FFY 2017 Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program (WHEAP)

Operations Manual

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION

Division of Energy, Housing and Community Resources

homeenergy+

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DISCLAIMER

The Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program (WHEAP) Operations Manual is written by the Wisconsin Department of Administration (WI DOA), Division of Energy, Housing and Community Resources (DEHCR) for use by the contracting WHEAP agencies, counties, and/or tribes administering WHEAP locally. DEHCR reserves the right to change the policies and guidelines set forth in the WHEAP Operations Manual during the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY). Any DEHCR-initiated Information Transmittals issued via broadcast email subsequent to the publishing of the current FFY WHEAP Operations Manual and establishing new or updated policy shall supersede the policies and guidelines set forth in the current FFY WHEAP Operations Manual.

Questions or concerns regarding the interpretation of the policies and guidelines set forth in the current FFY WHEAP Operations Manual shall be directed to the Division of Energy, Housing and Community Resources' Home Energy Plus (HE+) Help Desk (heat@wisconsin.gov or 608-267-3680).

Chapter 1 − Program Introduction

This chapter presents a broad overview of the Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program (WHEAP).

1.1 Program Description WHEAP

Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program (WHEAP) is an umbrella term covering two different but very similar programs, one funded by the federal government (Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, **LIHEAP**[1]) and one funded from fees collected through the electric utilities (**Public Benefits** program, PB). These programs are designed to assist eligible **households** with the heating and electric bills. Both programs (LIHEAP and PB) have very similar functions and design with the major difference being that LIHEAP focuses mostly on heating assistance and PB provides **benefits** for non-heating electric consumption.

The two basic parts of energy assistance are regular benefits and **crisis assistance**. In addition, a furnace services program is operated under WHEAP.

The funding for energy assistance comes from the LIHEAP block grant (federal funds) and the Wisconsin Public Benefit fund (a fee charged on Wisconsin customers' electric bills).

WHEAP benefits are not guaranteed to eligible households. When funds have been exhausted for a program year, there are no benefits issued to households regardless of eligibility.

1) Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program

   The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is a federal program established to provide financial assistance against increases in fuel costs for low-income households.

2) Public Benefits

   The Public Benefits program was created originally in 1999 as a part of the biennial budget bill. Under this program, a low-income fund was created into which the electric providers in the **state** contributed an amount primarily generated by a fee added to customers' electric bills. The money in this fund is divided between the energy assistance program and the **Weatherization** Assistance Program (WAP).

A provision of this law permits cooperative and municipal utilities to operate a Commitment to Communities Program instead of participating in the state Public Benefits fund. The customers of utilities choosing to operate a Commitment to Community Program are not eligible for benefits from the state's Public Benefits programs (under energy assistance or Weatherization).

[1] **Bolded** words are the first reference of a term or phrase defined in Chapter 10.

1.1.1 WHEAP − Regular Benefits

Regular Benefits provide assistance with current season heating (LIHEAP) and/or non-heating electric (PB) expenses. Regular Benefits are provided on behalf of eligible households to the fuel vendor (utility or bulk fuel vendor) or, in a limited number of situations, directly to the **applicant**. Households may be eligible for one or both of the benefits. Applicants may receive only one regular heat and/or one regular electric (non-heating) benefit during each heating season (October 1 to May 15). Regular Benefits are paid out of a central account managed by the **Division of Energy, Housing and Community Resources**, not from an amount allocated to the local **WHEAP agency**.

Regular Benefits provide assistance with the home **energy bills** and are not intended to cover the total costs of heat or electricity. Regular Benefits may only be applied to the current heating season or program year. Some of the factors affecting the amount (size) of the heat benefit include:

- Total funding available for Regular benefits in the state;
- The **income** (reference Chapter 2) level of the household;
- Type of fuel;
- The size (number of **rooms**) of the **dwelling unit**;
- The fuel costs of the household; and
- The type of dwelling unit.

Regular electric (PB) benefits are only available to households serviced by a utility that is participating in the State Public Benefits Program. Some of the factors affecting the amount (size) of the electric benefit include:

- Total funding available for Regular benefits in the state;
- The income level of the household; and
- The electric (non-heating) fuel costs of the household.

1.1.2 WHEAP − Crisis Assistance Benefits

Crisis Assistance, whether LIHEAP or PB, is intended to allow the local WHEAP administering agency to respond to special situations; dealing with emergency situations or acting proactively to avoid serious problems. Crisis Assistance is a discretionary benefit to households—even if a household is eligible, they may not receive assistance.

Crisis Assistance is categorized by two payment types: **emergency payments** and proactive payments. The eligibility requirements for each are slightly different. Emergency payments are only available during the heating season (October 1 to May 15). Proactive payments are available any time during the program year (October 1 to September 30).

Crisis Assistance benefits are only paid to providers of goods or services. Applicants never directly receive the benefits.

Each local WHEAP agency receives an allocation of crisis funds to administer to eligible households on an as needed basis.

1.1.2.1 WHEAP − Crisis Assistance Services

Crisis Assistance Services funds are provided to local WHEAP agencies to provide a mechanism for purchase of services (such as education—energy or financial) and goods (such as Weatherization kits) for **recipients**. These funds may also be used to cover local agency costs of taking and processing **applications** for Crisis Assistance.

1.1.3 WHEAP − Furnace Service

Eligible applicants whose furnace (heating system) ceases to operate or presents a safety threat to the household may be eligible to receive furnace services. Eligibility for furnace services shall be determined by the local WHEAP agency before any service is provided. Furnace services are a discretionary benefit to households; even if a household is eligible, they may not receive services.

The **Home Energy Plus (HE+)** Furnace Program eligibility criteria and service requirements are outlined in the HE+ Furnace Program Manual (available on the Home Energy Plus website, http://homeenergyplus.wi.gov). The HE+ Furnace Program Manual outlines when a repair or replacement is appropriate. Customers must agree to relinquish the old heating system when it is replaced with a new unit.

Furnace services provided to a household through the HE+ Furnace Program and in conformance with the HE+ Furnace Program Manual requirements will never result in a property lien or in a charge to the eligible household.

Furnace service payments are different from Crisis Assistance payments in that they are paid from a central account managed by the Division of Energy, Housing and Community Resources.

1.2 WHEAP − General Eligibility

There are financial and non-financial parts to the **eligibility determination**. Non-financial eligibility includes Wisconsin **Residence**, eligibility to receive federal benefits (for **non-citizens**), provision of a Social Security Number (SSN), having an **energy burden**, and other issues. Detailed discussion of non-financial eligibility requirements is presented in Chapter 2.

Financial eligibility is tied to the income of the household being less than or equal to sixty percent (60%) of the state median income (**SMI**) for households. The income levels for various family sizes are published by the Division of Energy, Housing and Community Resources at the beginning of the heating season. The test period for determining the income level for the household is usually the three (3) months prior to the month of application. The income for certain income types, such as seasonal wages and self-generated income, have a test period that is based on income received during the twelve (12) months prior to the date of the application, or the previous tax year. A detailed discussion of financial eligibility is presented in Chapter 2.

When a household is found to be eligible for regular benefits, the determination of eligibility is used for Crisis Assistance and furnace services for the remainder of the program year (October 1 through September 30). Crisis Assistance and furnace services have additional

eligibility criteria that also must be met. See Chapters 2 and 4, and the Home Energy Plus Furnace Program Manual.

1.3 WHEAP − Regular Benefits Payment Determination

Home Energy Assistance Heat Benefits are primarily based on the relationship of household income to the state median income (SMI), size of the dwelling (number of rooms), dwelling type, and home energy costs. The primary factors affecting the regular electric (non-heating) benefit are the household income and the non-heating electric use. A table of the maximum income allowable for various family sizes is provided on the HE+ website. The table is also available in the WHEAP brochures sent to the agencies.

1.3.1 General Payment Information

Regular benefits are provided to eligible households for almost any type of heating fuel used—natural gas, fuel oil, liquefied natural gas (propane), wood, wood pellets, corn pellets, and some other fuel types. The **HE+ System** calculates the regular benefit amounts based on the information submitted in the application. The primary factors affecting the benefit level are household income, number of **household members**, fuel type, fuel use, and number of rooms in the dwelling.

The information entered in Field #22 must be the reported cost of the household's **primary heating fuel** usage and electric costs. In cases where electric is used for primary heat, total electric costs only need to be entered once in Field #22.

The HE+ System calculates the benefit for heating and non-heating electric assistance when application data is accepted for benefits. The HE+ System generates benefit payments to vendors or customers, and notification letters to customers. The notification letters indicate: 1) the type of benefit(s); 2) the benefit amount(s) 3) the recipient of the benefit; and/or 4) the benefit has been withdrawn, cancelled, or denied along with the denial reason and/or repayment amount (when applicable).

1) Income

   The HE+ System calculates the household income level. If a household's level is less than or equal to 60% of the state median income level (SMI), the household is income eligible. If the household's income is more than 60% of the state median income level, the household is denied WHEAP benefits as over–income, unless the household has been deemed **categorically eligible**. When a categorically eligible household is over 60% SMI, the benefits are paid as if the applicant’s income was 60% SMI.

2) Energy Costs

   To receive a benefit based on actual costs, the bill for home energy costs must be a direct pay account and cannot include charges for a business or from a shared meter (see Chapter 3 for additional limitations on using actual fuel costs). The HE+ System uses the home energy information entered in Application Field #22 to determine heating and **non-heating electric costs**. If annual fuel usage is not provided during the application process, benefits will be based on the proxy fuel table. When an amount is used from the proxy table to calculate benefits, the fuel use is set at 75%

of the projected average cost for the fuel and building type.

The information entered in Field #22 must be the reported cost of the household's **primary heating fuel** usage and electric costs. In cases where electric is used for primary heat, total electric costs only need to be entered once in Field #22.

3) Comparisons to Heat Proxy Table

   The HE+ System automatically compares adjusted actual heating costs to the Heat Proxy Fuel Table. The heat proxy amount is based on 75% of the average costs for the same dwelling type, fuel type and number of rooms.

   - If the adjusted actual heating costs are greater than two times the proxy for the same dwelling type, fuel type and number of rooms, benefits will be based on two times the proxy amount, rather than actual costs.
   - If the adjusted actual heating costs are less than the proxy, benefits will be based on the proxy rather than actual costs.

4) Proxy Fuel Tables

   There are situations where actual fuel costs are not available for calculating benefits, such as heat included in rent. To permit calculation of WHEAP benefits an amount is taken from the appropriate Proxy Table. Each table is a collection of average costs. There are a number of tables to provide numbers based on fuel type and other factors, such as the number of rooms and the fuel used for making hot water.

5) Heat Proxy Table

   When annual usage is zero, the HE+ System uses the appropriate amount from the Proxy Fuel Table.

   The HE+ System reduces the appropriate average heating cost by twenty-five (25%) as an incentive to use actual fuel costs.

6) Electric Proxy Tables

   When annual usage is zero, the HE+ System uses the appropriate amount from the Proxy Electric (PB) Table. When electric is the only fuel source for the dwelling, the non-heating electric portion is determined by reducing by half the total reported consumption to determine the amount used in calculating the electric benefit (if the applicant is a customer of a Public Benefits participating utility).

7) Number of Rooms

   The HE+ System uses the number of rooms in a dwelling as a measure of the size of the dwelling. In counting the number of rooms there are areas that are not counted such as bathrooms, unfinished basements, entryways, hallways, laundry rooms, porches, closets, and unheated attics. The maximum number of rooms allowed in the system is nine (9). See section 3.4.19 for information on counting the number of rooms.

1.4 WHEAP − General Crisis Assistance Eligibility

All recipients of Crisis Assistance must satisfy all appropriate non-financial eligibility requirements. Crisis Assistance also requires the applicant to have made a minimum payment of $25 in the past three (3) months, and have a direct pay relationship with a participating energy vendor. There is a maximum crisis benefit amount that an applicant may receive during a program year (October 1 to September 30). See section 4.2.1 for more information. Applicants shall have a need for crisis assistance, and shall satisfy the appropriate income eligibility test requirements. Different income eligibility test periods exist for the two types of Crisis Assistance; Emergency Crisis Assistance and Proactive Crisis Assistance.

1.4.1 Proactive Crisis Assistance

The income test period for Proactive Crisis Assistance is the same as for Regular Benefits. For most applicants the test period is three (3) months, but for certain income types, such as seasonal wages and self-generated income, the test period is based on income received during the twelve (12) months prior to the date of the application, or the previous tax year.

1.4.2 Emergency Crisis Assistance

Emergency Crisis Assistance uses the Regular Benefit test period to determine eligibility. When a household is not eligible for Regular Benefits, it might be eligible for emergency benefits if there has been a change in the household circumstances (due to accident, illness, etc.) —the change in circumstances must have reduced household income in the month before the application to below the one-month maximum income level for the month prior to the application. When a change in circumstances occurs after the test period (due to accident, illness, etc.); the local agency might determine income eligibility for emergency crisis assistance on the current month's anticipated income. See Chapter 4 for details.

1.5 WHEAP − HE+ Furnace Program Eligibility

Homeowners and some renters who are WHEAP eligible may be eligible for furnace services. See the Home Energy Plus Furnace Program Manual for details.

1.6 WHEAP − Application Process

The application for WHEAP benefits is called the Home Energy Plus Application. This application is also used to determine eligibility for Weatherization assistance.

Individuals must apply for energy assistance through their local WHEAP agency. There is a WHEAP agency for each county and for seven of the Tribes in the state.

Individuals may remit multiple applications during the program year, October 1 to September 30. An applicant may only receive one regular heat benefit and one regular non-heat electric benefit each program year if it is eligible. However, being turned down for benefit(s) during a program year does not preclude future applications during the program year. If circumstances have changed since the denied application, a new application can lead to an award of benefits.

All duplicate applications received by the local agency shall be processed in the HE+ System with any information provided by the applicant. If the applicant chooses to withdraw the application, the application must still be entered in the system.

Applicants are required to provide complete and accurate information for their household within 30 days of the application date. In order for an application to be considered complete, it must have a dated applicant signature and dated intake worker signature on the Certification Page. The Certification Page provides notice to the applicant regarding use of the information provided and the rights of the applicant. In some cases, the applicant's signature must be notarized. The Certification Page provides worker acknowledgement of verification of the applicant's information and agreement to comply with the Home Energy Plus Conflict of Interest/Non-Disclosure Agreement (see 8.5.1). Item number twelve on the Certification Page addresses carbon credits; if the applicant elects to strike this section, proceed with completing the application. Striking item twelve will not affect the outcome of the application.

1.7 Weatherization Assistance

The HE+ application is used for both the energy assistance and Weatherization assistance programs. The basic eligibility requirements for Weatherization are the same for energy assistance (WHEAP) so a single application (Home Energy Plus Application) can be used for both programs.

1.8 Discrimination Complaints and Administrative Hearings

1.8.1 Discrimination

If an applicant believes he/she has been discriminated against in any way, the applicant may file a complaint by contacting the Coordinator of the agency where he/she applied or any person authorized by the agency to receive discrimination complaints. The law prohibits discrimination based on: race, color, national origin, sex, age, or **disability**.

1.8.2 Hearings

An individual has the right to apply for energy assistance benefits and to receive a payment or a letter of explanation within 45 days from the date the application process is completed. The application process is not complete until the HE+ System processes the application—determines eligibility, calculates a benefit, and sends a notice of award or denial. If the individual believes their application has been incorrectly denied or their payment is incorrect, they may request a fair hearing by contacting the local agency where he/she applied or by writing to:

Wisconsin Department of Administration
Division of Hearing and Appeals
PO Box 7875
Madison, WI 53707-7875

An applicant will not receive any notice of eligibility denial or benefit award until the Division processes applications (extraction) for payment. Delays may occur in performing the first extraction of each program year and these are generally because federal funding for the program has not been received.

Fair hearings are only available to appeal determination of regular WHEAP Benefits. Crisis and Furnace benefits are not eligible for appeal.

Chapter 2 − Program Eligibility

2.1 General Eligibility Rules and Guidelines

The Home Energy Plus application is used to process regular energy assistance benefits, establish eligibility for crisis assistance, and establish eligibility for the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP). HE+ applications are submitted to the local WHEAP agencies for review and processing. The eligibility criteria for WHEAP and WAP follow the same guidelines—the income limits are the same, however, WAP has structural criteria that may include or exclude a dwelling unit—that means while the family may be eligible, the dwelling could be ineligible.

Applications shall only be submitted from households that reside within the boundaries of the local agency's jurisdiction. For example, a county may not process an application from a household living in a different county or on a reservation where the tribe contracts with the Division to provide WHEAP services.

Eligibility is based on the non-financial and the financial requirements. The applicant must meet ***both*** sets of requirements to be eligible for Home Energy Assistance. Financial and non-financial eligibility criteria are assessed based on household composition and circumstances on the date of application for energy assistance.

Households denied a heating benefit or a PB (electric) benefit during the heating season may reapply for the denied benefit if the conditions leading to denial of that benefit (heat or electric) have changed. A household may re-apply multiple times if not deemed eligible on earlier applications. Households may apply throughout the year for eligibility.

For an application to be considered for regular heat/electric benefits, it must be initiated before the end of the heating season. An applicant is eligible for only one heating and one electric benefit per heating season. Applications must be entered/processed in the chronological order in which they were received. The application completed with the first chronological date, when more than one application from an applicant exists, will have precedence in processing.

Each application shall have a completed certification page which includes a dated applicant and a dated agency staff signature. Signatures on withdrawn, incomplete, and denied applications may not be used for a new application.

There is no entitlement to WHEAP or WAP benefits—being eligible does not mean Regular Benefits, Crisis Assistance, Furnace, or Weatherization benefits will be provided.

Households containing an individual who was a case head on a paid application during the current heating season are not eligible for regular heating/electric benefits. However, such a household may be considered for crisis assistance if all other eligibility requirements are satisfied.

2.2 Non-Financial Eligibility

Non-financial eligibility includes several types of tests, and households must satisfy the requirements of each test. These tests include residence, citizenship or immigrant status, valid SSN, student status, and energy burden.

2.2.1 Applicant/Case Head

A case head must be 18 years or older, or be a **minor head-of-household**, or be a child who meets one of the following exceptions:

1) All adults in the household are ineligible non-citizens; ***and***
   - The dependent child is either a citizen or an eligible non-citizen; ***and***
   - The child has an SSN.

2) An emancipated minor over 15 may be a case head if the minor is living independently and:
   - Is married; or
   - Was married; or
   - Is the principal support of a child; or
   - Has visible independent means of support and cannot be claimed as a dependent on the income tax return of someone not in the household.

2.2.1.1 Photo Identification (ID)

First time WHEAP applicants, and those applying in your county/tribe for the first time, must be positively identified from a valid photo identification (ID) such as a driver's license, other government issued identification card, an employer's identification card, student identification card, or similar identification card with a photograph of the applicant. A positive ID must be completed before the application is considered complete. Only use valid photo ID for identity and signature verification, not for any type of information validation.

Applicant	Photo ID to View
Adult case head	Same adult case head
Minor case head	Legal guardian of minor case head
Authorized Representative on behalf of adult case head	**Authorized Representative**
POA of adult case head	POA Representative

Declare in the HE+ System what form of photo ID was viewed by the authorized agency representative. If a photo ID was viewed for someone other than the applicant (ex: legal guardian, Power of Attorney, Authorized Representative, etc.) indicate, in System Notes, the name of the person whose ID was viewed.

2.2.2 Residence

A person who lives in Wisconsin and makes Wisconsin his or her principal residence meets the Wisconsin portion of the residence requirement. They must also intend to remain in Wisconsin. Migrant workers usually do not satisfy the residency requirement because they do not intend to remain in Wisconsin.

A person must apply for energy assistance at the agency in the county/tribe where they live on the date of the application. An applicant/household member with multiple residences must apply based on their primary residence. When an applicant/household member resides in more than one residence, the local WHEAP agency must indicate in HE+ System Notes on what basis they determined the primary residence. Applications for an address that has been determined to not be the primary residence will deny as an 'ineligible dwelling'.

Applicants who receive LIHEAP assistance in another state during a heating season are not Wisconsin residents for the same heating season.

2.2.2.1 Type of Residence

Only applicants living in an eligible dwelling are eligible for WHEAP benefits.

If a dwelling is not listed in the table below, please contact the HE+ Help Desk for assistance in determining the eligibility of a dwelling. In the event an applicant resides in a stationary RV or camper; please contact the helpdesk to determine if the applicant resides in an eligible dwelling.

Dwelling Eligibility Table	
Eligible Dwellings	**Ineligible Dwellings**
Single Family House	Secondary home (e.g. vacation home, seasonal home)
Multi-Unit Building with 2 or more units (e.g. Duplex, Condo, Apartment, Townhouse, Studio Apartment, Flat)	Vehicle
Mobile Home	**Assisted living facility** or nursing home
Rooming house, motel, hotel, YMCA, or YWCA	Group home, halfway house, Community-Based Residential Facility (CBRF), or foster home
Adult Family Home (as licensed by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services)	Government or Institutional facility (e.g. jail, hospital, care institution)
	Deer Stand
	Abandoned building or space
	Tent

2.2.2.2 Roomers

A **roomer** is a person who rents a sleeping room from the building owner. A roomer does not have a separate site address from other occupants of the building. A roomer does not share in providing, or being provided for, the necessities of life with other residents of the structure. A roomer is a person who has proof of a permanent address, but occupies a single room within the **rooming house**. A roomer in a single-family structure must verify he or she is not part of the **economic unit** of the other tenants of the structure. Roomers are not precluded from WHEAP benefits.

Persons living in a housing arrangement with their own room and sharing common spaces (such as kitchens, living rooms, TV rooms, recreation rooms) are not roomers. Persons sharing any common spaces, including but not limited to bathrooms, kitchens, and living rooms, are part of a household with other members and eligibility must be assessed for the whole group as an economic unit.

2.2.2.3 Homeless

A **homeless** applicant who has proof of a permanent address to move into may be eligible for an energy assistance benefit if the following conditions are met:

- Verification of a move to a permanent address. This should be verified by a lease agreement, phone call to the landlord or information from a homeless shelter.
- The applicant must have selected a vendor to provide service in their new residence unless energy service is included in the rent or paid to the landlord in a separate payment.
- If the homeless applicant cannot secure a home energy account due to large arrearages on a previous account, or does not have the money for a deposit, proactive services may be used to assist them with securing energy services.

It may be necessary for agencies or a homeless shelter to assist the applicant in gathering information or obtaining a current vendor and an account number.

2.2.2.4 Non-citizens

If an individual is not a **U.S. Citizen**, they shall be identified as either an eligible or ineligible non-citizen for WHEAP benefits.

If the applicant states a household member does not have a Social Security Number (SSN) or valid immigration records, the individual shall be marked an **ineligible non-citizen**. This individual may not be the case head of the application. See sections 2.2.1 and 2.2.6.2 for more information.

Before a non-citizen is marked an **eligible non-citizen** on the HE+ Application, the local agency intake staff must complete the following steps:

1) Run the provided SSN through the verification process. The SSN must be positively verified before proceeding to the next steps in eligibility determination. If the SSN has been verified,
2) Verify if the individual is receiving FoodShare or any form of monthly Social Security

income,

- If yes to either, mark the individual an 'Eligible Non-citizen' and document in HE+ System Notes the method of verifying receipt of FoodShare or Social Security Income

3) If no, each individual must be defined as one of the following categories, according to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), in order to mark an eligible non-citizen:
   - A non-citizen lawfully admitted for permanent residence under the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA)
   - A non-citizen granted asylum under section 208 of the INA
   - A refugee admitted to the U.S. under section 207 of the INA
   - A non-citizen paroled into the U.S. under section 212(d)(5) of the INA for at least one year
   - A non-citizen whose deportation is being withheld under section 243(h) of the INA as in effect prior to April 1, 1997, or whose removal is being withheld under section 241(b)(3) of the INA
   - A non-citizen granted conditional entry pursuant to section 203(a)(7) of the INA as in effect prior to April 1, 1980
   - A non-citizen who is a Cuban or Haitian entrant as defined in section 501(e) of the Refugee Education Assistance Act of 1980
   - A non-citizen who (or whose child or parent) has been battered or subjected to extreme cruelty in the U.S. and otherwise satisfies the requirements of § 431(c)
   - Amerasians under the Amerasian Immigration Act of 1982
   - Native Americans born abroad
   - Trafficking victims who have been classified with a T nonimmigrant status

   It is the applicant's responsibility to provide non-expired documentation of their lawful status in the United States. Examples of documentation to support lawful status include:
   - Permanent Resident Card (I-551)
   - Unexpired foreign passport stamped by the U.S. Government indicating that the holder has been "Processed for I-551"
   - Permanent resident Re-entry Permit (I-327)
   - Arrival Departure Form I-94 with "Temporary I-551" stamp and holder's photograph affixed
   - Travel Document issued to Permanent Residents (I-327)
   - Travel Document issued to Refugees (I-571)
   - Form I-94 stamped with one of the following statuses: Asylee, Parolee or Parole, Refugee, Asylum, HP-humanitarian parolee, PIP-public interest parolee, or Cuban-Haitian Entrant

   Enter in HE+ System Notes the document witnessed which verified their lawful status in the United States. If the individual has an immigration status or verification document that is not identified above, contact the HE+ Help Desk for guidance.

2.2.3 Social Security Number (SSN)

An SSN is required for the case head and all persons in the household who have been issued a valid number by the Social Security Administration (SSA). A person who does not have an SSN, and is eligible to apply for one, must do so with the Social Security Administration. See the sections which follow for Social Security Number exceptions.

An agency must assist applicants to apply for an SSN. The website for the SSN application form and instructions for applying for a new SSN can be found at: http://www.ssa.gov/online/forms.html.

SSNs must be verified through the HE+ System. When entering an HE+ Application, the System will prompt a web call to verify each SSN listed on the application. Agencies shall notify each applicant that all SSNs will be verified with SSA. There is a disclaimer on the paper HE+ Application which serves as notification when the intake method is non-interactive. There is a disclaimer on the electronic HE+ System application that shall be read to each applicant when the intake method is interactive.

The HE+ System will check the SSN against the Master Customer Index (MCI) database administered through the State of Wisconsin Department of Health Services. The MCI database contains verified demographic information obtained by several other state programs. If the SSN(s) can be verified with MCI, the HE+ System will indicate that the SSN(s) has been verified and the worker can proceed with the application.

In the event the SSN(s) cannot be verified with MCI, the HE+ System will automatically send the SSN(s) to the SSA for verification. Verification with SSA will take approximately three (3) business days. The worker should complete all other sections of the application and submit for benefits. The application will automatically be sent to the worker's "SSN Sent to SSA" inbox.

In the event of an emergency situation, please see Crisis Chapter 4, section 4.2.2, or the HE+ Furnace Program Manual located on the HE+ website.

The "SSN Sent to SSA" inbox will contain any SSN(s) not found in MCI and needing to be verified with SSA. This requires no user interaction, but is an informational inbox for application management purposes. Any application containing an SSN(s) waiting for verification from SSA will remain in this mailbox until SSA has processed the submitted SSN(s), and takes approximately three (3) business days. If the SSN(s) are verified by SSA, the HE+ System will automatically release the SSN(s) allowing the application to extract. If the SSN(s) are not verified by SSA, the SSN(s) will move to the "SSN Rejected by SSA" inbox.

The "SSN Rejected by SSA" inbox is populated with any SSN(s) sent to SSA and returned as invalid. This inbox does require user action. The worker must contact the applicant and check if the number and associated information was entered correctly. The worker should identify any discrepancies and update the information in the HE+ System, and may have to refer the applicant to the local SSA office for further follow-up. If the new information does not match the MCI database, the HE+ System will again automatically send the information to SSA for verification; the application will move back to the "SSN Sent to SSA" inbox. In rare circumstances, an SSN override may be needed. Workers shall check the "SSN

Rejected by SSA" mailbox on a regular basis to ensure all applications with a rejected SSN are being addressed in a timely manner.

Note: Do not disclose any information returned from MCI or SSA to the applicant. Only ask the questions to determine whether or not the information originally entered is correct.

WHEAP benefits will not be paid if, within thirty (30) days from the date of application, the case head has not supplied SSNs for all eligible household members. A denial letter stating that the application as not completed will be generated after 30 days. The entire household is ineligible for HE+ benefits if any eligible member fails or refuses to provide or verify his/her SSN or does not provide proof of application for an SSN.

When an applicant cannot provide the SSN for a household member(s), include the household member(s) on the application, leaving the SSN field blank. The application will be incomplete until the SSN has been provided and verified.

In circumstances where the application is submitted and is waiting in the “SSN Rejected by SSA” inbox beyond 30 days, the HE+ System will automatically allow for a fourteen (14) day extension for purposes of SSN verification only. All other elements of the application must be complete and the application must be in submitted status in order for the application to not be denied as incomplete. An application will be prevented from denying as incomplete if it is waiting in the “SSN Sent to SSA” inbox, provided that all other aspects of the application are complete and it is submitted.

DEHCR will monitor SSN verifications and any abuse of the verification system may result in termination of HE+ System access.

2.2.3.1 SSN Verification

SSNs must be verified through the HE+ System. The HE+ System will check the SSN against the Master Customer Index (MCI) database administered through the State of Wisconsin Department of Health Services. The MCI database contains verified demographic information obtained by several other state programs.

When entering an HE+ Application, the System will prompt a web call to verify each SSN listed on the application. Agencies shall notify each applicant that all SSNs will be verified with SSA. There is a disclaimer on the paper HE+ Application which serves as notification when the intake method is non-interactive. There is a disclaimer on the electronic HE+ System application that shall be read to each applicant when the intake method is interactive.

In the event the SSN(s) cannot be verified with MCI, the HE+ System will automatically send the SSN(s) to the SSA for verification. Verification with SSA will take approximately three (3) business days. The worker should complete all other sections of the application and submit for benefits.

DEHCR will monitor SSN verifications and any abuse of the verification system may result in termination of HE+ System access.

2.2.3.2 Rejected SSNs

The “SSN Rejected by SSA” inbox is populated when any SSN(s) sent to SSA and returned as invalid. The worker must contact the applicant and check if the number and associated information was entered correctly. The worker should identify any discrepancies and update the information in the HE+ System, and may have to refer the applicant to the local SSA office for further follow-up. Workers shall check the "SSN Rejected by SSA" mailbox on a regular basis to ensure all applications with a rejected SSN are being addressed in a timely manner.

Note: Do not disclose any information returned from MCI or SSA to the applicant. Only ask the questions to determine whether or not the information originally entered is correct.

WHEAP benefits will not be paid if, within thirty (30) days from the date of application, the case head has not supplied SSNs for all eligible household members. A denial letter stating that all information was not provided will be generated after 30 days. The entire household is ineligible for HE+ benefits if any eligible member fails or refuses to provide or verify his/her SSN or does not provide proof of application for an SSN.

When an applicant cannot provide the SSN for a household member(s), include the household member(s) on the application, leaving the SSN field blank. The application will be incomplete until the SSN has been provided and verified.

In circumstances where the application is submitted and is waiting in the “SSN Rejected by SSA” inbox beyond 30 days, the HE+ System will automatically allow for a fourteen (14) day extension for purposes of SSN verification only. All other elements of the application must be complete and the application must be in submitted status in order for the application to not be denied as incomplete. An application will be prevented from denying as incomplete if it is waiting in the “SSN Sent to SSA” inbox, provided that all other aspects of the application are complete and it is submitted.

In the event of an emergency situation, please see Crisis Chapter 4, section 4.2.2, or the HE+ Furnace Program Manual located on the HE+ website.

2.2.3.3 SSN Exceptions

If the household member meets one of the following exceptions for not having an SSN, indicate the reason there is no SSN on the household member record and include the proper documentation in HE+ System Notes.

2.2.3.3.1 Infants

Infants (newborns) less than 60 days old where an SSN has not yet been issued may be processed without a valid SSN if the applicant has applied for an SSN for the infant.

2.2.3.3.2 Religiously Exempt from Social Security

Applicants who are exempt from being assigned SSNs due to a religious conviction must provide the Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) assigned by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Do not enter the ITIN into the HE+ System as the SSN. An HE+ System Note, including the ITIN, must be added to the system.

2.2.3.3.3 Ineligible Non-citizens

Ineligible non-citizens without an SSN shall not be listed as a case head. IRS-assigned numbers should never be entered in the HE+ System as SSNs for ineligible non-citizens. See section 2.2.2.4.

2.2.3.3.4 Household Members Over 60 Days Old

DEHCR approval must be obtained to proceed with any U.S. Citizen or eligible non-citizen over 60 days old if an SSN has not yet been issued or there are extenuating circumstances where the SSN cannot be verified. There must be a valid reason for the delay in obtaining an SSN and proof that an SSN was applied for. Approvals of exceptions are granted on a one-time basis. The situation must be fully documented in the HE+ System Notes. A valid SSN will be required on the next application.

2.2.3.4 SSN Overrides

The SSN Override function in the System may only be used in extenuating circumstances. Any SSN override request must include a System Household Member Note with the reason for the override request. To help DEHCR assess the override request, include what was done to verify the information entered, and if applicable, any important details for possible reasons the SSN was rejected. DEHCR must approve these overrides and will consider each on a case-by-case basis. DEHCR staff may contact the worker via System Household Member Notes for more information pertaining to the override request.

2.2.3.5 Change SSN Request

Simple Change SSN: In the event that a case head or any household member in the HE+ System has an SSN entered in the system that is later found to have been incorrectly entered, a Change SSN request must be completed. A Change SSN request can be made via the change SSN function found on the action ribbon when viewing Person Summary details from the Person ID (PID) containing the incorrect SSN record. This request will be sent to DEHCR through the Home Energy Plus system to complete the change SSN request. This will move or merge the records from the incorrect SSN to the correct SSN.

If the request is done while there is a current year application in process, the worker will need to ‘validate’ the SSN of that person on the actual application once DEHCR staff has completed the change SSN function.

