Vol. 2027, No. 1 – October 6, 2026

COMMERCE DEPARTMENT

The Energizer

Topics in this issue of *The Energizer*

Policies & Procedures:

- QR codes on printed applications are working
- FFY26 A16 report is due October 15
- FFY27 application and eHEAT mismatch for annuity income
- *Final Closeout Package* is due October 31 – submit early if possible
- Admin/A16/Outreach start-up funds
- *FFY27 Reports & Submissions*
- Blank application signature date and energy vendors
- OMB Uniform Grant Guidance for Federal Funds training
- Key dates

Notices:

- New member of Commerce EAP team
- EAP in the news
- PUC news release – *October 1 marks start of Minnesota's winter utility shut-off protections*
- Message to energy vendors & mechanical contractors – Safely interacting with Safe at Home households
- A Spark – *Happy New Year!, PH benefit determination and ERR funds*

Policies & Procedures

CR codes on printed applications are working

As of October 1, 2026 the original QR code on printed applications is working. The newer QR code, added to the printable applications on the Commerce EAP consumer website also works.

FFY26 A16 report due October 15

Service Providers must submit their FFY26 *Energy Self-Sufficiency & Outreach Report (A16)* (.xlsx) (Appendix 7A) by Thursday, October 15, 2026. Submit the report via eap.mail@state.mn.us.

FFY27 application and eHEAT mismatch for annuity income

Questions were raised during the application processing workgroup about whether Service Providers must go back and review prior applications to determine if a household should have been processed as a new application based on the type of annuity income reported in a prior year.

No, Service Providers **do not** need to go back and review prior recertification applications solely because of the FFY27 income category mismatch. This includes recertifications where the household did not report an income change from the prior year.

What Service Providers need to do:

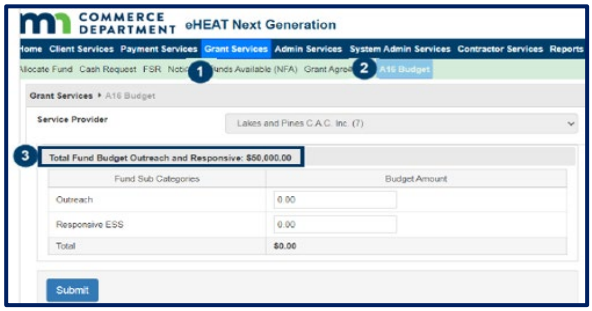
- **Applications already determined eligible:** No review or reprocessing is required because of the FFY27 income category mismatch.
- **Recertification applications with no updated income:** No re-review is required.
- **New applications not determined eligible as of 9/28/26:** Review the income documentation and ensure the income type is correctly recorded in eHEAT.

Final Closeout Package is due October 31 – submit early if possible

Service Providers must submit their EAP *Final Closeout Package* to Commerce by October 31, 2026 for the FFY26 program year ending September 30, 2026. **If you can submit as early as possibly as there may be delays.**

See the 9-29-26 *The Energizer* for detail and contact your PPA with questions about the closeout process. Submit the *Final Closeout Package* via email to eap.mail@state.mn.us.

Admin/A16/Outreach start-up funds



Notices of Funds Available (NFAs) for FFY27 start-up allocations for Administration and Outreach/Energy Self-Sufficiency (ESS) listed below are encumbered in eHEAT. A reminder that **Service Provider fiscal staff must "Complete" the NFAs in eHEAT.**

Service Providers must also **enter their Assurance 16 (A16) budgets for Outreach and Energy Self-Sufficiency (ESS) in eHEAT.** In eHEAT, go to Grant Services**,** A16 Budget**.** Enter the Outreach and ESS budget amounts, then click Submit.

Service Providers can spend *no more than* 50% of their A16 funding on Outreach activities. This reserves *at least* 50% of A16 funding for ESS activities. If a Service Provider chooses to spend less than 50% of their A16 funding on Outreach, they may spend the difference on ESS activities.

Use this table to work with fiscal staff to enter the budgeted amounts for Outreach and ESS in eHEAT. Contact eap.mail@state.mn.us with questions.

