



Department of Human Resources
311 West Saratoga Street
Baltimore MD 21201

FIA ACTION TRANSMITTAL

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**TO: DIRECTORS, LOCAL DEPARTMENTS OF SOCIAL SERVICES
DEPUTY/ASSISTANT DIRECTORS FOR FAMILY INVESTMENT
FAMILY INVESTMENT SUPERVISORS**

**FROM: *Charles E. Henry, Jr.*
ROBERT J. EVERHARD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FIA**

**RE: MARYLAND ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (MEAP) FY '99
OPERATIONS**

PROGRAM AFFECTED: ALL FIA PROGRAMS

ORIGINATING OFFICE: OFFICE OF POLICY RESEARCH & SYSTEMS

SUMMARY

The Maryland Energy Assistance Program (MEAP) begins taking applications for its program year on November 2, 1998. MEAP will continue to take applications for heating assistance through March 31, 1999.

MEAP provides heating assistance grants to fuel suppliers and utility companies on behalf of eligible MEAP applicants. During the last program year, MEAP issued approximately 68,700 heating assistance grants. The average MEAP benefit during this time was \$204.78.

In general, MEAP is available for Maryland residents whose household income is at or below 150% of the Federal poverty level and who are responsible for their heating costs. Attachment A provides the Income Guidelines for 1998-1999 MEAP program year.

Eligibility for MEAP is determined by State (DHR) designated Local Administrative Agencies. In some areas, the local MEAP office is within the local Department of Social Services. In other areas, the local Community Action Agency serves as the MEAP administrator. In Baltimore City, the Baltimore City Department of Housing and Community Development administers MEAP. Attachment B provides a list of local MEAP agencies, addresses, and telephone numbers.

Homeowners, renters (including renters whose heat is included in the rent payment), and roomer/boarders may be eligible for MEAP assistance. Applicants residing in Section 8 subsidized housing and whose heat is included in their rent payments are not eligible for MEAP assistance. Residents of residential hotels may apply on their own behalf. Residents of group homes or domiciliary care facilities (e.g., nursing homes, shelters) may not apply on their own behalf.

Eligible households may be issued a maximum of one MEAP grant per MEAP program year. The grant is sent directly to the eligible household's energy provider and shall not be considered income for the determination of the household's eligibility for other public assistance programs.

MEAP ELIGIBILITY AND GRANT PAYMENT

Applications for MEAP are accepted by the local MEAP office during the MEAP program year (November 2, 1998 through March 31, 1999). Eligibility determination is the responsibility of the local MEAP office.

All MEAP applicants are required to provide proof of income (for all household members age 18 and older for the 30-day period prior to the date of the MEAP application); residence; and identity. Social Security Numbers are required for all household members.

Applicants designate their household's primary heating fuel (i.e., oil, propane, kerosene, natural gas, electricity, or wood) and designate an energy vendor for receipt of the MEAP grant. When a household is determined eligible, the MEAP grant is sent directly to the designated energy vendor.

For applicant-renters where heat is included in the rent payment, the applicant's landlord is asked to sign a MEAP "Landlord Agreement" stating the MEAP grant will be applied to a reduction of the applicant's rent. Upon receipt of the agreement, the MEAP grant is sent directly to the eligible applicant's landlord.

Applicants should be aware that they are responsible for continuing to pay their energy bills before, during, and after the MEAP application and eligibility determination process.

MEAP COORDINATION WITH DSS

Potential MEAP applicants may enter the local Department of Social Services requesting assistance for their energy bill (or a utility turn-off notice). The local DSS staff should attempt to assist this customer.

During the MEAP Program Year (November through March):

Has the Customer applied for a MEAP grant?

1. If the customer has not applied for a MEAP grant:

Refer the customer immediately to the local MEAP office. It may be helpful to contact the local MEAP office on behalf of the customer to make arrangements for the customer to be seen as soon as possible.

In order to expedite the MEAP application process, DSS staff are to provide verification of any public assistance (i.e., TCA, TEMHA, etc.) received by all occupants of the customer's residence during the past 30 days. Also, a "Wage Screen and Unemployment Insurance Screen" for all occupants (age 18 or older) of the customer's residence should be done to cover the past 30 days. These items are to be given to the customer or faxed directly to the local MEAP office.

Does the Household have an "Energy Crisis"?

Is the household's furnace operating? If not, why? Does the household have a fuel supply for the furnace? Is the electricity turned off? Does the household's heating situation cause a threat to the occupants' health or safety?

If the household cannot safely heat the residence during the MEAP program year, the household is experiencing an energy crisis. Immediate action is necessary. First, determine whether the household has applied for a MEAP grant. If there is any question about whether the household has applied for MEAP, contact the local MEAP office.

