



Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) 101

HEAP, also called LIHEAP, helps Mainers with low and moderate incomes pay for their heating costs.

What is HEAP?

HEAP benefits can help pay for heating fuel, including firewood, oil, electricity and gas. The amount of benefits eligible households receive depends on household size, income, heating costs, and other factors. Benefits are typically paid to your heating and electric company directly. You can apply for this benefit at your [local Community Action Program \(CAP\) agency](#).

HEAP is also connected to food assistance (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP) through what is called the “heat and eat connection.” If you apply for HEAP and receive a HEAP benefit, it will help ensure that you’re getting the most SNAP benefits that you are eligible for and may even make you eligible for SNAP benefits.

Am I eligible for HEAP?

You are financially eligible for HEAP if your income is at or below the amount in [this chart for your family size](#) on MaineHousing’s website. Some paid, documented medical expenses may be deducted from your income when determining eligibility for HEAP. This means that even if your income is over the limits below, but you have medical expenses, you may be eligible and should apply.

NEW! If you receive **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)**, you are automatically income eligible for HEAP. You will also automatically get the highest HEAP benefit for your family size. This means you are eligible for HEAP by just showing proof that you get TANF to your CAP agency. You won’t have to provide any other income verification (like a pay stub, or verification of unearned income such as SSI, SSDI, child support, veterans benefits, etc.) to show you are income eligible for HEAP and get the highest benefit for your family.

If you are receiving federally-funded **SNAP**, you are also automatically financially eligible for HEAP. Again, all you need to do is show proof that you get SNAP to your CAP agency when you apply for HEAP. **BUT, if your monthly income is at or below the poverty level for your family size (see chart [here](#)), you may want to ask your CAP agency to use your actual income to calculate the amount of your benefits.**

Using your actual income may give you a higher HEAP benefit. If your income is over the poverty level just showing that you get SNAP will get you the highest benefit available to you.

NOTE: if you get both TANF and SNAP, you don't need to show your actual income to get the highest HEAP benefit. You can just use proof that you receive TANF and you will get the highest benefit available for your family.

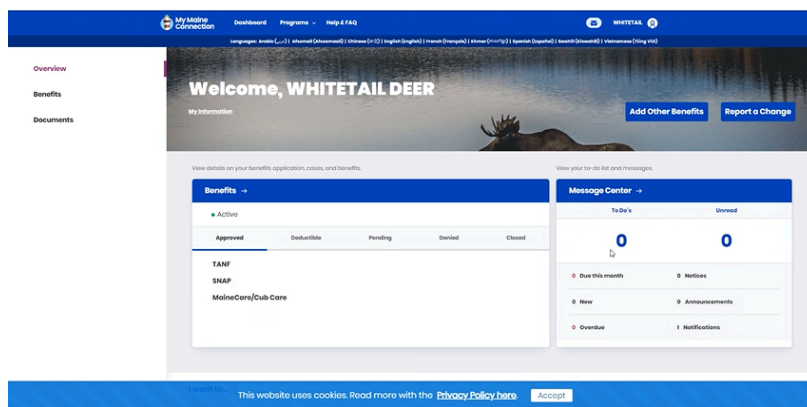
Am I eligible for HEAP if I am an immigrant?

HEAP is a federally funded program. You are eligible if you are a legal permanent resident, a refugee, an asylee, if you are paroled into the US for at least one year, if your deportation order has been withheld or if you have been granted conditional entry. You are not eligible if you are an asylum seeker or if your status is undocumented. Mixed status households can get HEAP assistance for eligible household members. Call Maine Equal Justice at (207) 888-9788 if you have questions.

How can I use “My Maine Connection” to prove I get TANF or SNAP for HEAP eligibility purposes?

To show you're receiving SNAP/TANF when you go to your HEAP appointment, bring the most recent “notice of decision” letter that DHHS sent you in the mail to show you are receiving TANF or SNAP benefits.

