

# HEAP - Home Energy Assistance Program

- [2016-17 HEAP Outreach Calendar](#)

## 2017 - 2018

Erie County Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP):  
478 Main Street: 1st Floor  
Buffalo, NY 14202

HEAP Hotline: 858-7644  
HEAP Office Hours 8:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m.

Erie County 2017-18 Home Energy Assistance Program Guide



Clients with **heat service off** are encouraged to report to HEAP for assistance on or after **November 13, 2017**.



### HEAP Locations:

- **478 Main Street, Buffalo** (8 a.m. - 4 p.m.) - All households receiving Temporary Assistance (TA) or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, and heads of household under 60 years of age or non-disabled
- **291 Pearl St., Buffalo** (8 a.m. - 4 p.m.) - Heads of household 60 or older, or under 60 and disabled (not receiving TA or SNAP)

Clients with a **shut-off notice** are encouraged to call the HEAP hotline at **858-7644** for information. A client may or may not need to report for assistance.

Clients with **service on and no shut-off notice** are encouraged to apply by mail or online. To apply online, visit [www.myBenefits.ny.gov](http://www.myBenefits.ny.gov)

To apply by mail: Click [Here](#) to request an application through the web portal on or after October 2, 2017; OR - Call the Application Request Line at **858-1969** on or after October 2, 2017.

Applications will be mailed out when Regular Benefit Assistance begins on November 13, 2017. A printable application will be available on this site starting November 13, 2017.

### HEAP Components:

**Please scroll down for details of each component -**

1. Early Outreach and SNAP or TA AutoPay for Regular HEAP - **open**
2. Regular HEAP - **opens November 13, 2017**

3. Emergency HEAP - ***opens January 2, 2018***
4. HERR (Heating {Furnace} Equipment Repair and Replacement - ***open***
5. Heating Equipment Clean and Tune Assistance - ***open***
6. Cooling Assistance - ***closed until Spring 2018***
7. How to Apply for HEAP
8. Documentation Requirements for Regular HEAP
9. Documentation Requirements for Emergency HEAP
10. Subsidized Rent & HEAP
11. How HEAP calculates wages
12. Countable and Excluded resources
13. Weatherization Assistance Referral, EmPower NY, Lifeline - ***open***
14. Other assistance if HEAP is closed or benefits are exhausted -***open***

## HEAP Income Guidelines 2017 – 2018

### Household Size    Gross Monthly Income

	Income cannot exceed:	
	(Tier 1)	(Tier 2)
1	\$0-\$1,307	\$1,308-\$2,318
2	\$0-\$1,759	\$1,760-\$3,031
3	\$0-\$2,212	\$2,213-\$3,744
4	\$0-\$2,665	\$2,666-\$4,457
5	\$0-\$3,118	\$3,119-\$5,170
6	\$0-\$3,571	\$3,572-\$5,883
7	\$0-\$4,024	\$4,025-\$6,017
8	\$0-\$4,476	\$4,477-\$6,150
9	\$0-\$4,929	\$4,930-\$6,284
10	\$0-\$5,382	\$5,383-\$6,418
11	\$0-\$5,835	\$5,836-\$6,733

\*An additional \$26 is added to the base benefit if household has Tier 1 income - see "Regular Benefit Heating Assistance" for further details.

### 1. Early Outreach and SNAP or TA Auto Pay for Regular HEAP - ***open***

#### Early Outreach:

1. Households that received HEAP last season and have a senior citizen, disabled individual, or child age 5 or younger may receive an Early Outreach application between August 23 and September 15, 2017.
2. These clients may apply for HEAP before the season officially opens. The only documentation required for an early access application is copies of earned income, if any (most recent four weeks' pay stubs).
3. Applicants who received HEAP last season **are not** required to submit proof of unearned income like Social Security, SSD, workers comp, unemployment, utility bills, or proof of residency.
4. Households who believe they should have received an Early Access application but did not, or who need to replace a lost or damaged application, may call the HEAP Hotline at **858-7644** for assistance.
5. The mail-in application is for a Regular HEAP benefit only, for the main source of heat.
6. We can begin notifying companies of approvals from early outreach applications when program opens. The approval may restore service, or will create a 30-day hold from termination of service, or will result in a delivery of fuel, depending on the circumstances.
7. **No HEAP Benefits resulting from early access approvals will be promised or issued to heat supplier until HEAP officially opens on November 13, 2017.**

