

TO: Local District Commissioners, IM Directors, FS Directors, HEAP Liaisons
FROM: Patricia A. Stevens, Deputy Commissioner, Division of Temporary Assistance
SUBJECT: Standard Utility Allowance (SUA) for Food Stamps

EFFECTIVE DATE: November 17, 1997

CONTACT PERSON: Regional Representatives: Region I: 518-473-0332;
Region II: 518-474-9344; Region III: 518-474-9307;
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This is to provide you with clarification regarding eligibility of Food Stamp (FS) households for the heating/air conditioning (HT/AC) standard utility allowance (SUA). GIS message 96 TA/DC051, issued 12/31/96, advised that FS households who did not pay separately for heat/air conditioning would be eligible for the HT/AC only if the household received a Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) benefit for the current HEAP year. This GIS further stated that eligibility for the HT/AC based on receipt of HEAP did not continue if the household moved from the dwelling in which they received HEAP.

Effective November 17, 1997, households in receipt of FS whose eligibility for the HT/AC SUA is based on the receipt of HEAP will remain eligible for the HT/AC SUA even if they move as long as at least one adult member of the dwelling unit received HEAP for the current program year and the household resides in a HEAP eligible dwelling unit. In these cases, the SUA end date remains unchanged when the household moves. If there is no SUA end date, a date of 1/99 is entered.

In those cases where the household contains a vulnerable individual, the effective date for this policy clarification is February 1, 1997. According to the HEAP definition, a vulnerable individual is someone under 6, 60 or older or disabled.

FS recipients who request a review of their SUA eligibility may be eligible for restored benefits back to the applicable effective date of this policy.

HEAP eligible shelter types for those households who do not pay separately for heat or air conditioning include: 01, 03, 05, and 20.

Those households who pay separately for heat or air conditioning continue to receive the SUA based on incurrence of these expenses.

Example:

John Smith lives in an apartment with heat and utilities included. He receives a HEAP renter's benefit in March 1998 and the worker rebudgets his FS case with a HT/AC SUA beginning in April 1998. The SUA end date is 3/99.

In July, John moves into another apartment where heat is included but he pays for his own utilities. John remains eligible for the HT/AC SUA because he still lives in a HEAP eligible living situation. The SUA end date remains 3/99.

In September 1998, John moves again, this time into subsidized housing with heat included. He does pay his own utilities. The FS budget is now changed to remove the HT/AC SUA because this is not a HEAP eligible living situation. John may be eligible for the HT/AC SUA if he incurs costs for air conditioning or he can receive the utility SUA because he does incur costs for this expense.

If John should move back into a HEAP eligible living situation, he could again receive the HT/AC SUA, with a SUA end date of 3/99.