37.70.607 AMOUNT AND METHOD OF PAYMENT

(1) Eligible households directly billed for energy costs by the fuel vendor will be paid a benefit amount computed using the benefit matrices and multipliers in the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) Benefit Award Matrix and Table of Multipliers and will be paid as follows:

(a) Reimbursement may, at the discretion of the department only, be made by check payable to the household for any eligible energy costs which have been paid by the household at the time of the benefit or adjusted award. Paid eligible energy costs claimed by the household must be supported by fuel receipts.

(b) The amount of the benefit or adjusted award remaining after the application of (1)(a) will be paid by check directly to the fuel vendor and will be applied by the fuel vendor against any unpaid, including any future, eligible energy costs of the household in accordance with the department-provided vendor application and contract. Any credit balance in excess of $250 attributable to the benefit or adjusted award after the end of the heating season must be returned to the department.

(c) Application for benefits for the current heating season will not be processed until the credit balances for each of the household's fuel vendors attributable to previous years' program awards total $250 or less. This does not apply if the department has extended the heating season and has allowed LIHEAP attributable credit balances to remain on the recipients' accounts until spent.

(d) All credit balances are presumed to be from previous program awards unless the household provides proof to the contrary.

(2) Eligible households that pay energy costs for heating their homes that are not billed directly by the fuel vendor because the fuel account is not in the name of a household member will be reimbursed for eligible energy costs paid by the household, provided that the amount paid to the household for the heating season does not exceed the benefit amount computed using the benefit matrices and multipliers in the LIHEAP Benefit Award Matrix and Table of Multipliers. Reimbursement will be made by check payable to the household. The household must provide receipts to document paid eligible energy costs claimed. The household must provide receipts to support the paid eligible energy costs to the local contractor by June 20 or the end of the heating season, whichever is later.

(3) For eligible households that have their energy costs included in their rental payments:

(a) The household will be paid a benefit computed monthly. For each month of the current heating season for which the household provides a paid rent receipt, the household will be reimbursed a prorated portion, determined by dividing one by the number of months in the heating season, of the benefit amount provided in ARM 37.70.601. However, the benefit

paid to the household for any month must not exceed 50 percent of the rent paid for that month as evidenced by the rent receipt. Failure to provide rent receipts to the local contractor by June 20 or the end of the heating season, whichever is later, will result in the forfeiture of any benefits to which the household would otherwise be entitled.

(b) The benefit will be paid by check payable to the household.

(4) Benefits for eligible households using wood to heat their dwelling will be paid as follows:

(a) by payment to a wood vendor for purchases of wood;

(b) at the option of the local contractor, by payment directly to the household for future purchases of wood. Households which receive a direct payment will not be entitled to any additional benefits for the current heating season which the household might otherwise be entitled to receive due to moving to a different dwelling or other change in circumstances, except in an emergency as defined in ARM 37.70.901; or

(c) when the household provides receipts to verify that the household has purchased wood between July 1 and the end of the heating season of the current state fiscal year, by a payment directly to the household reimbursing the household for wood already purchased. Households which are reimbursed based on paid receipts do not lose their right to additional benefits for the current heating season as provided in (4)(b). Failure to provide receipts verifying wood purchases to the local contractor by June 20 or the end of the heating season, whichever is later, will result in the forfeiture of any benefits to which the household would otherwise be entitled.

Authorizing statute(s): 53-2-201, MCA

Implementing statute(s): 53-2-201, MCA

History: NEW, 1982 MAR p. 732, Eff. 4/16/82; AMD, 1982 MAR p. 1771, Eff. 10/1/82; AMD, 1983 MAR p. 131, Eff. 2/11/83; AMD, 1984 MAR p. 1481, Eff. 10/12/84; AMD, 1985 MAR p. 1412, Eff. 9/27/85; AMD, 1986 MAR p. 2021, Eff. 12/12/86; AMD, 1987 MAR p. 1805, Eff. 10/16/87; TRANS, from SRS, 1998 MAR p. 2059; AMD, 2000 MAR p. 2707, Eff. 10/6/00; AMD, 2004 MAR p. 1026, Eff. 4/23/04; AMD, 2004 MAR p. 2818, Eff. 11/19/04; AMD, 2005 MAR p. 1786, Eff. 9/23/05; AMD, 2011 MAR p. 108, Eff. 1/28/11; AMD, 2015 MAR p. 2145, Eff. 12/11/15; AMD, 2018 MAR p. 108, Eff. 1/13/18; AMD, 2018 MAR p. 1886, Eff. 9/22/18; AMD, 2019 MAR p. 2383, Eff. 12/28/19; AMD, 2020 MAR p. 1844, Eff. 10/10/20; AMD, 2021 MAR p. 1060, Eff. 10/1/21; AMD, 2022 MAR p. 1879, Eff. 9/24/22; AMD, 2026 MAR, Notice No. 2026-532, Eff. 5/23/26.