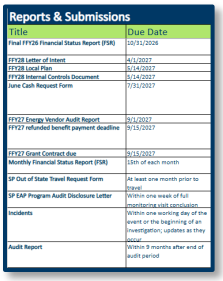
Service Provider	Admin	Outreach & ESS	Outreach Maximum
AEOA	$172,577	$57,525	$28,762.50
Anoka	$112,515	$37,505	$18,752.50
BiCAP	$68,150	$22,717	$11,358.50

Service Provider	Admin	Outreach & ESS	Outreach Maximum
Northwest	$35,324	$11,775	$5,887.50
Prairie Five	$37,758	$12,586	$6,293.00
Red Lake	$38,860	$12,953	$6,476.50

Bois Forte	$2,109	$703	$351.50
CAPHC	$507,723	$169,241	$84,620.50
CAPRW	$465,992	$155,331	$77,665.50
Fond Du Lac	$10,419	$3,473	$1,736.50
Inter-County	$38,377	$12,792	$6,396.00
Kootasca	$72,464	$24,155	$12,077.50
Lakes & Pines	$131,139	$43,713	$21,856.50
Leech Lake	$22,701	$7,567	$3,783.50
LSS	$57,819	$19,273	$9,636.50
Mahube-Otwa	$121,466	$40,489	$20,244.50
MVAC	$135,698	$45,233	$22,616.50

SCD	$194,944	$64,981	$32,490.50
Semcac	$98,852	$32,951	$16,475.50
SMOC	$31,558	$10,519	$5,259.50
Three Rivers	$125,073	$41,691	$20,845.50
Todd Co	$31,320	$10,440	$5,220.00
TriCAP	$166,328	$55,443	$27,721.50
Tri-Valley	$38,916	$12,972	$6,486.00
UCAP	$105,615	$35,205	$17,602.50
West Central	$105,988	$35,329	$17,664.50
White Earth	$25,230	$8,410	$4,205.00
Wright Co	$45,085	$15,028	$7,514.00

FFY27 Reports & Submissions


Reports & Submissions

Title	Due Date
Final FFY26 Financial Status Report (FSR)	10/31/2026
FFY28 Letter of Intent	4/1/2027
FFY28 Local Plan	5/14/2027
FFY28 Internal Controls Document	5/14/2027
June Cash Request Form	7/31/2027
FFY27 Energy Vendor Audit Report	9/1/2027
FFY27 refunded benefit payment deadline	9/15/2027
FFY27 Grant Contract due	9/15/2027
Monthly Financial Status Report (FSR)	15th of each month
SP Out of State Travel Request Form	At least one month prior to travel
SP EAP Program Audit Disclosure Letter	Within one week of full monitoring visit conclusion
Incidents	Within one working day of the event or the beginning of an investigation; updates as they occur
Audit Report	Within 9 months after end of audit period

The *FFY27 Reports and Submissions* document lists due dates of key EAP documents, Commerce holiday closure dates, and other key dates. Please note there are two tabs: Reports and Submissions, Calendar of Events.

Blank application signature date and energy vendors

Because signing the application permits data sharing, active applications without a signature date in eHEAT are invisible to energy vendors.

When logging a valid application, Service Providers should enter the signature date so that energy vendors can see the applications and respond to consumption requests.

A reminder that when Service Providers log an application without a signature, the signature date should be left blank to prevent vendors from seeing that a household applied.

OMB Uniform Grant Guidance for Federal Funds training

Minnesota Home Energy Training (MNHET) is partnering with Kevin Myren, CPA, to host a half-day virtual training on the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Uniform Grant Guidance (2 CFR 200).

As outlined in the *FFY27 EAP Policy Manual* (Ch. 13, p. 18), any fiscal staff working with the EAP program **must** attend initial training on OMB Guidelines within one year of the hire date. EAP fiscal staff must take refresher courses within one year of LIHEAP-applicable OMB Uniform Guidance changes. This course meets that requirement.