The local MEAP office may be able to arrange for prompt fuel delivery to alleviate an "energy crisis" or may be able to work with the local utility (to either get the customer an extension for a "turn-off notice" or to get the utility service restored).

2. If the customer has applied for a MEAP grant:

When did the customer apply for MEAP? Was the customer's household eligible for a MEAP grant? Has the grant been issued? If the customer does not know the answers to these questions, contact the local MEAP office immediately. The local MEAP office maintains a database of all MEAP applicants and recipients and can answer these questions.

Was the MEAP Application Denied?

If the customer's application for MEAP was denied, the customer may re-apply for MEAP 30 days after the date of the denied application (i.e., 30 days from the date of the customer last applied for MEAP). Local DSS staff should contact the local MEAP office to determine if the customer should re-apply for MEAP and make arrangements for the customer to do so. The local MEAP staff will again assess the customer's situation and attempt to resolve an energy crisis.

Was the MEAP Application Approved?

DSS staff must contact the local MEAP office to verify that a MEAP grant has been approved and to determine if a grant was issued. It may be that the household was determined eligible for MEAP and a grant has not been processed. If this is the case, the local MEAP office may be able to expedite the issuance of the grant and/or work with the customer's fuel supplier to alleviate a crisis.

If a MEAP grant has been approved and the MEAP grant is not sufficient to resolve an energy crisis, the customer should be encouraged to apply for Emergency Assistance.

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE (EAFC) GRANTS FOR ENERGY:

If the customer is not eligible for a MEAP grant or the MEAP grant is not sufficient to resolve an energy crisis, the local MEAP agency may refer the customer back to the local DSS to apply for an Emergency Assistance (EAFC) grant.

Local Departments of Social Services are required to submit a plan annually which details the procedures established by the Local Department for the payment of cash benefits under Emergency Assistance to Families with Children (EAFC) in its jurisdiction (COMAR 07.03.08.03.A.). Local DSS staff must be aware of locally established EAFC policies and procedures related to energy-related emergencies.

Generally, in order to be considered for an energy-related Emergency Assistance (EA) grant, the applicant shall verify that application has been made to MEAP and that any available MEAP benefits have been used and are insufficient to resolve the energy crisis.

Unless specifically stated in the DSS's local EAFC plan, denial of a MEAP grant does not necessarily prevent a customer from applying for an EA grant. Likewise, approval of a MEAP grant does not automatically qualify an EA applicant for an energy-related Emergency Assistance grant.

REFERRAL TO OTHER AGENCIES:

When it is determined that the MEAP grant is not sufficient or available to the household to resolve an energy crisis and the local DSS's Emergency Assistance grant is not sufficient or available to resolve an energy crisis, referral to another agency may be necessary.

Other local non-profit agencies (e.g., local Fuel Funds) may have resources available to help resolve an energy crisis. In most cases, the local MEAP office is aware of other available local resources. Contact the local MEAP office to determine the next course of action.

In general, households must have applied for all MEAP and Emergency Assistance funds prior to referral to other resources.

FOLLOWING THE MEAP SEASON (April through June):

If a customer requests assistance with an energy bill when MEAP is not available, the Local DSS staff should check with the local MEAP office to determine if another program, such as the Partners in Energy Program (PIE) is available.

PIE is an adjunct program to MEAP and may be available (when funding permits) from April through June. PIE offers customers, who did not receive a regular MEAP grant during the previous MEAP program year (November through March), an opportunity to receive an energy assistance grant. The local MEAP office will instruct DSS staff on where to refer the customer of PIE program assistance.

The same eligibility criterion applies for PIE applicants as for MEAP applicants. However, the PIE grant is generally less than a regular MEAP grant. Therefore, potential MEAP grant recipients should be encouraged to apply for MEAP during the MEAP program year. Local DSS staff should follow the same procedures described above for MEAP when the PIE program is available.

WHEN MEAP (OR PIE) IS NOT AVAILABLE:

It is possible that a household will seek assistance during the summer months when neither MEAP nor PIE is available. When this occurs, the local DSS staff should comply with the local Emergency Assistance (EAFC) policies and procedures.

IF Emergency Assistance for energy assistance is not available to the household, the customer should be referred to other local agencies (e.g., local Fuel Funds). Local MEAP staff may be consulted to determine available local resources and/or to obtain telephone numbers and addresses of local agencies.

ACTION REQUIRED OF: All Local Departments

ACTION DUE November 2, 1998

INQUIRIES

Please direct concerning this transmittal to Jo-Ann Showalter at (410) 767-7956 or Rick McClendon (410) 767-8513.

cc: Sandra Brown, Maryland Energy Assistance Program (MEAP)
Denese Maker, Community Services Administration
Cindy Riely, Office of People's Counsel
Mary Ellen Vanni, Fuel Fund of Central Maryland
Eileen Strugill, Office of Information Management
Richard Urps, MEAP
Jackie Truesdel, Baltimore Gas & Electric Co.

