STATE OF MICHIGAN

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GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
LANSING

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State Emergency Relief Policy Manuals

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STATE OF MICHIGAN

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

SER SERVICE CODES

NON-ENERGY SERVICES

SER SERVICE	SER SERVICE CODE
RELOCATION SERVICES	
Relocation	10
HOME OWNERSHIP SERVICES	
Lien Filing Fee	32
House Payments	40
Property Taxes	41
Mobile Home Lot Rent	42
Insurance	43
NON-ENERGY HOME REPAIRS	
Home Repairs (not furnace repair or replacement)	50
UTILITY SERVICES	
Water or Sewage	60
Cooking Gas	61
Utility Deposit (not heat or electric)	12
BURIAL SERVICES	
Funeral Director	80
Cemetery / crematory	81
Burial Vault Provider	82
MIGRANT HOSPITALIZATION	
Migrant Hospitalization	91

NOTES:

- A payment can be authorized to a provider only if they are enrolled under an appropriate provider eligibility type code for the payment being authorized.
- Local offices cannot enroll LIHEAP energy providers, burial, water, sewage, cooking gas providers, or county treasurers.

SER ENERGY SERVICES

SER SERVICE	SER SERVICE CODE
Heat Deposit/Fee	26
Non-Heat Electric Deposit/Fee	27
Heating Fuel	63
All Electric Home	64
Non-Heat Electricity	65
Furnace Repair/Replacement	33

NOTES:

- A payment can be authorized to a provider only if they are enrolled under an appropriate provider eligibility type code for the payment being authorized.
- Local offices cannot enroll providers as LIHEAP enrolled energy providers.

SER QUICK REFERENCE CHART

Service	ERM Item	Proof of Need	Dollar Maximum	Required Payments		Housing Affordability Item 207	Client-caused Item 204
					#months		
Relocation	303	Homelessness Services Statement Court Summons Condemnation Notice	Relocation Table	Y	6	Y	Y
Mortgage Land Contract	304	Foreclosure or Forfeiture Notice	$2000 Lifetime Total	Y	6	Y	Y
Homeowners Insurance	304	Foreclosure or Forfeiture Notice	$2000 Lifetime Total	Y	6	Y	Y
Mobile Home Lot Rent	304	Eviction Notice				Y	Y
Property Taxes	304	Notice of Foreclosure Hearing		N		Y	N

Service	ERM Item	Proof of Need	Dollar Maximum	Required Payments	#months	Housing Affordability Item 207	Client-caused Item 204
Heat/Electric Arrears, Deposit, Fees	301	Shut Off Notice/Telephone Call Fuel Delivery Statement from Group	Fiscal Year Cap Table	Y	6	N	Y
Water, Sewer Cooking Gas	302	Shut Off Notice Fuel Delivery	$175 Fiscal Year	Y	6	N	Y
Reconnect Fee/Deposit: Heat, Electric, Water, Sewer, Cooking Gas	302	Required by Provider	$200 each Issuance	Y	6	N	Y
Beds, Cooking Stove, Household Items, Refrigerator, Table and Chairs, Washer		Not Available Through SER - DENY					
Clothing		Not Available Through SER - DENY					
Energy Related Home Repair such as furnace.	304	Estimate	$4000 Life-time Maxi-mum	N	All mort-gage/land contact payments and property taxes must be current	Y	N
Non-energy related home repairs	304	Estimate	$1500 Life-time Maxi-mum	N		Y	N
Burial	306	Funeral Home Invoice	Burial Table	N		N	N

SER TABLES FOR GOOD CAUSE, INCOME NEED STANDARD AND RELOCATION MAXIMUMS

SER Group Size	GOOD CAUSE TABLE	SER INCOME NEED STANDARD FOR NON-ENERGY SERVICES	INCOME LIMIT FOR ENERGY SERVICES	FISCAL YEAR MAXIMUM FOR RELOCATION
	ITEM 204	ITEM 208	ITEM 208	ITEM 303
1	$225	$445	$1595	$410
2	$240	$500	$2155	$520
3	$255	$625	$2715	$620
4	$270	$755	$3275	$740
5	$285	$885	$3835	$870
6	$300	$1,015	$4395	$1040
For each additional person in group	Add $15	Add $100	Add $560	Groups larger than 6 use the amount for 6

