

GENERAL INFORMATION SYSTEM
DIVISION: Employment and Transitional Supports

September 5, 2006

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TO: Commissioners; TA Directors; HEAP Directors

FROM: Russell Sykes, Deputy Commissioner, Division of Employment and Transitional Supports

SUBJECT: Use of the "Financial Statement" (LDSS-3596) for Utility Arrearage Assistance and the Updated 2006-07 Food/Non-Food Guidelines

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2006 (Guidelines)

CONTACT PERSON: Temporary Assistance Bureau at 1-800-343-8859; extension 4-9344

The purpose of this GIS message is to reiterate TA policy on the use of the "Financial Statement" (LDSS-3596) and provide updated information on the Food/Non-Food Expenses used on the LDSS-3596.

The LDSS-3596 assesses an applicant's/recipient's financial situation to determine if he/she is required to attempt to negotiate a Deferred Payment Agreement (DPA) with his/her utility company in lieu of a district issuing a utility arrears payment under SSL § 131-s. A positive cash flow on a LDSS-3596 is **not** a basis for denial of assistance with the utility related emergency under SSL § 131-s, but is an indication that an applicant/recipient may be eligible to negotiate and enter into alternative payment arrangements, a DPA, with his/her utility company. A positive cash flow requires a referral from the district that directs the applicant/recipient to his/her utility company to attempt negotiation of a DPA.

Although an applicant/recipient may have a positive cash flow, a utility company may refuse to enter into a DPA with the customer. A refusal by a utility company to enter into a DPA agreement with a customer is not a basis for district denial of assistance with the utility related emergency under SSL § 131-s. However, a refusal on the part of any applicant/recipient with a positive cash flow to first attempt negotiation of a DPA is a basis for denial of emergency assistance under SSL § 131-s.

The LDSS-3596 allows for entry of a deduction from gross income for Food/Non-Food monthly expenses. Guidelines for these expenses are established annually by the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance and are based on the Food Stamp Program's Thrifty Food Plan that is also updated annually. Districts must begin using the updated Food/Non-Food guidelines beginning October 1, 2006. Policy regarding the use of the LDSS-3596 is currently in effect.

The amount of the Food/Non-Food deduction allowed on the LDSS-3596 for this expense is based on the actual monthly expenses of the household up to the maximum amounts listed below. These are only guidelines. Households may exceed these maximum amounts only under special circumstances such as special dietary needs or medical conditions. These cases should be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine if a higher deduction is appropriate.

Household Size	Food/Non-Food Expense
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1	\$ 232
2	\$ 426
3	\$ 612
4	\$ 777
5	\$ 922
6	\$ 1,107
7	\$ 1,224
8	\$ 1,398
Each Additional Person	+ \$176

Please refer to the Energy Manual, Section X, "Deferred Payment Agreements" for assistance in completing the LDSS-3596.