### **SNAP or TA AutoPay:**

- Households currently receiving SNAP or TA assistance may qualify for an AutoPay HEAP benefit that will be processed and credited automatically to heating bill in December.
- Households wishing to check the status of an AutoPay may call the HEAP hotline at **858-7644** beginning October 2, 2017. If a household misses the Auto Pay, they may submit a HEAP application for processing prior to season opening.
- Early Outreach and AutoPay eligibility notices will be mailed in December, and benefits should appear as a credit on December heating bills.
- The AutoPay is for a Regular HEAP benefit only, for the main source of heat.
- No HEAP Benefits resulting from Auto Pay will be promised or issued to heat supplier until HEAP officially opens on November 13, 2017.

[back to top »](#)

### **2. Regular Benefit heating bill assistance - opens November 13, 2017**

- One regular HEAP benefit is available for a household's *main* source of heat.
- Gas and Electric benefits appear as a credit on bill about 60 days after approval. Oil, propane, wood, pellets, and coal benefits produce a delivery of fuel totaling benefit amount.
- Household does not need a shutoff notice or low fuel to apply for Regular HEAP.
- If there is a shutoff notice, a 30-day "hold" is placed on heat account if benefit is approved. Service will not be shut off during that 30 days and the utility company will not seek collection for the portion of the total bill equaling the benefit amount.
- If service is off, benefit approval may restore service depending on total amount owed.
- **There is no resource test for Regular HEAP;** HEAP will not examine household's savings or checking accounts etc.

### **Regular HEAP Benefit Amounts:**

- **\$350 base benefit** - Natural Gas or Electric Heat
- **\$675 base benefit** - Deliverable fuel (oil, propane, kerosene)
- **\$525 base benefit** - Deliverable fuel (wood, coal, pellets, corn)
- **Add on \$26** - Add an additional \$26 to base benefit if Household has Tier 1 income.
- **Add on \$25** - Add an additional \$25 to base benefit if there is a child age 5 or under OR an adult over the age of 60 OR disabled individual in Household.

## **Benefit for Heat Included in Rent**

If Heat costs are included in Rent (NON SUBSIDIZED RENT ONLY), benefit amount is based on household income:

- \$35 benefit if income is Tier I
- \$30 benefit if income is Tier II
- If Heat is included in Rent, and Rent is subsidized, household is eligible for \$21.

[back to top »](#)

### **3. Emergency Benefit Heat and Utility Bill Assistance - opens January 2, 2018**

- Emergency benefits are for the *main* source of heat, and for *heat-related electric* (electric that is necessary to operate the furnace, thermostat, etc.).
- There must be a Shut-off Notice or Low Fuel Supply (oil, propane, wood, etc.).
- One Emergency "Heating" benefit, for main source of heat is available- If there is a shutoff notice or low fuel supply & Regular benefit was already received.
- One Emergency "Heat-Related" electricity benefit is available- If there is a Shutoff notice and electric is needed to run furnace or thermostat.

### **There is a Resource Test for Emergency HEAP:**

Household may have no more than \$2,000 (or \$3,000 for a household with a member age 60 or older) in available liquid resources (\$\$ in savings, checking, stocks, bonds, CDs, IRAs, 401{k}). Monthly living expenses in savings are not counted and are determined on a case-by-case basis. Countable (liquid) and Excluded Resources are listed below.

