

**ELDERLY HOME HEATING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
2008 - 2009**

Office of Policy and Management
Energy Management Unit

Elderly Home Heating Assistance Program (EHHAP)

Introduction:

Pursuant to Section 8 of Public Act 08-1 of the August 2008 Special Session of the General Assembly, the Office of Policy and Management is responsible for providing home heating assistance to state residents aged sixty-five and older, with income equal to or less than one hundred percent of the state median household income, who are unable to make timely payments on deliverable fuel, electricity or natural gas bills.

Based on U.S. census data, and Connecticut legislative reports, OPM estimates that there are approximately 231,000 households that may meet the eligibility criteria as indicated in PA 08-1. Of these households it is estimated that 179,000 may be eligible for heating assistance benefits under the Connecticut Energy Assistance Program (CEAP) or the Connecticut Heating Assistance Program (CHAP). Approximately 52,000 households may meet the eligibility criteria as indicated in PA 08-1 whom are not eligible for state funded heating assistance under CEAP or CHAP.

Due to the funding limitations (\$4 million, with \$500 thousand for “outreach”), this proposed program will potentially serve 7,000 households.

Program Overview:

OPM proposes a program titled the Elderly Home Heating Assistance Program (EHHAP) to be administered through a grant to Operation Fuel to meet the requirements of Section 8 of PA 08-1. Operation fuel presently administers heating assistance programs and under Sections 5, 6 & 9 of PA 08-1 will receive \$14.0 million in grants from OPM to administer additional heating assistance. Operation Fuel maintains the administrative and programmatic infrastructure to implement the EHHAP without creating redundant program administration elsewhere, minimizing additional administrative costs. The eligibility guidelines for the EHHAP and other heating assistance programs that Operation Fuel has responsibility for overlap, therefore, Operation Fuel already serves as a point of contact for much of the population potentially eligible for the EHHAP.

EHHAP applicants deemed eligible for assistance will receive a one time \$500 payment made directly to their deliverable fuel vendor, electric utility or natural gas utility for heating expenses incurred on or after November 1, 2008 and on or before May 15, 2009. Heating payments will be for the applicant’s primary source of heat at the applicant’s primary place of domicile. The applicant, or applicant’s spouse must be responsible for payment of the heating bill. To be eligible an applicant must be sixty-five years of age on or after November 1, 2008. If eligible for heating assistance under CEAP or CHAP, an applicant must exhaust benefits under those programs before being deemed eligible for assistance under EHHAP.

General Guidelines:

- Grant targeted to elderly state residents unable to make timely payment on the heating account for their primary source of heat.
- Grant amount is a one time payment of \$500.

Administration:

- Operation Fuel will provide intake services and determine eligibility.
- Operation Fuel will provide services identifying and notifying eligible residents that assistance is available.
- Operation Fuel will make grant payments directly to deliverable fuel vendors, municipal utilities furnishing electricity or natural gas or electric and natural gas companies.

Basic Eligibility Requirements:

1. Program is for heating costs (statute)
2. Must be a state resident (statute)
3. Must be age 65 or over (statute)
4. Program benefit is for “deliverable fuel, electricity or natural gas bills” (statute)
5. Must be unable to make timely payments (statute)
6. Income must be equal to or less than 100% of the applicable state median income (statute)
7. Applicant or spouse must be responsible for payment of the residential heating bill at the Connecticut address reflected on the heating bill (administrative)
8. Grant is for primary heat source only (administrative)

Definitions:

For the purposes of this plan, the following terms are defined:

1. Heating Costs – Costs attributable to the purchase of a deliverable fuel, electricity or natural gas for residential space heating.
2. State Resident – Primary place of residence is in Connecticut
3. Age 65 & up – Must be 65 or older as of November 1, 2008.
4. Deliverable fuel – heating oil, propane, kerosene, wood, coal
5. State Median Household Income – Most recent published by DSS (see below)
6. Responsible for bills – Applicant or spouse’s name must be on invoice/bill

- 7. Primary residence – primary place of domicile
- 8. Family member – Immediate family (mother, father, son, daughter)

Eligibility:

Any state resident aged sixty five or over as of November 1, 2008, with income equal to or less than one hundred percent of the applicable state median household income, who is unable to make timely payment on deliverable fuel, electricity or natural gas heating bills and who is not eligible for benefits under the Connecticut Energy Assistance Program (CEAP) or Connecticut Heating Assistance Program (CHAP) or if eligible, has exhausted benefits under CEAP or CHAP.