SER REQUIRED PAYMENTS AND FISCAL CAPS

SER GROUP-SIZE				WATER/COOKING GAS REQUIRED PAYMENT	FISCAL CAPS
				ITEM 302	ITEM 301
1				$8	Natural Gas & Wood, other fuel $850
2				$9	Deliverable Fuel $1200
					Other fuel $850
3				$10	Residential Electric $850
4				$11	All Electric Home $850
5				$13	
6				$15	ITEM 302
*				$15 (for 6 or more)	Water and cooking gas $175

*Add these amounts to the 6 person amount for each additional person

AFFORDABILITY (ITEM 207)

Basic 75% housing cost standard (shelter must not exceed 75% of total net income).

ADD: 15% if heat included; 5% if electricity included; 5% if water/cooking included.

CODES FOR SER SERVICES

RELOCATION SERVICES ITEM 303		HOME OWNERSHIP ITEM 304		ENERGY SERVICES ITEM 301	
Relocation	10	Lien Filing Fee	32	Heat Deposit/Fee	26
		House Payments	40	All Electric Home Deposit Fee	26
		Taxes	41	Non-Heat Electric Deposit Fee	27
		Lot Rent	42	Heat	63
		Insurance	43	All Electric Home	64
				Non-Heat Electric	65

CODES FOR SER SERVICE

UTILITY SERVICES ITEM 302		MIGRANT HOSP ITEM 307		BURIAL ITEM 306		HOME REPAIR Item 304	
Water/Sewer	60	Hospitalization	91	Funeral Director	80	Furnace Repair or Replacement	33
Cooking Gas	61			Cemetery	81	Non-energy Repair	50
Utility Deposit and Reconnect Fee (not heat or electric)	12			Vault	82		

DHS-849 CODES, INCOME LEVEL

Income Level DHS-849
A = 0 - $166
B = $167 - $333
C = $334 - $499
D = $500 - $666
E = $667 - $833
F = $834 - $999
G = $1000 - $1249
H = $1250 and above

DEPARTMENT POLICY

State Emergency Relief (SER) prevents serious harm to individuals and families. SER assists applicants with safe, decent, affordable housing and other essential needs when an emergency situation arises.

Requirements

Residence in the state of Michigan is not required. SER serves all persons physically present in Michigan. In addition SER applicants must:

- Complete the application process.
- Meet financial and non-financial requirements.
- Have an emergency which threatens health or safety and can be resolved through issuance of SER.
- Take action within their ability to help themselves. For example, obtain potential resources and/or apply for assistance.
- Not have caused the emergency; see ERM 204, Client-Caused Emergencies.
- Cooperate in providing information about income, assets, living arrangements, and other persons living in the home.

Deny SER services for applicants who fail to meet any of the above requirements.

DEPARTMENT POLICY

Right to Apply

SER applicants can file or obtain an application until at least 5:00 p.m. each business day. Accept and register an application for SER if the following information is provided:

- Applicant name.
- Address or statement of homelessness.
- Birthdate.
- Applicant’s or authorized representative's signature.

An MDHHS-1171, Assistance Application, is considered an application for SER if the client indicates they are applying for State Emergency Relief and the minimum information is provided, even if the MDHHS-1171-SER supplement has not been submitted. In instances where the MDHHS-1171-SER supplement is not received by the department, it should be requested from the client or completed during an interview.

Applicant Responsibilities

Applicants must cooperate with the following:

- The application process.
- Provide verifications.
- Answer all questions truthfully and completely, whether written or oral.

Deny SER if applicants refuse to take action or provide information within their ability, or withdraw their application.

Department Responsibilities

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) must provide the following:

- Help in completing forms, answering inquiries, or obtaining verification.
- Confidentiality.
- Information about department programs.

- Assistance to applicants who have trouble reading and/or understanding.

Non-discrimination

SER applicants may not be discriminated against because of race, sex, religion, age, national origin, color, height, weight, marital status, political beliefs or disability.

Hearings and Complaints

SER applicants have the right to request a hearing regarding any action, failure to act, or undue delay in processing by the department. Hearing requests must be in writing.

