of the unit, square footage of the cooling room, work completion date, registration/warranty and technician signature; and,
- The Customer Section with client signature to attest that services have been satisfactorily completed.

J. Payment and Authorizations

- Vendors must submit a completed, signed and dated HEAP Cooling Assistance Services Invoice (**LDSS-5044**) to the district for a payment to be authorized within 30 business days of the completion of the cooling assistance services but no later than September 30th of the program year, or payments will not be made.

Attachment A

- Payments to vendors must not exceed \$800 for a window, portable air conditioner, or fan and \$1,000 for an existing wall sleeve unit, once in a 5-year period as determined from the date of installation.