Income Guidelines:

Income eligibility is based on the Connecticut State Median Income Guidelines as published by the Connecticut Department of Social Services as of July 1, 2008.

<u>100 Percent of State median Income Guidelines</u>								
Household Size	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Annual Income	\$48,787	63,798	78,810	93,821	108,832	123,844	126,658	129,473
(For households with more than eight members, add \$2,815 for each additional member.)								

Intake:

Intake will be performed by Operation Fuel at already established fuel bank locations.

An applicant whose income is 60% or less of the state median income and may meet CEAP or CHAP eligibility guidelines will be referred to the appropriate Community Action Agency, and must apply for benefits through those programs prior to receiving a grant through the Elderly Home Heating Assistance Arrearage Program. Applicants that have exhausted benefits under CEAP or CHAP may receive a grant under the Elderly Home Heating Assistance Arrearage Program as long as they meet all of the relevant eligibility requirements. At the time of intake, Operation Fuel, or it’s satellite intake provider, will inform the applicant of eligibility or ineligibility and why.

At time of application the following must be provided by the applicant:

- Completed application form:
 - Name, Social Security Number*, **Birth-date and age***, Phone #
 - **Are you a State Resident?*** (yes/no)
 - Current Address, Address where heating costs were incurred (If different, explanation)

- Is the address where the heating cost was incurred your primary residence, or was it your primary residence at the time the heating cost was incurred? (yes/no)
- ***Are you responsible for paying the heating bill as indicated? (yes/no)****
- Fuel Source for Heating
- Is this the primary source of heat at this residence? (yes/no)
- Account Number
- ***Statement of Family Gross Income****
- ***Statement of Liquid Assets****
- Have you applied for heating assistance under the Connecticut Energy Assistance Program (CEAP) or Connecticut Heating Assistance Program (CHAP)? (yes/no)
- Have you been approved for assistance under the Connecticut Energy Assistance Program (CEAP) or Connecticut Heating Assistance Program (CHAP)? (yes/no)
- If approved for assistance, have you exhausted all of the assistance available to you under the Connecticut Energy Assistance Program (CEAP) or Connecticut Heating Assistance Program (CHAP)? (yes/no)
- For deliverable fuels:
 - Name of vendor, address, phone number, FEIN
- For Natural Gas and Electric:
 - Name of Utility Company
- For Electric:
 - Statement that primary source of heat is electricity.
- Statement of understanding that payment will be made directly to the fuel vendor or the utility.
- Statement authorizing Operation Fuel and the State of Connecticut to use information provided on application, including SS#, to verify eligibility for a grant.
- Statement attesting that the applicant is unable to make timely payment on the attached bill.
- Statement attesting to the truthfulness of all information included on or submitted with the application.
- Signature of Applicant, Date

****Proof of age, state residency, responsibility for paying the bill, family gross income and liquid assets must be presented with the application at intake. The following documentation will satisfy this requirement (Note that lack of a social security number will not preclude applicant from grant eligibility if they satisfy all other eligibility requirements):***

Proof of Age: may include a valid Connecticut drivers license, birth certificate, passport or other acceptable legal documentation that indicates a persons date of birth.

Proof of State Residency: may include a valid Connecticut drivers license, voter registration information, tax and or utility bills, or a valid U.S. passport.

Proof of Responsibility for Heating Cost: A copy of a heating bill, submitted with the application, must be in the applicant or spouse's name and reflect costs incurred on or after November 1, 2008 and or on or before May 15, 2009.

Proof of Family Income (Including Liquid Assets):

For wage earners copies of a minimum of the most recent four weeks of pay check stubs for each wage earner family member, or a statement from the employer on company letter head stating gross wages for the most recent four week period for each wage earner in the family.

For self employed a federal income tax return for each self employed family member.

