



Calhoun County Senior Services

Minimum Service Standard

SERVICE NAME: HOME HEATING ASSISTANCE

DEFINITION: The home heating assistance program is designed to help seniors with their heating utility costs. It is targeted to seniors who find it difficult to pay for their home heating utility bills and who are in danger of having their heat source shut off by the utility company or other provider.

UNIT OF SERVICE: One unit equals one household receiving financial assistance to pay heating utility.

INCOME REQUIREMENT: Yes. Recipients must be at or below 200% of the poverty level as published in the most recent Federal Register.

DESIRED OUTCOME: Seniors will maintain heating service in their homes allowing them to remain living independently and in a healthy environment.

MINIMUM SERVICE STANDARD:

A. Client Eligibility – In addition to the recipient eligibility criteria contained in the “ALL SERVICES” standard, each program shall have written eligibility criteria which will include at a minimum:

1. The service provider shall determine if a client is covered by another source of home heating assistance funds and utilize those funds before accessing senior millage funds.
2. The participant must be the head of household or spouse of head of household to receive assistance.
3. The participant must have a heating utility vendor bill that is past due.
4. The maximum amount of assistance allowed per household is \$1,000 per calendar year. This amount may be accessed on more than one occasion throughout the year and is not intended as one time assistance only but as a cumulative amount allowable over a calendar year.
5. Participants may receive assistance each year after requalifying.
6. The service provider will not require that a Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) denial of home heating assistance be required prior to an otherwise eligible client receiving assistance through this program.

B. Service Delivery

1. Each program must inform participants about the Michigan Home Heating Tax Credit and be able to assist individuals as necessary to make application for this credit.
2. Funds may be used to pay the bills of eligible participants within the limits as well as for reasonable administrative costs to run the program.
3. Assistance must be available for past due bills for all types of heating systems including natural gas, electric, propane, fuel oil, wood, and alternative fuels.



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4. Payments for a new supply of a deliverable fuel and any delivery fee may be covered up to the maximum allowable assistance per year.
5. Payments must be made directly to the heating utility vendor on behalf of the client.

C. Intake and Assessment – A uniform intake procedure must be defined and followed by the service provider and records including the following minimum information must be maintained:

1. Name, address and telephone number
2. Income verification documentation
3. Copy of driver's license or Michigan I.D. for all adult household members
4. Copy of heating utility vendor bill(s) being paid
5. Address on the participant's ID must match the address on the utility bill.

D. Coordination and Targeting of Services

1. Assistance to clients in delaying heating utility shut-offs on an emergency basis must be provided. This would involve establishing relationships with local heating vendors to work out the logistics of accomplishing such emergency delays when a payment is forthcoming on behalf of the client.
2. All areas of Calhoun County must be served with special emphasis on those geographic areas with most need as in the eastern and rural portions of the County.
3. Education of participants in how to prevent high heating bills will be offered and mandatory participation may be required, as appropriate, to other programs that provide services that may lead to more fuel efficiency in the home, such as any weatherization program, home repair programs, etc.
4. Providers must maintain a strong link to the senior transportation program and assist clients in obtaining such transportation to allow them to apply for the home heating assistance program.
5. Program publicity and outreach are required to reach the population most in need of this service.