



Date: February 20, 2026

DMS Operations Memo 26-07

To: Income Maintenance Supervisors  
Income Maintenance Lead Workers  
Income Maintenance Staff  
FSET Agencies

**Affected Programs:**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> BadgerCare Plus      | <input type="checkbox"/> Caretaker Supplement              |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FoodShare | <input type="checkbox"/> FoodShare Employment and Training |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Medicaid             |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SeniorCare           |  |

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Division of Medicaid Services

**Qualifying for the Heating Standard Utility Allowance for FoodShare**

**CROSS-REFERENCE**

- FoodShare Wisconsin Policy Handbook, [Section 4.6.7.3 Standard Utility Allowances](#)

**EFFECTIVE DATE**

April 1, 2026

**PURPOSE**

This operations memo announces a change to how FoodShare assistance groups with no elderly, blind, or disabled (EBD) members qualify for the heating standard utility allowance (HSUA).

**BACKGROUND**

The HSUA is a deduction used when determining FoodShare benefit amounts. It is the highest of a series of standardized deduction amounts based on the utilities that households are responsible for paying. Under current policy, any FoodShare assistance group that has received a Wisconsin Heating Energy Assistance Program (WHEAP), Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), or similar payment greater than \$20 in the current month or within the past 12 months are eligible to receive the HSUA. Assistance groups can also qualify to receive the HSUA if they are obligated to pay or are paying for any heating source, if that heating cost is separate from the cost of rent.

The One Big Beautiful Bill Act of 2025 (2025 H.R. 1), signed into law on July 4, 2025, limits the FoodShare assistance groups that can receive the HSUA based on their receipt of WHEAP, LIHEAP, or similar payments.

## **POLICY**

Effective with FoodShare benefits issued for the month of April 2026, FoodShare assistance groups without an EBD member will be eligible for the HSUA only if they are obligated to pay for or are paying for a heating source separately from the cost of rent. Assistance groups without an EBD member will not qualify for the HSUA if they receive a qualifying WHEAP, LIHEAP, or similar payment but are not obligated to pay for, or are not actually paying for, a heating source separate from the cost of rent.

There is no change to how assistance groups with at least one EBD member qualify for the HSUA.

## **CONTACTS**

DHS CARES Problem Resolution Team

DHS/DMS/BEEP/AG

DHS/DMS/BEOT/JN