

## Topics in this issue

**Policies and Procedures:** A Spark: FFY2016 EAP extended to July 1 and Crisis maximum increased; Commerce EAP informed the following stakeholders about EAP changes; How to handle additional Assurance 16 funds; Energy Vendor outreach

**Notices:** None

## Policies & Procedures

The following *A Spark* was emailed to EAP Service Providers on Thursday, April 21, 2016.



### FFY2016 EAP extended to July 1 and Crisis maximum increased

Given that sufficient funds are available, EAP has the opportunity to implement program changes to serve more households and serve households more. These changes include extending the application deadline to July 1, 2016 and increase the maximum Crisis benefit from \$500 to \$1,000. **These changes are effective immediately.** A memo was sent today to Executive Directors from Deputy Commissioner Bill Grant announcing these changes. Following are details and guidance around these changes:

#### Application extension to July 1, 2016

The following **key dates** apply to this extension:

- Applications are accepted until Friday, July 1, 2016.
- All benefits are available to households with applications logged on or before Friday, July 1, 2016.
- Last day to determine eligibility and create Primary Heat benefit is Friday, July 15, 2016.
- Last day to create a Crisis or ERR event is Friday, July 15, 2016.

#### Maximum Crisis increase to \$1,000

- This increase applies to all Crisis reasons
- Note that the Standard Delivery Amount remains \$500.
- For self-supplied biofuel (e.g. wood), the household will be limited to \$500 per Crisis event. The maximum of \$1,000 overall is available to self-supplied biofuel households for other fuel types or future bio-fuel emergencies.
- The number of allowable Crisis events is increased to 10.
- In addition to Service Providers' outreach, Commerce will send letters to households that have already received most or all of their \$500 Crisis benefit to notify them that additional Crisis funds are available. EAP Coordinators involved with the policy-making process are helping develop the letter for clarity and effectiveness and the scope of this mailing. Commerce will get the letter out as soon as possible and will notify Service Providers before the letter is mailed.

#### Service Provider outreach

To help get the word out about these changes, Service Providers are asked to do the following:

- Communicate with energy vendors about these changes. Commerce is also communicating with energy vendors, but as Service Providers interact with them on a regular basis they should provide these updates.
- **Update local EAP applications and dates on websites.** This includes changing the application deadline in several places and the three-month eligibility table. The attached .pdf highlights where changes are needed on pages 2,

4 & 6. Also ensure that deadlines listed on websites are updated to July 1. These changes are also being made on the Commerce website.

- **Consider outreach to pre-logged households.** Some Service Providers report this activity is most effective if an application is included along with a letter.

### Additional Administrative funding

These program changes will increase the work load of your staff. To assist with that we are allocating about \$800,000 in administrative funds and about \$1.2M in Assurance 16 for outreach, advocacy and referral activities. These funds include the regular allocation and additional funds for administration and Assurance 16 activities. The administrative funds are intended to assure that you have the staffing and other resources to process applications through this one-month extension and to complete program activities through September 30, 2016. Service Providers will be receiving their *Notice of Funds Available* as soon as possible.

Challenges can arise when making changes in the middle of the program year. So we thank you in advance for your patience and assistance in overcoming these challenges. Thank you also for your hard work to help additional households.

### Commerce EAP informed the following stakeholders about EAP changes:

- Public Utilities Commission and MN Department of Human Services – housing & homelessness prevention, SNAP outreach grantees
- MN Department of Health - Women, Infants & Children Program (WIC)
- MN Department of Education – ECFE
- Native American organizations via the Office of Economic Opportunity
- MN Department of Veterans Services – LinkVet Support

### How to handle additional Assurance 16 funds Available Assurance 16 Funds

The following table shows the current A16 funds available to each Service Provider and the amount that can be allocated by funding category. The table shows the Total A16 Allocation, the amount allocated for Outreach & Responsive ESS, the amount actually allocated for Proactive ESS, and the maximum that may be budgeted for Outreach.

**Note that because EAP is extending the program application deadline to July 1, 2016, the maximum amount allowed for Outreach is being increased to 60% of each Service Provider's actual total A16 allocation.**

Service Providers should use this table to work with their fiscal staff to enter the budgeted amounts for Outreach and Responsive ESS in eHEAT. If you have any questions, please contact the EAP A16 Coordinator at 651-539-1812 or [Michael.Schmitz@state.mn.us](mailto:Michael.Schmitz@state.mn.us).