### **Emergency HEAP Benefit Amounts:**

- \$350- Natural Gas Heat
- \$490- Electric Heat – PSC and municipal electric companies
- \$675- Deliverable Fuel (i.e. oil, propane, kerosene)
- \$525- Other Fuel (coal, wood, wood products)
- \$140- Heat Related Electric – PSC and municipal electric companies

[back to top »](#)

### **4. Heating (Furnace) Equipment Repair and Replacement (HERR) - open**

- HERR may assist HEAP-eligible homeowners, who have minimal financial resources, with the cost of repair or replacement of essential heating equipment (furnace, boiler, etc.)
- To apply, homeowner or authorized representative must apply in person with all necessary documentation.
- **An authorized representative is permitted to apply on behalf of the homeowner, but must provide their ID and a statement signed by the homeowner.**
- Reasonable accommodations will be explored for home-bound applicants to assist with application requirements.
- Herr Documentation Requirements:
  1. Two (2) furnace estimates from participating HEAP contractors.

2. Visit the following site for a list of participating contractors:  
[http://www.heapoil.org/admin/reports/HEAP\\_ApplicantReport/ParticipatingDealers/dealerReportForOTDA.jsp?CountyID=34&fuelType=8](http://www.heapoil.org/admin/reports/HEAP_ApplicantReport/ParticipatingDealers/dealerReportForOTDA.jsp?CountyID=34&fuelType=8)
3. Participating contractors will provide free estimates to HEAP applicants.
4. Proof of homeownership- Deed to home (County Real Property website can be utilized to prove home ownership if client cannot locate Deed).
5. Proof of household resources: Current checking and/or savings account statements, proof of any stock, bonds, CDs, IRAs, etc.; One form of ID for all household members; Proof of income for all household members received within last 30 days.

Renters are not eligible for HERR. Landlords may not apply for HERR for rental properties. Homeowners must own and be residing in the property for the 12 months prior to the HERR application. The furnace must have been operable within 12 months prior to the HERR application.

### **5. Cooling Assistance - Closed until Spring 2018**

### **6. How to Apply for HEAP - effective November 13, 2017**

1. **If Service is OFF, or household is OUT of heating fuel:** Household member or authorized representative must report to one of the following HEAP locations for assistance: **478 Main St., Buffalo** (8 a.m. - 4 p.m.) - All Households receiving TA or SNAP, and heads of Household under 60 years of age, non-disabled; or **291 Pearl St., Buffalo** (8 a.m. - 4 p.m.) - heads of Household 60 or older, or under 60 and disabled (not receiving TA or SNAP).
2. **If Service is ON**, but household has a **current shutoff notice or low supply** (less than 1/4 tank of heating fuel): Household member or authorized representative may call the HEAP Hotline at **858-7644** and a representative will examine the situation and direct the application process accordingly. Client may or may not need to report.
3. **If Service is ON, with NO shutoff notice and NO low fuel supply:** Household may call the HEAP Application Request Line at **858-1969**, or request an application by clicking [Here](#). An application packet will be mailed and there is no need to report; Or, household may apply for Regular HEAP electronically by visiting: [www.MyBenefits.NY.gov](http://www.MyBenefits.NY.gov)

***An authorized representative may apply on behalf of individuals unable to appear at HEAP. The representative may have ID and a signed and dated note from the applicant.***

### **7. Documentation Requirements for Regular HEAP**

#### **If Household is receiving TA or SNAP:**

Many Active TA or SNAP households have Regular HEAP calculated and sent to heating supplier automatically (AutoPay). No application for Regular HEAP is required for these households. If AutoPay is not received, a HEAP application must be submitted with a current utility bill.

To check the status of an Auto Pay, call the HEAP Hotline at **858-7644**.

#### **If Household is not receiving TA or SNAP and received HEAP assistance last season:**

A completed and signed HEAP application and the following documentation is required:

- Proof of GROSS EARNED INCOME (wages) received with the last 30 days for all household members.
- If paid weekly, last 4 paystubs.
- If paid bi-weekly, last 2 paystubs.
- Proof of UNEARNED Income is **NOT** Required (Social Security, Pension, Unemployment, Workers Comp, Disability, etc.) If you moved or there are new members in your household, you must document those changes.

## **If Household is not receiving TA or SNAP and did not receive HEAP assistance last season (Nov. '17 - April '17):**

A completed and signed HEAP application and the following photocopied documentation is required:

1. Proof of Gross Earned Income (wages) received within the last 30 days for all household members; If paid weekly, last 4 paystubs; if paid bi-weekly, last 2 paystubs.
2. Proof of Unearned Income is **NOT** required (Social Security, Pension, Unemployment, Workers Comp, Disability, etc.)
3. If you moved or there are new members in your household, you must document those changes.
4. ID is **not required** from returning applicants.