MARYLAND ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
INCOME ELIGIBILITY STANDARDS
PROGRAM YEAR 1999

HOUSEHOLD SIZE	MAXIMUM INCOME STANDARD
1	\$1,006
2	\$1,356
3	\$1,706
4	\$2,056
5	\$2,406
6	\$2,756
7	\$3,106

EACH ADDITIONAL ADD: \$350

ATTACHMENT A

TOLL FREE MEAP HOTLINE: 1-800-352-1446 (TTY: 1-800-925-4434)

LOCAL MEAP OFFICES

ALLEGANY COUNTY HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION, INC.
441 N. Centre Street
Cumberland, MD 21502
301 777-8550

ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY COMMITTEE, INC.
251 West Street
Annapolis, MD 21404
410 626-1910
Balto. Area Number 410 269-8447

BALTIMORE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
One Investment Place
Towson, MD 21204
410 853-3385

CAROLINE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
207 S. Third Street
Denton, MD 21629
410 479-5900

CARROLL COUNTY HUMAN SERVICE PROGRAMS
10 Distillery Drive
Westminster, MD 21157
410 857-2999

CECIL COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
135 E. High Street
Elkton, MD 21921
410 996-0505

DORCHESTER COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
774 Cambridge Plaza
Cambridge, MD 21613
410 228-5100

FREDERICK COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
100 E. All Saints Street
P.O. Box 237
Frederick, MD 21701
301 694-2410

GARRETT COUNTY COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY, INC.
104 E. Center Street
Oakland, MD 21550
301 334-9431

HARFORD COUNTY COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY, INC.
21 N. Bond Street
Bel Air, MD 21014
410 638-3240

HOWARD COUNTY COMMUNITY ACTION COUNCIL, INC.
6751 Columbia Gateway Drive
Columbia, MD 21045
410 313-6440

KENT COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
350 High Street
Chestertown, MD 21620
410 778-0820

MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
1301 Piccard Drive
Rockville, MD 20850
301 315-4450

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
6505 Belcrest Road
Hyattsville, MD 20782
301 209-5240

Mailing Address: 805 Bright Seat Road
Landover, MD 20785

QUEEN ANNE'S COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OFFICE
1935 4-H Park Road
Rt. 18, P.O. Box 327
Centreville, MD 21617
410 758-3977

SOMERSET, WICOMICO, AND WORCESTER COUNTIES
Shore-Up! Inc.
520 Snow Hill Road
Salisbury, MD 21801
410 749-1142

CHARLES, CALVERT, AND ST. MARY'S COUNTIES

Southern Maryland Tri-County Community Action Committee, Inc.
Hartman Building
8371 Leonardtown Road
Hughesville, MD 20637

CHARLES: 301 274-4474

CALVERT: 410 535-1010

ST. MARY'S: 301 475-5574

TALBOT COUNTY

Neighborhood Service Center, Inc.
126 Port Street
Easton, MD 21601
410 822-5015

WASHINGTON COUNTY COMMUNITY ACTION COUNCIL, INC.

101 Summit Avenue
Hagerstown, MD 21740
301 797-4161

**BALTIMORE CITY DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICE CENTERS**

Where to Apply: 410 396-5555

NORTHEAST

2201 Pinewood Avenue, 21214
410 545-3900

NORTHERN

5225 York Road, 21212
410 396-6085

CENTRAL

1901 Pennsylvania Avenue, 21202
410 545-3714

SOUTHEAST

101 S. Ellwood Avenue
21224
410 545-6515

EASTERN

1400 Orleans Street (Ground Level of Dunbar), 21231
410 396-9469

SOUTHERN

2490 Giles Road, 21225

410 396-1729

NORTHWESTERN

3939 Reisterstown Road,
21215
410 396-0416

WESTERN

1114 N. Mount Street, 21217
410 545-6900

SOUTHWEST

501 S. Athol Avenue, 21229
410 545-1851

AMERICAN INDIAN CENTER

113 South Broadway, 21231
410 675-3535

HERO

101 W. Read Street, 21201
410 685-1180

WAXTER SENIOR CENTER

861 Park Avenue, 21201
410 396-1341

MAYOR'S CRISIS RESOURCE CENTER - EAST

Dunbar Complex
1400 Orleans Street, 21231
410 396-4433

MAYOR'S CRISIS RESOURCE CENTER - WEST

Mondawmin Mall
1002 Mondawmin Concourse, 21215
410 396-0260