Complex Change SSN: For other cases where only select records from a history need to be transferred to a different SSN/PID record, please contact the help desk for assistance in completing these requests.

2.2.4 Student Status and WHEAP Eligibility

If the case head is age 24 or older on the date of the application, the applicant's student status does not need to be verified. However, the applicant still must meet WHEAP financial and non-financial eligibility criteria to receive WHEAP benefit(s).

Student status must be determined for case heads enrolled in institutions of higher education when the case head is under age 24. An applicant enrolled in school halftime or more will be ***eligible*** for an energy assistance benefit ***only*** if WHEAP financial criteria, WHEAP non-financial criteria, ***and*** one of the following WHEAP student status criteria is met:

1) The applicant is physically or mentally disabled (disability must be verified, i.e., Veterans or Social Security Disability benefits), and the verification of disability is entered in HE+ System Notes; or

2) The applicant is receiving W-2/**TANF** cash benefits; or

3) The applicant or their spouse (if married) is financially responsible for a child 18 years old or younger who is living in the same household; or

4) Applicant lives with a spouse who is not a student; or

5) The applicant is currently working an average of 20 or more hours per week for at least minimum wage; or

6) The applicant is a full-time student receiving extended Unemployment Compensation Benefits under the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), sometimes referred to under the North American Free Trade Act (NAFTA), provisions designed to enable the applicant to be a full-time student. This benefit award is limited to one year.

WHEAP applicants under 24 years old are considered students if they are enrolled, on a half-time to full-time status, in an institution of higher education that requires a high school diploma or an equivalency certificate (i.e., universities, colleges, technical, trade, vocational schools, and schools for the physical or mentally disabled). Determination of a student's status as a full-time, half-time, or part-time student is based on the institution's assessment/policy. Questions about status that cannot be resolved with the institution should be addressed to the HE+ Help Desk.

Student status expires at midnight on the on the last day of the applicant's final semester as per the institution of higher education's established semester end date.

2.2.4.1 In Between Enrollments

Individuals who have graduated from high school and have not yet enrolled in post-secondary education are treated as adult members of a household (unless they are under 18 years of age) until they begin their education. This may affect a few **early applications**, taken in August or September, as the individual's status is determined on the date of the application. It may also affect individuals who have had non-traditional high school

graduation dates. If there is such an individual in the household, count the income of the adult (age 18 and older) for the previous three (3) months.

2.2.4.2 High School Enrollees

A high school student may be considered a case head only if over 18, or if they are an emancipated minor (see 2.2.1). If the student is enrolled in a regular high school program leading to a diploma, the student status is not considered in determining eligibility. If the student is enrolled in a program leading to a General Education Diploma (GED) at a Technical School or other institution, that program does not qualify as post-secondary education and may not be used to qualify an applicant for student status.

2.2.5 Energy Burden

To be eligible for energy assistance, the household must have a heat/electric burden on the date of the application. The Energy Burden Table (see section 2.2.5.2 below), provides examples of situations and determinations of energy burden.

In addition to having an **electric burden**, there must be a relationship with a utility participating in the State Public Benefits Program for an applicant to be eligible for non-heating electric assistance (Public Benefits).

Responsibility for energy, heat and/or electricity, in the household can be demonstrated in a number of ways including, but not limited to:

1) Having an account with the energy supplier and directly paying the bills,

2) Having the cost of the energy (heat and/or electricity) included in the rent,

3) Making separate payments to the landlord for the energy supplied (heat and/or electricity), or

4) Gathering or cutting wood used for heating, or purchasing wood from a non-**registered supplier**.

When the account is not current because the vendor has closed the account (for lack of payment or other reasons), the relationship between the vendor and the applicant needs to be examined.

- If the applicant has not moved and a different vendor will not be serving the household, the agency should work with the vendor and the applicant to get an account re-established.
- If the applicant has moved, or has identified a new vendor to provide service, the agency needs to work with the new vendor and the applicant to get an active account established.

2.2.5.1 No Energy Burden Households

The following do not satisfy the energy burden requirement:

1) Applicants who have no responsibility for heating/non-heating electric because the costs are being paid in full directly to the **fuel supplier** (or landlord, if heat/electric is included in rent) by a government program.

2) Applicants residing in government-assisted housing (**subsidized housing**) or receiving rental assistance and heat and/or electric is included in their rent. This does not include the **Low Income Housing Tax Credit,** also known as 'Section 42'.

3) **Renters** who pay neither rent nor **heating/electric costs** because of an in-kind rental agreement. Renters who do not pay toward heating/electric costs when there is a shared meter and they do not pay any energy costs to anyone.

4) Tenants of group homes where the costs of care are paid by a local, state or federal agency, or charitable organization. This includes, but is not limited to, halfway houses or CBRFs.

5) Residents of medical or correctional institutions including nursing homes, assisted living facilities, government institutions, or jail when the applicant is not responsible for paying their heat and/or electric costs.

6) Tenants of facilities that pay a portion of their maintenance or care have no energy burden unless they pay their food and shelter costs.

7) WHEAP funds may not be used to offset or reimburse General Relief (GR) payments for energy cost. A GR recipient is considered to have an energy burden when GR makes a:
   - Flat cash payment to the recipient; or
   - Partial payment by voucher for heat and shelter; or
   - Received full payment of energy costs by GR but have since reimbursed the GR agency for the full payment. If the reimbursement occurs after a denial of the original application, the applicant may reapply and must complete a new application.

2.2.5.2 Energy Burden Table

The following table presents a variety of examples of energy burden questions and indicates (middle column) if the example satisfies the energy burden requirement. The final column indicates the method by which payment will be made, if appropriate.

ENERGY BURDEN TABLE

APPLICANT HEAT/ELECTRIC SITUATION	HAVE AN ENERGY BURDEN	TYPE OF PAYMENT
Pay an electric/heating vendor directly for use.	Yes	Designated vendor *will* receive a payment.
Heat/Electric is included in rent.	Yes	Applicant *will* receive a single party check based on "0" (proxy) heat/electric costs.
Heat/Electric is paid to the landlord or trailer park owner.	Yes	Applicant *will* receive a single party check based on "0" (proxy) heat/electric costs.
Applicant gets electricity through an extension cord from a neighboring residence (from a house to a mobile home for example).	No	Applicant *will not* receive an electric benefit.
Applicant has a separate meter/account for his or her residence - someone else pays the bill.	Yes	Designated vendor *will* receive a payment that may be based on actual fuel costs for the residence.
Applicant has the account name listed in a non-household member's name.	Yes	Designated vendor *will* receive a payment that may be based on actual fuel costs for the residence. If the account name is in a deceased spouse, protective payee, or other and is a direct pay account, actual energy costs may be used.
Applicant rents. Heat/ electric are not included in rent. Account is in the landlord's name. Tenant directly pays energy provider.	Yes	Designated vendor *will* receive a payment that can be based on actual fuel costs for the residence.
Applicant has a shared meter/account with another residence, does not have heat/electric included in their rent, nor do they pay any heat/electric costs to anyone.	No	Applicant *will not* receive a single party check based on "0" (proxy) heat/electrical costs.
Applicant lives in a residence with a master meter for heat/electric and the account is in the applicant's name.	Yes	Applicant has a relationship with a vendor; designated vendor *will* receive a payment based on "0" (proxy) for the master metered fuel(s).

APPLICANT HEAT/ELECTRIC SITUATION	HAVE AN ENERGY BURDEN	TYPE OF PAYMENT
Agricultural, business, or industrial activities on the same meter/account as the applicant's residence.	Yes	Designated vendor *will* receive a payment based on “0” (proxy) heat/electric cost.
Applicant has a shared meter/account with another tenant, and applicant pays the other tenant an amount for the heat/electric bill.	Yes	Applicant *will* receive a single party check based on “0” (proxy) heat/electrical costs.
Applicant heats with wood, the wood supplier is not a registered vendor, or applicant cuts his or her own wood.	Yes	Applicant *will* receive a single party check for heat benefit based on “0” (proxy) heat costs.
Applicant lives in government assisted housing (subsidized housing) and heat/electric is included in their rent. This does not include Section 42 housing.	No	Applicant is not eligible for a benefit, and *will not* receive a payment.

2.2.6 Counting Household Members

Enter all persons living in the household on the date of the application unless specifically excluded (see section 2.2.6.3). All persons in the **economic unit** are considered members of the household if they are living in the household on the date of application. Household members who are temporarily out of the household on the date of the application for reasons such as a vacation or business trip are still considered part of the economic unit and are counted on the HE+ application. In addition, those working out of town but not maintaining a separate permanent residence are also considered part of the economic unit. A lease may, or may not, list all those satisfying the WHEAP definition of a counted **household member**.

If the household composition changed during the three prior months, consider only the persons living in the household on the date of application. Do not count persons who may have lived in the household during a portion of the preceding three months but are no longer in the household on the application date. If the household member resides in more than one residence, the local WHEAP agency must indicate in HE+ System Notes on what basis they determined the primary residence.

2.2.6.1 Counting Children

Enter children as members of the household where they reside.

In custody cases where a child(ren) lives in more than one location based on shared physical placement, count the child(ren) in the household where they reside more than 50% of the year. If the applicant states that the child(ren) are part of a true 50%/50% physical

placement situation, the child(ren) can be recorded on the application of both parties. If a minor has unearned income, the unearned income shall be counted in the home where the income is being received.

In order to verify the placement of a child(ren), consider requesting any of the following information: court order(s), information from Income Maintenance cases or other economic support records, or school registration records or contact information. If this information is not available, please contact the HE+ Help Desk.

The worker shall indicate in HE+ System Notes what the applicant stated about the child(ren)'s living situation as well as any verifications viewed, as this information may be needed later on in the case of a dispute or fair hearing.

NOTE: 50% legal custody is not the same as 50% physical placement. The parent must have at least 50% physical placement in order to include the child(ren) on the application as an eligible household member.

2.2.6.2 Non-citizen Household Members

1) Enter eligible non-citizens as household members. See section 2.2.2.4.

2) Enter ineligible non-citizens as household members and indicate their status as ineligible non-citizen. All policy related to counting income applies to ineligible non-citizens. Count all applicable income for ineligible non-citizen household members.

The person listed as the case head must always be a U.S. citizen or an eligible non-citizen. If the case head is an ineligible non-citizen, the application will deny. The HE+ System will automatically generate a letter stating that the household was denied. If there is an eligible non-citizen or U.S. citizen of any age in the household, the worker must encourage her/him to apply (become the case head). See also Section 2.2.1.

2.2.6.3 Household Members Not Included on Application

The following is a list of the persons who should *NOT* be included as household members:

1) A **temporary household member**. Do not count the person or his/her income.

2) A foreign exchange student from another country attending school on an exchange program.

3) College students, unless they live in the home full-time and are commuting to school. If the student has any living facilities other than the home they may not be counted in the household—for example: have a dorm room, rent a room or an apartment. Individuals who have started their post-secondary education may not be counted as household members during semester breaks, or over the summer (between terms), unless they are commuting students.

4) Foster children who are placed for care by a court order.

5) A roomer/boarder: A person who rents a room in a residential structure but does not share in providing for the necessities of life for self or other residents of the structure. Persons living in a housing arrangement with their own room and sharing any common spaces, including but not limited to bathrooms, kitchens, and living rooms, are not roomers. The necessities of life are; shelter, heat and utilities. If the applicant rents a room to a roomer, you *do* count the rental income from this roomer/boarder as income.

6) A medical attendant (not resident in household): A person who cares medically for a household member to allow the household member to remain in their home, instead of a nursing home or institution. This medical attendant does not live with the household member and does not share in providing or being provided for the necessities of life. The necessities of life are shelter, heat, and utilities. The medical attendant maintains a separate household as their primary residence.

   If the medical attendant lives in the household, then they are considered a **live-in medical aid** and are counted as a household member.

7) A household member who has been called to active duty in the military and is to be out of the household for at least 60 days. The base income of this individual should not be counted. Any household support provided to maintain the household (i.e., housing allowances, allotments sent directly to the household for support) is counted as income for the household.

2.3 Financial Eligibility

2.3.1 General

The WHEAP income test is based on sixty percent (60%) of the state median income (SMI) level. If the household's gross income is less than or equal to the income limit for its size, the household passes the income test. If the gross income exceeds the limit, the household is not eligible unless categorical eligibility criteria are met. The income guidelines for different household sizes can be found on the HE+ website.

1) Assets

   The HE+ Program does not have a vehicle or asset limit test for eligibility. While regular benefits lack an asset test, assets may be considered in deciding Crisis Assistance benefits or furnace services, including assets of landlord.

   The proceeds of the sale of an asset are generally not counted as income. If the sale proceeds:

   - Include capital gains realized from the asset, the capital gains are not counted as income.
   - Involve a series of payments, any interest included in the payments needs to be counted as income. One common example is a land contract sale of real estate—the land contract should contain a description of the payments showing the principal and interest amounts (often this is in a chart or table).

   While retention of income documentation is not generally required, verification is required.

2) Categorical Eligibility

   Categorical eligibility status will allow a household to pass the income test if they are above the 60% SMI level. For a household to be determined as categorically eligible every household member must be a recipient of W-2/TANF, FoodShare, or SSI for each of the three months preceding the month of application. W-2 is considered categorical eligibility criteria only if there is a ‘cash benefit.’

   - W-2/TANF is Wisconsin Works/Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. If the household is over-income for WHEAP, but is determined to be categorically eligible because the household is receiving W-2, the agency must verify that all household members are a part of the Assistance Group and document, in HE+ System Notes, how this was verified.
   - FoodShare (FS) is also known as Food Stamps. If the household is over-income for WHEAP, but is determined to be categorically eligible because the household is receiving FoodShare, the agency must verify that all household members were receiving FoodShare in each of the three months prior to the month of application and document in HE+ System Notes how this was verified. Notes should specifically indicate which household members and months that FoodShare was received.
   - SSI is Social Security Supplemental Income. The SSI category includes the Care Taker Supplement Income (Care Taker Supplement is abbreviated as CTS or C-Sup).

Note: Receipt of Social Security Retirement benefits or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) cannot be used to establish categorical eligibility.

If some, not all, of the household members (including ineligible non-citizens) are recipients of W-2/TANF, FoodShare, or SSI for each of the preceding three months, the household is not categorically eligible.

If the household member(s) is a recipient of W-2/TANF, FoodShare, or SSI and does not have a first-of-the-month effective date for receiving program benefits but does have a partial month, consider him/her to have been a recipient of the program for that entire month. For example: The applicant applies for WHEAP on October 1. S/he has received W-2/TANF cash benefits for all of September and August, but was not a recipient until July 15. Consider him/her to have been a recipient for all of July.

2.3.2 Counting Income

Determine the income amounts on a monthly basis, consistent with the test period and the type of income.

1) Test Period

   The test period is the time frame during which income is counted to determine eligibility. The time frame can vary by income type. For most individuals with wages, government benefits, and regular income, the test period is based on gross income received during the three months prior to the date of the application.

   The test period can also be based on gross income received during the twelve months prior to the date of the application, or the previous tax year for income types such as interest, dividends, tribal per capita payments, seasonal work, and self-generated income.

2) General Guideline

   Count all gross income received by all household members on the date of application for the appropriate test period. For self-generated income and seasonal wages, see the specific directions in the sections which follow.

   Do not count, or enter, earned income or unemployment compensation for minors under the age of 18 (or full-time high school students) at the time of the application.

3) Interest, Dividends, and Royalties

   Count as income interest, dividends, and royalties, gross amounts received/earned in the twelve months prior to application, or during the previous tax year. Interest payments from land contract sales are recorded as land contract payments and can be recorded monthly if the amortization (payments) schedule is available (if an amortization schedule is not available it may be necessary to use amounts based on prior year's taxes).

Ignore this income only if the interest, dividends, royalties combined is less than $120 a year ($10/month). Ignore interest and dividends if the household member does not have access to the funds, such as interest on IRAs and CDs. To the extent it can be identified ignore the interest from asset account for applicants with a **PASS** plan (SSI *P*lan for *A*chieving *S*elf *S*upport). Do not ignore tribal per capita amounts.

Count the full 12 months and enter the monthly average amount for each of the months on the application.

In verification, do not accept statements that show only the interest earned for the prior three months. You may accept as verification the 1099 form issued by the payor or Schedule B of the 1040 tax return.

4) Disability Long Term Offset – When receiving both Social Security Disability and a Long Term Disability Insurance payment, the Long Term Disability may be reduced by the amount of the original Social Security Disability payment. Count the net disability calculation showing on the Coordination of Benefits (COB) statement issued. The Social Security Disability payment received will be entered as a separate income line.

5) Some residents of buildings with income-based requirements for occupancy live in a building where their energy costs (both heat and electric) are included in their rent. Such residents are not eligible for WHEAP benefits because they have no energy burden. Applications can be taken from the tenants of such buildings to determine eligibility for Weatherization. The local WHEAP agency will follow processes below in determining eligibility:
   a) Collect copies of waivers signed by the tenants allowing the property manager (landlord, housing authority) to release income information to the local WHEAP agency.
   b) Collect household information (SSN for each resident in the household, number of rooms, income, and any other information needed to complete the HE+ application) from the property manager.
   c) Obtain from the property manager an assurance that the case head for each application is who they say they are (this is in place of actually viewing the photo identification for the case head).
   d) Check the box on the fuel question indicating, “Do not pay….”
   e) Signed and dated Certification Page by each applicant/resident.

5) Deductions from Income

   Allow no deductions from gross income for employment-related expenses, childcare, medical expenses, or for any other reason. Allow no deductions from gross income except as specifically identified in this chapter, or as part of the Income Deducted Table (Section 2.3.8).

   Garnishments removed from income are not an allowable deduction from income. Care must be taken to ensure the income counted is the total gross income amount for each pay period.

2.3.3 Child Support

1) Received in the Household
   - Count all child support payments received, regardless of source
     - Count the actual money received even if it exceeds any court ordered amount or comes from other programs or parties than the non-custodial parent.
     - Count the child support payments as income even if the child is not actually living in the house at the time of the application.
     - Regular, recurring payments received that are for the purpose of paying down arrears are counted as income.
   - If a lump sum payment is made for arrears, including tax intercept income, only count the amount of the payment that applies to the test period.

2) Payments made by the Household
   - Court ordered child support payments paid by a household member/applicant are deducted from total household income.

Regular, recurring payments paid to pay down arrears are deducted from income. Payments made by a household member/applicant for child support that are not part of a court order may not be ignored and may not be deducted from income. Payments for alimony or maintenance may not be deducted from income.

Payments, even if court ordered, intended to pay for outstanding bills (medical or otherwise, legal costs, or other non-custodial expenses) may not be ignored or deducted from income. If a lump sum payment is made for arrears, including by tax intercept, only deduct the amount of the payment that applies to the test period. The worker must verify whether any part of the lump sum payment applied to the test period.

3) Child Support for Non-Resident Child
   - If a household receives child support payments, but the child actually resides more than fifty percent (50%) of the time in some other household, do not count the child as a household member, but count money received (regardless of what the household does with the child support funds).

2.3.4 Spousal Impoverishment

A spouse who is in a nursing home (institutionalized spouse) for more than 30 days may allocate some or all of their Social Security Income to their spouse (community spouse). The Spousal Impoverishment provision ensures that the community spouse has income to meet household expenses. Money not allocated to the community spouse must be used to pay nursing home costs and is not available to the community spouse. Count the income received as a result of Spousal Impoverishment income allocation provisions of Wis. Admin. Code HSSS §103.07(1)(9B)2 as direct income for the community spouse. Do not count the personal needs allocation that the institutionalized spouse is entitled to receive (typically a minimum of $45).

2.3.5 Self-Generated Income

Self-Generated Income (including self-employment and farm income) is determined by using a 12-month test period and entering an averaged, annualized amount for each of the three (3) months on the application. Other types of income for the individual or household are entered separately on the application and do not affect the self-generated income entries in the HE+ System.

When a household has more than one type of self-generated income, the losses of one shall be used to offset the profits of the other. For purposes of calculating income on the HE+ application, Rental Income (entered in the HE+ System using 'Rental Income' (R) income type) shall be included in the offset of losses and profits of self-generated income. When there is a realized loss in self-generated income, enter self-generated income as a separate income source and $0 as the amount for that source on the HE+ Application.

Self-generated income losses may not be offset by wages, interest income, or government program benefits. Alternatively, income from wages, interest, government benefits may not be reduced by self-generated income losses.

Note: For the purposes of calculating income, ownership and management of rental property (Schedule E) is self-generated income and this income is entered in the HE+ System as 'Rental Income.'

2.3.5.1 Verification of Income − Self-Generated Income

The worker shall ask all applicants with self-generated income in the household whether or not taxes were filed for the prior calendar year. If taxes were filed, the tax return must be provided by the applicant. Request the federal 1040 form and all appropriate schedules. If possible, use a copy prepared by a professional tax accountant.

The most common IRS 1040 Forms that report self-generated income are Schedule C (Business), Schedule F (Farm) and Schedule E (Rental, Partnerships, and Subchapter S corporations). Each member of a Partnership is also issued a Schedule K-1.

Use the self-generated income amount reported on the IRS 1040 tax forms for the prior year. Compare the amounts on the appropriate schedule with the entry on the corresponding line on the 1040 form—usually these are lines 12, 17, and 18. No adjustments are required. Divide the total net annual (12 months) income from the appropriate schedule by 12 to obtain the average monthly income amounts. When entering the income in the system, enter each month individually.

For Partnerships, use page 2 of the Schedule E and the partner's K-1 to determine the individual's income to count for the partnership.

- For each business on the Schedule E, calculate the net amount by adding and subtracting the totals from the Passive Income and Loss and Nonpassive Income and Loss. (If there is only one Partnership/S-Corporation on the Schedule E, this total net will be on line 32 of the Schedule E)

- Take that total net, and subtract any Guaranteed Payments (line 4 on the schedule K-1).

- Take this amount and divide by 12 (or the appropriate number of months, see below) and enter the annualized amount in each month of the test period using the Self-Generated Income (SE) income type.

- If there were guaranteed payments on the K-1, this is considered wage income and should be added as a separate income type using the Wages (W) income type and indicate in the 'Income Source' line that these wages are from guaranteed payments from a partnership. Guaranteed payments should be annualized by dividing the total guaranteed payments by 12 (or the number of months business was in operation) and enter for each month of the test period.

- Wages earned by self-employed individuals who pay themselves, issuing a W-2 at the end of the year, shall be annualized and entered as Wages (W) income type in the HE+ System, specifying in the 'Income Source' line that this is wages from the self-employment business. This income is included on line seven of the 1040. Use the W-2 for a verification item, dividing by 12 (or the number of months of operation) and enter for each month of the test period.

When the applicant does not file taxes, or did not file self-employment on his/her taxes, instruct them to complete a Self-Generated Income Report Form (S-GIRF) as found on the HE+ website. See section 2.3.5.2. A copy of the S-GIRF or tax records shall be retained in the application file when used. Exception: Rental income must be verified by tax records for furnace services. If rental income is not verified by income taxes for the homeowner or dwelling owner, the homeowner, including the rental unit, is not eligible for a furnace referral unless taxes are subsequently provided. See the Home Energy Plus Furnace Program Manual for details.

When a business was not in operation for the entire previous year because it started business in that year, divide the net annual income from the appropriate schedule by the number of months of operation to get the average monthly income. For example, the business started July 1 of the previous year. Take the net annual income and divide by six (6). If a business operated for only a few months of the previous year, but was in existence for the whole year, divide the net annual income by 12 to get the average monthly income. Seasonal businesses would be an example of this situation.

2.3.5.2 Use of Self-Generated Income Report Forms

A Self-Generated Income Report Form (S-GIRF) may be used to verify self-generated income when an applicant states that he/she did not file taxes in the most recent year or did not file self-employment on his/her taxes. In such a case, the S-GIRF must cover the previous 12 months to the date of application. Sum the total of the gross income provided on the S-GIRF and divide by 12 to calculate monthly income and enter that amount for each of the previous three (3) months. A separate S-GIRF shall be used and entered as a separate entry in the HE+ System for each source of self-generated income. The agency shall retain a copy of the completed S-GIRF in the application file when used.

The Self-Generated Income Report Form can be found on the HE+ website.

Note: No income deductions are allowed when reporting self-generated income on a S-GIRF. Deductions or expenses related to self-generated income shall not be factored in to the amounts counted as income unless the applicant provided the complete tax return from the prior year.

The S-GIRF shall be used to report self-generated income if:

- Money is received for self-generated income without an organized self-employment business and/or self-employment is not filed on the applicant's taxes. Examples include: odd jobs, child care, cleaning, donating plasma, etc.

- The source of income, business or farm was not in operation during the previous year and IRS tax forms are not available.

  Example: Business or income started in June and applicant is applying in November. The business operated for five months (June through October.) Divide total income by five (5) to arrive at amount per month, and enter that amount as self-generated income for each of the three (3) previous months.

- Chapter 7 bankruptcy has been filed since tax forms were last completed.

  Note: The last day of work would be the day that the bankruptcy papers were filed. Do not use last year's tax form; use the S-GIRF to calculate income.

  Note: A person who files bankruptcy under Chapter 11 of the federal bankruptcy laws and remains self-employed is not considered to have a significant change. Base income on last year's tax return and any approved bankruptcy reorganization plan.

2.3.5.3 Self-Generated Income and Annual Fuel Use

When self-generated income is in, or based in, the home, (or other areas on the property which share a meter with the home) the actual fuel usage should be entered, but is not used to calculate the benefit. The applicant will receive a benefit based on "0" (proxy) heat/electric costs when selecting "Yes" for commercial use on the account in Field #22 (fuel page).

To determine if there is commercial use, compare the addresses used for the business or source of self-generated income on the Income Tax Schedules (C, E, F) or the Self-Generated Income Report Form (S-GIRF) to the home address for one indication of a business operating out of the home. If there is a separate address for the business, select "NO" for commercial use on the account.

If the business address is the same as the home address, use the following tests to determine if there is commercial use on the account:

1) Does the self-generated income primarily occur in the home (or other areas on the property which share a meter with the home)? If so, select “yes” for commercial use on the account. If no, continue to #2:

2) Does the applicant see customers in their home (or other areas on the property which share a meter with the home) on a routine basis? If so, select “yes” for commercial use on the account. If no, continue to #3:

3) If all self-generated income is operated entirely in a separate location, or has very little activity in the home, (or other areas on the property which share a meter with the home), and fails the previous two tests select “No” for commercial use on the account in Field #22, and the actual fuel usage is used to calculate the benefit. Examples of self-generated income which generally have very little activity in the home are: cleaning services, home party sales, lawn care, snow removal, rental, and scrapping metal.

4) If the situation is questionable, indicate in System Notes the answers the applicant provided to the aforementioned tests. If you have a different situation or you are uncertain if there is commercial use on the meter, please contact the HE+ Help Desk for assistance in determining if there is commercial use.

In the case of a farm operation, verify that the energy consumption for the dwelling does not include any of the farm operations.

Note: See section 3.4.19 for information on counting the number of rooms.

2.3.6 Seasonal Workers’ Income

Seasonal workers are individuals whose primary employment/source-of-income is normally earned in less than 12 months per year. Seasonal workers may be paid on a 12 month basis but earn their income in less than 12 months, such as some teachers. Seasonal workers often include school bus drivers, teachers, and others whose primary employment is less than 12 months per year. If the seasonal employment has not been in effect for 12 months, calculate the seasonal income from the start date to the end of the prior month (of the application date) and divide by the number of months this covers.
If an individual is determined to be a seasonal worker, indicate in System Notes what information was used to make this determination.

Individuals who have regular (year round) employment or source of monthly income and hold second jobs in seasonal businesses are not seasonal workers for the purpose of calculating income. An individual, who holds a seasonal job but is not determined to be a seasonal worker because they have a regular source of income, should have each income calculated per established income guidelines for each source.

A seasonal worker may have more than one job or source of income. If a household member’s primary source of income is determined to be seasonal, all wage and unemployment compensation income must be calculated from the same annual time period

and divided by 12 to get a monthly income amount. All other income types should be counted as per policy for that income type.

2.3.7 Income Counted Table

INCOME COUNTED TYPES DEFINITION/DESCRIPTION	**(System Code)**
Alimony Received	**(A)**
Child Support Received See Section 2.3.3.	**(CS RECD)**
SSI Caretaker Supplement	**(C-Supp)**
Disability Long Term Count gross receipts during the test period. If recurring payments are made annually, then divide by 12 and add the computed amounts to each month of the test period. When the Long Term Disability payer is offsetting the amount of disability benefit against the Social Security Disability payment, count the net calculation of the disability payment after the SS payment is calculated.	**(DL)**
Disability Short Term Count the income in the months to which the payment(s) applied, regardless of when the payment(s) was received. Example: maternity leave	**(DS)**
Dividends, Interest, Royalties Count as income if the combined total is greater than or equal to $120 in the twelve months prior to the application, or during the previous tax year, and the applicant or a household member has access to it (able to withdraw the money without penalty). Examples of interest which may not be accessible: IRAs, CDs, etc. If annual amount earned is less than $120, ignore the income. **NOTE**: Do not accept statements that show only the interest earned for the prior three months. Schedule B of the 1040 tax return may be used.	**(D)**
Gambling, Lottery, Bingo Lottery winnings, Bingo, or any other income from gambling. Count gross winnings for each of the past three months, do not deduct losses.	**(G)**
General Relief Income from the State Relief Block Grant (e.g. Refugee Cash Assistance [RCA]). See also Ignored Income Table.	**(GR)**
Gift/Donations Something given voluntarily without expectation of payment in return, or to make a gesture of assistance. Count money received as a gift or donation in the last three months. Do not include gifts received for birthdays, holidays, or other special occasions.	**(GF)**
Government Relief or Disaster Aid Funding received from federal government assistance. This includes the	**(GV)**

INCOME COUNTED TYPES DEFINITION/DESCRIPTION	**(System Code)**
match grant money/resettlement funds a refugee receives upon arrival in the US. Note: Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) is reported as General Relief income.	
Land Contract Count only the interest portion of the payments as income.	**(LC)**
Land Rent Income from land used for, including but not limited to, cash crop fields or pastured livestock. Ignore annual amount earned up to $120.	**(R)**
Lump Sum Payments Counted Lump sum payments received from employers for compensatory time, unused sick leave, and unused vacation time are counted and should be prorated over the number of months covered.	**(W)**
Other Use *only* when an income type does not exist and indicate in the Source Field the type of other income.	**(O)**
Other Direct Payments (Regular and Scheduled) Regular and scheduled payments of any source of income (received monthly, quarterly, annually, or on any regular schedule) that is not classified as ignored income. • Respite Care if received as salary. • Payments for shelter costs or normal living expenses (rent, clothing, food eaten at home). • Regular payments from a trust fund.	 **(W)** **(W)** **(P)**
Pensions, Annuities, and Deferred Compensation (IRA, 401k, 503b, etc.) • These payments are scheduled and paid on a regular basis. For pension or annuities paid on a monthly basis, enter the monthly gross benefit. For those paid on a quarterly and/or other basis, enter the average monthly amount. Often 1099 forms can be used for verification. Reminder: An amount equal to the Medicare Part B deduction should be subtracted from the gross amount of social security retirement benefits, federal pensions, and Rail Road Retirement. See Ignored Income Table under Medicare. • Payments from trust funds that make regular payments to the beneficiary. • Enter veterans' benefits as Veterans Benefits. • For IRA withdrawals: **NOTE:** The point at which an IRA or Annuity is annualized or at the time the holder is required to make withdrawals, it is counted as income. Withdrawals that are not regular and not required may be a reduction of assets, and not included as income for an account holder under the age of 70.	**(P)** **(V)**

INCOME COUNTED TYPES DEFINITION/DESCRIPTION	**(System Code)**
1) If the account owner is **70 or older**, count all withdrawals, even once a year, from the account as income. If the withdrawal is a single action that takes all of the funds from the account, divide the withdrawal by 12 and enter the averaged amount for each of the months of the test period. 2) If the account owner is **under 70 years of age**, count as income all withdrawals from an account that are regular, and/or more frequent than once a year, for example weekly, monthly, or quarterly. If the withdrawal is a single action that takes out a lump sum, even if it draws out all of the funds from the account, **do not** count the amount withdrawn as income.	
Rental Income Enter income in the HE+ System using (R) income type; see Section 2.3.5 for more information on counting Self-Generated Income.	**(R)**
Self-Generated Income (Self-Employment) This includes farm income. See Section 2.3.5.	**(SE)**
Social Security (Retirement) Benefits paid from the Social Security Old Age and Survivor's Insurance Trust Fund to retired workers, their spouses and children, and survivors of deceased workers. See also: Medicare Part B, Section 2.3.9. (*If a lump sum retroactive payment is received, count only the amount of the payment that would have been received in the test period.*)	**(SS)**
Social Security Disability Insurance Benefits paid from the Social Security Disability Insurance Trust Fund to disabled workers and their spouses and children. See also: Medicare Part B, Section 2.3.9. (*If a lump sum retroactive payment is received, count only the amount of the payment that would have been received in the test period.*)	**(SSDI)**
Spousal Impoverishment See Section 2.3.4.	**(SP)**
Strike Benefits Strike benefits are counted incomes. If the payment(s) includes an amount paid specifically for a period not in the three months prior to the application, that portion is ignored as income, except for seasonal workers. **NOTE**: For seasonal workers see also Section 2.3.6.	**(W)**

INCOME COUNTED TYPES DEFINITION/DESCRIPTION	**(System Code)**
Student Income Count all earned income, including wages from employment, work-study wages, and ROTC stipends. Other student stipends should be counted as other income. Do not consider financial aid such as scholarships, education grants, fellowships, veterans' educational benefits (including educational subsistence allowances), ROTC scholarships, student loans or book reimbursements as income for student(s).	**(W)** **(O)**
Supplemental Security Income Income paid to the disabled, elderly, and blind. Enter the federal and state benefit as two separate SSI income lines. Do not count SSI-E income. Verify that state SSI benefits do not include SSI-E. See section 2.3.9 - Ignored Income Table.	**(SSI)**
TANF/W2 TANF/W2 -count only cash grants received.	**(T)**
Training Allowances Vocational and rehabilitative program money recognized by federal, state or local governments. Example: • Wisconsin Employment Opportunities Program WEOP, or • Workforce Investment Act (WIA – formerly JTPA). **NOTE**: Related reimbursements and payments made directly to service providers for childcare, tuition and fees may be ignored except for any amount in excess of actual expenses, which must be counted as income. See also Reimbursements in the Ignored Income Table, Section 2.3.9 of this chapter.	**(W)**
Tribal Per Capita Tribal per capita gross amounts received in the 12 months prior to application, or during the previous tax year, less the first $2,000 received by the applicant in the same 12 months or the same tax year. If the total gross amount is $2,000 or less, treat the entire amount as ignored income.	**(TR)**
Unemployment Compensation Unemployment benefits are counted incomes. (*If a lump sum retroactive payment is received, count only the amount of the payment that would have been received in the test period.*)	**(UC)**
Veterans Benefits Veterans' benefits are counted income. These may be identified by the VA as the following: • VA Compensation: for disability during war activity, • VA Pension (do not list as pension income): for disability that was acquired outside of war activity, • Retired Military Compensation: regular retirement, or • Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC).	**(V)**

INCOME COUNTED TYPES DEFINITION/DESCRIPTION	**(System Code)**
Wages, Salaries, Commissions, Bonuses, Profit Sharing and Tips Count all gross income received in the three months prior to the application month (based on payment or check date) by all adults 18 and over living in the household (see Ignored Income Table 2.3.9 for exceptions). • Count commissions, bonuses, and profit sharing received annually (lump sums)in the year it was received. Take total award divided by 12 and enter the computed annualized amount in each month of the test period. • Seasonal workers, calculate earnings by dividing the person's gross income from W2 statements or the 1099 by 12. Report the monthly income for the preceding three months.	**(W)**
Workers Compensation Workers compensation payments are counted income.	**(WK)**
Zero Income Cases Comments must be included as HE+ System Application Notes. See 3.4.28.2 for Notary Public requirements of Zero Income Households.	