If Household is **not receiving TA or SNAP** and **did not receive HEAP assistance** last season:

- A completed and signed HEAP application and the following documentation is required:
  1. Proof of gross income received received within the last 30 days for all household members.
  2. Wages: If paid weekly, last 4 paystubs.
  3. WagesL If paid bi-weekly, last 2 paystubs.
  4. Award letters: if applicable, for Social Security, Pension, Unemployment, Workers Comp, Disability, etc.
  5. Yearly statement of interest income received (savings, checking, CDs, money market account, etc.).
  6. Dividend proof (stocks, bonds securities, etc.).
  7. Social Security Numbers for all household members.
  8. One (1) form of ID for all household members (birth certificate OR Social Security card OR driver's license OR school ID, etc.)
  9. Proof of Residency (utility bill, mortgage proof or rent/lease information).
  10. Current utility bills.

[back to top »](#)

## **8. Documentation Requirements for Emergency HEAP**

If Household **received** a Regular HEAP benefit this season:

- Shutoff notice or statement of low fuel supply from company.
- Proof of all household liquid resources.
- One form of ID for any new household members (that were not listed on Regular HEAP application).

If Household **did not receive** a Regular benefit this season:

- For main source of heat, no Emergency benefit is available until Regular benefit is exhausted.
- Applicant may apply for Emergency for "heat-related" electric, and Regular benefit for main source of heat simultaneously, and must provide all documentation for Regular & Emergency HEAP.

[back to top »](#)

## **9. Subsidized Rent & HEAP Eligibility**

If household receives Government Rental Assistance (Section 8, Belmont, HUD, etc.):

- If Heat is included in rent- \$21 Benefit (paid to a utility account if one exists, or paid the SNAP or TA card).
- If Electric non-heat is included in rent- Not eligible for assistance with electric costs.
- If Household pays directly for heat:

- May apply for Regular and Emergency HEAP towards heating bill.
- If Household pays directly for Electric needed to run furnace and/or thermostat:
  - May apply for Emergency HEAP.

[back to top »](#)

## **10. How HEAP calculates wages**

HEAP calculates all wages using these formulas:

- Paid Weekly –  $((4 \times \text{Weekly gross})/4) \times 4.3333$
- Paid Bi-Weekly –  $((2 \times \text{bi-weekly gross})/2) \times 2.1666$
- Paid Bi-Monthly – (add 2 gross pay amounts- no other calculation)

[back to top »](#)

## **11. Countable and excluded resources**

Countable (these are counted for Emergency HEAP resource test):

- Cash.
- Checking and/or savings account balances.
- Stocks/bonds.
- Time deposit certificates.
- IRA accounts, including remaining amounts from a closed out IRA.
- Lump sums from sale of property or insurance settlements and balances from any other lump sum not specifically excluded.
- 401(k) and other retirement accounts.
- Income tax refunds (except EITC payments).
- Any other available funds not specifically excluded.

Excluded (these are not counted for Emergency HEAP resource test):

- Amounts designated for an allowable current monthly living expense such as food, shelter, employment-related expenses, etc.
- Money earmarked for payment of the current year's property and/or school taxes for the primary residence.
- One burial plot per household member.
- One written pre-arranged burial agreement with a cash value not exceeding \$1,500 per household member and interest on the burial account.
- Accounts, such as PASS accounts, designated by the Social Security Administration as exempt from SSI resource limits.
- Real and personal property.
- Equipment.
- Automobiles and other vehicles.
- Payments from reverse annuity mortgages.
- Loans (including college loans, personal loans, home equity loans).
- Credit cards or advances from credit cards.
- Individual Development Accounts (IDA).

## **12. Weatherization Assistance Referral, Home Performance with Energy Star, EmPower NY, Lifeline - open**

### **Weatherization Assistance (WAP):**

HEAP Eligible Households qualify for WAP.

