2900 Fuel Program (Continued)

G. Eligibility Calculation

Everyone who shares a heat source must be included in the fuel household, and their income and resources must be counted.

Exception: If an elderly or disabled applicant has a live-in caretaker who provides homemaker or personal services that the applicant cannot or should not perform, count the caretaker as a household member but do not count the caretaker's income or resources. Do count any room or meals money the caretaker pays to the elderly or disabled person as unearned income. (See 2903.2, 2904.3, and P-2900 C2.)

When ACCESS has income, resource, or dependent care expense information on members who are active in any program in the applicant's household, ACCESS uses that information in the fuel budget (2904).

Use the PATH 203F, Fuel Program Worksheet, to do a manual budget.

Follow these steps to calculate eligibility:

Step 1: Determine household composition (2901).

Step 2: Determine gross earned income of all members of the fuel household for the 30 days prior to the date of application (2904). For exclusions see 2904.3.

When ongoing income is expected to be different from income in the 30 days prior to the date of application because income is ending or beginning, use a reasonable estimate based on the best available information.

For self-employment income when a tax return has been filed, determine monthly income as follows, according to the tax forms used:

a. Schedule C-EZ: line 3 divided by 12.

b. Schedule C: line 31 plus line 12 plus line 13 plus Schedule D, line 18, if appropriate. Divide the total by 12.

c. Schedule E: line 3 or 4 minus line 19, plus Schedule D, line 18, if appropriate. Divide the result by 12.

2900 Fuel Program

G. Eligibility Calculation (Continued)

d. Schedule F: line 11 plus line 16 minus line 35, plus Schedule D, line 18, if appropriate. Divide the result by 12.

Enter income of each individual in FUEL/C.

Step 3: Deduct 20 percent as an employment expense.

Step 4: Determine unearned income of all members of the fuel household. For exclusions, see 2904.3.

Step 5: Subtract dependent care expenses up to the maximum allowed (2904.3).

Step 6: Subtract $150 for each member who is elderly (60 or over) or disabled (2904.3).

Step 7: Subtract alimony or child support paid to a non household member (2904.3).

Step 8: Drop cents to obtain the net income figure.

Step 9: Compare the net income and household size to the allowable income maximums (P-2905A). Deny if over income; otherwise, continue to Step 10.

Step 10: Using the table at P-2905 B, determine the percentage of poverty level for a household of this size and net income.

Step 11: Heating costs: locate the household's annual heating cost in the Fuel Consumption Proxy Tables at 2906.4. If the household heats with coal, use the figures for wood heat. If the type of housing is "other", choose multi-family, single-family, or mobile home, depending on the applicant's description of the home.

Step 12: If the family lives in subsidized housing, subtract the annual heating subsidy from the table at P-2905 C.

Deny if the result is zero or less.

Step 13: Subtract the minimum heating fuel cost from Table II in 2906.3 based on the household's percentage of poverty level (see step 10 above).

If zero or less, deny. If greater than zero, continue to step 14.

2900 Fuel Program

G. Eligibility Calculation (Continued)

Step 14: Find the heating cost percentage for the household's percentage of poverty level (Table III in 2906.3) and multiply by the annual heating cost (step 11) or by the heating cost minus the heating subsidy, if appropriate (step 12).

Step 15: Find the maximum benefit amount in Table IV in 2906.3 and compare to the result in step 14.

If the result in step 14 is greater than the maximum benefit amount, use the maximum benefit amount.

If the result in step 14 is less than the maximum benefit amount, use the result in step 14.

Drop cents.

Step 16: Multiply by the payment rate (P-2905 E). Drop cents.

Step 17: Multiply by 100 percent for applications submitted between July 15 and August 31.

Multiply by 100 percent for applications submitted between September 1 and November 30 to be paid in January.

Multiply by 80 percent for applications submitted between December 1 and December 31 to be paid in February.

Multiply by 60 percent for applications submitted between January 1 and January 31 to be paid in early March.

Multiply by 40 percent for applications submitted between February 1 and the last day of February to be paid in late March.

Note: "Submitted" means received and date-stamped by a PATH district office or the Office of Home Heating Fuel Assistance, or date postmarked, if mailed.

Exception: If the applicant heats primarily with wood and applies by August 31, follow the calculations above and issue a fuel benefit payment of 100% by September 30.

2900 Fuel Program

G. Eligibility Calculation (Continued)

Heated Renters: For applicants who make undesignated payments for their home heat in the form of rent, and are not receiving a rent subsidy, follow step 17 above based on the date of the application. Multiply the annual benefit amount by 30 percent to determine the amount of the check to be issued directly to the applicant (not less than $50, 2906 b.)

Subsidized/ Heat Included: For applicants who make undesignated payments for their home heat in the form of rent and do receive a rent subsidy, an annual benefit of $5.00 is issued by check directly to the applicant (2906 c.).

Roomers: For applicants who pay reasonable room rent for exclusive use of a room, heat included, the standard benefit of $50 is issued (2906 d.).

H. Changes (2908)

1. No Effect on Eligibility or Benefits

The household is not required to report any changes in circumstances. Any changes reported for other programs will not affect eligibility or the benefit level once the household's eligibility and benefit amount have been approved and the benefit has been issued.

If the household receives any other benefits from the department and a worker makes changes to the STAT panels for those other programs before the payment rate is set and the benefit has been issued, a new version of FUEL/ELIG may be created based on this new information.