2.3.8 Income Deducted Table

INCOME DEDUCTED TYPES DEFINITION/DESCRIPTION
Child Support Paid Enter the child support paid in the test period and the system will subtract the child support paid from the income calculation. See Section 2.3.3.

2.3.9 Ignored Income Table

IGNORED INCOME TYPES DEFINITION/DESCRIPTION
Adoption Assistance Social Security Act Title IV-E Fund. Provides monthly payment to adoptive parents to assist with the care of a special needs child. Count the child in the household.
Assets • Any personal asset sold in any of the three months prior to application; see Section 2.3.1 (1). • Withdrawals from the principal of interest/dividend earning accounts as savings accounts, stocks, U.S. Treasury Bonds, etc. • Lump-sum withdrawals from an IRA account before the account owner is 70 years old are not counted as income. • Capital Gains *Note:* All lump sums for someone under 70 years of age are ignored when it is an asset.

IGNORED INCOME TYPES DEFINITION/DESCRIPTION
Note: Remember to check for interest, which is counted as income if greater than or equal to $120 per year.
Dividends, Interest, Royalties If the annual combined total earned is less than $120, ignore the income.
Earned income for minors (under 18) If the household member(s) is under 18, ignore earned income (including wages and Unemployment Compensation). **High school students 18 and over** If the household member(s) is age 18 or over **and** is a full or part-time high school student, ignore earned income (including wages and Unemployment Compensation).
Flex Dollars Ignore flex dollars used for health insurance premiums when the dollars would not otherwise be available to the applicant.
General Relief General relief from Interim Assistance (IA) programs for individuals that have applied for SSI is ignored income, as this assistance is repaid from the individual's lump sum eligibility payment.
Government Payments and Program Participation Income • Payments or allowances made under any federal, state or local laws for the purpose of energy assistance, including WHEAP. Do not count payments specifically designated for heating/electric costs. • Payments made to children of Vietnam Veterans born with spina bifida. • VISTA income. • AmeriCorps income. • Base pay of military personnel called to temporary active duty when the individual is not in the household on date of application and when the temporary assignment will be for 60 days or more. • Foster Care Payments for minor(s). • Title V Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP income, formerly Green Thumb). • Payments to volunteers under Title II (RSVP, Foster grandparents and other) and Title III (SCORE and AGE) of the Domestic Volunteer Services Act of 1973 (P.L.93-113) as amended. • Youth Incentive Entitlement Pilot Projects, Youth Community Conservation and Improvement Projects, Summer Youth Employment Program and reimbursement of expenses provided under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and Wisconsin Conservation Corps. • Uniform Relocation Assistance and Property Acquisition Policy Act of 1970 (P.L. 92-646, section 216). • Alaska Native Claim Settlement Act (P.L. 92-203, Section 21(a).

IGNORED INCOME TYPES DEFINITION/DESCRIPTION
• Sub-marginal land of the United States held in trust for certain Indian tribes (P.L. 94-114, Section 6). • Retroactive DEFRA payments. • Payments made under P.L. 100-383 Wartime Relocation of Citizens. These are restitution payments made by the U.S. government to individual Japanese-Americans or their survivors and Aleuts who were interned or relocated during World War II. • Monies received as a result of P.L. 101-41, Puyallup Tribe of Indians Settlement Act of 1989. • Veteran's Aid in Attendance is ignored unless the aid worker is living in the household. • Certain government payments are counted income when the annual amount is equal to or greater than $120. Anything less than $120 is ignored. • DNR Programs that pay royalties (e.g. Stumpage) • USDA Programs (e.g. crop disaster relief programs) • Agriculture Programs (e.g. CRP)   • Tax credits – Tax credits such as farmland preservation and homestead credit claimed on Wisconsin Income Taxes.
In-kind Income Do not count any gain or benefit that is not in the form of money payable directly to the household, such as: meals, clothing, housing or garden produce. This includes but is not limited to: • Benefits received from the supplemental food program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC). • FoodShare (Food Stamps) Benefits.
Jury Duty Ignore any payments received for performing Jury Duty. If any counted income is paid during jury duty, the income is counted as normal. See Section 2.3.7 Income Counted Table.
Kinship Care Cash benefit paid to caretaker relatives of minor children. Count the child in the household.
Land Rent Income from land used for, including but not limited to, cash crop fields or pastured livestock. Ignore annual amount earned if less than $120; count as income if annual earned amount is $120 or more.
Loans Ignore all loans including, but not limited to, student loans and reverse mortgages a person received in the previous three months from private individuals or commercial sources. (This includes advances on a credit card.)
Lump Sum Payments, Non-recurring There are some lump sum payments that are counted as income, but most are not. Examples of not counted lump sum payments include:

IGNORED INCOME TYPES DEFINITION/DESCRIPTION
• Income tax refunds (paid in lump sums or weekly), • Rebates, • Earned Income Credits (EIC) paid in lump sum or weekly, • Employer new-hire sign-on bonus, • US military (re-)enlistment bonus, • Insurance settlement, • Estate Inheritances, • Trust funds, if the payment is a non-recurring lump sum, • Refunds of Security deposits on rental property or utilities, • Retroactive Social Security, Public Assistance or unemployment compensation payments,+ • Severance pay, • Tax intercept, or • Homestead Tax Credit. +*If the lump sum payment includes an amount paid specifically for any of the three months prior to application, that portion is counted as income.*
Medicaid Purchase Plan (MAPP) Income Wisconsin's Medicaid Purchase Plan (MAPP) offers people with disabilities, who are working or interested in working, the opportunity to buy health care coverage through the Wisconsin Medicaid Program. A person meets the work requirement for MAPP if engaged in a work activity at least one time per month. Any wages earned to meet this requirement shall not be counted on the application.
Medicare--Part B Premiums • Medicare Part B premium deductions from social security payments. • Medical insurance premiums deducted from the retirement pay of those receiving federal retirement or railroad retirement benefits, up to an amount equal to the Medicare Part B premium. *Note:* Part D premiums are not deducted from income.
Money received by a disabled person specifically to allow him or her to live in their own home • Money received through Community Options Program (COP). • Payments to a disabled person for the services of a medical attendant or live-in medical aid when the money is paid in total to the attendant or aid for services rendered. *Ignore income for the disabled person, but count as income for the live-in medical aid if the aid is considered a part of the household.*
Payments made to a third party • Rent payments paid by a relative who is not a household member. • Payments by a government agency to a child caring institution providing day care for

IGNORED INCOME TYPES DEFINITION/DESCRIPTION
a household member. • Payments of a household's medical bills made directly to a hospital by an insurance company.
Refunds & Overpayments If overpayments are received in any of the preceding three months that the applicant is responsible to re-pay, do not count the amount of the ***overpayment*.** If repayment of overpayments is withheld from an assistance payment, or other source of income, count the full amount of the income before the overpayment is removed.
Reimbursements (money paid to the household for incurred expense) As long as the payment is not more than what the household actually spent and is *not* for normal household living expense or shelter costs (rent, clothing, or food eaten at home). If the reimbursement was more than the actual expense, count the extra as income. Reimbursement Examples: • Flat allowances or per diem for job or training related expenses such as travel, uniforms and transportation to and from a job or training site, including travel expenses of migrant workers. • Out-of-pocket expenses incurred by volunteers. • Reimbursement or allowances for students for specific education expenses, i.e., travel or books. • Medical and dependent care. • Services provided under federal Block Grant programs. • Respite Care received to pay for services.
Student Income or Support Do not count financial aid such as scholarships, educational grants, fellowships, veterans' educational benefits (including educational subsistence allowances), ROTC scholarships, student loans, or book reimbursements as income for student(s). Stipends received by a student are counted income; even if the source is ROTC.
Sub-Housing Utility Allowance/Reimbursement Do not count the heating/electric allowance/reimbursement as income.
Subsidized Guardianship Payments Ongoing payments to persons becoming legal guardians of children in foster care, similar to the adoption assistance program for children who are adopted. The target population is children placed with relatives licensed as foster parents. Count the children in the household; do not count the subsidized guardianship payments.
Supplemental Security Income Exceptional Expense (SSI-E) When received, SSI-E Exceptional Expense Supplement benefit must not be included as part of the state SSI income. Do not enter the SSI-E income amount. $-95.99 for Individuals

IGNORED INCOME TYPES DEFINITION/DESCRIPTION
$-345.35 for Couples ($172.67 for each person) $-49.34 for Couple/One Spouse Eligible
Tribal Per Capita If the total gross amount received in the prior 12 months or previous tax year is $2,000 or less, treat as ignored income. If over $2,000, the first $2,000 of Tribal Per Capita is ignored income; anything over in the same year is counted income.

Chapter 3 − Application Process

3.1 General Application Rules

3.1.1 How to Apply

A household may apply by completing a paper version of the Home Energy Plus (HE+) Application or participating in an **interactive interview**. Phone, mailed or dropped off applications can be accepted with the correct supporting documents.

3.1.2 Where to Apply

Households must apply through the local WHEAP agency in the county/tribe where they reside.

3.1.3 When to Apply

Households have the right to apply at any time, regardless of whether or not the heating season has ended. Agencies should encourage households to apply. Early applications may be taken once the Division has determined the Early Application start date. (See Chapter 10 Definitions of terms for more information.)

3.1.4 Multiple Applications

A household may apply multiple times if not deemed eligible on earlier applications. Households have the right to apply throughout the year. For an application to be considered for regular heat/electric benefits it must be initiated before the end of the heating season. Every application shall have a dated applicant signature and a dated agency staff signature on the Certification Page. Signatures on withdrawn, incomplete, and denied applications may not be used for a new application.

All duplicate applications received by the local agency shall be processed in the HE+ System with any information provided by the applicant. If the applicant chooses to withdraw the application, the application must still be entered in the system.

3.1.5 Regular Benefits

WHEAP eligible applicants may receive one regular heating and one electric benefit providing the application is initiated before the end of the heating season and LIHEAP or Public Benefits funds are available during the heating season. Once a household is determined WHEAP eligible the household remains eligible for crisis assistance for the duration of the program year regardless of the date of the application. Eligibility does not ensure the provision of a crisis benefit.

3.1.6 Weatherization Eligibility

At the time an applicant's HE+ application is approved, the address reported on the HE+ application is referred for Weatherization services. Referrals for Weatherization services

extend for 12 months following the date of the approved HE+ application. If an HE+ eligible household moves, the Weatherization referral does not automatically carry to the new address. The household may re-apply during the same program year to determine eligibility for Weatherization assistance at the new address by completing an HE+ application through the local agency. All applications must contain current, complete, and accurate information based on the date of the application. See the Weatherization Program Manual for restrictions regarding previously weatherized units.

3.1.7 Limitations

There is no entitlement to WHEAP or Weatherization Assistance. Being eligible does not mean Regular Benefits, Crisis Assistance, Emergency Furnace, or Weatherization benefits will be provided.

3.1.8 Fair Hearings

If the individual believes their application has been incorrectly denied, an error in determining eligibility, or their payment is incorrect, they may request a fair hearing (see Section 1.8.2).

3.1.9 Application Processing

Applications are to be entered/processed in the chronological order in which they are received. The application completed with the first chronological date, from applicants who file more than one application, will have precedence in processing.

All applications are to be entered into the HE+ System within 30 days after the application process is started. Any application materials mailed, faxed, dropped off at the agency, or otherwise provided to the agency outside of the original appointment, must be date stamped upon receipt.

Each application and each section of the application must be completed to the maximum extent possible regardless of information that may cause a denial of benefits. The local WHEAP agency must assure each application is complete in all parts unless the applicant withdraws the application or fails to provide required information within 30 days of the application date.

All applications received in the early application process shall be entered into the HE+ System prior to October 31. In addition, missing information for incomplete early applications can be received until October 31 to be considered complete.

3.1.10 Fraud Prevention

Any application for an agency employee, relative of an agency employee, former employee, or a friend of a worker shall be reviewed and approved by a staff person at a supervisory level or higher, and entered into the HE+ System by someone holding the ‘Supervisor’ permission. This permission must be held by at least one WHEAP staff person of a supervisory role within the agency (or designated by a person with a supervisory role). In addition, a System Note indicating the manager/supervisor who reviewed the application

must be entered. This restriction applies to any actions related to the individual's regular benefits, crisis assistance, and furnace applications.

All agency staff who work with WHEAP are required to agree to the Conflict of Interest Policy/Non-Disclosure Agreement. All staff who have HE+ System access will be prompted to agree to the Conflict of Interest/Non-Disclosure Agreement Form upon gaining access to the HE+ System. This agreement is for the duration of employment with the agency. For staff who work with WHEAP, but do not have HE+ System access, agencies shall require staff members to sign a paper copy of the Conflict of Interest/Non-Disclosure Agreement Form which can be found on the HE+ website under Grantee Information. This agreement is for the duration of employment with the agency. The paper copy shall be retained for the duration of the employee's employment at the agency. (For more information refer to Section 8.5.1 and Appendix A.)

If the only agency person with the 'Supervisor' permission is faced with taking an HE+ Application from their friend or family member, contact the HE+ Help Desk for guidance before taking the application.

3.2 Application Formats

3.2.1 Interactive

The interactive application is the same as the paper application form that is located on the Home Energy Plus website and is filled out during an interview process with a WHEAP intake worker. The application is interactive when the information is entered into the system during the interview.

3.2.2 Home Energy Plus Application (Long Form)

The long form, Home Energy Plus (HE+) Application (Form DOA-9549), is the paper version of the application in the online HE+ System. Use the form to conduct a mailed application or to conduct intake when the HE+ System is not accessible. If the paper version is used in a face-to-face or phone appointment, the 'Is Interactive' field shall be entered as "No". Although the form was designed to be completed by local WHEAP staff, individual applicants may submit a completed form to apply for assistance. HE+ Long Form Applications shall not be altered without prior approval by DEHCR.

Each Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) DEHCR distributes a current version of the HE+ Long Form Application. Applicants shall submit only a current FFY form to apply for Energy Assistance. Prior FFY versions of the application form shall not be accepted by the local agency. If an applicant submits a previous FFY version, start the application in the HE+ System by entering the required minimum application information (application date, applicant name, applicant Social Security Number (SSN), applicant date of birth, applicant gender, housing type, applicant mailing and residence address) and leave it in "Pending" status. Mail an "Incomplete Notice" to the applicant with the current version of the HE+ Application Long Form enclosed. Do not submit the application until the applicant returns the current, completed, signed, and dated FFY Certification Page. HE+ Long Form Applications shall not be altered without prior approval by DEHCR.

If a current FFY Home Energy Plus Application is received by the local agency without the

applicant signature, enter the application in the System by entering the minimum required application information and leave it in “Pending” status. Mail an “Incomplete Notice” to the applicant with a Certification Page to sign.

The Certification Page must be signed by the applicant and the worker before the application is considered complete. Do not submit the application until the applicant returns the completed, signed, and dated Certification Page. If an applicant chooses not to sign the Certification Page the worker must document this on the Certification Page and add an HE+ System Note. The worker must also sign the Certification Page prior to submission for benefit eligibility in the HE+ System. A complete Certification Page includes an applicant signature and date, and a worker signature and date.

The Spanish version of the HE+ Application is available for applicants, but does not replace the policy requirement that agencies have a method to orally communicate with persons with limited English proficiency (LEP). See section 8.2.3 for more information.

3.2.3 Home Energy Plus Short Application Form

The Home Energy Plus Short Application Form was designed only for use with fixed income households where the applicants:

1) are at the same address as the last application;

2) have no change in the household member composition;

3) have no minor household members; and

4) only receive income from one or more of the following income types:

    - Social Security including SSDI, SSI;
    - Dividends/interest;
    - Pension; and/or
    - Veterans benefits

All instructions and guidance in this WHEAP Operations Manual apply to HE+ Short Form Applications in the same manner as they do to the HE+ Application Long Form.

HE+ Short Form Applications shall not be altered without approval by DEHCR.

When an HE+ Short Form Application is submitted and the agency determines the household did not meet the HE+ Short Form Application criteria, a full application process must be conducted. The application is incomplete until all information is verified. The HE+ Short Form Application with applicant signature must be retained in the file. The agency is not required to obtain a new applicant signature for the full application process, and the original HE+ Short Form Application date shall be maintained. Document in HE+ System Notes how the full application process was conducted.

3.2.4 Automated Applications

Households a) whose income in the previous year came only from Social Security, b) who receive gas and electric service from a Class A utility, and c) who have the same housing characteristics as the previous year (have not moved), may be provided with automated WHEAP benefits without being required to submit a new application.

The automated application households are identified from the previous year's data and the utilities verify the household is at the same meter and provide the fuel information. The local WHEAP agency is not required to take an application for these households. However, the number of years a household may receive an automated benefit is limited to two years. Every third year, the local WHEAP agency will have to verify the information with a new application.

3.2.5 Phone Applications

Phone applications may be accepted. Phone applications may be interactive if the data is entered directly into the system during the interview.

- The application date is the date of the phone interview.
- The application needs to be 'saved' which will put it into 'Pending'.
- Send the Certification Page to the applicant with any requests for documentation. If the phone application is conducted interactively, using an HE+ System generated Certification Page is the preferred method. Document with an HE+ System Application Note that information was requested. An application is not complete until the Certification Page signed and dated by the applicant is received for that application.

If the applicant returns the information within 30 days, enter the additional information, save and submit the application and then 'Accept Benefits' for payment. If the documentation is not returned within 30 days, the system will deny the application as incomplete. The applicant will have to re-apply.

3.2.6 File Retention

Document retention in the application file includes the following:

- entire paper application; complete or incomplete
- a signed and dated Certification Page; For any interactive application, using a System generated Certification page is the preferred method.

When applicable, retain

- Authorized Representative and/or Power of Attorney (POA) documentation,
- Zero Income Form(s),
- Any documented used to verify self-generated income (self-generated income form, tax forms and/or supporting schedules).
- Agencies that do not use the system generated Incomplete Form to notify applicants of missing information must keep copies of all Incomplete Forms/letters in the applicant file, when applicable.

For additional record keeping requirements, see Section 8.5.3.

3.3 Processing an Application – Paper or Interactive

3.3.1 Access

The secured database/website where applications are stored and from which applications are processed is referred to as the HE+ System, and is located on the web at https://heplus.wi.gov. Entrance to the HE+ System site is controlled by a security agreement, a user name, security image, and password. Incorrectly entering the logon information five times will result in the profile being locked. Users should contact their agency HE+ System Profile Management Administrator (PMA) to unlock the profile. The local PMA is responsible for creating users, assigning permissions, and verifying intake worker PII. The Division of Energy, Housing and Community Resources staff are the only ones who can create PMA's in the HE+ system. As part of the security on the HE+ System, all local WHEAP workers with Application Intake permissions will be required to enter their Social Security Number (SSN) upon their first log on. Workers' SSNs will be visible to only the PMA for the territories assigned to that user. Any changes in user system permissions will result in the user needing to agree to the newly assigned permissions and the Conflict of Interest/Non-Disclosure Agreement statement.

The Division maintains a non-secured, or public, website. The public site can be accessed directly at www.homeenergyplus.wi.gov. A substantial amount of information is available on this site for both WHEAP and the Weatherization Assistance Program

3.3.2 Verification of Information

The information entered in the application on the system is to be true and correct. WHEAP workers are to verify all information before it is entered in the HE+ System. While it is not necessary to maintain copies of documents as proof the information entered is correct, workers must indicate how they have verified information in HE+ System Notes.

- Applicable income documentation that IS required to be retained in the file
    - Self-generated income form, tax forms and/or support schedules used to verify self-generated income
    - Zero Income Form(s)

Income information verification may be entered in the "Verification" field of the HE+ System Application Income Table and in HE+ System Notes if additional clarification is needed.

If a worker discovers that verified application information differs from the submitted paper HE+ Application Form, discrepancies should be documented in HE+ System Notes.

If the information entered on the current year application differs from application history, discrepancies should be documented in HE+ System Notes.

3.3.3 Validation of Applicant Data

Workers are required to use data validation functions that are available in the HE+ System when processing HE+ applications. Information displayed as part of the data validation must be reviewed for accuracy prior to use for application processing. Applications that require bypassing the data validation functions must have documented justification in HE+ System

Notes. Data validation functions are only to be utilized for validating and retrieving data relevant to an HE+ application. Misuse may result in inactivation of a worker's WHEAP user profile and may include further disciplinary action.

3.4 Field by Field Instructions/Guidelines

3.4.1 Application Date

Application Type	Application Date
HE+ System Application (i.e. Interactive Application)	The date the interactive interview takes place.
Phone Application (paper or interactive)	The date of the phone interview.
Paper Application taken by WHEAP worker (at outreach or because system is down)	The date the interview takes place.
Paper Application completed by applicant and mailed or dropped off at agency	The date the application was received by the Agency. Each application must be date stamped upon receipt.

3.4.2 Worker Number

Up to a four-digit local agency assigned number, individualized for each worker, can be entered.

3.4.3 Interactive Interview

To be interactive, information provided by the applicant must be entered into the HE+ System during the course of the interview. An interactive interview may be face-to-face or over the phone.

3.4.4 Outreach Indicator

The outreach indicator assists the local agency in tracking the method in which an application is received.

- Local Agency – Application process is conducted face-to-face at the County/Tribal office or Subcontractor's office.
- Alternate Site – Application interview is conducted face-to-face at a location other than the main County/Tribal/Subcontractor office. For WHEAP purposes, elderly meal sites, or other outreach sites are alternate sites.
- Home Visit – Application is taken face-to-face in the applicant's home.
- Mail – Applications that are submitted to the agency via United States Postal Service (USPS) mail, or dropped off at the front desk of the agency.
- Phone – Applications that are taken over the phone.

3.4.5 Withdrawn

Withdrawn applications must be entered into the HE+ System. An applicant may choose to withdraw the application any time prior to extraction. Withdrawn applications should always have at least the minimum information entered. All information provided should be entered even if the application will be withdrawn.

Add HE+ System Notes as to the reason for the withdrawal must be entered. A system generated denial letter is sent to the applicant.
When a current year application is withdrawn, it is not possible to create another application on the system until the withdrawn application is extracted.

3.4.6 Social Security Number (SSN)

SSNs must be verified through the HE+ System. The System will prompt a web call to verify each SSN listed on the application. See Section 2.2.3 for more information on verifying SSNs.

3.4.7 Field #1 Territory (County/Tribe)

Applicants must apply in the county or tribe where they reside on the date of application.

3.4.8 Field #2 Applicant (First and Last Name)

First time WHEAP applicants, and those applying in your county/tribe for the first time, must be positively identified from a valid photo identification (ID) before the application is considered complete. Only use valid photo ID for identity and signature verification, not for any type of information validation. Declare in the HE+ System what form of photo ID was viewed by the authorized agency representative. The first and last name entered in this field shall be the legal name of the applicant. Any non-legal form of the name shall be entered in Field #3, Alias.

3.4.9 Field #3 Alias First Name

The first and last name entered in Field #2 shall be the legal name of the applicant. Field #3 shall be used to enter any other name that the applicant elects to be known as. For example, *James* is the legal name entered in Field #2, and *Jim* is the Alias entered in Field #3.

3.4.10 Field #4 Date of Birth

Enter the applicant's date of birth.

3.4.11 Field #5 Gender

Enter the gender that the applicant most closely identifies with.

3.4.12 Field #6 Phone Number

Enter the primary telephone number provided by the applicant.

3.4.13 Field #7 Email Address

Providing an email address is optional. The applicant should only provide their email address if they are permitting the agency and/or the Division to send emails related to Home Energy Plus programs. Email addresses will not be shared outside of Home Energy Plus programs.

3.4.14 Field #8 Preferred Method of Communication

Select the preferred method of communication for the household. This field is not required. By providing this information the applicant is providing consent to contact the household via the selected method.

3.4.15 Field #9 Housing Type

Select the housing type that best describes the applicant's residence.

- Single family for one unit (detached) structures.
- 2- to 4-unit buildings for small apartment buildings (and condominiums), this will include duplex buildings (2 units), triplex buildings (3 units), and four-unit buildings. If the structure has a commercial use in the one of the units, check the appropriate building type based on the number of units, for example if there is a bar on the first floor and a residential unit on the second floor this would be a duplex, 2 units.
- Apartment or multi-unit building (including condominiums) when there are more than four units in the building
- **Mobile home** when it is a mobile home (trailer in the old terminology) or a manufactured house (new terminology) that was towed to the site (even if it was more than one part that is tied together at the site). Use mobile home for units on private land or in mobile home parks. If the structure is a modular home, not a mobile home, check single-family house.
- Rooming house, motel, hotel, and YMCA or YWCA when one of the aforementioned describes the structure.
- ‘Ineligible Dwelling’ if the location where the applicant is living is an ineligible dwelling type (Recreational Vehicle, tent, or other ineligible type, including an applicant’s non-primary residence).

  When a dwelling does not correspond to one of the standard housing types, pick the type that seems closest and document in HE+ System Notes the reason for selecting that housing type. Guidance may also be provided by the HE+ Help Desk.

Refer to the Dwelling Eligibility Table in Section 2.2.2.1.

3.4.16 Field #10 Mailing Address

The mailing address is where the applicant gets their mail at the time of the application. The applicant's mailing address may be different from the residence address (for example, a PO BOX).

If the envelope icon by the address is red, the application will not extract until the address has been corrected. Data entry may be continued on the application, but the application will not extract until the mailing address has been validated or overridden in the HE+ System. When requesting an override, an HE+ System Address Note must be added to document how the mailing address was verified. HE+ System Notes will be reviewed by Division staff to assist in validating the address.

If the applicant has his/her mail delivered to a legal guardian, protective payee, or an **authorized representative**, enter that person's address in this field.

3.4.17 Field #11 Residence Address

Enter the (physical) address where the applicant resides at the time of the application by clicking on the house icon. Do not enter a P.O. BOX NUMBER in the residence address. Enter only the physical address (see Field #10, Mailing Address).

Compare and verify the street address from the prior year. If different, enter the correct street address. When changing an address, the system will ask if you wish to clear all fields related to the dwelling. If the applicant has moved, select 'Yes' to clear out all housing-related fields including fuel account information.

This address represents the applicant's location on the date of application. If the applicant moves before the case has been paid, change the mailing address only (see Field #10, Mailing Address). If the applicant moves after the case has been paid, update the person's Master Record.

If the residence address returns as a duplicate with a different case head during the same heating season, an HE+ Application Note shall be added to demonstrate the questions asked to determine the validity of two paid cases at the same address in the same heating season (Ex: First applicant applied in October, second applicant applying in March and stated they moved in during February). DO NOT provide information to the applicant regarding any other applicants who have applied at the same address.

3.4.18 Field #12 Own or Rent Residence (If Applicable, Landlord Information)

If the applicant lives in a mobile home and claims to own the unit, indicate they are an owner even if they pay lot rent in a mobile home park.

Agencies shall enter as much landlord or management company contact information as the applicant is able to provide. Landlord or management company contact information is essential to Weatherization referrals.

The landlord's or management company name and phone number is ***required*** when heat or electric is included in rent or a separate payment is made to the landlord. Verification of heat and/or non-heating electric included in rent is ***required*** and the means of verification must be indicated in HE+ System Notes, such as, but not limited to:

- Observation of a lease or rental agreement,

- Observation of previous year's information if the applicant is at the same residence,
- Verbal contact with the landlord, or
- In some cases the heating vendor can verify if heat is included.

3.4.19 Field #13 Number of Rooms

Count and enter the number of rooms in the applicant's dwelling. Do **not** count bathrooms, unfinished basements, entryways, hallways, laundry rooms, porches, closets or unheated attics. Do not count rooms that contain a swimming pool, hot tubs, or spa.

- If the housing type selected is Rooming house, motel, hotel YMCA or YWCA, the number of rooms must equal one. The system will not accept a value greater than one.
- The maximum number of rooms the system will accept is nine. For a household that has more than nine rooms, enter nine.

If the applicant uses part of the home for commercial use, do not count rooms that have been used on a regular basis in the last 12 months for commercial purposes.

Example: If the applicant is the owner of a building which includes rooms the applicant has rented to roomer/boarders or overnight guests ("Bed & Breakfast"), do not count the rented rooms.

To aid in determining an accurate room count for combined living spaces such as kitchen/dining area, great room, studio or efficiency apartment, or other large living space, hypothetically insert a wall(s) separating the spaces. If the residents can utilize the resulting rooms with the same or more utility and without increased inconvenience, the room count shall be counted as more than one room. If the existence of the hypothetical wall would result in a lack of utility and increased inconvenience, the room count should be one. No more than three rooms shall be counted for any open living space.

3.4.20 Field #14 Living Arrangement

Selecting 'Are currently in a homeless situation moving to a permanent residence,' will *not* make the applicant ineligible. Document the proof of permanent address in the HE+ System Notes.

3.4.21 Field #15 Government-Assisted Housing

There is a broad range of types of government-assisted housing. There are projects done under the auspices of the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Farm Service Agency (FSA), and a variety of other programs including those using Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA) funds. Check with the local Housing Authority for the location(s) of building(s) they operate or know about. The WHEDA website that lists some subsidized housing units in Wisconsin is www.wheda.com

Residents of these buildings may directly pay their utilities or they may have one or more of the utilities included in the rent. A heating allowance or utility allowance may be provided to the residents, often through an additional reduction in the rent. Do not count utility allowances or reimbursements as income.

3.4.22 Field #16 Guardian or Designated Representative

If the applicant has a Guardian or Designated Representative the information should be entered in this field. If the Legal Guardian, Power of Attorney, Protective Payee, or authorized representative is creating the application for the applicant, then they will sign the application rather than the applicant. Document in HE+ System Notes what form of verification was viewed for these scenarios (Authorization of Representative/Affidavit of Agent Form, Power of Attorney papers; etc.).

If the form of verification viewed is the Authorization of Representative/Affidavit of Agent Form, the following procedures shall be followed:

1) Document in HE+ System Notes the duration the applicant authorizes the agent.

2) The authorization is valid for all Home Energy Plus applications until the date indicated on the form, not to exceed five program years.

3) If no date was provided for the 'Authorization is valid until' date, the authorization is only valid for one application. Document in HE+ System Notes.

4) The form shall be:

   - Included in the application file for the duration of the authorization,
   - Reviewed each program year, and
   - Made available to the Division upon request.

A protective payee is someone designated by the Social Services Agency to assist with or fully handle an applicant's finances. Enter the name of the representative payee. Do this only if the applicant wants the benefit notice/check sent directly to the representative payee. The benefit notice/check will be sent to the address provided in Field # 10, Mailing Address.

If the case head is a dependent child, enter the parent's name here. A dependent child may be a case head if all adults in the household are ineligible non-citizens, ***and*** the dependent child is either a citizen or an eligible non-citizen; ***and*** the child has a valid SSN.

3.4.23 Field #17 Student Status

Students age 24 and older as of the date of the application are eligible case heads. The applicant's student status does not need to be verified.

Students under age 24 as of the date of the application are not eligible case heads (applicants) unless they meet specific conditions. This question is intended to help determine if an individual satisfies any of the exceptions. A student could be a household member, not a case head, without the need to satisfy the exceptions for student status. Individuals enrolled in high school are dealt with under the provisions for emancipated minors.

3.4.24 Field #18 Racial/Ethnic Group

This question identifies the race/ethnicity of the applicant, not the other household members. Select the one designation that the applicant says best describes his/her racial/ethnic background. Use 'Not Reported' when the applicant is unable or does not want to identify their racial/ethnic background.

3.4.25 Field #19 Relationship

If anyone in the household under age 18 is related to any other adult household member, answer 'Yes. If an appropriate relationship exists, the Division can bill the benefit payment to TANF. The paper version of the Home Energy Plus Application includes a list of qualifying relationships. Click on 'View Relationships' for a list in the HE+ System if unsure what type of relationship qualifies.

