

GENERAL INFORMATION SYSTEM
DIVISION: Temporary Assistance

March 2, 2005

Page: 1

TO: Commissioners; TA & FS Directors; WMS Coordinators; CAP Coordinators

FROM: Russell Sykes, Deputy Commissioner, Division of Temporary Assistance

SUBJECT: FS Standard Utility Allowances for Heating/Cooling Expenses

EFFECTIVE DATE: Immediately

CONTACT PERSON: FS Bureau at (800) 343-8859, ext. 3-1469

Food Stamp households that incur a heating or cooling expense are entitled to an allowance for Heating/Cooling utility expenses. Effective 10/1/02, New York mandated that households with a qualifying expense, regardless of the amount, be budgeted with the full Standard Utility Allowance associated with the type of qualified expense.

Any household with a qualifying expense (or receipt/anticipated-receipt of HEAP) must be allowed the full standard for the appropriate level of utility: Heating/Cooling SUA (HT/AC), Non-heating/Cooling SUA (UTIL), or Phone. Households cannot be allowed actual expenses, even if they are higher than the standard; and the standard is not reduced by pro-ration under any circumstances.

For households residing in Public or Subsidized housing with their heat included in their rent, running an air conditioner constitutes a qualifying cooling expense when the household is responsible for its own electricity or incurs a surcharge for air conditioning. A household's responsibility for payment of utilities may be verified in any one of several ways such as a utility bill, lease, landlord statement, payment receipts or cancelled checks. Once it has been established that a household is responsible for its own non-heating electric utility costs, if the household states (either orally or in writing) that they run an air conditioner on this electricity, the household must be granted the full Heating/Cooling SUA. It is not necessary to verify the air conditioner unless there is reason to find the statement questionable.

In order to budget the Heating/Cooling SUA for these households, worker intervention is needed on the Automated Budgeting and Eligibility Logic (ABEL):

- For all districts outside of NYC this would be accomplished by entering an "X" in the HT/AC IND as shown at: <http://sdssnet5/dta/DeskGuide/dgfsua020104.rtf>
- In NYC the budgeting of the Heating/Cooling Standard Utility Allowance for households residing in public or subsidized housing (shelter type codes 02, 24, 38 or 40) with heat included but incurring an air conditioning expense is accomplished by entering an "X" in the FSUA IND field on budget screen NSBL02.