

Belit Stockfleth

Authorized Signature

Number: SS-IM-09-014
Issue Date: 02/26/2009

Topic: Food Benefits

Subject: The Heat and Eat Project

Applies to (check all that apply):

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | All DHS employees | <input type="checkbox"/> | County Mental Health Directors |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Area Agencies on Aging | <input type="checkbox"/> | Health Services |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Children, Adults and Families | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Seniors and People with Disabilities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | County DD Program Managers | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other (please specify): |

Message: This week the Food Stamp Program signed an Interagency Agreement with Housing and Community Services (HCS) - Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). HCS and DHS have formed a partnership in an effort to enhance participation and benefits for food stamp households. The new partnership is called the Heat and Eat Project. The intent of the pilot program is to generate additional financial resources for vulnerable households and increase the likelihood low-income Oregonians maintain affordable housing and sustain heat.

Beginning March 1, 2009, the system will identify Food Stamp households meeting special criteria.

Who will receive the \$1 LIHEAP payment?

HCS assumes households with a rent cost, but no heating bill, have a heating cost included in their rent. The households with all of the following have been identified to receive the \$1.

- * They are receiving the LUA, IUA, TUA or no utility allowance;
- * Do not receive maximum FS benefits;
- * Are in open status and not in suspend status;
- * Are not homeless;
- * Have housing cost coded on FSMIS; and
- * Do not receive the maximum shelter allowance.

These households will receive a one-time payment of \$1 in LIHEAP benefits. Receipt of this payment automatically qualifies these households for the Full Utility Allowance (FUA) for the year. Even though the payment is only \$1, the real benefit is the

increased benefits to these households. Almost 22,000 households will receive the \$1 payment in March 2009.

How do households receive the LIHEAP benefit?

Each month, the day before the FSMIS end of month deadline, FSMIS will identify the cases qualifying for the Heat and Eat payment. The computer will automatically change the utility allowance coding to FUA and add the "LHP" household type to each FS case receiving this payment. LHP is a computer-generated code and local staff are not to remove the coding. The code tells all that the computer sent the \$1 payment and changed the utility allowance to FUA.

The \$1 LIHEAP benefit will be distributed to each household in a special cash account on the Oregon Trail EBT card. Systems programmers are working on placing the \$1 LIHEAP benefit into the chosen account for those households participating in Cash Out. Recipients of the \$1 will receive a notice referring them to their local LIHEAP program. They may be able to qualify for additional LIHEAP benefits. A copy of the notice is below.

What action is taken in local offices?

No special action is required by the local offices. Continue to code cases with the correct utility allowance at certification and recertification. Also, check homeless coding to ensure it is correct. Households receiving LIHEAP payments qualify for the FUA for a year. If a household does not receive the \$1 and thinks they are eligible for LIHEAP benefits, refer them to the local Community Action Agency to file an application for LIHEAP benefits.

The Heat and Eat project is a pilot for this year. An evaluation will be completed at the end. A decision will be made about continuing the project for 2010 and the future.

LIHEAP Notice being sent to the households

Notice of LIHEAP Payment

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) helps low-income people with their heating costs. Heat is part of your other household costs. Housing and Community Services has awarded you a \$1 LIHEAP benefit. This is a one-time payment.

The \$1 payment is in a cash account on your EBT card. Please use this \$1 for your heating needs. You may use this \$1 when you use your EBT card.

You may qualify for more LIHEAP benefits. For more about LIHEAP, please call 1-800-453-5511 or 1-800-SAFENET (723-3638). They can tell you how to locate the

local LIHEAP office in your area. You may learn more about LIHEAP on the web.
<http://www.ohcs.oregon.gov/OHCS/CRD/SOS/docs/EnergyAssistanceReferrals.pdf>

You food stamp benefits may also go up due to this LIHEAP payment. You now qualify for the full utility allowance for this year. Your benefits may go up for next month.

Oregon Administrative Rule: **461-160-0420, 461-160-0430, 461-180-0010**

If you have any questions about this information, contact:

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