3.4.26 First 19 Fields

The minimum information required in the first 19 fields in order to continue with the application is:

- SSN,
- Date of Birth
- Gender
- Application Date,
- Applicant Name,
- Housing Type,
- Mailing Address, and
- Residence Address.

3.4.27 Field #20 Household Members

All persons living in the household on the date of application should be entered on the application and/or the system. *Exceptions*: **Temporary Household Member** (see Section 2.2.6.3). The HE+ System inserts the case head as a household member. If the case head's name, date of birth, or citizenship is incorrect, you must make the correction in the household members section of the application. Information for all household members must be verified.

3.4.27.1 Gender

Gender is a self-declared field; enter the gender for each household member as the applicant reports it.

3.4.27.2 Citizenship: Citizen/Eligible Non-citizen/Ineligible Non-citizen

Include ineligible non-citizens and their income on the application. The HE+ System will not count the ineligible non-citizen as a household member, but it will count their income when determining program eligibility and benefit amounts.

3.4.27.3 Disabled

Disability is a self-declaration that their disability limits their life activities. Verification is required if a student claims disability status.

3.4.27.4 Military Service

Military Service includes a person who is serving or has ever served in a branch of the United States military as Active Duty, Reserve, or National Guard (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard).

3.4.27.5 FoodShare

A person would indicate 'yes' for FoodShare if that person received FoodShare in all of the previous three months to the date of the application.

3.4.28 Field #21 Household Income

All household members must report and verify their income received in the test period—for most applicants this means each of the preceding three months prior to the application date. See Chapter 2 for further clarification on income.

Household members can have multiple incomes. Enter each income type/source separately for the household member.

1) Verification – The form of verification used to verify the income is required in this field. (For example: if Wages are reported, enter "the name of the employer"; if Self-Employment is reported, enter 'IRS 1040' and any applicable Schedules.)

2) Enter an HE+ System Note when additional clarification is needed. CARES records may be used to verify the receipt of Social Security Administration Income Types.

3) All income must be entered and verified even if the household appears to be over income. If all the income information is not provided and verified, the application is incomplete and should be left 'Pending.' Enter an HE+ System Note to describe what is missing.

4) Income types with zero income for the test period should not be entered as income unless it is Self-Generated income verified by taxes.

Refer to Appendix B for more information on income types.

3.4.28.1 Zero Income

A zero income household has no sources of income either earned or unearned. This includes a household that has only ignored income (see Ignored Income Table in section 2.3.9).

A household is not zero income when:

- The household has countable income to report.

- The only countable income in the household is self-generated income (SE) and the business operated at a loss. For Field #21 enter SE as the income type and zero for the amount of income. This is the only income type that should be entered with zeros for each of the three month test period.
- The household has any other income resulting in a negative amount for the test period, such as child support paid.

If the household is determined to be zero income, see subsequent sections (3.4.28.2 and 3.4.28.3) for requirements of a notarized signature and the Zero Income Form.

Additionally, enter an explanation in HE+ System Notes describing how the household living expenses are paid.

3.4.28.2 Notarization for Zero Income Households

If a zero income household is unable to provide third-party verification of an ignored income source (see Ignored Income table in section 2.3.9), a Notary Public witness of the applicant's signature is required.

Third-party verification:
A notarized signature is not required when third-party verification is provided for an ignored income source. Ignored income shall not be entered into the HE+ System as an income record, but noted in HE+ System Notes. Examples of third-party verification include:

- Government-Assisted Housing – Applicants who reside in Government assisted housing and provide a lease
- Student Income – Loan/Grant Award letter/statement
- Kinship Care – View check stubs or CARES

If a Certification Page is not being notarized due to third-party verification, an HE+ System Note shall be added that indicates what document was viewed or how the information as verified.

The only requirement of the Notary Public is to witness the applicant's signature. Policy does not require an affidavit or oath from the applicant. When a notary witnesses a signature, it is assumed that the notary has done all of the following:

- Required that the signing party be in the notary's presence, in person;
- Satisfactorily identified the party; and
- Witnessed the party actually signing the document.

The notary's attestation (e.g., jurat, signature, and seal) must be included in the white space on the certification page near the applicant's signature.

Notarial Certification Page: A Certification Page with the Notary Public signature block is available on the HE+ website under Grantee Information. When opting to use this Certification Page, the applicant shall be presented with both pages of this document, as their signature on page two is acknowledging agreement to the statements on page one. The notary certification on page two is only to certify the identity and signature of the applicant.

The following procedures are suggested:

1) Mailed applications

   If a zero income mailed application is received without notarization, the worker should enter the provided application information into the system and return the system Certification Page, or the Notarial Certification Page from the HE+ website, to the applicant to have it notarized. The system application must remain in pending status with HE+ System Notes explaining the application is incomplete until the signed and notarized Certification Page is returned.

2) Outreach applications

   The worker should indicate the date, outreach site, and initial the grey box at the top of the paper application before the applicant takes the application for a zero income notarization. If a zero income application is accepted at an outreach site without a notary present, the worker should enter at least the minimum application information into the system and allow the applicant to take the full paper application, Certification Page, or the Notarial Certification Page from the HE+ website, to be notarized. The date of the application should still be the date the applicant met with the intake worker at the outreach site. The system application must remain in pending status with HE+ System Notes explaining the application is incomplete until the signed, dated, and notarized Certification Page is returned.

3) Interactive applications

   If a zero income application is accepted and a notary is not available on-site, the applicant should take the full Certification Page from the interactive application, or the Notarial Certification Page from the HE+ website, to have it notarized. The system application must remain in pending status with HE+ System Notes explaining the application is incomplete until the signed and notarized Certification Page is returned.

WHEAP agencies shall have a procedure in place to refer applicants to an alternate site which performs notarial acts for the public in any instance where a notary public is not available on-site at the time a zero income application is accepted.

3.4.28.3 Use of the Zero Income Form

A Zero Income Form (ZIF) shall be completed by each adult household member when the household is determined to be a zero income household (has no sources of income either earned or unearned). See section 3.4.28.1 for more information on zero income households. The agency must retain a copy of the completed ZIF in the application file.

The form shall be completed in its entirety in order to be accepted as verification of how the household is meeting basic living expenses including complete contact information of the

individual(s) assisting with monthly expenses. The form should adequately explain how basic living expenses (shelter, heat, utilities and basic living needs) are being met on a continued basis. A brief explanation shall be included in HE+ System Notes. WHEAP agencies may follow-up with the individual(s) listed on the Zero Income Form if warranted.

WHEAP Agencies shall use the Division created form, which can be found on the Home Energy Plus website (www.homeenergyplus.wi.gov) under WHEAP Grantee Information. The use of the Zero Income Form is optional in other situations at the agency's discretion, as a tool to ensure accurate processing of an application.

NOTE: See section 3.4.28.2 for notarization requirements for zero income households. The Certification Page is the document that must be notarized when required per policy, NOT the Zero Income Form.

3.4.29 Field #22 Energy Fuels (Fuel Page)

The fuel page is intended to collect information about fuel use and payment responsibility. It is important to correctly complete all the fuel entries as they can have an influence on the amount of the benefit.

Fuel information is required on all applications, including those for over income households.

3.4.29.1 Basic Fuel Page Rules

1) In order for an application to be complete the electric information needs to be provided. If an applicant does not have electricity in their home, an application can be entered without an electric energy fuel. The worker must make the appropriate selection in the HE+ System to indicate there is no electricity in the home. There must be documentation in HE+ System Notes explaining why no electric fuel type was entered.

2) In order for an application to be complete there must be a primary energy fuel (heating) selected.

3.4.29.2 Primary Heating Fuel

Each applicant may only report one primary fuel type. If the applicant has more than one heating source, the applicant and the agency need to determine which fuel type the applicant uses the most to heat the residence.

In choosing between fuels to declare as the primary heating fuel, consider the following:

- When there are two actual heating units consider which fuel actually supplies 50% or more of the household heat.
- Consider the primary heating unit of the dwelling. Selection of electric as primary because other heat source is too expensive or the heating unit is not working is not sufficient cause to select electric as the primary heat. All resources must be explored to assure that assistance is provided for the actual primary heating unit of the dwelling. The primary heating unit declared on the application affects weatherization services available for this dwelling.

- Should there be a furnace failure, emergency furnace service is only available for the primary heating fuel. When the dwelling is audited for weatherization services, only the primary heating type identified on the application is included in the audit assessment.
- Selecting ‘‘wood or other’, without a vendor will result in the eligible applicant receiving a single party check and means the household will not be eligible for any heating crisis assistance. An HE+ System Note must be added to identify the fuel type. ‘Other’ fuel types include corn pellets, other bio-fuels (corn stalks, etc.), or kerosene.

A household may not change the primary fuel type on the application after the benefit has been paid.

3.4.29.3 Energy Fuel Type

Click on the drop-down menu to select the type of fuel that is used for heating and non-heat electric in the house. If an applicant cannot tell you what fuel type they use, the application should remain in ‘Pending’ status until the applicant notifies you with the fuel type. If they do not notify you within 30 days, the application will be denied.

Wood pellets and wood chips should be entered as ‘wood or other’. When selecting ‘‘wood or other’ as a fuel type, an HE+ System Application Note must be added to identify the fuel type. ‘Other’ fuel types include corn pellets, other bio-fuels (corn stalks, etc.), or kerosene.

If an applicant does not have a relationship with a utility for electrical service, they will not be eligible for an electric benefit. If the only source of electricity is from solar cells, wind power, an extension cord, or a generator, no fuel record shall be entered into the HE+ System, and select “No” for the “Has Electric Provider” field. An explanation shall be included in System Notes as to the reason for this selection.

3.4.29.4 Payment Method

Select how the applicant pays for their home heating costs.

- Directly pays the bill sent from the fuel supplier. This choice coupled with the vendor information and the account information will lead to a payment being made to the vendor for the eligible applicant’s account.

  When applicants prove they pay their own heating costs, but do not provide documentation of the costs at the time of application, leave the application in ‘Pending-Unextracted’ status. Obtain the applicant’s dated signature on the Certification Page to obtain permission to contact the vendor to gather the fuel costs on behalf of the applicant. If the worker is still unable to gather the costs, process the application with “zero” fuel costs. An HE+ System Note is required to explain the reason for the “zero” cost entry.

- Rental payment includes energy cost in the monthly rent payment and household is not in government-assisted housing. This choice will lead to a check being issued to the eligible applicant based on "0" (proxy) heat/electric costs.

Applicants are required to provide verification if their energy cost(s) are included in their rent. Proper verification should be a hard copy document, such as a lease agreement. Indicate in HE+ System Notes the type of document viewed and the text in the document related to the inclusion of the energy costs in rent. Landlord information is required if their energy cost(s) are included in rent.

- Separate payment is made to the landlord, mobile home park owner, or no direct account with a vendor. This choice will lead to a check being issued to the eligible applicant based on "0" (proxy) heat/electric costs.

- Do not pay. Energy included in the monthly rent when residing in government assisted housing, renters who pay neither rent nor heating/electric costs because of an in-kind arrangement, or renters who do not have a direct pay relationship and do not make any payment toward the energy cost(s) per the lease/rental agreement.

  This choice will result in *no* benefit being provided to the applicant, because they do not have an energy burden.

3.4.29.5 Vendor Information

You can view vendor information by accessing the 'WHEAP Vendor Details' Report. Enter either the vendor name or number in the 'Vendor' search criteria and select the desired vendor(s) to view information for.

You may enter the first few letters of the vendor name or the first few numbers of the vendor number. This will pull up all active vendors that match the criteria.

All vendors are '**Direct Vendors**' and an applicant's benefit will be sent directly to their designated vendor. If an applicant is using a vendor who is not currently registered with the program, the agency must register the supplier, assist the applicant with locating a registered vendor, or arrange for an alternate payment method.

3.4.29.6 Account Number

Enter the account number from the applicant's fuel bill. You must enter information into this field when payment method is 'Directly pay the bill from the energy fuel supplier.' The account number entered must have a service address that matches the residence address of the household. Account numbers are important as they are the primary identifier the vendor uses to post benefits to an applicant's account.

1) If the vendor uses account numbers and the applicant or vendor cannot provide the number, leave the account number blank and leave the application 'Pending' until the numbers are provided. The case will be denied if the information is not provided within 30 days.

   Some vendors have a required account number format to be used when entering account numbers—this format will appear once the vendor has been selected. The vendor's format must be used.

2) If the vendor does not use account numbers, enter 'none.'
   If the vendor uses the account name as the account number, enter the account name.

3.4.29.7 Annual Fuel Cost

A system alert will prompt workers to re-verify a fuel cost that is over $2,000. The system will not accept a fuel cost over $7,000.

1) Actual fuel costs are preferred.
   - First choice (when available) is previous 12 months from the date of the application.
   - Second choice is last year's heating season (September 1 through August 30).

   NOTE: If this is a new residence, the prior resident's cost shall be used for actual fuel costs (when available).

   Actual fuel costs can be used for a duplex only when each unit of the duplex has their own furnace/electrical meter.

   When an applicant has used more than one vendor for bulk fuel, costs from all bulk vendors shall be added together to obtain the annual fuel cost when the applicant is able to provide receipts or obtain costs from each vendor. If cost information is not available from all vendors, enter the costs available and document in System Notes why this is not the full annual costs.

2) Annual budget amounts from utility use (natural gas and electric) shall be used when the complete prior 12 months or last year's hearing season usage is not available. Remember to convert any monthly budget amount to an annual amount by multiplying by 12.
   - Do not use budget amounts for bulk fuels (propane, fuel oil, wood).

   NOTE: An applicant's monthly payment cannot be used as a budgeted amount; budget must be provided by the vendor.

3) Enter "0" when the fuel costs available are not accurate or the budget amounts for utility fuels are not available. This does not mean there are no fuel costs, but rather that no information was provided. Benefit(s) will be calculated by using information taken from a table (proxy table) of average costs for the type of dwelling and fuel (proxy fuel costs).

   Enter "0" for the cost in the following situations:

   - The complete prior 12 months, last year's heating season costs and budget amounts are not available;
   - If there is an unusual energy use on the account such as an indoor swimming pool, hot tub, or spa.

The Wisconsin Energy Fuel Information (WEFI) web service is a data validation function used to confirm direct pay electric or natural gas Class A utility account numbers. Review the data returned by WEFI web service for accuracy prior to adopting the cost data into the fuel page. WEFI web service will return all available cost data for the application address for 12 months prior to the application date if the account is active on the day of the web service call. WEFI results may also include the date service was opened and current balance, depending on the results available from each utility. WEFI web service will not provide cost data for closed accounts. Manually enter the cost data for a closed account if reason for a closed account is known.

Review the data returned by WEFI web service for accuracy prior to adopting the cost data into the fuel page. Any discrepancies between WEFI results and information entered on the application shall be reviewed with the applicant and the results documented in notes.

3.4.29.8 Account Name and Household Relationship

If the person whose name is on the account is a non-household member, select whether the person is a deceased spouse, protective payee, or other.

If the account is not current or active because it has been closed, the agency needs to assist in getting a current account established.

- If the account is closed because the applicant has moved, the application will be incomplete until a relationship can be established.
- If the account is closed because the applicant is not current with their payments and the applicant has not moved, or otherwise changed vendors, the agency can use the closed account information on the application until current account information can be obtained.

3.4.29.9 Enter Name on the Account

If the person on the account is a household member, pick the name from the drop down list. If the name on the account is a deceased spouse, a protective payee, or other non-household member, click on the appropriate button on the screen and then enter the name.

3.4.29.10 Shared Meter

If there is more than one dwelling unit on the meter, select ‘Yes’. Examples of shared meters would include the situation where both units in a duplex have their usage recorded on one meter; where the electricity is provided to a “granny flat” from the meter for the main house; or where the electricity is provided to a nearby mobile home through an extension cord from the another residence. The applicant will receive a benefit based on "0" (proxy) heat/electric costs.

3.4.29.11 Commercial Use on the Account

See Section 2.3.5.3 to determine when commercial use on a fuel account exists.

3.4.29.12 Non-Heating Energy Costs

Use the same procedures as for the Primary heat source, using the actual vendor number for non-heating electric vendor.

Households without an electric burden must have documentation in the HE+ System Notes. Specify why an electric burden does not exist for the household; this includes households that do not have electric service.

3.4.29.13 Performance Measures

The Performance Measures questions are required for an application to be complete. The answers to these questions have no effect on the potential benefit amount.

3.4.30 Applicant Signature Date

Enter the date the applicant signed the Certification Page. The date the applicant puts on the Certification Page is the date that should be entered. If the Certification Page is received with a signature, but no date, use the date the application/Certification Page was received as the signature date and indicate in notes that the applicant did not date the Certification Page.

Chapter 4 − Crisis Assistance

4.1 Introduction

Applicants are not entitled to any crisis benefit. Crisis Assistance is intended to provide emergency and/or proactive crisis services to assist applicants with substantial home energy needs.

1) Each local agency has latitude in the delivery of the LIHEAP crisis and Public Benefit crisis services and benefits – whether to assist, how many times to assist an eligible household, type of assistance to provide, and how much assistance to provide, etc. This latitude includes authority to provide assistance for fuel sources other than the primary heating fuel when such assistance addresses the goals of crisis assistance. In the crisis assistance program, households may receive more than one crisis benefit during a program year. Delivery of the program shall be based on guidelines in an agency created Crisis Plan which must be submitted to the Division each program year. See section 8.2.7 for more information.

   Note: The agency does not have latitude in the required response times. See section 4.3.

2) Each local WHEAP agency receives allocations of LIHEAP ("P" codes, see section 4.6.2) and Public Benefit ("PB" codes, see section 4.6.3) funds to be used for their crisis assistance needs. The funds are allocated for crisis assistance and may be used for emergency or proactive crisis services.

3) Emergency Crisis Assistance is intended to deal with "no-heat" situations during the heating season (October 1 – May 15).

4) Proactive Crisis Assistance may be provided to resolve a wide range of home energy related problems. These services may be provided at any time during the program year, (October 1 – September 30).

5) Crisis Assistance benefits are paid only to providers of goods or services, vendors. There is no reimbursement for actions taken, or expenses incurred, by vendors prior to approval by the local WHEAP agency.

6) All crisis payments must be completed by the last extraction of the program year (normally September 30). Any crisis agreement not completed by the last extraction will deny.

7) Minimum crisis payments, including copayment releases, shall be $30. All crisis payments shall be rounded down or up to the nearest whole dollar. No cents should be entered for crisis payments.

4.2 Crisis Eligibility

4.2.1 General Eligibility Guidelines

To be eligible for any Crisis Assistance households must:

1) Meet the WHEAP non-financial eligibility criteria.

2) Have a direct pay relationship with a participating energy vendor. Applicants without a direct pay relationship are not eligible for crisis assistance benefits (payments) – emergency or proactive. Crisis can be issued on an application that originally issued a single party check if the applicant has a participating vendor at the time of the crisis.

3) Have paid on their heating bill at least $25 in the previous three (3) months to be eligible for any heating related crisis payment, and paid on their electric bill at least $25 in the previous three (3) months to be eligible for any Public Benefits (electric) crisis payment. The applicant contribution cannot come from another assistance program (such as KWWF, Salvation Army, Catholic Charity, etc.).

   The agency may make one exception to the required household contribution if the Crisis Assistance application is an Emergency Assistance (no heat) and:
   - It is the first crisis assistance application of the season; or
   - Applicant moved from another state in the last 3 months; or
   - This first contact with the household came as an after-hours/weekend emergency request.

   HE+ System Notes must be entered to explain why the exception was provided.

4) Have received less than $1,200 in total Crisis Assistance benefits during the program year (October 1 to September 30).

4.2.1.1 Denials of Eligibility

In the case of Crisis Applications, the HE+ System automatically generates a Crisis Application denial letter when the HE+ Application does not meet the eligibility requirements or when the HE+ Application is incomplete. A worker may deny crisis in the HE+ System by selecting one of the grantee denial reasons, which will create HE+ System generated denial letter including the denial reason chosen.

If the household is ineligible for Crisis Assistance, the agency must provide:

- A verbal denial within 48 hours of the request for **Emergency Assistance, or within 18 hours when there is a potentially life threatening situation,** followed by the appropriate HE+ System crisis assistance denial letter.
- Written notice of denial within 30 days of the request for **Proactive Assistance**. The WHEAP crisis system automatically generates a denial letter when a case exceeds the financial eligibility income limits or when an application is incomplete. The worker may also generate denial letters by selecting one of the grantee denial reasons.

4.2.1.2 Denial of Crisis Benefits or Services

A denial of crisis benefits or services may be made for reasons other than the determination of eligibility and should not be confused with denials of eligibility for crisis assistance. Eligible households may be denied services because of:

- the weather,
- assets of the household,
- failure to make payments on their energy bills,
- having previously received crisis assistance,
- having received $1,200 in crisis assistance,
- the applicant's situation is not an emergency,
- the local WHEAP agency is prioritizing the limited funds remaining, or
- other reasons which should be described in the local WHEAP agency's Crisis Plan.

Crisis applications are not eligible for appeals.

4.2.2 Emergency Crisis Eligibility − Additional Guidelines

To qualify for emergency crisis assistance the household must have no heat, or will have no heat by the end of the next working day, and weather or other conditions must create a concern for the health or life of the household's residents. Agencies shall respond to and address potentially life threatening situations within 18 hours. Each local agency has the latitude in the type of assistance to provide and the minimum amount of assistance to address the emergency situation.

If the HE+ Application is waiting for SSN verification from SSA but is otherwise complete, emergency crisis assistance may be issued by requesting a crisis override that is associated with a pending or on-hold application. This should only be requested for households experiencing actual or imminent loss of essential home energy during the heating season. The worker shall notify the applicant that they are responsible for repayment if any SSN on the HE+ Application cannot be verified (resulting in the application being incomplete).

4.2.2.1 Income Eligibility Variations − Emergency Crisis

1) In the case of an energy emergency when the household does not meet the three-month eligibility and the agency wishes to address the emergency, the agency can approve crisis if the prior month's income (third month or the regular application test period) is at or below the one-month income eligibility level. The crisis application must be in the same month as the regular application to correctly reflect the prior month income eligibility from the date of crisis request.

2) If the household is still ineligible despite using the prior month's income to establish eligibility *and* the household's financial circumstances have changed (i.e., divorce, loss of a job, accident, health problem, etc.), agencies may *estimate the current month income and enter the current month income on the crisis screen***.**

3) Households may be eligible for emergency assistance after denial of regular benefits if the reason for denial was that a household member was a paid case head in another WHEAP household during the current heating season.

4) Households may be eligible for emergency assistance after denial of regular benefits as a duplicate application. The application contains a denial of regular benefits because benefits were already received this heating season.

4.2.2.2 Cooling Eligibility − Emergency Crisis

Emergency services for cooling are provided during the summer months only in cases of extreme heat, with a declaration of a heat emergency, *and* approval from the Division. Agencies may not implement cooling assistance unless a state or local public health official declares a heat emergency, *and* authorization is given from the Division.

4.2.3 Proactive Crisis Eligibility − Additional Guidelines

To qualify for proactive crisis assistance the household must have heating costs beyond their ability to pay after the Heating Assistance benefit. This may be due to excessive fuel bills, unreasonable percentage of income required to pay for heat, etc. An HE+ System Crisis Note is required to identify the reason for the crisis assistance.

A household may be eligible if the denial of regular benefits was solely because:

- The application for energy assistance was submitted outside of the program dates for heating assistance, or
- The application was found ineligible for heating assistance benefits only because a household member was a paid case head in another WHEAP household during the current heating season, or
- The application contains denial of regular benefits because benefits were already received this heating season.

4.2.4 Exceptions to the Crisis Benefit Limit

The Division may grant an exception to the $1,200 Crisis Assistance benefit limit for an applicant during a program year upon request by the local agency. Exceptions require an explanation from the agency as to why they wish to exceed this limit.

The following guidance applies to any crisis override request:

1) The agency should identify several of the following conditions to justify the request for an exception:
   - Household has met the minimum contribution requirement, or
   - Household faces an emergency (loss of heat) during the heating season, or
   - Household faces a loss of electrical service, which will create an emergency (loss of heat) during the heating season, or
   - During the past twelve (12) months the household has made payments toward the heating bills that represent more than 10% of household's annual gross income, or

- Household contains a vulnerable individual (child under 6, verified disabled individual or individual 60 or older), or
- The expected high temperatures for the next 72 hours will be below freezing (32° F), or
- Other housing options do not exist for the household (no family, friends, or other resources are available), or
- The household has no other resources (savings or other assets) to draw upon, or
- Assisting with arrearage will help establish a payment plan the applicant will be able to meet, or help establish an account in their name. The proposed payment plan should be included in the notes.

2) An explanation in HE+ System Notes or customer request reason field are required to describe which circumstances justify granting the exception to the household. Be specific about the household situation on the exception to exceed the $1,200 cost limits that has been chosen.

3) Crisis applications over the cost limits will have an application status of 'Paid On Hold' or 'Reserved On Hold' (for Co-payment codes). These applications will be reviewed by DEHCR, and will be approved or rejected after reviewing the notes left by the agency.

4) Application status on immediate pay crisis codes will change to 'Paid/Denied Submitted' status after DEHCR approves or denies the override; no further action is required by the agency.

5) Application status on co-payment or match payment crisis codes will change to 'Reserved Submitted' status if approved, or 'Denied Submitted' if denied. The agency must release the payment from the crisis application after the override is completed in order for the crisis application to extract.

6) The agency should not make a promise to pay to the vendor or applicant until the cost limits have been approved by DEHCR. If this is an emergency situation, contact the HE+ Help Desk for assistance.

4.2.5 Exceptions to the Applicant Contribution Requirement

The Division may grant a special exception to the minimum requirement for an applicant to have made payments in the past three (3) months. This special exception will allow a second crisis payment to the household, and the exception will allow the $1,200 limit on crisis assistance to be exceeded.

The local WHEAP agency must request the special exception and be prepared to identify several of the following circumstances to support the request for an exception:

- The low level of income available to the household;
- The presence of vulnerable individuals in the household;
- The absence of other housing options to use until the emergency is abated;

- Cold temperatures are expected for the near future; high temperatures for the next 72 hours are not expected to exceed 25° F;
- The household has no other resources to draw upon; and
- The total amount of Crisis Assistance benefits paid to the household to-date does not exceed $1,200.

HE+ System Notes must be entered to describe which circumstances justify granting the exception to the household.

4.2.6 Locally More Restrictive Eligibility Guidelines

Local WHEAP agencies may establish more restrictive guidelines for eligibility for Crisis Assistance Benefits. When an agency adopts more restrictive guidelines, or additional guidelines, these policies must be spelled out in the agency's Crisis Plan. For example, an agency may:

- Set a maximum sum of Crisis Assistance benefits that is less than $1,200, or
- Set other non-monetary requirements (such as attending **energy education** or budget counseling), or
- Require community service work for households without any income to earn eligibility. In these cases, the local WHEAP agency must value the community service work at least at the minimum wage and the total work credit must meet, or exceed, the $25 payment requirement. Local agencies may set higher dollar value thresholds for the community service work.

4.3 Emergency Crisis Assistance

Emergency Crisis Assistance is intended for households experiencing actual or imminent loss of essential home energy during the heating season.

4.3.1 General WHEAP Agency Responsibilities

1) The local WHEAP agency must respond to and address the requests for Heating Emergency Services and to Cooling Emergency Services if a cooling emergency is authorized, within 48 hours. If the situation is life threatening, the agency must respond within 18 hours.

2) The local WHEAP agency must conduct **outreach** and public information activities to ensure people are aware of the program and how to obtain assistance.

3) The local WHEAP agency must establish a way for emergencies to be reported outside of office hours. This may be a telephone number currently in existence. For numbers outside your agency (sheriff, 911, etc.), there must be written procedures for coordination between your agency and the other source. These procedures must include methods for information collection and follow-up procedures that are agreed to by all parties. This number must be published and available to applicants throughout the service area.

4) The local WHEAP agency must identify a person(s) within the agency to assess referrals from fuel suppliers, utility Early Identification Programs (EIP), state or county **Weatherization operators** or other local agencies.

5) The local WHEAP agency needs to develop agreements with local fuel suppliers. This includes wood dealers, and other vendors supplying energy related services. The agreements must ensure a response to fuel emergencies, including those that occur outside of office hours.

6) The local WHEAP agency must establish agreements with non-regulated utilities and bulk fuel dealers (that are registered WHEAP fuel vendors serving households in the agency's area) to notify the WHEAP coordinator or other designated staff person of all households who have been refused delivery.

7) The local WHEAP agency must establish a method for the utilities suppliers and heating contractors to easily report fuel emergencies.

   The local WHEAP agency must establish a method to follow up on utility disconnects during the Heating Season. Agencies must have agreements with local regulated utilities regarding procedures to be followed in the event of an actual disconnect.

8) The local WHEAP agency must establish procedures with the Weatherization agency to ensure response within 72 hours for heating unit emergencies.

9) Agency staff must enter complete HE+ System Crisis Notes in the HE+ System explaining the circumstances of the crisis and how the crisis service will assist the applicant. HE+ System Crisis Notes are required for each occurrence.

4.3.2 Emergency Assistance

When the agency is notified (either by an applicant or by another party) that a household has no heat or will have no heat before the end of the next working day, the agency should determine whether there is a threat to health or safety. The agency should also determine whether the circumstances are life threatening in assessing what measures to take.

1) The response must protect the health and safety of the household members and alleviate the emergency. After the emergency is dealt with, agencies should assess an applicant's situation by using proactive services to continue to work with applicants to avoid future crisis situations.

   Agencies should include in their determination of action(s) the following criteria. Keep the relationship of each factor with the other three in mind.

   - Expected low temperature during the period before the next working day, or
   - Condition of the dwelling unit (i.e. is it habitable, is the furnace operable, mobile home, apartment, etc.), or
   - Alternatives available to the household (i.e. temporary relocation, other resources, etc.).

2) Agencies must determine the most appropriate and cost-effective solution to the emergency. Agencies must include in their array of services the following benefits for Emergency Services:
   - Provision of funds for energy/fuel for eligible households to handle the immediate emergency, or
   - Provision of temporary shelter for households experiencing emergencies.

   Agencies are encouraged to tailor the response to fit the situation/need. Examples of how to address an emergency:
   - A telephone call to the heating or electric supplier to guarantee a payment, or
   - Relocation of the household (temporary or permanent), or
   - Provide heating unit repair or replacement, when appropriate through the Emergency Furnace program, see Home Energy Plus Emergency Furnace Manual, or
   - Any other action or combination of actions that will at least address the emergency and protect the safety of the applicant—provision of blankets or temporary use of space heaters, or
   - Agencies may pay a portion of a household's non-heating electric bill using federal LIHEAP Funds or State Public Benefit Funds for customers of participating vendors.

3) If the heating system is not working agencies may address this problem during the heating season (October 1 to May 15) through the Emergency Furnace Program. Repairs, or replacements, are only allowed to be done on the heating unit using the primary fuel type reported on the Home Energy Plus Application form. For more information about the Furnace Program, see Home Energy Plus Furnace Program Manual.

4.4 Proactive Crisis Assistance

Proactive Services are non-emergency services designed to assist households to pay for current home energy costs, establish self-sufficiency practices, help decrease arrearages, maintain service, or to assist with connection fees to enable the applicant to obtain utility service to move into housing.

4.4.1 General WHEAP Agency Responsibilities

Agency Responsibilities: The agency must respond to applications for Proactive Services within 30 days of the request date.

Agencies must have the capacity to provide the following heating Proactive Benefits and Services:

- Proactive payments, including **co-payment agreements or match payments** with applicants; co-payment agreements and match payments must be completed by September 30 (end of program year), and
- Budget counseling and money management services, and
- Energy conservation training, counseling, etc.

4.4.2 Proactive Services

1) Local WHEAP agencies are encouraged to develop criteria to be used in assessing need for proactive services. These criteria should include:
   - Has experienced one or more emergencies during the current or past heating season, or
   - Have home energy bills that are clearly beyond the household's ability to pay after the heating and non-heating assistance benefit and, if appropriate, utility allowance, is taken into account. This may be due to excessive fuel costs, unreasonable percentage of income required to pay for heat, high medical bills, loss of income, or other extenuating circumstances, or
   - Has made an effort to pay bills through better budgeting and attempts to control energy use.

2) The agency must determine, on a case-by-case basis, the most appropriate benefit(s) to be provided to households eligible for Proactive Assistance. The benefit(s) may be provided by agency staff, contractor staff, or other entity that the agency has an agreement with to provide benefit(s).

   Agencies are encouraged to tailor the response to fit the situation/need. See the "Crisis Codes" in Section 4.6.1 for an explanation of various crisis codes to be used for various services.

3) Co-Payment Agreements

   Co-payments are agency payments conditioned on households paying an agreed monthly (or other specified time period) amount to the vendor. Co-payment agreements may be established for one or a number of payments. An agency may condition co-payments on the household completing other activities, in addition to or in place of vendor payments (such as completing energy education or budget counseling programs, or performing community service). These benefits are coded as SCCC (LIHEAP) or SPBC (Public Benefits); selection of either of these codes reserves funding in the HE+ System. The agency must have a written co-payment agreement that is signed by the worker and the applicant that states the conditions of the agreement.

   Agencies may choose a variety of ways to distribute funds with a co-payment agreement. Co-payment agreement transactions can easily be modified in the co-payment agreement portion of the crisis entry to reflect applicant and agency payment amounts throughout the contract. The system does not automatically pay or deny the co-payment transaction, regardless of due dates entered. Agencies have the option to release payments (which will extract for payment), default payments (which will send a denial letter to the applicant) or delete a scheduled payment. Payment is not made, using these codes, until the agency releases a payment in the system.