WAP is NO-COST home weatherization services and energy conservation improvements including attic and wall insulation, weather stripping, caulking, testing of furnace, other minor energy conserving home repairs.

If Head of Household is 60 or older:

- Contact Erie County Senior Services Information and Assistance: **858-8526**.

If Head of Household is under 60:

- Contact the HEAP office under 60 WAP Referral Program: **858-2634**.

Renters may apply for Weatherization assistance, though Landlord may be asked to contribute 25 percent towards costs, unless Landlord is also HEAP-eligible.

### **Home Performance with Energy Star - People United for Sustainable Housing (PUSH)**

- Low-interest loan/grant through NYS, for Energy Related home improvements, may be up to 50 percent subsidized with a grant for eligible households. Loan can be paid "on bill" (equaling cost saved each month on energy bills based on installed measures).
- Contact 884-0356 for details.

### **EmPower NY:**

No-cost assistance for HEAP-eligible households, funded through the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA). Eligibility is based, in part, on gas and/or electric usage. Not all applicants will qualify for assistance.

Services may include:

- Replacement of Refrigerators that are 10 or more years old.
- Installation of high-efficiency lighting and insulation.
- Tips on how to save energy.

Call Senior Services Intake & Assessment at 858-8526 for an application or for more information.

### **Lifeline Program: Low-cost telephone service:**

- HEAP-eligible households can receive basic service for as low as \$1.00 per month, plus per-call charges and taxes.
- Clients should complete a Lifeline application and mail it to phone company with a copy of your HEAP award letter.
- Applicants can apply, or re-certify Lifeline discount using last year's HEAP eligibility notice, if current season notice is not yet received.
- Contact telephone service provider for more information.

### **13. Other assistance if HEAP benefits are exhausted - open**

If HEAP or HERR benefits are exhausted or closed for the season, these programs may be available to assist:

#### **Emergency Aid for Families through Erie County (EAF) & Emergency Aid for Adults (EAA) - 478 Main Street, First Floor, Buffalo.**

- **EAF** - Assistance for all ages, 0 percent Loan-based program may assist with most recent 4 months' bills.
- **EAA** - Assistance for recipients of SSI or SSD. Grant/Loan program may pay recent and/or current bills.
  1. Must have a current shutoff notice or be low on fuel, and exhausted all HEAP benefits for season (or HEAP is closed for season).
  2. Applicants whose service has been off for an extended period are not eligible.
  3. Interview Requirements:
    - All individuals in the household ages 18 and older must be present at interview.
    - Picture ID for anyone in household ages 18 and older, and ID for anyone in household under 18.
    - Proof of Rent expense or if homeowner (deed to home).
    - Current Gas, Electric, Phone bills.
    - Proof of all income of the entire household for last 8 weeks (including wages, child support, SS, SSI, pension, rental income, etc.).
    - Letter from HEAP stating that benefits are exhausted/denied.
    - For National Fuel assistance, applicants must attain a financial statement from National Fuel before applying for EAF or EAA (go to National Fuel Office at 409 Main St., Buffalo).
    - For National Grid or NYSEG assistance, contact electric company and tell them you are applying for EAF and request financial statement, and they may send it directly to you or EAF worker, depending on the situation.

#### **National Fuel "Neighbor for Neighbor" heating bill assistance (all heat source types):**

1. Salvation Army: 883-9800, ext. 230 (Open 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., call for appointment) OR:
2. Catholic Charities: 856-4494 or 218-1400 (Open 8:45 a.m. to 4:45 p.m.).

- Must be 55 years or age or older, OR disabled, OR have a serious medical condition, OR receiving Unemployment Benefits.
- Applicants must have made a significant effort during the course of the year to make utility payments, other than those provided by HEAP, etc. The suggested baseline is 4 payments or more of \$25 or more in 12 months.
- Do not need a shutoff notice.
- Need HEAP exhausted or HEAP denial proof.

#### **Erie County Emergency Assistance to request placement in a temporary shelter:**

Report to Erie County Emergency Housing Unit, 158 Pearl Street, Buffalo, Monday-Friday, between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. **OR** Call 2-1-1 Western New York or 1-888-696-9211 after 4 p.m., or during the weekend.