If the household fails or refuses to provide verification of circumstances for other programs and those other programs are denied or closed, eligibility for the fuel program will not be affected. Once a household has been granted fuel assistance, eligibility continues without change, except as stated in #2 below.

2. Death or Change in Resident Status

If all eligible members of the household are deceased or have left the state and this information has been entered on ACCESS before the benefit run, that benefit will not be

issued.

2900 Fuel Program (Continued)

I. June 30 through July 15

All fuel cases will be closed effective June 30. Households who want benefits from the fuel program must apply between July 15 and the last day of February.

J. Certified Fuel or Energy Suppliers

Names of fuel suppliers who have a signed PATH 148, Fuel Supplier Certification Agreement, on file with OHHFA are available in the ACCESS vendor file (VEND/D). PATH 148s are mailed to all fuel and energy suppliers, identified as serving customers in Vermont, every three years. If an applicant names a fuel or energy supplier who is not certified, the supplier will be contacted and invited to sign the PATH 148.

The certification agreement is valid for three years. At the end of that time, a supplier will be sent a new certification agreement to sign.

If an applicant's supplier does not sign the PATH 148, the applicant may request assistance in finding a certified supplier by calling the toll-free OHHFA number: 1-800-479-6151.

Fuel suppliers refused certification shall be advised in writing. Examples of fuel suppliers who would be refused certification include, but are not limited to: a fuel supplier who is a member of an applicant's household or who is the applicant's landlord and does not have a separate fuel supply business serving the applicant and other customers.

K. Expedited Fuel Application Procedures

1. Expedited Application Period

OHHFA accepts faxed requests for expedited fuel benefits from Community Action crisis fuel workers the last Monday in November through the last day of February from Monday through Friday 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Requests will not be accepted after 3:00 p.m., weekends, or on official state holidays.

2900 Fuel Program

K. Expedited Seasonal Fuel Application Procedures (Continued)

2. Eligibility Determination and Data Entry

The OHHFA **only** accepts faxed requests to expedite processing and payment of fuel benefits from Community Action Agencies, and **only** for primary heating fuel.

The Community Action Program (CAP) crisis or outreach worker is required to first determine if the applicant is eligible for crisis fuel assistance. The CAP worker then sends a faxed request (with all supporting documentation) to OHHFA for expedited, using the form supplied by OHHFA.

- If a new fuel application accompanies the faxed request, it must be entered into ACCESS using APPL/C or E. Eligibility is processed
- If the fuel application is currently pending, it is pulled from pending files (date order) and eligibility is processed.
- If the application is active (eligible for a benefit but not yet paid), it is pulled from central filing and reviewed for ongoing eligibility and/or reported changes.
- If the application has been denied during the current season, the crisis fuel worker will fax a **newly completed application** with the request for expedited. Fuel workers will not reprocess an application that has been denied – a new application must be submitted. There are no exceptions.

a. Granted Expedited

If the applicant is eligible for fuel assistance, the worker approves eligibility in ACCESS and sets the "Expedited?" flag on the Eligibility Screen to "Y". ACCESS generates an electronic funds transfer transaction and prints a mock payment warrant as verification that the approval was accepted.

The worker completes a PATH 220EX, Notice of Expedited Seasonal Fuel Assistance Benefit, and faxes it to the CAP worker who initiated the request.

The worker enters the expedited request in ACCESS under APPL/C (crisis fuel ?APPL DATE) and the eligibility determination data in ACCESS under ELIG/C/EF. Required data fields must all be completed before the data entry may be approved (Command: APP).

The expedited fax request, application, supporting documentation, original PATH 220EX, and mock payment warrant are presented to the Family Services Supervisor for payment issuance.

2900 Fuel Program

K. Expedited Seasonal Fuel Application Procedures

2. Eligibility Determination and Data Entry (Continued)

b. Denied Expedited

If the applicant is not eligible for fuel assistance, the worker will approve the denial immediately. ACCESS will generate a denial notice to be sent directly to the applicant by mail.

If incomplete or conflicting information exists and requires verification, the request for expedited will be denied. Any questionable information, pursuant to 2905, requires verification. The application will, however, remain pending while verification is sought.

When eligibility for expedited benefits is denied, the worker will complete the Notice of Denial for Expedited Fuel Assistance form and fax it to the CAP worker.

The worker enters the expedited request in ACCESS under APPL/C (crisis fuel ?APPL DATE) and the eligibility determination data in ACCESS under ELIG/C/EF. Required data fields must all be completed before the data entry may be approved (Command: APP).

The expedited fax request and Notice of Denial for Expedited Seasonal Fuel Assistance form are presented to the Family Services Supervisor for statistical recording purposes.

3. Payment of Benefit

The Family Services Supervisor is responsible for issuing expedited benefits to the fuel supplier for primary heating fuel or energy within ten business days of the request.

One work day each week, by 2:00 pm, the Supervisor sends an email to SCHED requesting Fuel Job PAS06FVD be run. A copy of this email is sent to EBT Unit as a courtesy. A payment warrant is system generated overnight and delivered to PATH's Administrative Services Accounting Division the following morning. After banking transactions have been confirmed by Administrative Accounting, the individual payment warrants for each transaction go to the OHHFA for dissemination to the fuel suppliers by mail. Each warrant is accompanied by a cover letter to the fuel supplier prepared and signed by the Supervisor.

Funds are deposited in the bank accounts of the fuel suppliers within three business days of the electronic funds transfer date.