   Co-payment agreements may begin at the start of the heating season (October 1). All co-payment agreements must be completed and final payments entered by the last extraction date of the current program year. Co-payment agreements may not

cross program years. Applicants requiring additional proactive assistance may reapply.

In situations where the household *defaults* or co-payments are deleted on a co-payment agreement, the actual amount paid will be less than the original obligated amount. When deleting co-payments, HE+ System Notes must be added to document the situation.

Note: When an applicant defaults, the agency worker must default the corresponding scheduled payment, but can leave the remainder of the co-payments in reserve.

4) Match Payment Agreements
   Match payments are short-term agreements where the agency can reserve funding pending a customer contribution. These codes reserve funds and reduce the available balance amount of the local agency's crisis funds. Payment is made upon verification of applicant contribution and release of the reserved funds in the HE+ System. No written co-payment contract is necessary. Similar to co-payment agreements, match payment agreements must be released prior to the last extraction date of the current program year. Match payments are entered into the HE+ System using crisis codes SPAS for LIHEAP, or SPBS for Public Benefits. Entry is similar to co-payments, yet is limited to only one payment. Pending match payments will be moved to the Crisis Co-Payment Mailbox for the user who created the crisis application

4.5 Crisis Applications

Crisis Assistance benefits are only paid to providers of goods or services, vendors. There is no reimbursement for actions taken, or expenses incurred, by vendors or applicants prior to approval by the local WHEAP agency.

4.5.1 Crisis Eligibility Procedure

1) To be considered for Crisis Assistance, applicants *must* have had eligibility determined by having completed a Home Energy Plus Application at any time during the current program year. If an applicant is deemed eligible for the current program year, the eligibility applies for the entire program year for any emergency crisis or proactive crisis services.

2) For applicants who have not applied during the heating season, eligibility *must* be determined by completing an application. The applicant will be denied a heating and/or an electric benefit because it is outside the heating season, but the applicant *may* be eligible for proactive crisis assistance.

3) If the household circumstances have experienced a major change (i.e. major change in income or household composition) since the regular benefit was paid, the agency may re-determine eligibility.

4) If the applicant has moved:

   Within the county/tribe:
   a) Associate the crisis application with the regular application.
   b) Update the address and the fuel information on the crisis application to the new address. This action will update the Master Record.

   To a different county/tribe:
   a) The new agency should associate the crisis with the regular application.
   b) Update the address and the fuel information on the crisis application to the new address. This action will update the Master Record.

5) When an emergency occurs outside of the agency's regular working hours, every attempt should be made to determine an applicant's eligibility before promising payments or assistance. Applicants are responsible for any assistance provided if the applicant fails to complete an application or is determined to be ineligible for energy assistance. The agency must obtain the minimum application information to be able to enter and pay for an after-hours service and shall proceed with the following steps:

   - Application date, applicant name, applicant Social Security Number (SSN), applicant date of birth, applicant gender, housing type and residence and mailing address fields are required.
   - Select 'Request Crisis Override' from the action toolbar on the application
   - Enter a required System Note describing the situation and the reason for a payment prior to determining eligibility
   - The request will automatically be placed in the 'Add New Crisis Pending Override' inbox waiting for Division approval
   - Upon approval, a Pending-Pending Crisis Application will be created and placed in the 'Crisis with Pending/On-Hold App' inbox
   - Edit the crisis application and 'Save'

   The applicant then has 30 days to complete the application. If the application is completed, submitted, and the applicant is found to be eligible for WHEAP benefits, the application will automatically be removed from the 'Crisis with Pending/On-Hold App'.

   If the applicant is subsequently found ineligible, or if the applicant fails to complete the application within 30 days, the applicant is responsible for paying back the crisis funds that have been paid based on the agency's use of the Crisis Application to a Pending Application Override. The crisis benefit will either be recaptured from the vendor and the applicant will need to repay the vendor, or it will create a client owes repayment and the agency shall work with the applicant to determine the terms of the repayment agreement.
   NOTE: If the application is determined to be ineligible and will extract at the same time as the crisis application with the override, AND the primary fuel is Natural Gas or Electric, the crisis benefit will not pay out and the agency shall contact the vendor to advise the payment will not be made due to ineligibility of the household.

6) The HE+ System automatically generates a denial letter when a household is determined ineligible or when an application is incomplete. The worker may also generate a denial letter by selecting one of the grantee denial reasons.

   If there is no available balance, a crisis for that funding source cannot be paid and the applicant will receive a denial letter explaining that there were insufficient funds.

4.5.2 Entering Crisis Applications

Remember the following items when entering crisis applications:

1) Review the data brought forward from the application. Correct any information that has changed from the original application.

2) Select the appropriate crisis code. Do not use emergency crisis codes for proactive crisis activities. Emergency Crisis Assistance is only for households experiencing actual or imminent loss of essential home energy during the heating season. A full list of crisis codes and a description of each code is in Section 4.6.1.

   Remember the HE+ System will check the eligibility for crisis assistance based on the type of code selected. If an emergency code is selected, the system will use the income test periods for emergency crisis assistance to determine eligibility. If a proactive code is selected the system will enforce the three-month income test period when determining eligibility.

3) The Request Date is the date the customer requested assistance, and the Service Date is the date the agency responded to the crisis request.

4) The Allocation Category selection is to indicate from which allocation to pay the funds. The 'General' category will be the default and shall be used if the contracted agency wishes not to use other allocation categories, unless instructed by the Division to use a different allocation for a specific effort.

5) For the vendor entry, any applicant with a Class A utility account will be subject to a Wisconsin Energy Fuel Information (WEFI) web services call to confirm the account status. Use of the WEFI web service is required on all crisis applications with Class A utility accounts.

   The WEFI web service is a data validation function used to confirm direct pay electric or natural gas Class A utility account numbers. Review the data returned by WEFI web service for accuracy prior to accepting the results of the call. Any discrepancies between WEFI results and information entered on the application shall be reviewed with the applicant and the results documented in notes. WEFI web service will not provide data for closed accounts. Manually enter of the cost data for a closed account if reason for a closed account is known.

6) The Present Month Income field will be available only if the application fails the automatic eligibility check by the system for three-month and prior month income

eligibility. This field can only allow current month income eligibility and if an emergency crisis code is used.

7) Verify that the account name and account number is accurate and current.

8) If a payment was promised to the vendor and the applicant was over income and not eligible for crisis benefits, or the applicant fails to complete the application, a payment will be processed and the applicant will be responsible for repayment if it turns out they are not eligible for assistance. See section 4.5.1 for more information.

9) System Notes are required for each crisis entry.

4.6 Crisis Codes

4.6.1 Crisis Code Quick Reference

Code Type	Code Category	Code
PAYMENT	Emergency LIHEAP	PEAS
		PHAS
		PTAS
	Proactive LIHEAP	PCED
		PPAS
		PSPA
		SCCC
		SPAS
		SPSF
	Emergency Public Benefit	PBES
	Proactive Public Benefit	PBAS
		SPBC
		SPBS

FURNACE	Furnace Program	SFAS
		SFRR
		SFRT
SERVICE	LIHEAP Services	SADV
		SLBC
	Information and Referrals	BCWX
		IOTG
		IOTN
	Non-WHEAP Payments	NFPO
		NKWF

4.6.2 LIHEAP Funded Payment Codes

Service codes beginning with a letter "P" indicate a crisis assistance payment made by the HE+ system using LIHEAP crisis benefit funds. All payment codes require entry of account #, account name, amount, and vendor number.

PEAS – LIHEAP Emergency Payment
Emergency assistance payment to a fuel supplier resulting in the delivery of fuel or a continuation of utility service.

PCED – LIHEAP Client Education Payment
Payment made to tech school, college, WHEAP agency, etc., for the cost of client education and/or budget counseling classes.

PPAS – LIHEAP Proactive Payment
Proactive assistance payment sent to fuel suppliers/utilities. Payment may also be sent to a vendor for repairing or replacing fuel oil and LP tanks and/or lines.

PHAS – LIHEAP Housing Assistance
Payment for temporary shelter/housing for applicant or relocation to new housing.

PSPA – LIHEAP Spring Proactive Assistance Payment
Proactive assistance payment sent to fuel suppliers/utilities as a *single* payment as part of the Spring Proactive Assistance Program. Crisis code used specifically for a Division administered program and will only be available during specific program dates.

PTAS – LIHEAP Temporary Assistance
Payment for the purchase of temporary assistance for an applicant. (Blankets, space heaters)

SCCC – LIHEAP Crisis Co-Payment Contract
Total amount of the co-payment agreement developed and agreed to by the applicant and fuel supplier using LIHEAP crisis funds. A copy of a signed agreement must be in the applicant's file. Agency enters the total co-payment agreement amount. This code reserves funds and reduces the available balance amount of the local agency's LIHEAP crisis funds. Payment is made upon release of the reserved funds.

SPAS - LIHEAP Match Payment
A short-term agreement of one payment requiring a customer contribution prior to release of LIHEAP crisis funds. This code reserves funds and reduces the available balance amount of the local agency's LIHEAP crisis funds. Payment is made upon release of the reserved funds. No written co-payment contract is necessary.

SPSF – Summer Fill Match Payment
A short-term agreement of one payment requiring a customer contribution prior to release of LIHEAP crisis funds. Crisis code used specifically for a Division administered Summer Fill Program and only available during specified program dates.

4.6.3 Public Benefit Funded Payment Codes

Service codes beginning with the letters “PB” indicate a Public Benefit crisis assistance payment made by the HE+ System using Public Benefit crisis benefit funds. Local agency staff enters "PB" codes. The household’s electric vendor must be participating in the state’s Public Benefit program. All payment codes require entry of account number, account name, amount, and vendor number.

PBAS – Public Benefit Proactive Electric Payment
Public Benefit proactive assistance payment to a public benefit electric supplier as a **single** payment. No co-payment contract is involved.

PBES – Public Benefit Emergency Electric Payment
Public Benefit emergency assistance payment to a public benefit electric supplier resulting in restoring electric service or continuation of electric service.

SPBC – Public Benefit Co-Payment Contract
Total amount of the co-payment agreement developed and agreed to by the applicant and electric supplier using Public Benefit crisis funds. A copy of signed agreement must be in the applicant’s file. Agency enters the total co-payment agreement amount. This code reserves funds and reduces the available balance amount of the local agency's PB crisis funds. Payment is made upon release of the reserved funds.

SPBS - Public Benefit Match Payment
A short-term agreement of one payment requiring a customer contribution prior to release of PB crisis funds. This code reserves funds and reduces the available balance amount of the local agency's PB crisis funds. Payment is made upon release of the reserved funds. No written co-payment contract is necessary.

4.6.4 WHEAP Furnace Repair and Replacement Payment Codes

These codes are not actually Crisis Codes as these payments do not affect the local WHEAP agency crisis balances. Furnace payments, like regular benefits, come from a central fund to pay all furnace activity throughout the state. See Home Energy Plus Emergency Furnace Manual for information on eligibility, allowable activities, and other requirements of the furnace repair and replacement part of the program. The following three codes are used on Emergency Furnace Applications:

SFAS – Furnace Assessment
Used to issue payments to vendors for furnace assessments that *do not* include other furnace repair/replacement activity.

SFRR – Furnace Repair
Used to create payments to vendors for furnace repairs.

SFRT – Furnace Replacement
Used to create payments to vendors for furnace replacements.

4.6.5 Service Codes

Service codes indicate a service has been provided to a WHEAP household that was not a payment. Service codes do not generate payments and do not affect individual case/WHEAP agency crisis balances.

SADV − Advocacy
Agency conducts vendor negotiation or energy advocacy resulting in a reasonable, affordable payment plan *or* results in a fuel delivery (mediation).

SLBC – Budget Counseling
Budget counseling, training, or assistance provided.

4.6.6 Information and Referral Codes

The following crisis service codes indicate information has been provided to the applicant and/or a referral has been made for other assistance. Use these codes for any WHEAP cases that information and/or referrals have been provided to. No payment is involved.

BCWX – Best Candidate for Weatherization
Household which has been identified and referred as a best candidate for Weatherization services.

IOTG − Other Government Program
Referral to any other government-sponsored program. Specify nature of the program in comment section of Crisis application.

IOTN – Other Non-Government Program
Referral to any other non-government program. Specify nature of the program in comment section of crisis application.

4.6.7 Non-WHEAP Funded Payment and Services

These codes are used when payments or services are provided to eligible households using other source of funds (non-WHEAP) to pay for the benefits or services. Examples of funds include (and are not limited to): fuel funds (such as Hometown, Keep Wisconsin Warm Fund), other federal sources (such as FEMA), and other charitable sources (such as Salvation Army, United Way, Catholic Charities, etc.).

"N" codes may be used by local agencies to indicate that a payment is being provided to eligible WHEAP households using funds other than federal LIHEAP monies. Payments may be made by the local agency or coordinated by the local agency. The system will not generate a check for these payments. For example, a local agency makes a payment to a WHEAP household using FEMA funds. Record the activity using the NFPO code. A dollar amount is required for "N" codes but the county/tribe crisis balance is not affected. (Select ‘None’ in the fund source.)

NFPO – Fuel Payment – Other Funds
Payment to a fuel supplier using other funds (i.e., United Way or Salvation Army) as a single payment. No co-payment contract is involved. The HE+ System will allow selection of a specific funding source and amount awarded to be entered.

NKWF – Payment to a Fuel Supplier Using Keep Wisconsin Warm Funds
Payment to a fuel supplier using Keep Wisconsin Warm funds as a single payment. No co-payment contract is involved. The HE+ System will allow amount awarded to be entered.

"A" codes are used by local agencies to indicate that a service has been provided to a WHEAP eligible household when WHEAP funds are not involved. For example, the local agency may decide to provide budget counseling to an applicant using non-WHEAP funds. The service would be recorded as ALBC. These codes do not generate payments.

ALBC – Budget Counseling
Budget counseling, training or assistance provided when non-WHEAP funds are used to support staff providing service.

AUPP - Utility Payment Program Participation
Participation in payment program when non-WHEAP funds are used to support staff providing service.

4.6.8 Denials

Agencies can deny crisis benefits and cause a denial letter for crisis assistance to be sent to the applicant. The more common denials are "Co-payment Contract Default" and "Adequate Resources." Workers are able to generate other grantee denials

4.6.9 Cooling Payment Codes

The Cooling Assistance Payment Codes require a declaration of a summer heat emergency. Emergency services for cooling are provided during the summer months only in cases of extreme heat, with a declaration of a heat emergency, *and* approval from the Division. Agencies may not implement cooling assistance unless a state or local public health official declares a heat emergency, *and* authorization is given from the Division.

PCOA – Air Conditioner Purchase
One (1) per eligible household. Requires a statement of need from a medical practitioner.

PCOE – Emergency Payment to Electric Utility
Emergency Payment to electric utility resulting in continuation of service. Payment amount is a local agency decision.

PCOF – Fan Purchase
Payment for purchase of fan(s).

PCOL – Window Locking Security Devices
Payment for purchase of window locking devices which allows windows to be raised to promote air circulation while maintaining security.

PCOR – Air Conditioner Repair
Payment to a contractor for air conditioner repair. Payment cannot exceed $250.

PCOS – Temporary Shelter
Payment for applicant's temporary shelter/housing during a summer heat emergency.

PCOT – Training/Education (Cooling)
Payment made to technical school, college, etc. for cost of client education classes.

Chapter 5 – Quality Assurance

5.1 Quality Assurance

Each contracted agency is responsible for participating in Division conducted and internal quality assurance activities. Such activities include, and are not limited to:

- On-Site Administrative Reviews (AR)
- Desktop Monitoring (DTM)
- General Quality Assurance (GQA)
- Furnace Quality Assurance (FQA)
- Vendor Desktop Monitoring (VDTM)

In the event that the contracted agency elects to subcontract WHEAP operations, both the contractor and the subcontractor shall participate in quality assurance activities. Agencies are strongly encouraged to meet with their subcontractors on a regular basis to ensure effective service coordination, delivery and compliance with WHEAP policies.

5.2 On-Site Administrative Review (AR) Agency Responsibilities

The contracted agency is responsible for participating in Division conducted on-site quality assurance activities. Each agency is scheduled to receive an Administrative Review every two to three years. On-Site Administrative Reviews focus on the following key program areas:

- Contract Compliance
- Program Operations
- Program Integrity
- General and Furnace Case File Review

In addition, the Administrative Review process offers dedicated time for all parties to review WHEAP program operations for potential additional training and technical assistance opportunities.

WHEAP agencies shall ensure the following occur:

- Response to the Administrative Review notice letter within the timeframe established by Division staff
- Confirmation of Administrative Review date and location is sent to Division staff as requested
- All individuals, whose attendance has been requested by Division staff, are present at the specified times as determined by the Division
- Submittal of the pre-visit questionnaire by the deadline established by Division staff

- Submittal of Division requested documents by the deadline established by Division staff
- Provision of reliable internet access for the duration of on-site review
- Provision of access to any and all program related files and information as requested by Division staff
- Submittal of formal response to the Administrative Review summary letter within thirty days of the date of the on-site observations letter sent by the Division
- Responsiveness to Division requests including implementation of corrective actions within the timeframes established by Division staff
- Implementation of training at the local level based on Monitoring/Review findings and Division staff recommendations, including making agency staff available for training as directed by Division staff

5.3 Desktop Monitoring (DTM) Agency Responsibilities

The contracted agency is responsible for participating in Division conducted Desktop Monitoring quality assurance activities. All agencies will have an overall assessment of program operations at a fixed point in time of each program year. This review is not a replacement for an on-site review, rather a means to ensure that agencies are correctly interpreting and applying WHEAP program requirements and policies.

Desktop Monitoring reviews focus on these key program areas:

- Contract Compliance
- Contract Allocations
- General and Furnace Case File Review

WHEAP agencies are required to:

- Respond to all agency required case corrections within the timeframes established by Division staff
- Implement training at the local level based on DTM findings and Division staff recommendations and/or make agency staff available for training as directed by Division staff.

5.4 General Quality Assurance (GQA) Agency Responsibilities

The contracted agency is responsible for participating in internal General Quality Assurance activities. General Quality Assurance practices are intended to review accuracy of general case files throughout the program year. This internal quality assurance review is a means to ensure that WHEAP workers are correctly interpreting and applying WHEAP program requirements and policies. In addition, results should be used to identify areas that should be used for internal training purposes. Local WHEAP agencies shall develop and implement a General Quality Assurance Plan for general case files. The WHEAP agency shall maintain a file with a copy of the plan and the results of the internal review. The written plan shall include procedures for general file quality assurance review including:

1) Staff responsible for file review*
2) How files are selected for review
3) How often reviews occur during the program year
4) How the files are logged as “reviewed”
5) The DEHCR General Quality Assurance tool used for the file review

*The local WHEAP agency worker who accepted the general application under review shall not conduct quality reviews of the general application file.

Agencies are encouraged to sample a variety of cases from multiple workers, if possible, when conducting the review.

Using the DEHCR General Quality Assurance tool, WHEAP agencies shall complete their required internal GQA review no later than January 31 of each program year. An agency's paid WHEAP caseload for the prior program year shall determine the number of cases selected for review:

- Agencies with a prior year caseload of 5,000 or greater shall select 20 cases as identified by the agency from the current program year

- Agencies with a prior year caseload of fewer than 5,000 shall select 10 cases as identified by the agency from the current program year

Agencies shall add a system note to each general case, identifying it as having been reviewed.

Agencies that subcontract WHEAP are responsible to ensure that the subcontractor is complying with this requirement. If an agency has multiple subcontractors, the minimum number of cases required above shall apply to each individual subcontractor.

Upon request by an employee of the Division of Energy, Housing and Community Resources (DEHCR) or a DEHCR authorized representative, the WHEAP agency shall produce all of the following:

1) The case file
2) The completed QA review tool
    - The QA log shall identify the general case file components reviewed, the results, and the follow-up activities performed to bring the file into compliance with WHEAP Policy requirements (when applicable)
3) The completed general QA log

5.5 Furnace Quality Assurance (FQA) Agency Responsibilities

The contracted agency is responsible for participating in internal Furnace Quality Assurance activities. Furnace Quality Assurance practices are intended to review accuracy of furnace referrals and files throughout the program year. Local WHEAP agencies shall develop and implement a Furnace Quality Assurance Plan for furnace repair/replacement activities. The

WHEAP agency shall maintain a file with a copy of the plan and the results of the internal review. The written plan shall include procedures for furnace file quality assurance review including:

1) Staff responsible for file review*
2) How files are selected for review
3) How often reviews occur during the program year
4) How the files are logged as “reviewed”
5) The DEHCR Furnace Quality Assurance tool used for the file review

*The local WHEAP agency worker who accepted the furnace application under review shall not conduct quality reviews of the furnace application file.

WHEAP agencies shall ensure the internal FQA is conducted twice per program year: once in January for October to December activity, and once in May for January to April activity. All activity shall use the DEHCR Furnace Quality Assurance tool, and include an annual minimum of:

- Five repair files, or 10% of the total repair files (whichever is greater)
- Five replacement files, or 10% of the total replacement files (whichever is greater)

Upon request by an employee of the Division of Energy, Housing and Community Resources (DEHCR) or a DEHCR-authorized representative, the WHEAP agency shall produce all of the following:

1) The furnace file
2) The completed QA review tool
   - The QA log shall identify the furnace file components reviewed, the results, and the follow-up activities performed to bring the file into compliance with the WHEAP Policy requirements (when applicable)
3) The completed furnace QA log

5.6 Vendor Desktop Monitoring (VDTM) Agency Responsibilities

WHEAP vendors are responsible for participating in Division conducted quality assurance activities at the Division's request. VDTMs focus on the fair pricing, delivery, and proper crediting practices of a specific vendor.

To assist in the process, WHEAP agencies are required to:

- Respond to Division requests for information regarding a specific vendor within the timeframes established by Division staff
- Participate as requested by the Division in all VDTM related activities

Chapter 6 − Errors, Mistakes, and Corrections

6.1 Master Record

The Master Record is a system function to save updated information about applicants learned after the current year application has been processed. This provides a method for the updated information to be stored for use on a subsequent application. The Master Record will reflect the data available from the most recent extraction (general application, crisis, furnace, etc.).

An HE+ System Note shall be included specifying changes made to the Master Record, along with how the information was learned and/or verified.

6.1.1 Change in Address

Changes/corrections in addresses for applications that have been extracted should be recorded by updating the Master Record.

1) Moved out of county/tribe

   If the applicant has moved out of your county/tribe, update the Master Record to reflect the change to the mailing address.

2) Moved into your county/tribe from another county/tribe

   If the applicant has moved into your county/tribe, update the Master Record to change the mailing and residence address. If crisis is being requested, update the address in the crisis application and this will automatically update the Master Record.

3) Moved prior to extraction:

   If the applicant moved prior to the extraction of the application, update the **mailing address only** in the application with the new address to ensure the benefit notice reaches the applicant. The application is valid based on the date of the application and must reflect the correct physical address and fuel account information. Add an HE+ System Application Note regarding the move.

4) Moved for Weatherization eligibility:

   If an HE+ eligible household moves, the Weatherization referral does not automatically carry to the new address. The household may re-apply during the same program year to determine eligibility for Weatherization assistance at the new address by completing an HE+ application through the local agency. Updating the Master Record does NOT update the Wx referral.

6.1.2 Own or Rent

If the 'Own or Rent' question was incorrectly completed, or has changed since the original application was processed, update the Master Record.

When processing a furnace application it is sometimes determined that the 'Own or Rent' question was incorrectly entered on the original application or that the ownership status has changed. The system allows workers to change the response to the 'Own or Rent' question on the furnace application. However, the information completed on the furnace application does not carry forward onto the next application. Therefore, the worker needs to update the Master Record to correct the 'Own or Rent' field for subsequent applications.

6.1.3 Fuel Switch

If there was a fuel switch conducted when the furnace was replaced, workers should update the Master Record with the new fuel type.

6.2 Benefit Calculator

The benefit calculator allows for a quick calculation of possible benefit amounts.

The benefit calculator will provide a heat (LIHEAP) benefit amount and an electric (non-heating) Public Benefits benefit amount. These are not final/actual benefit amounts as other factors can affect whether a household is eligible for a certain benefit. If a household is not eligible for an electric benefit (for example, because the utility is not participating in the Public Benefits program), the system benefit calculator will show what the benefit might have been if the household were eligible. Similarly, if a household is not eligible for a heating benefit (for example, because the family lives in subsidized housing with heat included in rent), the system benefit calculator will show what the benefit might have been if the household were eligible.

The benefit calculator should be used to determine if a benefit has been underpaid, or overpaid, by more than $30. During program years that supplemental benefits have been issued by the division, the $30 threshold must be based on the sum of the original and the supplemental benefit(s).

6.3 Regular Application Actions

When correcting errors or mistakes, or dealing with updates because of additional information, review both heat and electric benefits even if the correction seems to be for only one benefit. Remember the system deals with each benefit separately.

6.3.1 Cancel Benefit (Cancel and Refund)

It is possible to cancel one benefit (heat OR electric), or cancel an application by cancelling both benefits. Do not cancel the entire application when only one benefit needs to be corrected. Application status will display as cancelled even if only one benefit is cancelled. If no benefit was issued, it cannot be cancelled. See section 6.3.4 for extracted applications with one or more benefits denied in error.

6.3.2 Denied Incomplete and not Extracted

If the needed information is received before the case extracts, the additional information to the application should be added to the application. Resubmit for benefits if the case is now completed; 'save' if the case is still incomplete.

6.3.3 Updates to Unextracted Applications

If an application needs to be updated and it is in an unextracted state, either paid or denied status, updates can be performed and the application may be changed to "Pending" (saved) status or may be submitted for benefits. Application notes shall be added to identify why the application was changed to pending.

6.3.4 Denied in Error and Extracted (Reinstate the Application)

If an extracted application denies one or both benefits in error, create a new application with the original application date. Include the additional or corrected information, then submit the new application. Add HE+ System Notes to explain the error.

Example: information was received before the 31 days expired but it was not entered in the original application.

This is referred to as 'Reinstating the Application', and the original Certification Page is sufficient to consider this application complete.

6.3.5 Applications in Paid Status - Extracted State

Do not cancel an extracted application because an applicant wants to withdraw or because the applicant wants to reapply at a later date.

6.3.6 Error with an Extracted Application

6.3.6.1 Errors Which do not Affect the Benefit(s)

There are many "errors" which do not affect the eligibility or benefits paid. For these types of errors, do not cancel the application. Errors of this type should be corrected with HE+ System Notes and by updating the Master Record so that the incorrect information is not carried forward to future applications.

Examples of these errors include:

- Own or rent designation incorrectly identified (put the correct designation on the furnace application, if appropriate)
- Fuel account number is wrong

6.3.6.2 Errors Which May Affect the Eligibility/Benefit(s)

There are many errors which have the potential to affect the eligibility/benefit amount(s). Due to multiple factors affecting eligibility and benefit amounts, each error and each case should be evaluated individually.
Some errors that may affect the benefit amount or household eligibility include:

- Housing type
- Number of rooms
- Incorrect fuel type
- Annual fuel use
- Number of eligible household members
- Income
- Energy burden
- Student status
- Payments to the wrong vendor
- Failure to verify categorical eligibility on an over income application

If an error is discovered on an extracted application which may affect the benefit or eligibility, the first step is to determine if the correction will cause a change in payee, or a change of more than $30 in either the heat or the PB (electric) benefit. Use the Benefit Calculator to determine the adjusted benefit. See section 6.3 for important additional guidance.

1) If neither benefit would be affected by more than $30 (increased or decreased), add an HE+ System Note with the updated information and benefit calculation results, and in most cases update the Master Record to capture the updated information.

   If the error is corrected income (type or values), note the correct income amount in HE+ Application Notes associated with the original application. Income type(s) may need to be added or corrected on the Master Record, but income amounts should not be included on Master Record updates.

   If either or both benefit(s) would be affected by more than $30 (increased or decreased), then corrective actions need to be taken.

   Always enter HE+ System Notes to explain why the application is being corrected.

2) If only one of the benefits is affected by more than $30, cancel and refund that benefit only. Enter the correct information on the replacement application (the unchanged benefit will not pay because it has already been paid).

   If both benefits are affected by more than $30, cancel and refund the application (by cancelling both benefits). Enter the correct information on the replacement application.

   Continue to numbers 3-5 for guidance on when to select ‘vendor’ or ‘client’ for the cancel and refund process.

3) When performing a Cancel and Refund for either or both benefits, the responsible

party for the refund will default to the vendor. Vendor shall be selected for refund responsibility unless directed in policy otherwise.

4) If the benefit with the error was issued as a single party check, the default and only option for refund responsibility will be the client
5) If the benefit with the error, entirely or in part, was paid to a bulk-fuel vendor (propane, fuel oil, wood), the benefit must be corrected. If the applicant has received the fuel, the local agency must proceed with the benefit correction. If the overpayment is due to an agency error, select vendor as responsible for the correction, and cover, with crisis funds, any shortage to the bulk fuel vendor resulting from the correction. In situations where it is not a result of an agency error, select the client as responsible for the refund.

   If the correction can be made before the bulk fuel dealer has delivered the fuel, then proceed with the correction with vendor as responsible.

6.3.7 Wrong Account Number Entered

Do not cancel the application. Contact the vendor and have them put the credit on the proper account. Add an HE+ System Note explaining what happened and what corrective action was taken. Update the Master Record with the correct account number.

6.3.8 Wrong Vendor Entered on Application

Determine when the vendor changed.

1) If the applicant had changed a vendor prior to the application date, cancel the application for that benefit and process the corrected application.
   a) Cancelling the benefit will recapture the benefit from the incorrect vendor, and processing the new application will send the benefit to the corrected vendor. Do not instruct the vendor to send the benefit to the correct vendor.

2) If the applicant changed vendor after the application was taken, see instructions in Chapter 7 regarding credit balances – the vendor should not return the money.

6.3.9 Deceased Individual

A user with the ‘Supervisor’ permission can update an individual’s status as deceased. From the ‘Person Summary’ for that person, select 'Update Status' from the action ribbon. Update the deceased status from the drop down menu. Person status will then be changed to ‘Deceased’. Enter an HE+ System Note to indicate who contacted the agency with this information.

If an individual has been identified as deceased, in error, a user with ‘Supervisor’ permission can update the status. System Notes should be added to document the change in status. The person status will be changed to ‘Not Processed’ and will be validated through the MCI process on the next application.

If the death of the case head occurs after the date of application and before the application

is extracted, the application is valid based on the household situation on the date of the application.

NOTE: ‘Create Current Year Application’ and ‘Create Early Application’ will be grayed out with the red circle and white minus sign indicating these functions are not available on the ‘Person Summary’ of an individual who is identified as deceased. In addition, a case head whose status has been identified as 'deceased' will not be included in fixed income or outreach reports.

6.4 Automated Applications

Local WHEAP agency staff is not expected to routinely review the automated applications. Local WHEAP agencies may learn of household circumstance changes (from returned mail or calls from a household member). Do not delete an ‘Automated Application’. The following sections describe the courses of action recommended when circumstances have changed in an automated application household.

6.4.1 Death of Case Head

When local WHEAP staff are informed of the death of the case head, do not delete the application.

1) When the death of the case head happens prior to the application creation date (see application date on the auto application), then:

    a) Document, in HE+ System Notes, the reason the fuel account was active during the automated application process, and
    b) The application status should be changed to ‘Pending’ and HE+ System Notes added to explain the situation. Doing so will ensure that the case is processed as incomplete. The applicant household will be sent an associated denial letter.
    c) Navigate to the ‘person summary’ to indicate that the person as deceased. See section 6.3.9 for further information on marking an individual as deceased in the HE+ System.

2) When the death of the case head happens prior to the application creation date (see application date on the auto application) and household member(s) remain, then:

    a) Local agency staff should change the application status to ‘Pending’ and add HE+ System Notes to explain the situation, and
    b) Local agency staff should create a new application with a remaining household member as the applicant. A new application date and new Certification Page is required for the application to be complete. Use WEFI to update annual fuel costs.
    c) Navigate to the ‘Person Summary’ to indicate that the person as deceased. See section 6.3.9 for further information on marking an individual as deceased in the HE+ System.

3) When the death of the case head happens after the application date, then:

a) Local agency staff should not change the status of the application. This will allow the case to pay and the standard process for handling the payment should be followed (account credit should be returned to Division; see Chapter 7). HE+ System Notes should be added to the case.
b) Navigate to the 'Person Summary' to indicate that the person as deceased. See section 6.3.9 for further information on marking an individual as deceased in the HE+ System.

6.4.2 Change in Household Composition or Income

When there are changes in the number of household members or in the income counted for the household:

1) Make the corrections to the application (change the application status to 'Pending' update the information, and resubmit). Add HE+ System Notes to explain what was changed and why,

2) Obtain a signed Certification Page,

3) Do not change the application date or annual fuel costs, and

4) Do not delete the application.

6.4.3 Change in the Address (Moved)

1) If the household has moved and the new location is in the same county or tribe, the local agency must:

    a) Document in HE+ System Notes the reason the fuel account was active during the automated application process,

    b) Add HE+ System Notes to explain what household changes occurred, change the application status to 'Pending', and change the mailing address to the new address so the denial notice is sent to the correct location.

    c) Add HE+ System Notes to explain the situation. The applicant needs to reapply with the new address and household information. The new application cannot be entered in the system until the automated application extracts. A paper application can be completed until the application can be entered.

2) If the move is to a different agency's county or tribe, the agency with the original address takes the first two steps. The applicant must contact the new WHEAP agency serving the new address to complete a new application.

    a) Document in HE+ System Notes the reason the fuel account was active during the automated application process,

    b) Add HE+ System Notes to explain what household changes occurred, change

the application status to 'Pending', and change the mailing address to the new address so the denial notice is sent to the correct location.

c) Create a new (complete) application, and add HE+ System Notes to explain the situation. The new application cannot be entered in the system until the automated application extracts. A paper application can be completed until the application can be entered.