DEPARTMENT POLICY

Applicants must complete and sign one of the following applications in order to apply for State Emergency Relief (SER):

- DHS-1514, Application for State Emergency Relief.
- MDHHS-1171, Assistance Application, and the MDHHS-1171-SER, State Emergency Relief (SER) supplemental form.
- A MI Bridges online application in which a SER service has been requested.

Applicants may file an application for SER in any county in Michigan. An application submitted through MI Bridges for a SER covered service is considered a complete application, no additional application is required. Incomplete applications may be filed, but must be completed before authorizing SER.

An MDHHS-1171, Assistance Application, is considered an application for SER if the client indicates they are applying for State Emergency Relief and the minimum information is provided, even if the MDHHS-1171-SER supplement has not been submitted. In instances where the MDHHS-1171-SER supplement is not received by the department, it should be requested from the client or completed during an interview. Any person has the right to apply for an SER. Authorized representatives may apply on behalf of a person who is deceased, physically or mentally disabled, or a minor. Obtain written permission from all other applicants designating an authorized representative outside the SER group.

Obtain all supporting verifications and applicant signatures. The signature(s) establishes that clients understand their rights and responsibilities and that they prepared the application(s) truthfully under penalty of perjury. Applications may be transferred between counties if it is in the best interest of the applicant. Both counties must mutually agree to the transfer.

Burial Applications

An application for burial services must be made no later than 10 business days after the burial, cremation or donation takes place. Any person who has the legal right to claim the body may be the authorized representative; see ERM 306, Burials

APPLICATION REGISTRATION

Applications must be registered within one day of receipt. Online applications will be sent electronically to a registration inbox for proper assignment. Emailed applications are not acceptable.

Accept and register a SER application if the following information is provided:

- Applicant name.
- Address or statement of homelessness.
- Birthdate.
- Applicant's or authorized representative's signature.

APPLICATION DATE

Requests for SER become an application on the day the application is received by the Department. For electronic applications submitted through MI Bridges, the application date is determined based on the time and date of submission. Any application submitted after 5:00 pm or on a non-business day will have an application date of the next business day.

The application date is the first day of the 30-day SER eligibility period. If the application is approved, the 30-day eligibility period does not change regardless of how many service requests the client may make during that period. If the application is denied and the client reapplies, a new 30-day period will start with the new application date.

If additional SER services are requested during the approved 30-day eligibility period, a new application is not needed and the application date cannot be changed. Every additional request made during the approved 30-day eligibility period is entered into Bridges as an additional SER service request and is subject to the original 30-day eligibility period.

Example: Client applies for assistance with an electric shut-off on 4/1 and is approved. This establishes a 30-day SER eligibility period of 4/1-4/30. On 4/25, the client requests an additional SER service for a natural gas shut-off. The client has not made the required payments to the natural gas provider and has a shortfall. Because the client has requested the additional service during the 4/1-4/30 eligibility period, this request is subject to that period. The

client only has until 4/30 to provide proof of the shortfall payment for the 4/25 request.

ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION

Budget

Complete a SER budget in Bridges for each request/application; see ERM 208 for budget procedures. Bridges calculates payment maximums, required payments, income and asset copayment, client contributions, etc. based on the information entered from the SER application and determines eligibility or ineligibility for SER. Bridges electronically stores the budget; therefore, it is not necessary to place a printed copy of the budget in the case record; see ERM 208, Budget Procedures.

Approval

Certain conditions must be met before SER can be issued to help individuals and families whose health and safety are threatened:

- Prior written or oral approval must be given by an authorized department staff person before SER issuance.
- **Do not issue SER to reimburse expenses incurred or paid without prior department approval**.
- The SER payment must resolve the emergency.
- The group must meet all applicable policy requirements for the SER service.

Case Read Form

The DHS-1271, State Emergency Relief/LIHEAP Case Read Form, should be used to document eligibility and payment accuracy.

Prior Approval

After-Hours Emergency

Immediate action may be necessary to prevent harm to SER group members when an emergency arises after hours or on weekends. The prior approval requirement may be waived in any case when the emergency occurred while department offices were closed.

The first-line manager may approve a waiver of the prior approval requirement in non-burial cases, provided a SER application is filed within five business days from the date the emergency began.

DHS-1419, Decision Notice

Inform all SER applicants in writing of the decision made on their application. Mail or give the DHS-1419, Decision Notice, to the applicant. The notice must also be provided whenever a client withdraws their application.