| SP ID | SP NAME                                  | Proactive ESS Amount | Outreach/R esponsive ESS | Outreach Max | Total A16 Allocation |
|-------|--|----------------------|--------------------------|--------------|----------------------|
| 1     | Northwest Community Action               | \$0                  | \$48,782                 | \$29,269     | \$48,782             |
| 2     | Tri-Valley Opportunity Council, Inc.     | \$9,258              | \$55,516                 | \$38,864     | \$64,774             |
| 3     | Inter-County Community Council           | \$13,114             | \$51,790                 | \$38,942     | \$64,904             |
| 4     | Bi-County Community Action Program, Inc. | \$8,179              | \$132,903                | \$84,649     | \$141,082            |
| 5     | KOOTASCA Community Action, Inc.          | \$33,400             | \$117,124                | \$90,314     | \$150,524            |
| 6     | Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency    | \$86,916             | \$299,652                | \$231,940    | \$386,568            |
| 7     | Lakes and Pines C.A.C. Inc.              | \$39,275             | \$287,778                | \$196,231    | \$327,053            |
| 10    | Mahube-Otwa Community Council, Inc.      | \$55,492             | \$243,854                | \$179,607    | \$299,346            |

| SP ID | SP NAME   | Proactive ESS Amount | Outreach/R esponsive ESS | Outreach Max       | Total A16 Allocation |
|-------|---|----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| 12    | West Central Minnesota Communities Action, Inc. | \$37,243             | \$186,612                | \$134,313          | \$223,855            |
| 13    | Tri-County Action Program, Inc.                 | \$61,351             | \$242,665                | \$182,409          | \$304,016            |
| 15    | Anoka County Community Action Program           | \$0                  | \$165,244                | \$99,146           | \$165,244            |
| 16    | Community Action-Ramsey & Washington Co.        | \$135,189            | \$744,836                | \$528,015          | \$880,025            |
| 18    | Scott-Carver-Dakota CAP Agency                  | \$0                  | \$259,712                | \$155,827          | \$259,712            |
| 19    | Heartland Community Action Agency, Inc.         | \$17,052             | \$100,332                | \$70,430           | \$117,384            |
| 20    | Prairie Five Community Action Council, Inc.     | \$0                  | \$68,377                 | \$41,026           | \$68,377             |
| 21    | Western Community Action, Inc.                  | \$17,410             | \$81,628                 | \$59,422           | \$99,038             |
| 22    | Southwestern MN Opportunity Council, Inc.       | \$10,471             | \$54,990                 | \$39,276           | \$65,461             |
| 24    | Minnesota Valley Action Council Inc.            | \$39,553             | \$232,045                | \$162,958          | \$271,598            |
| 25    | Three Rivers Community Action, Inc.             | \$47,023             | \$185,698                | \$139,632          | \$232,721            |
| 26    | Semcac  | \$0                  | \$210,403                | \$126,241          | \$210,403            |
| 30    | Bois Forte Reservation                          | \$0                  | \$5,751                  | \$3,450            | \$5,751              |
| 31    | Fond Du Lac Reservation                         | \$2,011              | \$19,081                 | \$12,655           | \$21,092             |
| 33    | Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe                       | \$0                  | \$45,318                 | \$27,190           | \$45,318             |
| 39    | Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians, CAP          | \$0                  | \$55,265                 | \$33,159           | \$55,265             |
| 41    | White Earth Reservation Energy Assistance       | \$0                  | \$40,653                 | \$24,391           | \$40,653             |
| 44    | Wright County Community Action, Inc.            | \$0                  | \$80,210                 | \$48,126           | \$80,210             |
| 52    | Clearwater County DHS                           | \$0                  | \$21,378                 | \$12,826           | \$21,378             |
| 53    | Lutheran Social Service of MN (Brainerd)        | \$27,800             | \$109,786                | \$82,551           | \$137,586            |
| 61    | Renville County Energy Assistance Program       | \$3,971              | \$19,996                 | \$14,380           | \$23,967             |
| 64    | Todd County Social Services                     | \$0                  | \$47,993                 | \$28,795           | \$47,993             |
| 65    | Community Action for Suburban Hennepin County   | \$0                  | \$799,815                | \$479,889          | \$799,815            |
|       | <b>Total</b>                                    | <b>\$644,708</b>     | <b>\$5,015,187</b>       | <b>\$3,395,937</b> | <b>\$5,659,895</b>   |

## Energy Vendor outreach

We have asked the vendors to help get the word out about the program changes

- Meeting with large connected vendors. Advised them of the spend-down plan and changes to this program year. Encouraged outreach - outbound call campaign, training front line staff, targeted mailings, etc.
- Minnesota Propane Gas Association. Conference call with the association and many of its largest vendors. Explained program changes and encourage outreach to use increase in crisis to help low or empty tanks get filled so households are prepared for next heating season. Provided newsletter text that the Association will send out to its members.
- Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association. Advised MMUA of program changes and sent information that will be distributed to their members via email/twitter/ website etc.