3) If the move is to an assisted living facility, the local agency with jurisdiction of the application must:

a) Document in HE+ System Notes the reason the fuel account was active during the automated application process, and

b) Add HE+ System Notes to explain what household changes occurred, change the application status to 'Pending', and change the mailing address to the new address so the denial notice is sent to the correct location.

6.5 Crisis Application Actions

6.5.1 Crisis Paid to a Vendor in Error

If a crisis benefit is paid to a vendor in error, the agency shall use the following guidance:

1) If the crisis benefit with the error was paid to a bulk-fuel vendor (propane, fuel oil, wood), and the applicant has received the fuel, select "Client" as responsible for paying the benefit back and contact the applicant to set up a repayment arrangement. See section 7.9 for more information.

2) If the crisis benefit with the error was paid to a bulk-fuel vendor and the delivery has not yet been made, select "Vendor" as responsible for paying the benefit back. Contact the vendor to advise the benefit will be cancelled to ensure a future delivery is not made based on that benefit.

3) If the crisis benefit with the error was paid to a natural gas or electric vendor, cancel and refund the crisis benefit.

4) If a crisis benefit needs to be reissued because the original crisis was paid to the wrong vendor, a new crisis application can be entered if adequate crisis funds exist.

Note: The refunded crisis benefit resulting from a cancellation will not be reflected in the local agency's available crisis balance until it is offset by the associated vendors' subsequent regular 'Heat' and/or 'Public Benefit' (PB) benefit paid (HTPAY/PBPAY). All recouped crisis benefits will go into the "General" crisis allocation.

6.5.2 Crisis Paid to Wrong Account

If a crisis benefit is paid to the correct vendor but wrong account name or number, the agency needs to:

1) Notify the vendor of the incorrect and correct account information,
2) Request the benefits be transferred to the correct account name/number,
3) Update the Master Record with the correct account name/number, and
4) Enter HE+ System Crisis Notes to indicate the date the request was made to transfer the benefits.

6.5.3 Crisis Application When Application is Cancelled

If the basic information for the crisis (address, vendor, fuel type) is unchanged, it is not necessary to cancel the crisis. Do not cancel the crisis unless conditions make it necessary.

6.5.4 Co-Payment Agreement Actions

To cancel all remaining payments in a co-payment plan without sending a denial letter to the applicant, delete each due date transaction that no longer needs to be paid.

6.6 Furnace Actions

6.6.1 Ownership Change

If the ownership needs to be changed for a household because it was incorrectly entered on the regular application, information must be provided to show ownership, or rental tenancy, and the following step shall be followed:

1) Change the home ownership status on the furnace application. This will automatically update the Master Record.

Chapter 7 − Payment Adjustments, Refunds and Returns

7.1 Basic WHEAP Payments

Most WHEAP payments are issued directly to a vendor. For some regular benefit cases a check is sent directly to the applicant.

7.2 Checks Sent Directly to the Vendor

Regular benefit payments are sent directly to the applicant's vendor (fuel supplier/utility). Crisis assistance payments are sent directly to vendors supplying the crisis services.

1) In order for the WHEAP program to make payments to any business entity the vendor must be registered with the state, have an assigned vendor number, and be designated as 'active' in the HE+ System. Registered vendors must agree to comply with the policies outlined in the Fuel Supplier/Vendor Agreement (see the Home Energy Plus website) and set forth their services and servicing requirements.

   A vendor may be active for LIHEAP (heat), Public Benefits (PB) (non-heating electric), or both funding sources. If a vendor is not active for a funding source, it cannot receive a payment from that source. An example of a vendor only eligible for payments from one source is a utility not participating in Public Benefits; such a vendor may be eligible to receive LIHEAP payments and are not eligible to receive PB payments.

2) If a local WHEAP agency believes the fuel supplier, or vendor, is not adhering to its agreement, the local agency should notify the Division for investigation. If there is a violation of the agreement, the Division staff will work with the vendor to achieve compliance with the agreement or recommend to the Division Administrator that corrective action is taken, e.g., suspension of fuel supplier/vendor agreement.

7.3 Checks Sent Directly to the Applicant

A single party check for regular benefits will be sent to:

- Recipients who have heat/electric included in their rent; or
- Recipients who pay heating and/or electrical costs to the landlord or a mobile home park owner, or
- Some recipients on master meters (see Chapter 2), or
- Recipients who purchase fuel from a non-registered WHEAP supplier/vendor.

Crisis assistance benefits are sent directly to a vendor on behalf of a recipient; not directly to a recipient.

7.4 Checks Sent to the Local WHEAP Agency

When a local WHEAP agency enters its address for the applicant mailing address, the system sends *single party checks,* for the regular benefit, directly to local agencies.

Checks are sent to the local WHEAP agency when a lost or stolen check is replaced or if the mail is returned via the USPS for an invalid address.

7.5 Payment Registers

For each extraction, one check is sent to a vendor for all applicants who identified the vendor as their energy supplier, crisis assistance provider, weatherization agency that coordinated furnace activity. WHEAP cases are extracted from the HE+ System Wednesday evenings and checks are mailed the following Monday. Due to official holidays, occasional deviation from this schedule is warranted. The extraction schedule for the full program year may be found via the HE+ website.

Prior to receipt of this check, the vendor is provided a payment register, on the HE+ System or through the mail. The payment register includes account number, account name, applicant name, applicant address, county/tribe, benefit amount, and benefit type. Vendors, local WHEAP staff, and state staff having specific security access can view check registers.

7.5.1 System Codes

1) Payment Codes – These codes regularly appear on the check registers.
   - **HTPAY** Heat Paid – Regular heat (LIHEAP) benefit payment
   - **PBPAY** PB Paid – Regular “electric” (Public Benefits) benefit payment
   - **CRPAY** LIHEAP Crisis Paid – All types of LIHEAP crisis payments
   - **PCPAY** PB Crisis Paid – All types of Public Benefits crisis payments
   - **FNPAY** Furnace Paid – Payments for furnace services

2) Cancellation Codes
   - **CRCAN** LIHEAP Crisis Cancellation
   - **PCCAN** Public Benefits Crisis Cancellation
   - **FNCAN** Furnace Services Cancellation
   - **HTCAN** Heat Benefit Cancellation
   - **PBCAN** Electric (PB) Benefit Cancellation

3) Reserved Payment Codes
   - **CRRES** LIHEAP Crisis Reserved (SCCC) – LIHEAP funds reserved for future payment
   - **PCRES** PB Crisis Reserved (SPBC) – Public Benefits funds reserved for future payment
   - **FNRES** Furnace Reserved – Funds reserved for furnace services

4) Denied Payment Codes

CRDENY	LIHEAP Crisis Denied
PCDENY	Public Benefits Crisis Denied
FNDENY	Furnace Denied
HTDENY	Heat Denied
PBDENY	PB Denied
PHDENY	Heat and PB Denied with a 'General Denial' – Examples of a General Denial include “Your income exceeds the eligibility limit,” and “The application date has exceeded 31 days.”

7.6 Check Returns

When any check is sent to the Division it must be accompanied by a memo identifying the applicant(s), the amount of the benefit(s), what the payment(s) was (regular, crisis, or furnace benefit), and the reason(s) for the return.

Refunds, repayments, and written communications concerning payments should be addressed to:

DOA/ Division of Energy, Housing and Community Resources
Attn: WHEAP Refund
101 East Wilson Street, 6th floor
P.O. Box 7970
Madison WI 53707-7970

Email communications should be addressed to heat@wisconsin.gov

Checks should be made payable to DOA/Division of Energy, Housing and Community Resources.

7.6.1 Recipient Returns

When a single party heating/non-heating assistance check is returned to the local agency provide the recipient with a receipt for the check. Send the check along with the check stub, if available, to the Division of Energy, Housing and Community Resources. *DO NOT ENDORSE THE CHECK*.

7.6.2 When a Notice is Returned by Post Office

Notices are only returned when the post office does not have forwarding information for the applicant. When a benefit notice is returned by the post office, do not discard the returned notice before checking on the reason for the return.

Try to determine the applicant's correct mailing address, correct any discovered errors by updating the Master Record, enter an HE+ System Note, and if an address was established, resend the Notice.

Returned mail should raise a caution flag about an applicant's situation and be investigated for application data accuracy.

7.6.3 When a Single Party Check is Returned by the Post Office

Single-party checks are returned to the local agency whether or not forwarding information is available. Agencies shall have policies and procedures in place for how returned checks are securely handled and securely transported to the appropriate person(s) at the agency. Checks shall be kept in a secure location.
The following steps shall be followed:

1) If the returned check includes a new address:
   a) Contact the applicant to verify the address,
   b) Correct an error(s) or the entire address in the application mailing address by updating the Master Record,
   c) Check to see if there are related changes in the case record (house type, number of rooms, fuel type, etc.),
   d) Add an HE+ System Note, and
   e) Resend the check.

2) If the return notice does not indicate a new address and a forwarding address is verified, make any necessary changes by updating the Master Record (see steps above);

3) If the return notice does not indicate a new address and no forwarding address is established, enter an HE+ System Note.

4) If the applicant cannot be located within 30 days after the agency receives the returned check, the check must be mailed to DEHCR. If the applicant contacts the agency regarding the check after it has been returned to DEHCR, contact the HE+ Help Desk.

Returned mail should raise a caution flag about an applicant's situation and be investigated for application data accuracy.

7.6.4 When a Supplemental Benefit is Returned

1) Single-party supplemental benefit checks returned by the USPS must be processed as specified in Section 7.6.3. Never cancel an application because of a returned single-party supplemental benefit check.
2) Vendors will often return applicant supplemental benefits when an applicant moves and does not provide the vendor with a forwarding address. If an applicant subsequently contacts the agency to claim the payment, contact the HE+ Help Desk.

7.6.5 Returned Because the Applicant Is Deceased

If an applicant is deceased (after the application date), the check should be used to pay outstanding energy bills, and the remaining balance must be returned to the Division when the account is closed. DO NOT ENDORSE THE CHECK. Navigate to the 'Person Summary' to indicate that the person as deceased.

7.6.6 Vendor Identified Incorrect Payments

All suppliers are required to review the weekly WHEAP payment register for accuracy of home energy assistance and crisis assistance payments. In the event a payment is made to a supplier in error, the vendor should contact the local agency (listed on the payment register) within 30 days to correct the error.

1) Payments of Regular WHEAP benefits made in error must be corrected by the local WHEAP agency and will be refunded/recaptured through the next regular WHEAP Home Energy Assistance payment(s) made to the supplier—vendors should not prepare and send a check to the Division in these situations unless requested by Division staff.

2) In the event a Crisis Assistance payment is made to a supplier in error, the local WHEAP agency must:

   - Cancel/refund the crisis payment;
   - Notify the vendor of the error; and
   - Inform the applicant about the change in benefit.

   Vendors should not prepare and send a check to the Division in these situations unless requested by Division staff, as the benefit will be offset by a subsequent regular 'Heat' and/or 'Public Benefit' (PB) benefit paid (HTPAY/PBPAY).

7.7 Refunds

Vendors must notify the local WHEAP agency of any refunds.

Refunds may be for one or more customers. Each customer needs to be identified, if multiple customers' refunds are on one single check. The amount returned needs to be identified per customer.

When it is appropriate to return funds to the Division, checks should be made payable to DOA/ Division of Energy, Housing and Community Resources, and the following information should be provided:

1) Customer/Applicant's Name,
2) Customer/Applicant's Address,
3) Name of agency where customer applied for WHEAP,
4) Date of energy assistance (or heating season) benefit,
5) Reason for the return of funds (such as moved and unable to contact, deceased, or moved but new vendor does not participate in the State Public Benefits Program),

6) Type of funds returned (such as LIHEAP Heat Benefit, LIHEAP Crisis Benefit, PB electric benefit, PB Crisis Benefit, or Furnace Benefit), and
7) Amount of funds being returned.

7.7.1 Regular Benefits

Regular benefit payments made to a fuel supplier shall be applied to the current heating season costs. WHEAP payments that exceed current heating season costs must be applied as a credit to the customer's account. Supplemental payments are considered part of the original WHEAP benefit.

1) If a recipient retains the same supplier with an active account; the credit balance remains with the supplier until exhausted.

2) If the account becomes inactive, a reasonable effort must be made to contact the applicant and/or the local WHEAP agency to identify the new fuel provider to transfer the credit to the new supplier. Exception: Public Benefits non-heating assistance (electric) is not transferrable to a vendor who does not participate in the State Public Benefits Program. If the vendor does not participate, the funds should be refunded to the Division.

3) If a new fuel provider cannot be identified, the funds should be transferred to the customer/applicant. Exception: Public Benefits non-heating assistance (electric) is not transferrable to an applicant whose vendor does not participate in the State Public Benefits Program. If an applicant's vendor does not participate, the funds should be returned to the Division.

4) If the customer/applicant cannot be located the funds should be refunded to the Division.

5) If the customer/applicant moves out of the state, any LIHEAP heat benefit is to be transferred by cash or check to the customer/applicant. All Public Benefit (electric) assistance balances are to be refunded to the Division.

6) If a credit balance remains for a deceased applicant and the account is closed, the balance must be refunded to the Division.

7) When a WHEAP recipient moves his or her household, and as a result the recipient has no direct relationship with a fuel supplier, a vendor must notify the landlord of the amount of remaining fuel in the tank of the WHEAP recipient tenants who have moved from residence. Landlords must issue a refund to the WHEAP recipient tenant for the amount of fuel remaining. If unable to locate the WHEAP recipient tenant, the Landlord shall issue a refund to the Division. The landlord is not permitted to retain the fuel or debit the refund against a balance owed. When a recipient moves out of state the funds shall be refunded to the Division. The funds belong to the WHEAP recipient and/or the Division.

7.7.2 Crisis Benefits

1) If a recipient retains the same supplier with an active account; the credit balance remains with the supplier until exhausted.

2) If the account becomes inactive, a reasonable effort must be made to contact the applicant and/or the local WHEAP agency to identify the new fuel provider and transfer the credit to the new supplier.

3) If a new fuel provider cannot be identified, the funds should be refunded to the Division.

4) If the customer/applicant cannot be located the funds should be refunded to the Division.

5) If a customer moves out of state, the credit balance must be refunded to the Division.

6) If a credit balance remains for a deceased applicant and the account is closed, the balance must be refunded to the Division.

7) When a WHEAP recipient moves his or her household, and as a result the recipient has no direct relationship with a fuel supplier, a vendor must notify the landlord of the amount of remaining fuel in the tank of the WHEAP recipient tenants who have moved from residence. Landlords must issue a refund to the WHEAP recipient tenant for the amount of fuel remaining. If unable to locate the WHEAP recipient tenant, the Landlord shall issue a refund to the Division. The landlord is not permitted to retain the fuel or debit the refund against a balance owed. When a recipient moves out of state the funds shall be refunded to the Division. The funds belong to the WHEAP recipient and/or the Division.

7.7.3 Furnace Services

If there is a balance on a furnace services benefit, the funds should be refunded to the Division.

7.8 Lost, Stolen or Destroyed Benefit Checks

Single Party Check:
If an applicant contacts the local agency and states they have not received a benefit check, or that it was stolen or destroyed, the applicant must complete a Stop Payment Request. Requests will be processed by the Division, and will result in one of two actions:

- If the check has been cashed, a copy of the cashed check will be provided to the local agency to present to the applicant
- If the check has not been cashed, a replacement check will be issued for the applicant to pick up at the local agency

A Stop Payment Request includes completing a WHEAP Affidavit of Lost, Stolen or

Destroyed Benefits Form, and should be completed in the following scenarios:

1) Applicant states they have not received a check. Please note the following:

   a) Check must have been issued within the last 12 months

   b) It must be at least 3 - 4 weeks since the check was issued

   c) Checks cannot be forwarded to new addresses. These checks are stamped 'Return Service Requested' and returned to the local agency. Because this process takes an average of 3 weeks, agencies should be checking their returned mail in cases where the applicant has since moved or an incorrect mailing address was processed.

2) Applicant knows the check was received but the check has been lost, stolen or destroyed regardless of when the check was issued. Return as much of a mutilated or destroyed check as possible to the Division.

Completing a Stop Payment Request:

1) Agency completes the check information section of the WHEAP Affidavit of Lost, Stolen or Destroyed Benefits Form **before** presenting to the applicant

2) Applicant completes the remainder of the Affidavit and returns to the local agency

3) Agency reviews the Affidavit and signs

4) Agency provides a copy of the Affidavit to the applicant
   a) Retain the completed and signed affidavit in the applicant's file

5) Agency sends an email to the HE+ Help Desk (heat@wisconsin.gov), stating an Affidavit has been completed by the applicant, and include the following information:

   a) County/Tribe
   b) Application Number
   c) Applicant Name
   d) Check Number
   e) Check Date
   f) Voucher Number
   g) Amount of Check
   h) Reason for check affidavit

6) Add an HE+ System Note to the application that an Affidavit was completed by the applicant, and a stop payment request was sent to the Division

Results of the Stop Payment Request:

1) Check has been cashed

   a) The local agency will receive a photocopy of the check by email that must be presented to the applicant

   b) If the applicant insists the signature is not his/hers, have the applicant complete form DOA-2789 (including the oath and notary signature) and form DOA-2790 (handwriting samples). Mail the originals of both forms to the Division within 30 days (keep copies in the applicant's file)
      - Both forms can be found on the Home Energy Plus website under Grantee Information

   c) US Bank will initiate a forgery investigation and issue a cashier's check if there is a settlement on the forged check. The Division will forward the cashier's check to the local agency WHEAP Coordinator; and/or

   d) The applicant may wish to contact the local law enforcement authorities.

2) Check is outstanding

   a) Stop payment is completed on the outstanding check

   b) A WHEAP check, on which payment has been stopped, can be replaced only with a State Controller's Office 'S' series replacement check. 'S' series checks are not generated through the HE+ System.

   c) The stop payment action and replacement check will be recorded on the 'View Register' in the HE+ System

   d) The Division will mail the 'S' series check to the local agency for the applicant to pick up at the agency with a valid photo ID.

Single Party check issued to the applicant in error:
If the local agency becomes aware of information that would have made the case ineligible (whether or not the incorrect information resulted from fraud), and the check has not yet been cashed, or if the local agency becomes aware that the applicant is ineligible, the WHEAP agency must notify the Division in writing (an email to the HE+ Help Desk will suffice) and add an HE+ System Note. An Affidavit of Lost, Destroyed or Stolen Benefits Form, completed by the applicant, is not needed.

Vendor Checks:
Vendors do not have to complete an Affidavit. The agency or vendor should contact the HE+ Help Desk when a check has not been received. There are no time limits to initiate a stop payment request.

Stale dated checks:
State issued checks stale date (expire) after 12 months from the date of issuance. These will be recorded on the transaction register as a 'Cancelled Draft'. If an applicant is requesting that a stale dated check be reissued (they just found the check or state they never received the check), agencies may request that the check be reissued by sending a written request to the Division via the Help Desk. Include the applicant's name, application number, check number and amount, and applicant's current mailing address. Add an HE+ System Note to the application regarding the action taken.

The Division will review the request. An Affidavit is not required when the system reflects that the check is stale dated/has been marked as "Cancelled Draft".

7.9 Overpayments and Applicant Repayments

1) The local agency must establish a separate file on overpayments that the recipient is required to repay for single party heat or PB (electric) regular benefits, crisis benefits, emergency furnace benefits, and/or weatherization services regardless of program year association. The file should include:

   - A list of those cases in which an overpayment may have been made;
   - The date the recipient was notified of the overpayment;
   - The disposition made, i.e., recovery; and
   - The date and amount of any recovery or the amount of un-collectible funds.

2) Regular Heat and PB Benefits canceled during the heating season, and cancelled crisis benefits where "Vendor" is selected as responsible for paying back will be recouped by the HE+ System through subsequent regular Heat or PB payments.

   Repayments of regular benefits can be performed on the HE+ system by selecting the client as responsible for the refund. A model WHEAP Repayment Agreement form can be found on the Home Energy Plus website.

3) All overpayments must be refunded to the Division *within one year from the date of the check which included the overpayment.* *In the event the repayment will exceed one year, division approval is required*

   Overpayments should be payable to DOA/ Division of Energy, Housing and Community Resources and be mailed by the local WHEAP agency to the Division with a cover letter specifying the following:

   - Name,
   - Full address,
   - Reason for the overpayment,
   - Indicate Heating, Non-Heating or Crisis Benefit, Furnace Benefit, Weatherization Services,
   - Name of WHEAP agency, and
   - Date of the initial energy check or the appropriate heating season.

If the recipient chooses to pay in monthly installments, the local agency must send the payments to the Division as they are received. The local agency is responsible for ensuring that the Division receives the full overpayment within one year from the date of the check. However, if the recipient requires a repayment plan in excess of one year, full payment is expected to be made as soon as possible.

7.10 Bankruptcy

If an agency receives a stay order from a court stating that an applicant has filed bankruptcy and listed the agency as a creditor, suspend recoupment activity pending the outcome of the bankruptcy petition. Immediately file proof of claim with the court.

When the bankruptcy process is complete, the court will notify the local agency of the outcome. Consult your agency's counsel or district attorney for instructions on resuming recoupment activity.

Chapter 8 − Administration

8.1 Local Administration

The Division contracts with counties and tribes for local administration and delivery of WHEAP.

County departments of social/human services or designated tribal offices are responsible for the local operation of WHEAP. Each agency must provide eligible households living within the agency's jurisdiction with available WHEAP benefits and services.

Tribes contracted to provide WHEAP services are responsible for local program administration to applicants living within the borders of the reservation. Contracted tribes may not send applicants living within the reservation borders to the county WHEAP agency for services. County agencies with WHEAP contracted tribal reservation lands within their general boundaries may not provide services to households residing within the reservation boundaries.

A county or tribe may subcontract WHEAP operations. Subcontracting does *not* remove or diminish the county or tribe's responsibility for the operation of the program within their jurisdiction. Refer to Section 8.3.2 for specific criteria that applies to subcontracting.

8.2 Program Operations

Each local agency must administer the WHEAP within the guidelines, policies and regulations set forth in the current year WHEAP Operations Manual, the current year WHEAP Contract with the Department of Administration, Division of Energy, Housing and Community Resources, relevant State of Wisconsin Statutes, and appropriate Federal Regulations.

8.2.1 General

Local agencies shall:

1) Send at least one employee to all Division administered required WHEAP meetings, training sessions, and conferences.

   If a contractor and/or their subcontractor(s) are unable to provide representation at the required meeting, training or conference, a written explanation from the WHEAP Director shall be submitted a minimum of twenty-four hours before the start of the meeting, training, or conference.

   Unexcused absences or agencies with a history of non-participation are subject to penalties as outlined in the WHEAP Contract.

2) Obtain prior approval from the Division for out-of-state conferences or training. See section 8.3.3.

8.2.2 Public Information

Local agencies are responsible to provide information to the public in the agency's jurisdiction about WHEAP (energy assistance). The local WHEAP agency's public information about the program must include at least:

1) The availability of energy assistance, crisis assistance and weatherization services; and
2) Eligibility requirements, how to apply, location of application sites, times to apply; and
3) Provide information on transportation to application sites; and
4) Identify the program as administered by the State of Wisconsin Department of Administration and include the HE+ logo on all program materials prepared and published by the local agency. See Section 8.5.8.

The local WHEAP agency is required to:

1) Establish and publicize a local or toll-free telephone number where persons can call year-round for general WHEAP information. The publicized telephone number shall have voicemail or an answering machine where persons may leave a message when the phone is not answered. Messages must be answered in the order of receipt and no later than three business days from the date of the message;
2) Establish procedures to identify no-heat emergency telephone calls and to respond to the calls within the required timeframes (see Chapter 4 and the Home Energy Plus Emergency Furnace Manual)

8.2.3 Outreach

1) Agencies are required to provide outreach services to maximize participation of eligible persons for WHEAP benefits. Outreach activities must target households with disabled persons, elderly persons, children under six years old, and persons working at low-wage jobs (working poor). The "outreach indicator" is a question on the paper and system application. See Section 3.4.4 for more information about the outreach indicator.

2) Agencies are required to prominently display the Home Energy Plus Weatherization/WHEAP Co-Branding Poster in the agency's main waiting area for WHEAP intake. WHEAP agencies shall also consider displaying the poster in intake workers' offices, outreach locations, and other appropriate areas.

3) Agencies are required to ensure that persons with limited English proficiency (LEP) have meaningful and equal access to benefits and services. The agency is required to provide spoken interpretation in addition to translated written publications as some individuals may not read English or other language. The agency must have a mechanism to communicate orally with people with LEP. Providing the Spanish version of the Home Energy Plus (HE+) Application is not fulfilling this policy requirement. If the applicant requires spoken communication and/or explanation in addition to the translated application, agencies shall ensure verbal interpretation is available.

4) Agencies are required to provide services to the disabled and impaired, including but not limited to assisting applicants with the completion of the application form, translation of material, interpretation services for deaf, and reading services for blind.

5) Agencies must establish HE+ application sites that are accessible to targeted households.

6) Agencies must comply with Federal Law and provide an alternate intake site separate from a site which administers W-2/TANF.

7) Agencies must provide assistance with the preparation and submittal of applications by persons who are homebound.

8) Agencies must arrange an early application period for persons in targeted groups and **high-risk households**.

9) Agencies are required to complete a Program Operations and Community Service Plan (POCS) Plan. The Division provided template is available on the HE+ public website under WHEAP Grantee Information. The goal of this plan is to provide agencies with a means to describe how the agency will conduct outreach, how they will identify and enroll eligible households in their communities, and explain how the agency will reach targeted households. The POCS Plan should indicate what other community resources/stakeholders play a role in this outreach effort and identify key stakeholders that the agency coordinates efforts/referrals with. In addition, the list should indicate the local agency's contact person and the resource services provided. The plan must be made available to the Division upon request.

10) Agencies may choose to subcontract with non-profit organizations that administer W-2/TANF as long as an alternate intake method is offered which does not require applicants to apply in person.

11) Agencies may establish interagency agreements with other low-income program offices to perform some of the outreach activities to targeted groups.

8.2.4 Agency Information

Each WHEAP agency shall review the following information for accuracy before the start of each Federal Fiscal Year (October 1).

1) In the HE+ System, the name, address, phone numbers and e-mail addresses of person(s) responsible for administration and operation of the WHEAP. Additionally, review that agency staff are listed with the correct positions, including:
   a) a Director (party responsible for signing the contract and oversight of the program)
   b) at least one WHEAP Coordinator (party responsible, at a minimum, for the high-level administration)*
   c) fiscal staff
   d) at least one Profile Management Administrator (PMA)
2) In the HE+ System, the business address(es) and telephone number(s) for

applicants to contact and to be displayed on computer-generated notification letters.

- In the system, this information is found via the business view page under "Locations" in the "General" section. Click on the address for the business location to view business location details: the physical address, mailing address, and phone number.

3) Contact information on the "Where to Apply" map on the Home Energy Plus website (http://homeenergyplus.wi.gov/section.asp?linkid=119&locid=25)
4) Ensure the agency is meeting the alternate intake and outreach requirements of the federal law

*If a subcontracted agency is operating in more than one territory, one of the listed WHEAP Coordinators shall be unique to each county/tribe. Any exceptions to this require a request to the Division.

8.2.4.1 Updating Agency Information

The agency is responsible for ensuring that all contact information in the HE+ System is up-to-date, including the "Where to Apply" map on the Home Energy Plus website. Any changes to WHEAP contacts, including positions (Director, Coordinator, etc.), must be updated in the system by the agency.

Changes to business locations, mailing addresses, agency phone numbers, or changes to the Profile Management Administrator must be changed by the Division. Submit any updates in writing to the HE+ Help Desk (heat@wisconsin.gov).

8.2.4.2 Notification of a New Subcontract

Counties or tribes intending to enter into a new subcontract for the administration of the WHEAP, or counties/tribes changing subcontractors, are required to notify the Division a minimum of 30 days prior to the start date of the subcontract. See more about Subcontracting the program under Section 8.3.2.

In addition to notifying the Division, the agency shall complete and return the 'WHEAP Agency Contract Information Form' to the Division prior to the start of the subcontract. This form can be found on the Home Energy Plus website.

Counties or tribes may request, from the Division, guidance with the transition of WHEAP operations to a subcontractor. Email or call the Division as far in advance of the transition as possible.

8.2.5 Intake

The local WHEAP agency must conduct intake for the WHEAP and Weatherization programs. The **intake** program, at a minimum, is required to:

1) Establish a location for the distribution and receipt of applications;
2) Provide flexible office hours to accommodate applicants who cannot apply during normal business hours;

3) Ensure all application sites are accessible to persons with physical disabilities;
4) Ensure application sites are physically and geographically available for all potential applicants within the County/Tribal jurisdiction;
5) Provide for an alternate intake method (as required by Federal Law), such that an applicant is not required to apply in person at a site where W-2/TANF is administered; and
6) Develop a working relationship with the local Weatherization operator(s).
    a) The Division provides the Weatherization agencies with a list of potential applicants based on applicants who have received regular WHEAP benefits.
    b) Agencies may provide the applicants with the name, phone number, and address of the local Weatherization operator.

In accordance with Department of Energy (DOE) Weatherization Program Notice 10-08, agencies are required to keep confidential any specifically identifying information related to an individual's eligibility for the Home Energy Plus Program, or the individual's participation in the Home Energy Plus Program.

Each WHEAP agency, in its entirety, must comply with the Agency Guidelines for Handling Sensitive Data (Appendix A).

8.2.6 Complete and Process Applications

Local WHEAP agencies are required to take applications and assist applicants in completing the Home Energy Plus (HE+) application. Applications must be taken throughout the year to establish eligibility for Proactive Crisis assistance and Weatherization assistance after the heating season is over, and for regular energy assistance benefits and emergency assistance during the heating season.

Chapters 2, 3, and 4, and the Home Energy Plus Furnace Manual describe how to process applications for regular benefits, crisis assistance, and furnace services. In addition, each agency is responsible for:

1) Entering Home Energy Plus applications into the HE+ System within thirty (30) days of the application date. Please note: Regardless of the actual date when an Early Application is taken by the local WHEAP agency, the HE+ System processes the Early Application like an October 1 application.
    - If an extraction is delayed, all processing of payments and notifications are also delayed.
2) Verifying application information and viewing supporting documents to certify the application data is accurate.
3) Entering multifamily building applications into the HE+ System within 30 days, or less, for the local Weatherization operator to achieve the number of eligible dwelling units needed to make the building eligible for Weatherization assistance.
4) Entering all applications into the HE+ System in chronological (date) order. Applications will be processed using the data from the first chronologically entered application.

5) Assuring applications are complete, unless applicant withdraws or fails to provide required information.
6) Resolving application and check issuance problems.

8.2.7 Crisis Assistance

Each WHEAP agency is required to provide emergency and proactive crisis services to assist applicants with home energy costs. It is important for WHEAP contracted Tribes to provide these services to households within their reservation. County agencies with WHEAP contracted tribal reservation lands within their general boundaries may not provide services to households residing within the reservation boundaries.

Agencies shall develop a 'Crisis Plan' to guide the agency in managing funds and distributing benefits and services. The Crisis Plan must include all criteria included in the 'Crisis Plan' (located on the HE+ website under WHEAP Grantee Information) and be submitted to the Division by October 1st. These services include but are not limited to the following:

1) Respond to requests for crisis assistance as specified in Chapter 4;
2) Provide emergency services during the heating season; and
3) Provide proactive services year-round.

8.2.7.1 Contract Spending

Contractors shall budget the full WHEAP Contract allocation for twelve months of activity, including the five contract account lines, LIHEAP General Operations, PB Operations, Wx Operations, LIHEAP Crisis Services, and PB Outreach, as well as the two benefit account lines, LIHEAP Crisis Benefits and PB Crisis Benefits. Time reporting is strongly encouraged for budgeting and for reporting of actual expenditures.

Expenses to Crisis Benefits and Crisis Services shall be spent within a reasonable ratio. DEHCR will determine a reasonable ratio based on program operation factors and comparisons. Each Crisis Benefit issued requires crisis activity by the agency intake staff, which should be expensed to the Crisis Services contract account line. Some crisis activities will not result in a crisis benefit to an applicant, yet still may be an expense to the Crisis Services contract account line.

It is the Contractor's responsibility to ensure the subcontractor is meeting the Division expectations for expenditures.

8.2.8 HE+ Furnace Program

The local agency is responsible for determining eligibility for the HE+ Furnace Program, making the referral for furnace services, coordinating with the local Weatherization Agency, as well as assuring that applicants waiting for furnace services are able to relocate or provided temporary heat. See the Home Energy Plus Furnace Program Manual on the Home Energy Plus website for details of the WHEAP agency's responsibilities.

8.2.9 Fraud

All agencies are required to have procedures in place to handle fraud. If fraud is suspected, collect all information available about the case. Present this to the authority in the local agency who handles fraud cases (district attorney, sheriff, etc.) for investigation.

A worker signature on the Certification Page certifies that the worker has verified the information on the Home Energy Plus application in accordance with Home Energy Plus policies and is complete and accurate to the best of their knowledge. If a worker has doubt of the information's accuracy, further investigation shall be done to determine the accuracy of the information presented.

Upon completion of the investigation, determine if any benefits (LIHEAP/heat), public benefits, crisis, furnace, and/or weatherization) were awarded to applicants who were not eligible, or if a benefit overpayment occurred. If it is determined that fraud occurred, proceed with a cancel/refund of any benefits affected by the inaccurate information. If verification of fraud exists for previous years, proceed with the Home Energy Plus Repayment Agreement form for whichever heating years the fraud is affected by. System Notes are required for all fraud investigation cases. If the overpayment is with a bulk fuel vendor, the local agency must proceed with the benefit correction by selecting the client as responsible for the refund Refer to section 7.10 if there is a need for a customer repayment agreement. Contact the HE+ Help Desk for assistance.

