




Office of Community Services

INFORMATION UPDATE

TO: Executive Directors and HEAP Coordinators
FR:  Chief, OCS
RE: Additional HEAP Funding
PIPP Client Announcement
DT: October 21, 2008



Due to an unexpected funding increase, the Ohio Department of Development Office of Community Services will now receive an estimated \$245 million in Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) funding for the 2009 federal fiscal year. The additional money will enable us to increase the average HEAP benefit and the maximum/minimum payment for our Regular Program. This is a turnaround from the information provided at last month's HEAP Regional trainings where, at that time, we were looking at substantial funding cuts.

Since adequate dollars are now available, the OCS will implement the 2008-2009 HEAP with the same procedures as last heating season, except for the increased benefits noted below. The expected coordination between HEAP benefits and benefits from the Percentage of Income Payment Plan (PIPP) widely discussed at the recent trainings will occur next year with the implementation of the revised electric Percentage of Income Payment Plan (PIPP) rules effective November 1, 2009.

Outlined below are the benefits available during the upcoming HEAP season for low-income Ohioans below 175% of the federal poverty guidelines.

For the 2008-2009 Winter Heating Season:

Customers of Regulated Utilities

Eligible customers who are serviced by regulated utilities for both the primary and secondary heat sources, will be provided up to \$175 from the Winter Crisis Program to prevent utility disconnection or to restore service. Customers of regulated utilities who received benefits through the Winter Crisis Program will also (as in 2007-2008) be eligible for a Regular HEAP benefit. This may be split to pay for both gas and electric.

Bulk Fuel Customers

Bulk fuel users who apply for the Winter Crisis Program will receive up to \$950 for fuel oil or kerosene, up to \$750 for propane or bottled gas and up to \$350 for coal or wood or other solid fuels. Please be aware that these amounts are UP TO the maximum amount for each fuel type in order to receive a delivery of fuel to last 30 days. If they receive a delivery and do not use the maximum benefit, they cannot receive a second delivery. The only exception to this rule is if a client has a small propane or kerosene tank, the agency can establish a 30-day line of credit and then receive one invoice at the end of the 30-day period not to exceed the max. This is outlined in the Energy Assistance Guidelines. These customers will also be eligible to receive a Regular HEAP benefit based on the poverty level of the household. All of these benefits may be split to help pay for electric.

Customers of Non-Regulated Utilities (Co-ops and Municipal Utilities)

Eligible customers of one or two non-regulated utilities will be provided up to \$250 (these customers are not covered by the PUCO Winter Reconnect Order enabling re-connection for \$175). These customers who receive a benefit through the Winter Crisis Program (WCP) are eligible to receive a Regular HEAP benefit. This may be split to pay for both gas and electric.

PIPP Client Announcement

We plan to add a statement to the Notice of Decision to read as follows: "There are major changes planned to the Percentage of Income Payment Plan (PIPP) beginning November, 2009. Therefore, it is very important that you continue making your monthly PIPP installments. Failure to do so could result in your household not being able to participate in the PIPP and/or not being able to receive a HEAP benefit in the future."