Note: Applications that have been pseudo certified may only be withdrawn in Bridges to reprocess an incorrect eligibility determination.

Proof of Payment

If the SER group meets all eligibility criteria but has an income or asset copayment, shortfall, and/or contribution, do not issue payment until the client provides proof that their payment has been made. If another agency is making the payment, proof that payment will be made is required. Verification of payment must be received in the local office within the 30-day eligibility period or no SER payment will be made, and the client must reapply. Use the DHS-1419, Decision Notice, to inform the SER group of the amount they must pay and the due date for returning proof of their payment.

Energy Services

Example: For energy services, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) payment is not reduced when another agency is paying the client's current balance or arrearages, in addition to the copay, as long as the additional payment results in a zero-account balance. Verify the payments and account balance with the energy provider. A client has an account balance of $1150 and a shut off notice for $900. MDHHS energy cap is $850 therefore the client copay is the $50 over cap amount. A community agency is willing to pay the client copay amount and $250 to get the bill current for a total payment of $300. The MDHHS payment of $850 would not be reduced.

If the agency had paid $100 toward the need, the MDHHS would be reduced since the extra contribution was not enough to bring the total account balance to zero.

Anytime the copay is not made by another agency, the MDHHS payment is reduced.

Application Denial

If the copayment, shortfall, contribution or combination exceeds the need, the application shall be denied unless good cause is granted.

INTERVIEW REQUIREMENTS

All Applicants

An interview is not required in order to process a SER application or service request. In instances where changes are reported or there are discrepancies that must be resolved, the specialist may choose to complete an interview in order to process the application or to update the case record.

Note: A witnessed signature is not necessary for mail-in, faxed or online applications.

Standard of Promptness

Give priority to SER applicants when there is a direct threat to health or safety requiring immediate attention.

The SER standard of promptness is **10 calendar days**, beginning with the date the signed SER application is received in the local office. The case record must include documentation for any delay in processing the application beyond the standard of promptness.

- Do not use the standard of promptness as a basis for denial of SER applications.
- Continue to pend an application if the SER group is cooperating within their ability to provide verifications.
- Deny the application if the group does not cooperate.

Note: There is no standard of promptness adjustment for holidays or non-business days. The case record must include documentation for any delay in processing the application beyond the standard of promptness.

VERIFICATION

Clients must be informed of all verifications that are required and where to return verifications. The due date is **eight calendar days** beginning with the date of application. If the application is not processed on the application date, the deadline to return verifications is eight calendar days from the date verification is requested. This does not change the standard of promptness date.

Note: When the eighth day falls on a state-observed holiday, the due date for verifications to be returned will be extended to the following business day.

Use the DHS-3503, SER Verification Checklist, to request verification and to notify the client of the due date for returning the verifications.

The client must make a reasonable effort to obtain required verifications. The specialist must assist if the applicant needs and requests help. If neither the client nor the specialist can obtain the verifications despite a reasonable effort, use the best available information. If no evidence is available, the specialist must use their best judgment.

Identity

The client's identity must be verified. If an authorized representative (AR) applies on behalf of a group, the AR must verify his own **and** the client's identity.

Note: Documents used to verify identity may be originals or copies of the original document. Facsimiles are acceptable documents for identity.

The following are examples of acceptable verification of identity:

- Driver's license.
- State-issued identification.
- School-issued identification.
- Individual SSN has been validated by SSA in Bridges.
- Document indicating a client's receipt of benefits under a program which requires verification of identity (SSI, RSDI).

- Identification for health benefits.
- Voter registration card.
- Birth certificate/record.
- U.S. military card or draft record.
- U.S. passport.
- Certificate of Naturalization (Department of Homeland Security (DHS) forms N-550 or N-570).
- Certificate of U.S. citizenship (DHS forms N-560 or N-561).
- Military dependent's identification card.
- Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood, or other U.S. American Indian/Alaska native tribal document.
- U.S. Coast Guard Merchant Mariner card.

LEGAL BASE

Mich Admin Code, R 400.7001 et seq.

SER POLICY EXCEPTIONS

Exceptions may be granted for unique and unusual circumstances on a case by case basis by central office only. Unique and unusual circumstances may include instances where the household has used the available money for employment-related expenses or some other type of crisis, or the lives of the household members may be in jeopardy if the emergency goes unresolved.