In order to mitigate fraud and maintain program integrity, agencies shall ensure compliance with all applicable elements of "Appendix A - Agency Guidelines for Handling Sensitive Data." If requested by the Division, agencies shall identify all steps taken to comply with Appendix A.

Report all incidences of worker fraud to the Division.

8.3 Contract and Fiscal

It is every County's/Tribe's responsibility to read and understand the Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program contractual obligations. In addition, the County/Tribe acknowledges the fiscal responsibilities outlined in the WHEAP Contract and the WHEAP Operations Manual. Direct all questions and comments to the HE+ Help Desk (heat@wisconsin.gov or 608-267-3680).

8.3.1 Payment for Contract Services

Funds for LIHEAP General Operations, Public Benefits Operations, Weatherization Operations, Crisis Services, and Outreach are allocated to counties and tribes through a direct contract with the Department of Administration (DOA).

Counties and tribes are provided contracts on a three year cycle. The first year of the contract, each county and tribe will receive a full original contract for signature. The second and third year of the three year cycle each county and tribe will receive automatic renewals that contain a budget allocation. No signature is required with the second and third year contracts during each three year cycle.

In the event that an agency elects to transition the functions of WHEAP related activities to a different entity, agencies shall notify the division within 30 days of the intent to change activities. In addition to the notification, the agency shall submit a transition plan that addresses how the activities of the WHEAP transition will be addressed. The transition plan shall include, but not be limited to, how the program will continue uninterrupted, how the new entity staff will be trained, if the agency intake site will change, and how the new intake operations will be communicated to applicants.

Expenditures for these allocated funds are invoiced for reimbursement by counties and tribes on the Home Energy Plus System. Only staff with appropriate security clearance can access the contract/claim module of the System.

The Division does not provide a specific tracking tool for the agency to manage the reporting of expenses. The Division recommends that 100% time study be used for the most accurate method to track WHEAP activities.

Furnace services expenses, like regular WHEAP benefits, are paid by the Division and not from funds allocated to the County/Tribe.

For accounting purposes, the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number of the LIHEAP program is 93.568.

The State Grant Identification number for the Utility Public Benefits Program is 505.371.

8.3.2 Subcontracting

Counties/Tribes may subcontract the responsibility of ensuring eligible households living in their county/tribe have access to WHEAP benefits.

1) The Division requires that Counties/Tribes are required to provide written notification to the Division within 30 days of the start of the subcontract.
2) The agency shall provide the Division with a signed copy of the contract with the Subcontractor as well as a copy of any amendments to the contract.
    a) The Subcontract shall specify the duties of the Subcontractor relative to the operation of WHEAP and include at a minimum; terms, length of time, and budget components.
        i. A copy of the Subcontract shall be provided to the Division before October 1st each Federal Fiscal Year.
        ii. A copy of Subcontracts operating on a fiscal year other than the Federal Fiscal Year (October 1-September 30) is required to be submitted before October 1 of the Federal Fiscal Year. In addition, a copy of a Subcontract renewing an existing Subcontract is due to the Division before the existing Subcontract expires to ensure continuity of operations.
3) The Division does not require that it approves a Subcontracting agency or require that a Subcontractor itself be approved, but the Division reserves the right to reject any Subcontractor. See also the provisions of Article 7 in the contract between the Division and the agency.

4) Five (5) business days prior to the effective date of the Subcontract, the agency shall provide the Division with:
    a) Effective date of the Subcontract, and
    b) A completed WHEAP Subcontracting Notification Checklist, and
    c) A completed WHEAP Agency Contract Information Form, and
    d) Name, address, e-mail address and telephone number of entity providing subcontracted WHEAP services, and
    e) Name, address, and telephone number of contact person or WHEAP Coordinator at the Subcontracting agency.

The contract between the county or tribe and their subcontractor shall include the WHEAP Contract Addendum for Subcontracts, located on the HE+ website under Grantee Information. The agency must obtain prior approval from the Division before altering any substance in the WHEAP Contract Addendum for Subcontracts.

8.3.3 Out of State Travel

Agencies wishing to use WHEAP funds (LIHEAP or Public Benefits) to have more than two (2) staff attend out-of-state conferences or training must obtain prior approval from the Division. Agencies must submit a request, at least one month in advance, identifying the staff they wish to send and a justification for their attendance. The justification must include estimated total costs, reference to the specific workshops/programs they plan to attend and an explanation of how this knowledge will contribute to the agency's performance or quality of work. Any travel out of the country for WHEAP purposes must be reported to the Division in advance of the travel.

8.3.4 Computer Equipment, Connections, Security & Costs

The Agency shall be responsible for the following:

1) Any expenses of a Subcontractor relative to the operations of the WHEAP Program including monthly circuit and equipment/drop line move charges;
2) All costs for hardware, software and internet access required for WHEAP Program delivery. An Agency shall have all Information Technology (IT hardware (equipment that allows a user to create, store, or transmit data), software (computer application/program or data) and service subscriptions, including but not limited to email hosting and desktop support, necessary to meet general requirements for program management and financial reporting. Computers, laptops, tablets, and desktop Personal Computers (PC)s shall use a version of Microsoft (MS) Windows® operating system. Productivity software loaded on computers shall be a version of MS Office® compatible with Division software. Transmittal of MS Office files shall be in MS Word, MS Excel, MS PowerPoint, MS Access (Wx Assistant), or Portable Document Format (PDF file format. Other file formats may be transmitted upon request of the Division. All data handling shall be in compliance with Appendix A – Agency Guidelines for Handling Sensitive Data.
    a) An agency shall have reliable access to the Internet at a sufficient connection speed to meet business requirements. An agency shall make their own

hardware and software purchases. An agency shall track and maintain all IT hardware, software, and services that are purchased with WHEAP funds. An agency shall procure all IT hardware, software and services in accordance with all applicable federal and state guidelines and laws.

b) An agency shall make full specifications and disclosure of IT hardware, software, and services available to the Division upon request or during monitoring;

3) Communication and cooperation with the Division for the installation and maintenance of all computer equipment specifically related to WHEAP;

4) Appointing at least one System Profile Management Administrator (PMA) with a written request to the Division via the HE+ Help Desk (heat@wisconsin.gov), who is responsible for:

   a) Notification to the Division System Administrator(s) in writing (e-mail is acceptable) of any changes to these appointments;

   b) Creation of new, and maintenance of current, HE+ System contacts/permissions/user profile information (including review of the user profile name for appropriateness upon creation) within their county/tribe, including signed security agreements for each system user;

   c) Creation of new, and maintenance of current, HE+ System contacts/permissions/user profile information (including review of the user profile name for appropriateness upon creation) for subcontracted agency staff within their county/tribe if a Subcontractor PMA has not been appointed;

   d) Maintenance of current Home Energy Plus user profiles includes:

      i. Inactivate user profiles that will be off the system for more than two weeks on vacation, maternity leave, summer leave, or any other reason.

      ii. Deactivate user profiles who have been terminated, retired, quit, or otherwise have left the program.

5) Access for filing administrative claims is limited to County/Tribe staff only. Persons employed at the Subcontracted agency are not authorized to have access to the Contract Payment System; and

6) Assigning the ‘Supervisor’ security permission to at least one WHEAP staff person of a supervisory role within the agency (or designated by a person with a supervisory role). See section 3.1.10 for more information.

8.3.5 Allowable Costs

This section provides a description of allowable costs, by contract line. The agency shall expend funds provided under the contract in accordance with these policies.

8.3.5.1 Operations Accounts [LIHEAP General Operations, Public Benefits Operations, and Weatherization Operations]

These three contract account lines can be used to support the same costs, as detailed below.

1) Allowable program operations costs include:
   a) Staff costs to accept and process Home Energy Plus applications throughout the contract period,
   b) Verifying application information,
   c) Processing applications, including entering data into the HE+ system, and
   d) Other costs not covered by Crisis Services or outreach funds.

2) Allowable **administrative expenses** include:
   a) Supervisor and coordinator salary and fringe,
   b) Travel for meetings and training,
   c) Clerical support salary and fringe,
   d) Supplies, services and equipment, and
   e) Indirect shared agency administration costs.

Note: Charge indirect (shared agency) administrative expenses <u>only</u> to the operations accounts.

8.3.5.2 LIHEAP Crisis Services

1) Allowable costs include:
   a) Staff salaries, fringe benefits, and travel associated with providing crisis services,
   b) Costs related to providing furnace services, and
   c) Other costs directly related to providing crisis services.

2) Allowable Non-Staff costs include:
   a) Purchase/provision of educational or informational materials that are related to the provision of emergency or proactive services.
   b) Require description of item or service provided, date and cost of item/service.

3) Costs not allowed include:
   a) Indirect administrative expenses (see Section 8.3.5.1)

4) Transfers allowed:
   a) Crisis Services to Crisis Benefits
   b) Require written request (see Section 8.3.7)

8.3.5.3 Outreach

1) Allowable costs include:
   a) Agencies may charge to Outreach, the cost of staff salaries, fringe benefits, and travel associated with staff time spent on outreach activities.
   b) Providing energy information to potentially eligible groups or individuals through home visits, site visits, group meetings, etc.,
   c) Distributing posters, flyers or other informational material when available to potentially eligible persons,
   d) Providing information on eligibility criteria, application sites, etc. to local media,
   e) Producing and mailing information to potentially eligible persons, ensuring that the State of Wisconsin, Department of Administration, Home Energy Plus Program is referenced on any published material,
   f) Coordinating with other local program offices serving persons in targeted low-income groups, including arranging for WHEAP information and/or application intake to be provided in conjunction with other programs, and
   g) Preparing and disseminating early applications and the costs associated with that preparation and dissemination, including intake, and entry into the HE+ System, of early applications.

2) Costs Not Allowed:
   a) Indirect administrative expenses shall not be charged to Outreach. See also Section 8.3.5.1.

8.3.5.4 Public Benefits Crisis Services

1) Allowable Costs
   a) When funding is made available, the allowable costs are the same as for LIHEAP Crisis Services. However, these funds can *only* be used for those applicants whose electric utility participates in the State Public Benefits program.

2) Costs Not Allowed
   a) Indirect administrative expenses, nor any administrative activities, may be charged to Public Benefit Crisis Services. See also Section 8.3.5.1 and 8.3.5.2.

8.3.5.5 Crisis Benefits (LIHEAP and Public Benefits funded)

Crisis Benefit funds are not for operational expense reimbursement. Crisis Benefits are payments issued to participating vendors on behalf of eligible households.

To monitor the Crisis Benefits funds on the HE+ System, select the 'Crisis Benefit Balances' Report or view the "Crisis Balances" slider.

Crisis benefits can be assigned to different Crisis Benefit Allocation Categories to assist in

budgeting benefits throughout the program year. Examples of categories are 'General', 'Co-Payment', 'Proactive', and 'Reconnect'. Benefits will default to the 'General' allocation category if the contracted agency does not wish to use different allocations. Allocations can be adjusted at any time through the HE+ System and shall be monitored by the contracted agency.

8.3.6 Disallowed Costs

Disallowed costs are expenses, as determined by the Division, which are not reimbursable using WHEAP contract funds. If the Division cannot determine if an expense is allowable because of inadequate records or documentation, the questioned cost may be disallowed. Agencies shall reimburse the Division for the amount of any disallowed cost.

8.3.7 Crisis Allocation Transfers

Agencies may request to transfer funds from LIHEAP Crisis Services to LIHEAP Crisis Benefits. Agencies may request to transfer funds from Public Benefit Crisis Services to Public Benefits Crisis Benefits. All requests to transfer funds must be in writing (email is acceptable, to heat@wisconsin.gov) and approved by the Division. No other transfers of funds from one account line to another are allowed.

8.4 Financial Standards

Each County and Tribe is held to certain financial standards, and is required to maintain financial records in accordance with the guidance in this Section. Counties and Tribes are Subgrantees of Federal Block Grant Funds and Grantees of State of Wisconsin Public Benefit Funds and are accountable for expenditures of the funds allocated to them.

8.4.1 General

Agencies shall establish and maintain fiscal control and accounting procedures as set forth in Wisconsin Statutes §46.036(4). These procedures shall be in writing and consistently applied. Agencies shall maintain account books on a double entry basis. Accounting will be on a modified accrual basis at a minimum. Full accrual basis accounting is encouraged. Agencies shall maintain separate accounting for each contract. The agency shall maintain records that separately track and account for expenses to each account line of the contract. There shall be a system for allocating common expenses among operational account lines.

If work is performed by the agency’s staff, charges to the WHEAP program will be made on an actual cost basis. Agencies are required to notify the Division of any potential financial conditions that could adversely impact program operations. Examples of these conditions include: pending legal activity; organizational cash flow shortages; allegations or investigations of fraud or embezzlement. Failure to notify the Division of potentially adverse financial conditions is grounds for immediate termination of the contract.

8.4.2 Source Documentation

Agencies shall maintain at least the following documentation of contract funds:

1) Approval to secure funds,
2) Applications and requests for modifications,
3) Signed contract and modification approvals,
4) Board minutes, and
5) Proof of receipt/deposit slip, when applicable, including date, amount, source of funds, and identification of receipt of funds in cash ledger.

8.4.3 Expenditure Documentation

Agencies shall maintain, at a minimum, the following documentation of expenditures:

1) Invoice/Purchase Order/Receipt,
2) Travel authorization, and
3) Employee contract or time records approved by employee and supervisor.

8.4.4 Financial Record Retention

Agencies shall retain all financial records for five years.

All records maintained in accordance with the operation of the WHEAP program shall be available to the Division on request for inspection, examination, excerpting, transcription, or audit. The minimum acceptable records include, but are not limited to:

1) Documentation of employee time;
2) Documentation of all materials, supplies, and travel expenses;
3) Inventory records and supporting documents for allowable equipment purchased to carry out the scope of work of the program;
4) Documentation and justification of the methodology used for any in-kind contributions;
5) Justification supporting allocation of space charges or other indirect cost allocation methods; and
6) Any other records that support charges incurred.

Agencies shall maintain sufficient segregation of accounting records for this program separate from other contracts, projects, and programs.

8.4.5 Open Records/Public Records

An agency is subject to State Public Record laws, (Wisconsin Statutes §19.21-19.39). These laws relate to record retention by the agency and its Subcontractors and to the provision of information (known as “complete public access”). Division policy is to:

1) Forward a written copy of all records requests to DOA, Division of Energy, Housing and Community Resources or directly to DOA, Office of the Secretary, Legal Office, PO Box 7864, Madison, WI 53707-7864.
2) Provide records to requestors, as required; or
3) Request that DOA coordinate the response to the records request.

8.4.6 Financial Audits

Agencies shall ensure that financial audits are:

1) Conducted annually,
2) Conducted by an independent auditor,
3) Timely, and
4) Submitted to the Division as soon as available. Supply two (2) copies of the audit, including any accompanying letter of findings. Submit one copy to the HE+ Help Desk and mail the second copy to:

   Department of Administration
   Division of Administrative Records
   Bureau of Financial Management
   Single Audit Coordinator
   PO Box 786
   Madison, WI 53707-7869

5) Conducted in accordance with federal laws and regulations, OMB Circular A-133 and the State Single Audit Guidelines (SSAG) issued by the Wisconsin Department of Administration. Current SSAG for DOA is available at: http://www.doa.state.wi.us/Divisions/budget-and-finance/financial-reporting/state-controllers-office/state-single-audit-guidelines. Search for “SSAG” and see most current SSAQ summary.)

8.5 Administrative Requirements

Each County and Tribe is required to operate the WHEAP under the administrative standards in this Section.

8.5.1 Processing Applications of Relatives and Friends

If the applicant is an employee of the agency or its Subcontractor, a relative or household member of an employee, a former employee of the agency, or a close friend of the person certifying/entering the application, applications must be reviewed and approved by a staff person at a supervisory level or higher. A staff member holding the HE+ System ‘Supervisor’ permission must enter the application in the HE+ System and enter a System Note indicating the manager/supervisor who reviewed the application. This restriction applies to any actions related to the individual’s regular benefits, crisis assistance, and furnace applications.

Prior to performing intake or completing WHEAP related activities, every worker must agree to the Conflict of Interest Policy/Non-Disclosure Agreement that contains the following:

> **Conflict of Interest Policy/Non-Disclosure Agreement**
> No person who is a Contractor employee, Sub-contractor employee, or agent or consultant, and who performs or has performed any functions or responsibilities with respect to Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program (WHEAP) Contract activities, may obtain a personal or financial interest or gain an unfair advantage of the program. This does not preclude any individual from applying for the Home Energy Plus programs. Furthermore, the same person may not have an interest in any WHEAP-related contract or subcontract, or WHEAP-related proceeds, either for themselves or those with whom they have family or business ties, during their tenure. Receipt of earnings from the local WHEAP agency by employees shall not be considered a conflict of interest, but otherwise employees of the local WHEAP agency and WHEAP Contractor shall be fully bound by the requirements of this Policy. Upon request, the Department may make exceptions to this requirement after full disclosure and where the Department determines, in consultation with federal agencies if necessary, that such an exception is in the best interest of the State and is not contrary to state or federal laws.

In the event a paper copy must be signed, the signed Conflict of Interest/Non-Disclosure Agreement Form shall be retained for the duration of employee's employment with the agency.

8.5.2 Lobbying Restrictions

WHEAP funds may not be used to influence federal contracting nor financial transactions. This restriction includes, but is not limited to, the following activities:

- Agencies may not use federal funds (including LIHEAP) to pay a person(s) to lobby on their behalf with the Executive or Legislative Branch in connection with the award of a specific contract, grant, or loan.
- Agencies receiving more than $100,000 in federal funds per year must file with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services an annual statement certifying that they will abide by these restrictions.
- Agencies must disclose any payments made to a person(s) lobbying, as defined above, even if no federal funds are used to make the payment.
- The website for the form for agencies to disclose lobbying activities: www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/sflllin.pdf.

8.5.3 General Record Retention

Agencies shall retain all WHEAP records for five years.

The agency must maintain the following records as required in other sections of this manual including:

1) A record management system that retains documents for a period of five years from

the date an application is submitted. Agencies may retain records in an electronic format to reduce storage space needs (see Appendix A). If forms are required to be retained longer than five years, as outlined in the manual, the agency must retain those particular forms in accordance with the WHEAP manual.

2) Files on all applicants including, the entire completed (if applicable), signed and certified application form(s) DOA-9549.
   a) If the application is completed interactively, only the applicant signature form must be in the retained.
3) Any documents used to verify self-generated income (self-generated income form, tax forms and/or schedules). SSN's on the tax records will need to be redacted by crossing out all but the last four digits of the SSN's on all forms and schedules provided.
4) When applicable, retain Authorized Representative and/or Power of Attorney (POA) documentation and Zero Income Form(s).
5) All records associated with the requirements set forth in the HE+ Furnace Program Manual.
6) The agency may retain additional records beyond the minimum established here when handled within the specified requirements of Appendix A, "Agency Guidelines for Handling Sensitive Data."
7) Conflict of Interest/Non-Disclosure Agreement Forms for WHEAP staff without HE+ System Access.
8) Other documents required to be maintained as described in the WHEAP Operations Manual.

Electronic files of the following are maintained on the HE+ System:

1) Registered fuel suppliers; and
2) Weekly check registers for payments through the heating, public benefits, crisis, and furnace programs.

8.5.4 Staffing

1) The agency must maintain staffing adequate to provide:
2) Program information year-round on ***both*** WHEAP and Crisis Assistance;
3) Ability to take applications throughout the calendar year to assist applicants with home energy needs and to assist Weatherization agencies in determining eligibility of potential Weatherization recipients;
4) Outreach activities throughout the calendar year;
5) Crisis Emergency Services during the heating season;
6) Crisis Proactive Services year-round; and
7) Furnace Services year-round.

8.5.5 HE+ System Security

1) The agency (County/Tribe) must appoint a 'Profile Management Administrator (PMA)' with a written request to the Division via the HE+ Help Desk (heat@wisconsin.gov). Any changes to this appointment requires written notification to the Division. The PMA is responsible for:

   a) Creation of new, and maintenance of current, HE+ System contacts/permissions/user profile information (including review of the user profile name for appropriateness upon creation) within their county/tribe;

   b) Creation of new, and maintenance of current, HE+ System contacts/permissions/user profile information (including review of the user profile name for appropriateness upon creation) for subcontracted agency staff within their county/tribe if a Subcontractor PMA has not been appointed;

   c) Maintenance of current Home Energy Plus user profiles includes:

      i. Inactivate user profiles who will be off the system for more than two weeks on vacation, maternity leave, summer leave, or any other reason.

      ii. Immediately deactivate user profiles who have been terminated, retired, quit, or otherwise have left the program.

2) Any staff with a user profile has the responsibility to maintain their user login name and password as confidential. User name and passwords shall never be shared, even with other WHEAP staff. The user logged in is responsible for all activity occurring under this user profile. All activity in the system is recorded and time stamped according to the user login.

8.5.6 Coordination

Agencies must coordinate efforts with other local agencies serving low-income households and/or providing energy assistance. This includes working with the vendors who are not participating in Public Benefits. Agencies are required to complete a Program Operations and Community Service Plan (POCS) following the Division provided template (located on the HE+ public website under WHEAP Grantee Information). The POCS Plan should indicate what other community resources/stakeholders play a role in this outreach effort and identify key stakeholders that you coordinate efforts/referrals with. In addition, the list should indicate the local agency's contact person and the resource services provided. The goal of this plan is to provide agencies with a means of establishing their planned approach for conducting WHEAP outreach, and achieving an effective and inclusive community outreach partnering with local organizations on ideas and culture to reach the entire community. Agencies are required to make the plan available to the Division upon request.

8.5.7 Publications

The Division prints a variety of informational materials that are useful for outreach activities. Each July, orders are solicited from Agencies for a program year's supply. Limited quantities are available at the Division for small orders of additional print materials. Request can be sent to the HE+ Help Desk via heat@wisconsin.gov.

Note: Most forms and documents are available for print via the Home Energy Plus website.

8.5.8 Home Energy Plus and Co-Branding Logos

Agencies may develop, print and publish their own WHEAP informational materials such as brochures or program marketing materials. Program materials prepared by the local agency that will be available to the public shall identify the program as being administered by the State of Wisconsin Home Energy Plus Program. Documents used only for internal purposes do not require a logo.

Agencies shall use one of two official logos: the Home Energy Plus logo or the county/tribe specific Co-Branding logo.

The official Home Energy Plus logo can be obtained on the Home Energy Plus Training and Technical Assistance website (http://homeenergyplus.weccusa.org/), under the Technical Assistance tab, then selecting "Logos" from the drop-down. The Co-Branding logo is specific to each County/Tribe and is distributed directly to each agency from the Division. It is each County/Tribe's responsibility to advise the Division of any changes with organizations identified in their logo. Contact the HE+ Help Desk if a copy of the Co-Branding logo is needed.

Any changes to the logo must be submitted to the Help Desk for approval, and any materials developed using either logo shall be available upon request by the Division for review.

8.6 Monitoring

The agency is responsible for participating in Division conducted Administrative Reviews. Participation includes, but is not limited to:

1) All requested individuals must be present at the specified times during Administrative Reviews,
2) Providing the Division designee(s) with internet access,
3) Providing the Division designee(s) with access to program related electronic files and program related paper files,
4) Providing the Division designee(s) access to other program related information as requested, and
5) Responding to the Division requests and recommendations within the established timeframes.

The Division conducts WHEAP desk monitoring of heating and non-heating assistance,

crisis assistance, furnace services, outreach, and alternate intake. The agency is responsible for any Division requested follow-up resulting from desk monitoring.

The local agency is responsible for regular monitoring of heating and non-heating assistance, crisis assistance, furnace services, outreach, and alternate intake.

8.7 Disaster Planning

In the event that a disaster prohibits all or some of the normal functions of program administration, the agency disaster plan directs the continuance of essential services. Agencies are required to make the plan available to the Division upon request.

As per the required WHEAP Contract Addendum for Subcontracts, attach WHEAP Subcontractor Disaster Plans to the annual WHEAP Subcontract. See Section 8.3.2.

8.7.1 Local Agency Continuity of Operations Plans

Agencies are required to maintain the most up-to-date plan on file, and make the plan available to the Division upon request. Counties, Tribes, and Subcontractors are all required to develop and maintain the continuity of operations plans. Each entity is responsible for sharing the completed plan with applicable stakeholders and fuel providers to inform them of the procedures in case of a disaster or emergency.

Local agencies must provide to the Division the names of their primary emergency contact, and two back-up contacts. The document(s) must include such contact information as may be necessary to assure a contact is available 24 hours per day, every day including weekends and holidays.

8.7.2 Division Plan

In the event a disaster occurs that affects the ability of the Division to provide services in the normal way, a plan has been developed to identify ways to maintain essential services. The primary actions are outlined as a means of notifying local agencies about what to expect.

1) State Level Actions
   The Division will send letters to all State approved WHEAP vendors explaining the Division contingency plan. The letter will specifically notify them that Contractors or a Contractor's Subcontracting agency are authorized by the State to pre-authorize payment for deliveries in case of failure of the state benefit payment system or the telecommunications links with the State computer system or the Division.

2) Contractors and/or Subcontractors Requirements
   a) Contractors and/or their Subcontractors are required to report any changes in writing (e-mail is acceptable) to the:
      i. name of the WHEAP County/Tribal Director,
      ii. name of the WHEAP Coordinator,
      iii. physical address,
      iv. mailing address,

v. phone numbers (including extension(s) if applicable),
vi. fax numbers, and/or
vii. email addresses reported to the State for statewide broadcast messages.

b) Contractors and/or their Subcontractors are required to have voicemail and/or an answering machine message available year round with the following information available to the caller:

i. The emergency number to call for heating emergencies from October 1 through May 15;

ii. Office hours for applying for energy assistance/crisis assistance and where to apply from October 1 through May 15;

iii. From May 16 through September 30 a message that the heating season/emergency crisis assistance is over but there may be proactive crisis assistance available and how to apply;

iv. When it is time for early applications, provide a message describing when early applications begin and how to apply;

v. Contractors and/or their Subcontractors shall contact their approved State WHEAP vendors by letter outlining their procedures in case of business failure to ensure pre-authorized payment for deliveries;

vi. Contractors and/or their Subcontractors shall be expected to have in place a backup system for communicating with or reaching fuel suppliers in an emergency if the phone system is inoperative;

vii. Contractors and/or their Subcontractors shall have in place after-hours emergency service procedures. The personnel responsible for after-hours service shall be trained on disaster emergency procedures, including the pre-authorization procedures for guaranteeing emergency payments in cases of a disaster;

viii. Contractors and/or their Subcontractors shall have procedures to handle emergencies during normal hours of operations if the operations of the local office are interrupted;

ix. Contractors and/or their Subcontractors shall coordinate with the local office of emergency government, local law enforcement agencies, and other local service providers to assure they are aware of WHEAP's procedures to assist in emergency situations involving heating fuel or utility service;

x. Contractors and/or their Subcontractors shall have paper applications in their offices to take applications, determine eligibility, and to guarantee pre-authorized payments for deliveries;

xi. Contractors and/or their Subcontractors shall contact the local emergency government office and other nonprofit agencies informing them of their procedure in case of a disaster; and

xii. Contractors and/or their Subcontractors shall contact the local emergency government office to determine the emergency government office's procedures in the event of a disaster, and to coordinate efforts.

Chapter 9 − Contract Invoicing

9.1 General

Allowable costs are described, by line, in Chapter 8, Sections 8.3.5.1 through 8.3.5.5.

9.2 Invoice Filing Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the County/Tribe to invoice and/or approve expenses per the State and County/Tribal Contract that is from October 1 through September 30 of each year. The last day for a local agency to submit an invoice for the contract that ends on September 30 is at the close of business on November 30 of each year, when a final close out contract extraction will occur. Invoices submitted after this date for a previous contract year will not be processed for payment.

9.3 Guidelines for Invoicing

The County/Tribe, or their subgrantee, is required to invoice, for reimbursement, of expenses in the HE+ System. WHEAP expenditures shall be invoiced monthly. Expenses may not be invoiced until the first of the following month (Example: October expenses may not be entered into the HE+System until November 1).

- *Expenses submitted by each* County/Tribe *shall be actual expenses***.**
- Monthly expenses shall not be invoiced for 1/12th of the contract.
- Expenses for the previous month must be entered (invoiced) in the HE+ System by the 30th of the current month.
- The system will not allow creation of more than one invoice per extraction.
- If some, or all, of a month's expenses have not been invoiced and subsequent invoices (months) have been processed, the expenses not invoiced must be added to an invoice submitted later by adding a correction and selecting the month the expenses were incurred. EXAMPLE: if the most recently processed invoice has a "Report Period To" date of March and the expenses not invoiced are from January, the January expenses need to be included with the April invoice.
- An invoice can be edited until the point of extraction.
- "Zero" shall be entered as an amount if there are no expenses to be invoiced for a specific account line for the current invoice. A note shall be entered to explain any "zero" entries to provide an explanation to the Division. Notes are not required if the account funding has been fully expended.
- Once all amounts have been entered, the invoice is ready to be approved. Approval is only available to authorized agency staff.
- Agency staff shall notify their County/Tribal Treasurer, to whom the payment is issued, when an invoice has been marked as 'Approved by Primary'. This ensures that payments are promptly processed.

Only invoices with 'Approved by Primary' status will be processed for payment. It is the responsibility of the local agency to ensure that all invoices are in 'Approved by Primary'

status before the final Contract Closeout Extraction. Invoices remaining in 'Draft' status following the contract closeout period will not be paid.

*Any county/tribe (or their subgrantee) with an initial contract allocation of less than $25,000 are required to invoice for reimbursement a minimum of quarterly, though encouraged to invoice more frequently.

9.4 Reimbursement Payments

The Department will make invoice reimbursement payments twice monthly. The payment schedule is posted on the Home Energy Plus public web site at http://homeenergyplus.wi.gov/ under Grantee Information. Generally, contract invoice payment extractions occur on the 12th and 26th of each month.

Payment shall be made in conformance with the following:

1) The Division shall not provide reimbursement if the maximum amount of the Contract has been paid to the agency.

2) The Division reserves the right to reduce the LIHEAP Crisis Benefits/Services award and the Public Benefits Crisis Benefits/Services award, if an agency, and/or their Subcontractor, have not spent nor allocated for expenditure by*;

   June 1, at least sixty percent (60%) of the amount awarded;
   August 1, at least eighty percent (80%) of the amount awarded.

*These dates shall be subject to change at the discretion of the Division based on the allocation of additional funds.

The Division monitors agencies for compliance with this requirement. Agencies that do not meet the spending targets may receive a communication from the Division requesting that the agency submit a plan demonstrating how they propose to meet the spending benchmarks.

Payments which exceed allowable costs incurred and paid by the agency pursuant to the terms of the WHEAP Contract, if outstanding at the expiration of the WHEAP Contract, shall be repaid to the Division within sixty (60) days of the expiration date of the WHEAP Contract. The Division has the authority in accordance with State procedures, to reconcile payments and report expenses. Payments shall be used only for current WHEAP Contract year expenses.

Chapter 10 – Definition of Terms

Administrative Expenses
The general costs associated with administrating the Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program (WHEAP), including direct and indirect costs for:

1) Planning,
2) Determining eligibility, and
3) Issuing benefits.

Adult Family Home (AFH)
A licensed, private residential home where 1-4 adults not related to the operator reside and receive care, treatment or services (that are above the level of room and board). Adult Family Homes (AFH), as defined by the Department of Health Services, are eligible dwellings and all household members and their income are to be counted in the application. Caregivers generally receive separate per diems for room and board and care. Any per diem for room and board is ignored, while a per diem for care shall be counted as wages for the caregiver of the household. For additional guidance please contact the HE+ Help Desk.

Agency
The term agency, as used in this program, normally refers to the county department or tribal entity that administers WHEAP, or a Subcontractor who is acting as their agent.

> **A Subcontracting Agency or Subcontractor** is an entity with which the County/Tribe has entered into an agreement, in accordance with the Administrative Requirements, to perform all or a portion of the agency's responsibilities for WHEAP.

Annualized Income
Income calculated to reflect an average monthly amount. Refer to Section 2.3.7 and Appendix B for specific guidance on which income types should be annualized.

Applicant
The person whose name is entered in Field Two (2) on the application form (DOA-9549). Applicant and case head are the same and are used interchangeably for purposes of this manual. A case head must be 18 years or older, or be a **minor head-of-household** (see definition), or be a child who meets one of the following exceptions:

- All adults in the household are ineligible non-citizens; *and*
  - The dependent child is either a citizen or an eligible non-citizen; *and*
  - The child has a Social Security Number (SSN); *or*
- An emancipated minor over 15 may be a case head if the minor is living independently and:
  - Is married, or
  - Was married, or
  - Is principal support of a child, or

- Has visible independent means of support and cannot be claimed as a dependent on income tax of someone not in the household.

Application
The form used to apply for Energy Assistance. The Home Energy Plus Application, Form DOA-9549, is the paper form version of the application.

- A *Complete Application* is an application which has all required information documented and/or verified by the applicant, has been signed and dated by the applicant, has all required information verified by an authorized local agency staff worker, and signed and dated by the worker.
- An *Incomplete Application* is an application that is missing one or more of the elements required to be a complete application.
- A *Late application* is an application taken outside of the heating season, or after heating/electric benefit funds for the program year have been expended. This includes all applications that are initiated after the appropriate date. Applications that were initiated before the end of the heating season date *may* be eligible for heating/electric benefits provided funds remain. Applications after the heating season will receive an "outside the program dates" letter denying heating/electric regular benefits, but may be eligible for Proactive Crisis Assistance.
- A *Minimum Application* is an application that contains at least the applicant's name, SSN, date of birth, gender, type of dwelling, housing type, residence and mailing address and date of application. This is the minimum to be included to be considered an application for purposes of this program.
- An *Early Application* is an application, for the upcoming heating season, with an application date prior to October 1. Early applications may not be taken until after a date has been determined by the Division. Early Applications will not be paid until the first extraction of the new program year. While emphasis shall be given to 'Fixed Income' households, any income type qualifies for an early application.