For those on a fixed income;

- Social Security Benefits or Supplemental Security Income - copy of recent check, Social Security Award Letter, bank statement showing direct deposit
- State Assistance Financial Benefits (TFA, State Supplement, etc.) - a current budget sheet showing the monthly benefit amount awarded, etc.
- Veterans' Assistance- V.A. Award Letters, copy of current check, evidence of bank direct deposit
- Unemployment Compensation Benefits or Workers Compensation Benefits - current benefits printout, copies of checks, Award Letters
- Subsidized Adoption Benefits - copy of current checks, award letters, etc.
- Pensions or Annuities - copies of checks, bank direct deposit, statement from income source on their letterhead
- Any alimony or child support, including support paid to you via Child Support Enforcement, Divorce decree or Family Relations Court, or directly to you via the absent parent's employer, or by the absent parent himself/herself for each dependent child- copies of checks, bank direct deposits, support check printouts or letters from Support Enforcement, lawyers, voluntary agreement statement from absent parent, etc.
- Rental Income - rent stub(s), tenants' lease, copies of checks deposited in your bank acct.
- Contributions - Signed statements from friends or relatives who are contributing to your family's support

HOUSEHOLD ASSET GUIDELINES

There is also a liquid assets test (checking, savings, CD's, stocks, bonds, shares,

certificates of deposit and individual retirement accounts if the accounts are in the name of a household member who is at least 59-and-one-half years old.) The purpose of the liquid assets test is to try to ensure that winter heating assistance dollars go to households most in need; that is, to people without the financial means to heat their home.

For homeowners, the first \$10,000 in liquid assets, and for other households, the first \$7,000 in liquid assets, is disregarded. Any amount over that limit, when added to the annual gross income must be below the income guidelines.

Clients must provide proof of **income and assets** for all household family members who may reside with them, for the four weeks prior to the application date.

Grant Levels:

- One grant payment of \$500 for eligible families will be made directly to deliverable fuel vendors, municipal utilities furnishing electricity or natural gas or electric and natural gas companies for the 2008/2009 heating season (11/1/08 – 5/15/09) for heating only.
- Program expires when funding runs out or at the end of the state fiscal year 2009 (June 30, 2009) when funding lapses.

Grant Payments:

- Operation Fuel will make grant payments directly to the deliverable fuel vendor, municipal utility furnishing electricity or natural gas or electric and natural gas utilities.
- Operation Fuel will utilize a data-base to track approved grant payments and will submit monthly reports to the Office of Policy and Management indicating at a minimum the number of approved applicants by town, number of grant payments made, total amount of payments made, number of and amount of payments by fuel type (by month and cumulative), and total monthly and cumulative payments.
- Operation Fuel will cross reference the Department of Consumer Protection's list of licensed retail deliverable fuel vendors to ensure grant payments are made only to Connecticut licensed vendors.

Outreach:

Operation Fuel will provide services identifying and notifying eligible residents that assistance is available. Within available funding**, such outreach program will include, but not be limited to the following:

- In conjunction with OPM, develop a program informational flyer
- Identify statewide senior centers and forward informational flyers

- Disburse informational flyer to 211 Infoline
- Identify other community organizations, centers and religious organizations and forward informational flyers
- In conjunction with OPM, develop radio public service announcements
- Place radio PSAs
- Forward informational flyer to fuel banks and CAAs
- Forward informational flyers to the Independent Connecticut Petroleum Dealers Association (ICPA) for distribution to home heating dealers
- Ask utilities to include the flyer as a bill insert and educate customer service representatives on program guidelines

**Funding for outreach activities and Operation Fuel administrative expenses is limited to \$500,000.

Budget:

	<u>Revenue</u>	<u>Costs</u>
State Funding	\$4,000,000	
Administrative & Outreach		\$ 500,000
Heating Grants		<u>\$3,500,000</u>
Total Program Costs		<u>\$4,000,000</u>

Other Facts:

- There are 472,284 Connecticut residents that are 65 or older (U.S. Census – as of 7/1/07)
- There are 293,067 Households where head of household is 65 or over (OLR report 3/2003)
- 100% of state median income for family of two is \$63,798 (DSS, 7/1/2008)
- 231,000 Households where the head of household is 65 or over that potentially make less than 100% of state median income (based on a family of 2) – potentially eligible population (OLR Report and DSS)
- 179,000 of these households are potentially eligible for CEAP.
- 52,000 households are potentially eligible for the EHHAAP that are not eligible for CEAP/CHAP.