Example: The client is newly employed but will not receive a full month of income during the State Emergency Relief (SER) 30-day period, resulting in a denial due to housing being unaffordable. The local office can request an SER policy exception if the ongoing rental expense will be affordable once employment wages are received regularly.

Requests for exceptions to SER policy must be submitted by the local office supervisor through Bridges, the same day the worker requests the exception from their supervisor. Each decision will be issued for a specific case and will be identified by case name and number. If the decision is sent by email to the appropriate local office, a copy must be filed in the case record.

Note: The supervisor must review the SER before approving the exception request to ensure that the case information has been updated and verified as required by policy. Any case that has not been updated with current eligibility information will be denied by central office.

Assets must be updated, income must be budgeted for the 30 day SER period, all required payment details must be completed, etc. An approved exception is retained electronically in Bridges and can be viewed through the Exception Inquiry function. Exception requests that have been denied can be seen under Pending Casework in Bridges.

Exception requests must include the following information:

- Client's name and case number.
- Group composition.
- Specific reason for the exception request.
- Detailed information on the emergency.

- Extenuating circumstances.
- Household income.
- Total amount needed.
- Provider name.
- Provider number.
- Copay verification date and amount verified.
- Account number, if there is one.
- Required payment history for all requests.
- Theft or illegal usage, if the request is for an energy or utility service.
- Community/agency assistance available.

LEGAL BASE

SER

Social Welfare Act, PA 280 of 1939, as amended
Mich Admin Code, R 400.7001-400.7049

DEPARTMENT POLICY

Determine State Emergency Relief (SER) eligibility for the group as a whole. SER groups are the basic unit of SER eligibility. Verify income, assets and potential resources of all group members.

A single SER group consists of persons who occupy the same home. Home means the place where the members of the SER group keep their personal belongings and sleep. A home may be an apartment, a house, a mobile home, or a rented room. Consider a homeless family or group of individuals as a single SER group if they previously lived together in the same home and plan to do so again when they find permanent housing.

A number of SER services have a yearly or lifetime payment limit. This limit is referred to as a cap. All persons who are included in the SER group at the time of approval and who benefit from the payment will have that payment amount included in their individual cap. The cap payments are retained even if the individual moves from one group to another.

Exception: For Relocation services, the SER payment will only be applied to the fiscal year cap of the adult SER group members

Included Group Members

Adults and dependent children who normally live together are in the same SER group. See ERG Glossary for a definition of dependent.

Persons temporarily absent due to illness or employment are also in the same group. For SER burials, the deceased person is an included group member; 18 to 21-year-old children of the deceased parents of the burial group are not.

Note: Group members who are absent from the home for 90 consecutive days or more are not in the SER group.

Note: All members must be included in Bridges.

Excluded Group Members

Do not include the following persons in the SER group.

- Visitors in the home who do not normally live with the SER group.
- Renters who live with the SER group, provided a fair market rental rate is paid. Include the rental income in determining the SER group's eligibility.
- The SER group's landlord, provided the group pays fair market rent to live in the home.

  See the most current Fair Market Rents online at http://www.huduser.org/portal/datasets/fmr.html.
- A person physically present in the home who claims and verifies that they do not have any responsibility for meeting household emergencies. A person who desires exclusion on this basis has the burden of providing proof of the following:
  - The emergency does not adversely affect the person requesting exclusion.
  - The person will not benefit if the group's application for SER is approved.

  Example: A group of five adults share an apartment. The group includes a husband and wife and three unrelated persons. The husband dies, and the wife applies for SER burial assistance. Exclude the other three unrelated persons from the SER group for this service.

VERIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

Verify the SER group's payment of fair market rent by:

- Cancelled checks.
- Money order carbons.
- Landlord's federal or state tax return showing rental income.

LEGAL BASE

Mich Admin Code, R 400.7001 et seq.

DEPARTMENT POLICY

Residence and age does not normally affect eligibility. Eligibility based on alien and fugitive felon status is limited to the requirements listed in this section.

Residence

Presence in Michigan, not permanent residence, is required for State Emergency Relief (SER) eligibility.

Age

There is no minimum age requirement to apply for SER; however, if the applicant is an unemancipated minor, we must refer him/her to children's services for further evaluation.