Application Number
The application number is an HE+ System generated identifier attached to an application. This number is used, in part, to assure the household with the case head is not paid more than one regular heat or electric benefit in a program year.

Assisted Living Facility
A living unit where a third party assists the resident with one or more of the resident's basic daily activities. Basic daily activities include, but are not limited to, meal preparation, food shopping, regular medical care (shots, rehab, etc), transportation assistance, house cleaning, or home maintenance. *See also, definition for Adult Family Home (AFH)*. If the applicant is responsible for energy costs (heat and electric), lives in an independent apartment within an assisted living complex, and pays full market rent, consult the HE+ Help Desk for a determination of the status of the dwelling as an eligible or ineligible assisted living unit.

Authorized Representative
A person who has signed an Affidavit of Agent, and who is listed as the authorized representative on the Authorization of Representative/Affidavit of Agent Form.

Benefit(s)
The heating and/or non-heating electric assistance payments, crisis assistance payments, or furnace services provided to applicants.

Benefit Formulas
The formulas used to determine the amount of the heating and/or non-heating (or total home energy) assistance payments.

CARES
Client Assistance for Re-employment and Economic Support (CARES) is a statewide automated, integrated, computerized system. The CARES system supports the major economic support programs of Wisconsin Works (W-2), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), FoodShare (Food Stamps), Medical Assistance, Healthy Start, Employment and Training Programs, and the Learn fare Case Management.

Case Head − *See Applicant*

Categorically Eligible (Cat Eligible)
For a household to be Categorically Eligible, all household members must be recipients of either W-2/TANF, FoodShare (Food Stamps), or SSI in each of the preceding three months.

Co-Payment Agreement
An agreement between the agency, applicant, and energy supplier in which the agency agrees, as a proactive service, to pay a specified amount to the energy supplier. See Chapter 4 − Crisis Assistance. The agency payment is contingent upon:

- The applicant making his/her agreed payment (referred to as the co-payment) to the energy supplier; and
- The energy supplier continuing to provide services to the household.

County Department
A county department as described under s. 46.215 or 46.22 of the Wisconsin Statutes. The terms county department or agency, county social services department or agency, county human services department or agency, and human services department or agency are interchangeable for purposes of this manual and all refer to a county department as defined by statute. For purposes of this Program, county department also refers to tribes who operate the program under direct contract with the state unless specifically stated otherwise.

Crisis Assistance
The part of WHEAP providing assistance and/or services to households experiencing energy emergencies, or which are at risk of an energy emergency.

Direct Vendor – *See Registered Supplier and Fuel Supplier*

Disability
A self-declared physical or mental impairment or a designation made by a state or federal program that:

- Substantially limits one or more of a person's major life activities; or
- Results in the person receiving either Veteran's or Social Security disability benefits.

Division
The Division of Energy, Housing and Community Resources in the Department of Administration of the State of Wisconsin.

Dwelling Unit
A structure, including a stationary mobile home, apartment, group of rooms, or a single room occupied by a household that has an identifiable site address such as a fire number or street address. A United States Post Office Box number is a mailing address and does not identify a dwelling unit.

Early Application – *See Application*

Earned Income Tax Credit
A refundable federal or state tax benefit designed to help low income workers increase their financial stability and maintain their independence from the welfare system. It is also known as E.I.T.C. For the purposes of WHEAP, it is ignored income.

Economic Unit
A person or group of related, or unrelated, persons who live together in a dwelling unit and jointly share in providing or being provided for the necessities of life for the person(s) in the group. The necessities of life are shelter, heat, and utilities. *Note*: Persons living in a housing arrangement with their own room and sharing common spaces are all part of a single economic unit.

Elderly Household Member
Individuals as of the application date who are 60 years old or older.

Electric Burden
The responsibility for providing the household for all non-heating electric used in the home.

Eligible Non-citizen
Certain non-citizen statuses are eligible for WHEAP benefits. Eligible Non-citizens include those considered one of the categories listed in section 2.2.2.4 of the WHEAP Operations Manual according to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

Eligibility Determination
The process by which a household's eligibility for WHEAP is assessed. This includes the verification of documentation provided to complete an application and the certification of the correctness of an application.

Emergency
The actual or imminent loss of essential home heating/electricity during the heating season, or during a declared heat emergency in the summer.

Emergency Assistance
Crisis Assistance funds that provide benefits and/or services to address applicant emergencies. Emergency payments are provided during the heating season for households that are experiencing actual or imminent losses of home heating/electricity. Emergency payments for cooling assistance are provided during the summer months only in cases of extreme heat and with a declaration of a heat emergency.

Agencies may not implement cooling assistance unless a state or local public health official declares a heat emergency *and* authorization is given from the Division of Energy, Housing and Community Resources. See Chapter 4 − Crisis Assistance.

Energy Burden
The responsibility for providing home energy including home heating and home electricity. For example, a household may purchase fuel from a fuel supplier, make undesignated payments in the form of rent, or may heat with wood, etc.

Energy Education
The process whereby individuals and households learn to make choices to use energy efficiently, improve their indoor comfort, and become aware of how their behavior affects energy consumption, energy cost, and health and safety within their homes.

Energy Services Company (ESCO)
Third-party company that manages the energy consumption of multi-unit residential communities, including measuring usage and invoicing the tenants directly.

Fixed Income Household
A household that receives only one or more of the following income types: SS including SSDI, SSI, dividends/interest, pension, and/or veteran's benefits.

Fuel Supplier
A fuel supplier is an individual, partnership, or corporation in the business of supplying energy to customers. Landlords, trailer park owners, and other persons who purchase home energy from a fuel supplier to provide tenants or homeowners with home energy are not considered fuel suppliers.

Government-Assisted Housing
Housing where tenants pay less than the full costs for their residence because the federal, state, or local government pays a portion of their rent. Government-Assisted Housing includes rental assistance, subsidized housing, and most other programs to make housing more affordable to lower income households. This does not include Section 42 housing.

Heating Burden
The responsibility for providing all energy used for home space heating.

Heating/Electric Costs
The costs of any source of heating/electric in a dwelling unit used for residential purposes. All heating/electric costs for commercial, business, or any purpose other than the dwelling unit of the applicant are excluded.

Heating Season
The period from October 1 through May 15.

High-Risk Household
A household with past due fuel bills and/or a household at risk of actual or imminent loss of essential home energy. This may be indicated by disconnect notices, high fuel costs compared to household income, etc.

HE+ System
The web based system. Used to communicate information between local agencies and the Division of Energy, Housing and Community Resources, to assist in eligibility determinations, to maintain records of cases, and assist in the distribution of energy benefits to low income applicants. Also referred to as "the system" and formally known as the "WHEAP System".

Home Energy
All fuel sources used in a dwelling unit. It includes all heating costs and non-heating costs. Non-heating costs are often referred to on utility bills as base-load costs (the base costs before heating costs are included).

Home Energy Plus
Home Energy Plus is the umbrella term used for WHEAP and the Weatherization Assistance Programs. Also refers to the Home Energy Plus Web site, (http://www.homeenergyplus.wi.gov).

Homeless
An individual who lacks a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence or an individual who has a primary nighttime residence that is:

- A supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations; or
- An institution that provides temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized or
- A public or private place not designed for use as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.

Household
Any person or group of persons living together in a dwelling unit on the application date, who directly purchase home energy or make undesignated payments for energy in the form of rent. *See also Dwelling Unit and Economic Unit.*

Household Member
Anyone who on the date of application is living in the household and who is not a *Temporary Household Member* or considered a household member not included on the application as listed in section 2.2.6.3. Household members who are temporarily out of the household on the date of the application for reasons such as a vacation or a business trip are still considered part of the economic unit and are counted on the HE+ application. In addition, those working out of town and not maintaining a separate permanent residence are also considered part of the economic unit. Do not count a person who may have lived in the household during a portion of the preceding three months but is no longer in the household on the application date. Do not count the person or their income to determine total household size or income. A household member with multiple residences shall be included in the household if this is their primary residence. When a household member resides in more than one residence, the local WHEAP agency must indicate in HE+ System Notes on what basis they determined the primary residence.

Income
All monies received by a household. See Chapter 2 - Eligibility for an explanation of which monies are counted as income and which are ignored.

Ineligible Non-citizen
Certain non-citizen statuses are ineligible for WHEAP benefits. Ineligible non-citizens include individuals without a USCIS status and non-citizens who do not meet one of the specified categories outlined in section 2.2.2.4 of the WHEAP Operations Manual.

Ineligible Dwelling Unit
Ineligible dwelling units are units that are not eligible to receive WHEAP benefits. Mobile shelters are ineligible dwellings, and typically include, but are not limited to, tents, campers, and vehicles. Group homes, half-way houses, government facilities (jails, hospitals, and other governmental care facilities), assisted living facilities, transitional housing facilities, abandoned spaces or buildings, and secondary homes are also ineligible dwelling units for WHEAP. WHEAP agencies should contact the HE+ Help Desk when questioning an ineligible dwelling.

Intake
The process of taking an application to be used for determining eligibility for assistance.

Interactive Interview
An interview with the applicant answering questions as the information is being entered into the HE+ System.

Live-in Medical Aid
A person who cares medically for a household member to allow the household member to remain in their home, instead of a nursing home or institution. The live-in medical aid resides in the home with the household member and does not maintain a separate household as their primary residence. They jointly share in providing or being provided for the necessities of life. The necessities of life are shelter, heat, and utilities. The aid and their income are included on the HE+ application.

Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
The federally designated Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program under 42 U.S.C. 8621. The program provides benefits and services to assist low-income households with the costs of energy used for home heating. This federal program has also been referred to as the Low Income Energy Assistance Program.

Note: The Division of Energy, Housing and Community Resources calls its program the Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program (WHEAP) including the federally funded LIHEAP program and the Wisconsin Public Benefit program. *See also Public Benefits*.

Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) Housing (Also known as 'Section 42')
Based on Section 42 of the Internal Revenue Code, this housing program was enacted by Congress to provide the private market with an incentive to invest in affordable rental housing. Tenants of LIHTC housing receive a small reduction in rent from the market rent value. Because the tax credits were awarded to the builder/owner tenants of LIHTC housing are not considered residents of government assisted housing.

Match Payment Agreements
Short-term agreements of one payment where the agency can reserve funding pending a customer contribution. The SPAS and SPBS codes reserve funds and reduce the available balance amount of the local agency's crisis funds. Payment to a vendor is made upon verification of applicant contribution and release of the reserved funds in the HE+ System. No written co-payment contract is necessary. Similar to co-payment agreements, match payment agreements must be released prior to the last extraction date of the current program year

Minimum Application – *See Application*

Minor Head-of-Household
A minor (under age 18) who has Head-of-Household filing status for tax purposes. *See also, Applicant for relevancy to WHEAP*.

Mobile Home
A manufactured home designed to be towed to a permanent residential site as a single unit or in sections and is equipped and used, or intended to be used, primarily as a year-round dwelling, with walls of rigid un-collapsible construction.

A mobile home continues to be classified as a mobile home even when additions have been made to the structure.

Naturalized U.S. Citizen
Naturalization is the process by which U.S. citizenship is granted to a foreign citizen or national after he or she fulfills the requirements established by Congress in the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA). Naturalized U.S. Citizens can provide a Naturalization Certificate or U.S. Passport as evidence.

Non-citizen
A non-citizen is a person who is not a citizen of the United States. Non-citizens may or may not be eligible for WHEAP benefits.

Non-Heating Costs
The portion of the home energy costs not connected with heating the living space; usually these are electric costs. The costs for lighting, cooking, drying clothes, refrigerators, etc. are included in the non-heating costs.

Outreach
The activities undertaken to ensure households with the greatest needs receive WHEAP benefits. It includes informing potentially eligible persons about WHEAP, encouraging them to apply, and assisting them with the submission of an application.

Pass Interest
The interest on SSI *P*lan for *A*chieving *S*elf *S*upport (*PASS*) accounts.

Person ID
The Person ID is an HE+ System generated identifier attached to each person. This number is used, in part, to allow rapid location of a case without using the SSN.

Poverty Level
Household income in relation to family size established by the federal government.

Primary Heating Fuel
The type of fuel the household customarily uses to heat their home. If more than one fuel type is used in the home, the primary heating fuel is the fuel used the most by the household to heat the home. Primary heating type must reflect the primary heating unit of the dwelling.

Proactive Services
The part of Crisis Assistance that provides identification and assistance to high-risk households. Proactive services are provided year-round.

Public Benefits
Public Benefits were created as a portion of the "Reliability 2000" bill signed into law on October 27, 1999, the 1999-2001 Wisconsin State Budget, Wisconsin Act 9, s.16.957, Utility Public Benefits. This law was amended by Act 141 in 2005.

Recipient
Applicant who has received WHEAP benefit(s).

Registered Supplier
A registered supplier is a vendor providing fuel, or energy related products or services to participating households. A registered supplier must have an approved Vendor Agreement with the Division.

Renter
A person who pays rent to the owner (or his/her designee) of the dwelling unit in which the person resides, and is not part of the owner's household or economic unit.

Residence
The dwelling unit the applicant is living in on the application date.

Room
A room may be a living room, kitchen, dining room, bedroom, family room, den, study or other. It does not refer to bathrooms, entryways, unfinished basements, hallways, unheated attics and porches, closets or areas occupied by persons who are not part of the applicant's economic unit. Space used only for commercial/business purposes is not to be considered a room for WHEAP purposes.

Roomer
Person(s) who rents a sleeping room from the building owner. A roomer does not have a separate site address from other occupants of the building. A roomer does not share in providing, or being provided for, the necessities of life with other residents of the structure. Heat and non-heat energy use is included in the room rent. Persons living in a housing arrangement with their own room and sharing common any spaces, including but not limited to bathrooms, kitchens, and living rooms, are *not* roomers.

Rooming House
A structure in which one or more single sleeping rooms is rented to an individual(s) not part of the economic unit of other residents of the building. Heat and light are included in the rent.

Self-Employment Income - See *Self-Generated Income*

Self-Generated Income
Income, including self-employment , odd jobs, or farm income that is received directly from one's own business or means, rather than as an employee with a specified salary or wage from an employer.

Spouse
A person who is defined as married under Wisconsin law.

State
The State of Wisconsin

State Median Income (SMI)
An income level determined to be the median for households (4 person) in the state. This number is used as a reference point from which to calculate the maximum income level eligibility for households.

Subcontractor − *See Agency*

Sub-housing Utility Allowance
In government-assisted housing, the portion of a subsidized housing resident's rent that is applied to heating and/or electric costs, or the amount of rent reduction to permit the resident to directly pay heating and/or electric costs. Do not count sub-housing utility allowances as income.

Sub-housing Utility Reimbursement
Payment issued by the housing authority either to the tenant or directly to the utility on behalf of the tenant to assist with payment on their heat/utility costs. Do not count sub-housing utility reimbursement as income.

Subsidized Housing
Programs operated under the U.S. Housing Act of 1937, the National Housing Act, Section 101 of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1965, Section 202 of the Housing Act of 1959, Title V of the Housing Act of 1949, or any program listed in the most current State of Wisconsin Inventory of Federally Assisted Rental Housing and the Housing Authority Directory. Also see GOVERNMENT-ASSISTED HOUSING.

Supplemental Benefit
A special heating or electrical assistance payment provided in addition to, or as a second part of, the original heating or electrical assistance benefit.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
Title I of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA). The federal block grant program that provides states with the authority and funding to create programs that provide time-limited assistance to needy families with children and promote work.

Temporary Household Member
Anyone who is not a permanent resident in the household, whose stay in the household will be less than 30 days beyond the application date. The applicant certifies the temporary household member is not going to be in the home for more than 30 days.

Transitional Housing
Housing facility used to assist the movement from homelessness to independent living. Structure may be a SRO (single room occupancy) building, a congregate living facility, a group home, a regular apartment, or a single-family dwelling. If the applicant is responsible for energy costs (heat and electric), consult the HE+ Help Desk for a determination of the status of the dwelling as a transitional housing unit.

U.S. Citizen
A person (other than the child of a foreign diplomat) born within the United States or in the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, or the Northern Mariana Islands who has not renounced or otherwise lost his or her citizenship, a person born outside of the United States to at least one U.S. citizen parent (sometimes referred to as a ‘‘derivative citizen’’), or a **Naturalized U.S. Citizen**.

Weatherization
The improvement of a dwelling unit to reduce energy consumption. It often includes the installation of insulation and replacement or modification of the heating system.

Weatherization Operator
An agency that contracts directly with the state to provide Weatherization services for low-income households.

Withdrawn
An application that has been withdrawn from the HE+ System at the applicant’s request any time prior to extraction. Refer to Section 3.4.5 for more information on withdrawn applications.

Appendix A – Agency Guidelines for Handling Sensitive Data

General
Contracted agencies shall ensure program employees, both internal and subcontracted, shall take reasonable efforts to protect and secure sensitive information. Sensitive data are any information of which the loss, misuse, or unauthorized access to, or modification of could adversely affect the Home Energy Plus Program, contracted agencies, program employees, and/or customers. Sensitive data and information includes, but is not limited to Social Security Numbers (SSNs), Personal Identifiable Information (PII) meaning information that can directly identify a specific individual, household member or account specific information.

For the purposes of the following policy, sensitive data has two tiers.

Tier One sensitive data includes:

- SSNs by themselves or in combination with any PII (including date of birth, names, address, phone number, fuel account number and name, and income information), and
- The combination of date of birth and name without an SSN.
- WHEAP related single party checks returned to the local agency

Tier Two sensitive data includes:

PII elements that may be needed to complete effective business communications in support of the Home Energy Plus Programs (name, address, phone number, fuel account information, and income information).

Agencies and their subcontractors shall limit the use and exchange of sensitive data to the minimum required to conduct Home Energy Plus Program business effectively.

When using sensitive data individually or in quantity, contracted Home Energy Plus Program agencies, contractors, subcontractors and participants shall take reasonable actions to ensure the protection of sensitive program data that are: collected, displayed, transferred, stored, analyzed, or destroyed. This appendix identifies minimum requirements that shall be used for equipment, information collected and methods of transferring sensitive information. Contracted agencies shall have documentation and planned procedures in place for the handling of sensitive data and be able to make them available upon request.

Non-Disclosure Agreement
A contracted agency shall not disclose sensitive data to any persons other than those directors, officers, employees, and agents (including subcontractors) who have a business-related need to have access to such information for the limited purposes of the Contract and who have been apprised of, and agree to maintain, the confidential nature of such information in accordance with the terms of the Contract.

All staff that have HE+ System access will be prompted to agree to the Conflict of Interest/Non-Disclosure Agreement Form upon gaining access to the HE+ System. For staff

that work with WHEAP, but do not have HE+ System access, agencies shall require staff members to sign a paper copy of the Conflict of Interest/Non-Disclosure Agreement Form which can be found on the HE+ website under Grantee Information. This agreement is valid for the duration of employment with the agency. The contracted agency is responsible for the breach of the contract by any agency staff.

Desktops
Desktops that are used for collecting, displaying, transferring, analyzing or storing Tier One or Tier Two sensitive data, shall apply the following standards:

1) Desktops shall be locked when left unattended by authorized personnel. Re-entry into the desktop shall require a user login and password.

2) An automated screen saver lock shall be enabled after 15 minutes of inactivity. Re-entry into the desktop will require a user login and password.

3) Hard drives shall be cleansed using at least a seven pass overwrite procedure (commonly referred to as the Department of Defense (DOD) standard), where the drive is written over electronically to eliminate all data prior to surplus or re-assignment to another user or work area. Contracted agencies shall make available upon request verification that the device has been sanitized meeting industry standards, seven pass overwrite, degaussing (sanitation based on magnetism), or complete physical destruction of the hard drive media.

Portable Computing Devices
Portable computing devices that are used for collecting, displaying, transferring, analyzing or storing Tier One or Tier Two sensitive data, shall apply the following standards:

1) Personally assigned portable computing devices shall have full disk (hard drive) encryption, requiring a login and password.

2) Portable computing devices shall have the boot up from external or secondary devices disabled. Boot up shall only be permitted from the hard drive.

3) An automated screensaver lock shall be enabled after 15 minutes of inactivity. Re-entry into the laptop will require a user login and password.

4) Portable computing devices that are inactive for 15 minutes shall automatically lock.

5) Do not store Tier One sensitive data on shared pool portable computing devices.

6) Hard drives shall be cleansed using at least a seven pass overwrite procedure (commonly referred to as the Department of Defense (DOD) standard), where the drive is written over electronically to eliminate all data prior to surplus or re-assignment to another user or work area. Contracted agencies shall make available upon request verification that the device has been sanitized meeting industry standards, seven pass overwrite, degaussing (sanitation based on magnetism), or complete physical destruction of the hard drive media.

Portable Media
Portable devices used for collecting, displaying, transferring, analyzing or storing Tier One or Tier Two sensitive data, shall apply the following standards:

1) Files that contain Tier One sensitive data shall require a password to open.

2) Media that may contain sensitive information shall be encrypted and require a login and password to access the media prior to file or folder access.

3) Shall be stored in a restricted access location, surrounded by a durable physical barrier that is not portable.

4) Disposal of the media shall require wiping electronic media with at least a 7 pass overwrite of the entire medium, degaussing (sanitation based on magnetism) or complete physical destruction of the medium.

General Electronic File Creation and Storage
Tier One sensitive data shall not be used to name files or folders. Faxing or transmitting original or copies of SSN cards, Driver's Licenses, Identification Cards or any Tier One data is prohibited.

Shared Network Drive
Files containing Tier one and Tier Two sensitive data stored on a network drive shall be stored in a secured folder limited to staff that require access to the data.

File Transfer Protocol (FTP) Sites
Tier one and Tier Two Sensitive data on FTP sites shall require the following standards:

1) Files require a password to open.

2) The password shall not be stored in the file name, file properties or other related information files about the file (aka metadata).

3) Password is to be provided to the end user via phone, email or other separate method of communication.

4) Sensitive data shall not be stored on an FTP site as a long term or permanent solution.

Email
Agencies shall not email Tier One sensitive data. Agencies may, at their discretion, permit applicants to submit Home Energy Plus applications by email. Agencies allowing email applications shall first encourage application via phone, mail or in person as an alternative to email. Agencies shall be clearly advised that they should not include Social Security Numbers on emailed applications, advising the applicant that they will be contacted by the agency for this information. Upon receipt of application materials from applicants or household members by email, the application shall be entered using the date sent as the date of application. The application shall remain "pending" until all information has been verified and a signed certification page has been received. Incomplete Notices and other WHEAP Documents shall not be sent to applicants via email. All other applicable WHEAP eligibility policy requirements remain in effect.

Hard Copies

Storing hard copies:
Tier One sensitive data that are printed or physically displayed on media shall:

1) Be stored in a locked access location (key code door, key, combination lock, etc.).

2) Meet programmatic requirements for record retention requirements. See specific program policies for requirements.

3) Be disposed of through complete destruction of the material, including shredding the media into confetti or burning the materials.

Tier Two sensitive data that are printed or physically displayed on media shall:

1) Be stored in a restricted access location.

2) Meet programmatic requirements for record retention requirements. See specific program policies for requirements.

3) Be disposed of through complete destruction of the material, including shredding the media into confetti or burning the materials.

Hard copies in transit:
When Tier One sensitive data are printed or physically displayed on medium that is in transit:

1) The data shall be stored in a location secured by a durable physical barrier requiring a code or key, such as a locking metal file case or lock box.

2) Always be attended by an authorized individual.

3) When transporting hard copies containing Tier One data, a log shall be maintained of applications in transit from the point of origin and point of receipt.

When Tier Two sensitive data are printed or physically displayed on medium that is in transit:

1) Always be attended by an authorized individual.

Quality Assurance
Contracted agencies shall have procedures established to ensure:

1) Employees and subcontractors are made aware of the policy requirements annually. The agency is responsible for ensuring signers of the Non-Disclosure Agreement have a full and complete understanding of the Home Energy Plus Policies for Handling Sensitive Data.

2) Technology and devices are within the standards set forth by The Policies for Handling Sensitive Data.

3) When scanning (making an electronic copy of) documents for storage, the original hard copy or source data are to be maintained until the scanned document imagery is secured. Original hard copies and source data are to be handled and destroyed in accordance with applicable document retention guidelines.

4) Documentation is written and maintained for plan of action regarding incident management and data handling. Employees are to immediately notify their supervisor if it is suspected that sensitive data may have been compromised in any way (i.e. loss, theft, unattended media, including but not limited to, PCs and laptops). Incident Information to be recorded and retained:

    a) Date and time of incident.
    b) Location of incident.
    c) Description of what happened to expose the data.
    d) List of potential impacted identities shall be made available upon request in a password secured document.
    e) Plan of prevention and correction.
    f) Incident information will be password protected in a secured folder on the network drive and restricted to the necessary authorized individuals.
    g) The Division of Energy, Housing and Community Resources shall be notified of any incidents and corrective actions.

5) Contracted agencies and subcontracted agencies shall not:
    a) Scan, photocopy, or retain photo identification of program applicants or household members.
    b) Scan, photocopy, or retain Social Security cards of program applicants or household members.
    c) Send or request materials to be sent containing social security numbers by public or private mail, post, or messenger service.

Definitions

Contracted agency – An agency that has entered an agreement for program delivery on behalf of the Home Energy Plus Program or Wisconsin Department of Administration, Division of Energy, Housing and Community Resources.

Degaussing- A method of eliminating data on a storage device, were the drive is subjected to sufficient levels of magnetism to result in destruction of all data on the drive.

Desktops – A personal computer that is intended as a non-portable workstation.

Email - An electronic system which is used to exchange messages between individuals through the internet.

File Transfer Protocol (FTP) site - An internet site intended to transfer files or folders.

Hard Copies - A hard copy is any information printed, written or displayed on a surface, such as paper.

Overwrite procedure – A method of eliminating data on a storage device, were the drive is repeatedly written over electronically to eliminate all data.

Metadata - Any related information about the file or data.

Personal Identifiable Information (PII) – Any information by itself or combined with additional information that can be used to directly identify a specific individual.

Portable computing devices – Any computer that is designed as a portable workstation for an individual.

Portable media – A drive, disk, or storage device that can be removed from one computer and used on another computer.

Scanning - Making an electronic copy of physical document.

Sensitive data – Any information of which the loss, misuse, or unauthorized access to, or modification of could adversely affect the Home Energy Plus Program, contracted agencies, program employees, and/or customers.

Shared network drives - Drives that are accessible to individuals through a server for the purposes of sharing electronic files and folders.

Solid state storage media – A data storage devices that uses integrated circuits to hold data.

Social Security Number (SSN) – A nine digit number issued to an individual by the Social Security Administration.

Tier One sensitive data includes:

- SSNs by themselves or in combination with any PII (including date of birth, names, address, phone number, fuel account number and name, and income information), and
- The combination of date of birth and name without an SSN.

Tier Two sensitive data includes:
PII elements that may be needed to complete effective business communications in support of the Home Energy Plus Programs (name, address, phone number, fuel account information, and income information).

Appendix B – WHEAP Application Income Types

Refer to WHEAP Policy for specific information on counted and ignored income; this is a quick reference guide only. Refer to Section 3.4.28 for more guidance on income entry.

Income Types	System Code	Income Entry Reminders	Source	**Most Common Verifications** Items not listed in any specific order of preference. Be specific in verification field.
Alimony Received	(A)	May be spousal support, however, this is not the same as spousal impoverishment.		KIDS, check stubs, and bank statement
Child Support Received	(CS RECD)	Associate with the parent who receives the CS. It does not have to be entered under each child's name. Enter a separate CS RECD for each source; to verify each child support case.		KIDS, state issued debit card statement, bank statement, check stubs, or CS printout (The individual may be charged a fee to obtain the printout.)
Child Support Paid	(CS PAID)	Only court ordered child support paid is deducted. Enter as a positive value; the HE+ System deducts this income.		KIDS, payroll check stubs, or CS printout (The individual may be charged a fee to obtain the printout.)
C-Supp - SSI Caretaker Supplement[1]	(CTS;C-SUPP)	Associate the state CTS benefit for each eligible child in the household. CTS eligible household members are categorically eligible.		Notification of decision, CARES, Forward Health, or bank statement (Reminder: CTS payments may be included in the State SSI Income amount.)
Disability Long-term	(DL)	May see this income in the next year. Count the gross income.	Employer or insurance company	Benefit check stubs, or employer/insurance company statement

Disability Short-term	(DS)	Benefit is usually a short duration but may turn into a long-term disability payment. Count the gross income.	Employer or insurance company	Benefit check stubs, or employer/insurance company statement
Dividends/Interest[2]	(D)	Complete one income entry for combined interest/dividends income	Name of stock/bank/bond	Tax Form 1040, 1099, or statements covering a 12 month time period
Gambling/ Lottery/Bingo	(G)	Count money won in the last three months. Tribal Per Capita money should be entered as Tribal Per Capita Income.		Tax Form W-2G, or winnings statements
General Relief	(GR)	Economic support benefit awarded by a county or tribe.		CARES or check stubs
Gift/Donations	(GF)	Count money received as a gift or donation in the last three months. Do not include gifts received for birthdays, holidays, or other special occasions.	Identify the source/relationship of donor	Letter/statement
Government Relief or Disaster	(GV)	Issued by the federal or state government for aid to the household. (Examples: Refugee aid, flood relief, etc.)		GA list, Tax Form 1040, 1099, or check stub
Land Contract Payment	(LC)	Count only the interest portion of the land contract.		Land contract - amortization schedule, or Tax Form 1040 with Schedule B
Other	(O)	Use 'Other' only for income types that are not identified by WHEAP. Check the Ignored Income Table in Chapter 2 of policy to make sure it isn't ignored income. Trust funds are a type of annuity (P).	*Must identify the type of income.* (Examples: Stipends, Stumpage, Crop payments)	Tax Form 1040, notification letter, or 1099-MISC

Pensions, Annuities, and IRAs[3]	(P)	Enter a separate income for each source of annuity and IRA. NOTE: Veterans Pension, Disability, and Military Retirement income should be recorded under Veterans Income.	Employer or financial institution. (Example: Railroad retirement)	Tax Form 1040, 1099, check stubs, or gross dollar amounts from statements covering a 12 month time period[3]
Rental Income[2]	(R)	Includes dwelling, land or other rental income.	Type of Rental: Apartment, Duplex, Single Family Home, Land, etc.	Tax Form 1040 and all supporting schedules, or Self-Generated Income Form (S-GIRF) showing 12 months of income.
Self-Generated Income (Self-Employment)[2]	(SE)	Record all forms of SE, including losses. Enter a separate SE for each source. Includes: odd jobs, babysitting, hair stylist, etc. NOTE: SE losses can be offset against SE profits, including rental income. See WHEAP Policy, Chapter 2.	Must identify type of SE	Tax Form 1040 and all supporting schedules, or Self-Generated Income Form showing 12 months of income. *NOTE: Agency must retain copies of any documents used to verify self-generated income in application file when used.*
Social Security	(SS)	Count all SS benefits paid to retired workers, their dependents, and/or survivors of deceased workers in the 3 month test period.		Award letter, CARES, My Social Security (http://www.ssa.gov/myaccount).
Social Security Disability Insurance	(SSDI)	Count all SS benefits paid to disabled workers and/or their dependents in the 3 month test period.		Award letter, CARES, My Social Security (http://www.ssa.gov/myaccount). *Bank statements are not an acceptable verification item.*

Spousal Impoverishment	(SP)	A spouse located in a nursing home elects their community spouse to receive the SS benefit. The community spouse's income includes the full SS benefit except $45 designated for the nursing home spouse.		Notice of Decision/CARES
Social Security Supplemental Income[1]	(SSI)	Enter state and federal benefits separately. Federal portion is usually an even amount and the state portion will usually include cents. NOTE: State payments may include CTS income, which is a separate income entry.	Identify federal or state payment	Award letter, bank statement (state SSI payment only), CARES
TANF/W-2	(T)	Count all W-2 income received (net). NOTE: TANF or W-2 eligible household members may be categorically eligible.		CARES, Printout, Award/Sanction letter, Check stubs
Tribal per Capita[2]	(TR)	Count all Tribal per Capita income in the last 12 months or use the 1099 from the prior year. **Subtract $2,000** from the gross then divide by 12 to get a monthly amount. If total gross amount is less than $2,000, treat the entire amount as ignored income.		Check stubs, tribal verification, 1099
Unemployment Compensation	(UC)	If household member has seasonal employment, use annualized income. NOTE: If applicant receives UC each year, determine if this is seasonal employment.		UC statement, check stubs, DIHLR wage record; Tax Form 1099 - only if income is annualized. *Bank statements are not an acceptable verification item.* [4]

Veterans Benefits	(V)	Be sure to determine if the income is Veteran's pension, Veteran's compensation, or military retirement benefits (pension)	Identify type of Veteran's benefit	*For VA pension or VA compensation:* bank statement, annual award statement, or VA/VSO Phone Verification. For Military Pension: myPay Electronic Records
Wages & Tips	(W)	Do not count wages for minors under the age of 18 (see Ignored Income Table in WHEAP Policy for Earned Income). NOTE: Bonuses, tips, and vacation pay are wage income.	Identify the employer	Check stubs and employer payroll statement. NOTE*:* Seasonal worker wages should be annualized from a W-2. [4]
Workers Compensation	(WK)	Count the gross workers compensation income.	Employer or insurance company	Benefit check stubs or employer/insurance company statement

[1] Income makes household member Categorically Eligible.
[2] Use a 12 month income test period.
[3] Use a 3 month test period if paid monthly; 12 month test period if paid quarterly/annually.
[4] If applicant is a seasonal worker, use the same 12 month test period for wages and UC.