- **Training date:** Thursday, October 22, 2026 at 8:30 AM
- **Registration Deadline:** Monday, October 19, 2026
- **Location:** Online
- **Register for Uniform Grant Guidance Training**

Key dates



- **October 15** – FFY26 *Energy Self-Sufficiency & Outreach Report (A16) Report* is due
- **October 31** – *Expenditure Detail Reports* by fund and *Final Closeout Package* are due

Notices

New member of Commerce EAP team

The Office of Energy Assistance Programs is pleased to announce our new EAP Program Specialist, Lilia Leuthner. Lili can be reached at 651.539.1530 or Lilia.Leuthner@state.mn.us. Please join us in welcoming Lili to Commerce.

EAP in the news

Home heating costs likely to reach records, **The Timberjay**

Minnesota Energy Assistance Program expands to offer more benefits, **KMSP**

Minnesota Power offering help with Cold Weather Rule going into effect, **WDIO**

Cold Weather Rule begins for winter season, **West Central Tribune**

Minnesota cold weather utility rules kick in — act now to stay warm, **KIMT**

Cold Weather Rule kicks in Thursday, here's what you need to know, **Kare 11**

Minnesota Cold Weather Rule Starts Thursday: How to Keep Your Heat On This Winter, **KNSI**

Cold Weather Rule takes effect Oct. 1 for eligible Minnesota Power customers, **Grand Rapids Herald-Review**

Cold Weather Rule starts Oct. 1, protects eligible customers from disconnection, **Mesabi Tribune**

Oct. 1 marks start of Minnesota's winter utility shut-off protections, **MessageMedia**

Cold Weather Rule Begins in Minnesota, **KQDS**

PUC news release – *October 1 marks start of Minnesota's winter utility shut-off protections*

This news release was issued by the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission on September 30, 2026:

> **October 1 marks start of Minnesota's winter utility shut-off protections**
>
> St. Paul, Minn. – The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (PUC) reminds Minnesotans that the state's annual Cold Weather Rule protections take effect October 1 and remain in effect through April 30.
>
> The Cold Weather Rule helps protect residential customers from having their natural gas or electric service disconnected during the winter if they are behind on their bills. The protection is not automatic. Customers who are having difficulty paying their utility bills must contact their utility and establish a payment plan. Customers must make and keep the payments under the plan to remain protected.
>
> "Winter energy costs can put real pressure on household budgets, particularly for Minnesotans already facing financial challenges," said Commissioner John Tuma. "If you're worried about keeping up with

your energy bills, now is the time to take action. Reach out to your utility to discuss your options as well as other resources that may be available to help you through the winter."

How the Cold Weather Rule works:

- Make and keep a payment plan. If you do, your utility service cannot be disconnected or must be reconnected.
- Customers with household incomes at or below 50% of the state median income cannot be required to pay more than 10% of their monthly household income toward current and past-due heating bills.
- All residential customers, regardless of income, may be eligible to arrange a payment plan with their utility to maintain service through the winter.

The Cold Weather Rule applies only to natural gas and electric utilities. It does not apply to delivered fuels such as fuel oil, propane, or wood. While state law requires propane distributors to offer budget payment plans, customers using delivered fuels are encouraged to contact their providers directly to discuss payment options.

Energy assistance

Minnesotans who are struggling to pay their energy bills may also qualify for the Minnesota Energy Assistance Program, administered by the Minnesota Department of Commerce. The program is available to both homeowners and renters.

Eligible households can receive benefits of up to $1,400, along with additional support for certain energy emergencies. Energy Assistance can also help Minnesotans who use delivered fuels such as propane, fuel oil or wood, which are not covered by the Cold Weather Rule.

Income eligibility is based on household size. Learn more or apply at Minnesota Energy Assistance Program.

