



## Oregon LIHEAP “Heat and Eat” Program

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In an effort to enhance participation and benefits for Food Stamp recipients, starting in FFY 2009, an annual heating assistance benefit of \$1.00 will be available for income eligible households that make undesignated payments for heat in the form of rent. This one-time payment will increase the amount of food stamps a household can receive during the program year.

The intent of this pilot program is to generate additional financial resources for vulnerable households, increasing the likelihood that low-income Oregonians will maintain affordable housing, and sustain heat.

### Forecasted Outcomes

It is projected that some households could see up to an additional \$100 per month, or \$1200 per year in food stamp benefits as a result of the \$1 Heat and Eat program. The Oregon Department of Human Services estimates that \$55,000 of LIHEAP Heat and Eat funding will bring approximately \$2.77 Million new food stamp dollars into the State of Oregon, per program year.

### How Will the Heat and Eat Benefits Work?

*From now through the 2009-11 Biennium, DHS estimates that 55,000 households per year will be eligible for a Heat and Eat benefit. Eligibility criteria for the Heat and Eat program are as follows:*

- Households must be at or below 60% of state median income
- Households must have home energy need (e.g. *undesignated payments for heat in the form of rent*)
- Households must not be currently receiving the standard food stamp utility allowance

Households who are deemed eligible for the Heat and Eat Benefit need not file a separate application. On March 1<sup>st</sup>--the one-time, \$1 benefit will be applied directly to all eligible food stamp accounts. Each month thereafter, DHS will apply the benefit to *new* food stamp households deemed eligible for the Heat and Eat benefit.

Households will be informed of the Heat and Eat benefit via mailing, and the \$1 benefit will appear in a separate cash account on the Oregon Trail (EBT) card. Households will be able to access this \$1 at any ATM or grocery store with a point of sale device for cash.

Clients receiving a \$1 benefit from DHS would still be eligible (and encouraged) to receive traditional LIHEAP benefits through their local Community Action agencies.

### Accountability

At the end of the program year--DHS will conduct a "data run" which will provide OHCS with basic demographic information for clients receiving the \$1 benefit. This information is necessary to meet Federal LIHEAP Statutory requirements, however, is not outside the data currently collected from Food Stamp households.

Additionally, OHCS will collect data from ODHS regarding program outcomes--specifically, the average increase in food stamp benefits per household, as well as the statewide increase in food stamp benefits as a result of the Heat and Eat program.

**For more information, please contact Melissa Torgerson, Oregon LIHEAP Director at 503-986-2094 or [melissa.torgerson@state.or.us](mailto:melissa.torgerson@state.or.us)**