If you don't have a paper copy of that letter, you can log into [My Maine Connection](#) (DHHS' online benefits system) to get proof that you are receiving TANF or SNAP. After you sign in, from the home page you can click “overview” to see your benefits, including which benefits you are approved for. Take a picture of this screen, and show this information to your HEAP worker who will use it to help process your HEAP application.



IMPORTANT NOTE: If you are receiving SNAP (but not TANF) and your income is at or below the poverty level, you may want to use your actual income (not just show that you receive SNAP), to get a higher HEAP benefit.

You can do this by showing your HEAP worker your DHHS “Case Summary” which includes all of your gross income. You may have a paper copy of your Case Summary. If you do not, and if you have signed up with DHHS to get electronic benefit notices, you can access your case summary in My Maine Connection. To do this, sign in to My Maine Connection. From your dashboard, go to your messages in the “message center,” and look for your case summary notice. You can take a picture of this screen to verify your income for HEAP.

What if I heat with something other than oil?

In addition to oil, HEAP can also cover costs for kerosene, coal, pellets, wood, corn, biobricks, LP gas (liquified petroleum gas), or electricity.

What if I’m a renter and my heat is included in my rent?

If your heat is included in your rent, you can still apply for HEAP because you’re still paying for heat in your rent. Applying for HEAP helps make sure you get all the benefits you’re entitled to, including getting a SNAP benefit or a higher SNAP benefit, and help with other utility bills.

How do I sign up for HEAP?

You can apply at your [local CAP agency](#). The CAP agencies started taking applications for this year’s HEAP benefits on July 18, 2022 and will take applications for the year’s program through July 17, 2023. HEAP benefits issued during this program year can be used through April 30, 2024.

When should I apply for HEAP?

Households are encouraged to apply for HEAP as early as possible because the application process can take a number of weeks. Applying early will not negatively impact your benefit amount. There is no downside in applying as early as possible!

There’s a long wait to get an appointment. What if I need heating help right now?

The Energy Crisis Assistance Program (ECIP) is available if you are facing a heating emergency between November 1 and April 30. If you have a heating emergency, call your [local CAP agency](#) and tell them that you need emergency heating assistance. Once you are found eligible, you should get help within 48 hours. You may be eligible to get emergency heating assistance if:

- Your 275 gallon oil tank is at or below ¼ full;
- Your propane tank reads ¼ or less;
- You have a 7 day supply or less of other heating fuel; OR
- You have an electrical disconnect notice and can't negotiate a reasonable payment plan to keep your electricity on and your primary heating system requires electricity to operate.

Are there any other utility benefits I might be eligible for?

If you are eligible for HEAP, you may be eligible for other benefits to help make ends meet. If you are interested in any of these other benefits, contact your CAP agency or tell your HEAP worker that you would like to apply for these programs.

- **Low Income Assistance Program (LIAP)** – If you receive residential electric service from an electric utility, like CMP or Versant, and you are not living in government-subsidized housing, you may be eligible for help paying your electric bills through your electric utility's [Low Income Assistance Program \(LIAP\)](#). If you qualify, your bill will be reduced based on your income and electricity usage. Ask your CAP agency to help you apply, or contact your electricity provider directly and ask about the LIAP program.
- **Weatherization** – If your home is not as energy efficient as it could be, you may qualify for home weatherization improvements through the [Weatherization Program](#). You can apply for weatherization benefits at your local CAP agency.
- **Central Heating Improvement programs** – If your heating system is in need of repair or replacement, you may qualify for the [Central Heating Improvement Program \(CHIP\)](#). You can apply for this help at your local CAP agency.
- **Arrearage Management Program (AMP)** – If you are behind on your electric bill (what's known as being "in arrears"), and you meet eligibility criteria, the Arrearage Management Program (AMP) can help you reduce what you owe. If you are thinking about applying for the AMP program, we would recommend that you read the [Pine Tree Legal Assistance's guide to AMP](#) or call Maine Equal Justice.
 - If you are a CMP customer you can [apply for the AMP online](#).
 - If you are a Versant customer can [apply for the AMP online](#).