Questions about your utility service? The PUC can help. The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission's Consumer Affairs Office can help Minnesotans understand their rights and options if they are having difficulty paying their utility bills. Staff are available Monday through Friday by:

- **Website:** mn.gov/puc/cwr
- **Email:** consumer.puc@state.mn.us
- **Phone:** 651-296-0406 or 800-657-3782

About

The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission regulates three cornerstone service industries in Minnesota's economy: electricity, natural gas and telephone. The Commission's mission is to create and maintain a regulatory environment that ensures safe, adequate, and efficient utility services at fair, reasonable rates consistent with State telecommunications and energy policies. It does so by providing independent, consistent, professional, and comprehensive oversight and regulation of utility service providers. Learn more at mn.gov/puc.

Minnesota Public Utilities Commission
Contact: Jonathan Miller, 651-201-2258

Message to energy vendors & mechanical contractors – Safely interacting with Safe at Home households

This message was sent to energy vendors and mechanical on Thursday, October 1, 2026:

Safely interacting with Safe at Home households

The Minnesota Department of Commerce's Energy Assistance Program (EAP) wants to ensure energy vendors and mechanical contractors know about **Safe at Home** services.

What is Safe at Home (SAH)?

Safe at Home (SAH) helps those who fear for their safety by assigning a substitute address that private and public entities must accept and use in place of a SAH participant's real address.

Energy vendors and mechanical contractors working with SAH-enrolled EAP households must take great care to safeguard the SAH household's real address and other private data. See the Fact Sheets and information below for more details.

SAH is Administered by the Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State. Find more SAH information at https://www.sos.state.mn.us/safe-at-home/about-safe-at-home/.

How does SAH work?

Using an alternative address allows SAH participants to safely interact with others without disclosing where they live. Their mail goes to a P.O. Box address with an assigned Lot Number, and the SAH office forwards it to their real physical address.

By law, SAH participants cannot be required to disclose their physical address and cannot be required to answer any questions about their participation in SAH.

SAH Fact Sheets



The information below is also found on these fact sheets, which energy vendors and mechanical contractors may print out for their staff:

- Safe at Home Fact Sheet - for energy vendors
- Safe at Home Fact Sheet - for mechanical contractors

SAH information is also included in the Energy Vendor and Mechanical Contractor chapters of the FFY27 EAP Policy Manual:

- Chapter 15 - Energy Vendors
- Chapter 16 - Mechanical Contractors

How do energy vendor staff safely interact with SAH households?

Energy vendor staff must accept the SAH address of SAH participants. To interact safely with SAH households:

- SAH participant name and energy account number should be sufficient for the energy vendor to provide consumption data to EAP.
- When an EAP service provider manually requests consumption data, energy vendors must **not** return SAH households' real address information.
- Documents that include a SAH household's real address should be safeguarded, or have the real address information redacted whenever possible.

How do mechanical contractors safely interact with SAH households?

Mechanical contractor staff must accept the SAH address and work with EAP service providers and others to safeguard the identity and address of SAH participants. **The idea is to reduce the paper trail as much as possible and never have the SAH participant's name and address linked**.

To interact safely with SAH households:

- If a SAH participant chooses to get help with a furnace repair or replacement, mechanical contractors and EAP service providers must keep the SAH participant name and home address separate. For example, if a work ticket must be made for repair work to be done, use just the SAH participant's EAP Household Number on the ticket rather than their name.
- Mechanical contractors and EAP service providers are advised to keep SAH files locked up, with access limited. This is particularly important in cases where a SAH participant has furnace work done resulting in a work ticket with their actual address.
- Note: If a SAH participant has submitted a SAH Notice to Government Entity, the EAP Service Provider must get signed consent from the SAH participant before providing any household information (e.g., name and phone number) to an ERR contractor.

A Spark - *Happy New Year!, PH benefit determination and ERR funds*

This *A Spark* was sent to Service Providers on Thursday, October 1, 2026:

COMMERCE DEPARTMENT **A Spark**
Energy Assistance Program

Happy New Year!, PH benefit determination and ERR funds



Primary Heat benefit determination and ERR funds available October 1

The benefit formula is ready and is available for Primary Heat benefit determination on October 1.

In addition, ERR funds are available and Service Providers may begin obligating ERR funds and sending out mechanical contractors to eligible households. Once FFY27 ERR work is completed, it may be paid.