Note: Do not delay processing the SER application pending the evaluation by services staff.

Citizenship/ Alien Status

A person must be a U.S. citizen or a qualified alien to be eligible.

Qualified alien means an alien who is one of the following:

- Amerasian.
- Lawfully admitted for permanent residence under the INA.
- Granted asylum under section 208 of the INA.
- A refugee who is admitted to the U.S. under section 207 of the INA.
- Paroled into the U.S. under section 212(d)(5) of the INA for a period of at least 1 year.
- An alien whose deportation is being withheld under section 241(b)(3) or 243(h) of the INA.
- Granted conditional entry pursuant to section 203(a)(7) of the INA.
- A Cuban/Haitian entrant.

- An alien who has been battered or subjected to extreme cruelty in the U.S. by a U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident spouse or parent, or by a member of the spouse or parent's family living in the same household, or is the parent or child of a battered person; see BEM 225, Citizenship/Alien Status.
- Nonimmigrant (student).

Fugitive Felons

Effective April 8, 2015, this policy is suspended.

Fugitive felons are not eligible, **their presence disqualifies** the group.

Groups With Undocumented Alien(s)

Undocumented aliens are not eligible, **but their presence does not disqualify the group**. The following applies to all households containing one or more undocumented aliens:

- Any member of the household may apply.
- Include all household members for purposes of determining eligibility for SER.
  - Include the income and assets of all household members.
  - For shelter and energy services, include all household members when determining required payments, affordability, etc.
- Prorate the benefit for the U.S. citizens and legal aliens only. See ERM 208, Budget Procedures, for the prorated payment calculation.

Note: Households must meet all other SER eligibility requirements.

Verification Requirements

Verify the Social Security number of each household member as well as the status of each person identified as an alien. See BEM 223 and BEM 225 for acceptable verification sources.

The data match with the Social Security Administration is sufficient verification of citizenship.

When an individual does not have a Social Security number, provide an SS-5, Application for a Social Security Card, or refer them to http://www.ssa.gov/ssnumber for application instructions.

LEGAL BASE

MAC R400.7001 et seq.

MAC R400.7021

DEPARTMENT POLICY

As a condition of State Emergency Relief (SER) eligibility, all the adults in the SER group must agree to take actions within their ability to make potential resources available. Potential resource means an asset or income that may be available to a client if action is taken to make this available. Do not require the SER group to apply for loans, including home equity loans from financial institutions or individuals.

Pursuing a potential resource increases the group's ability to resolve their emergency with the additional income or asset.

Potential Resource Examples

The SER group must take reasonable action to obtain potential resources including, but not limited to:

- Program benefits under FIP, SDA, RAP, CDC, SSI, RSDI; settlements of lawsuits or insurance claims; unemployment insurance benefits and other employment-related benefits if there is the potential of benefits. Do not delay approval of SER while the group applies for other benefits. Their agreement to apply is sufficient.

  Exception: Local offices may choose to waive the requirement to apply for FIP, SDA, RAP, or CDC programs. Groups should still be encouraged to apply for all benefits for which they qualify.

- Poverty exemption from property taxes if the group is applying for home ownership services for taxes. Local taxing authorities (not the county treasurer) establish their own criteria for granting tax exemption. Generally, a request for exemption is filed after January 1 but before the last day of the board of review. The local office should not require a client to pursue this benefit at a time when requests are not being taken.

- Home heating credit if the group is applying for energy services.

- Assets to be received in the future, such as tax refunds and money owed to the SER group.

- Goods or services which the SER group can obtain by requesting them. Examples include home repair and weatherization services provided by a government or non-profit agency.

Note: Refer SER groups to other agencies for assistance only when the group does not meet SER eligibility requirements for the service, or when SER does not cover the service including any unmet required payment and/or copayment on the DHS-1419.

MEAP Referrals

When a SER group has been approved for SER energy services, a referral to 2-1-1 for additional energy self-sufficiency services, through the Michigan Energy Assistance Program (MEAP), must be provided.

Penalties

When an SER group member has been denied or terminated assistance for failure to comply, when able, with a procedural requirement of FIP, SDA or SSI, the group is not eligible for SER. Groups that are non-cooperative with the Office of Child Support are also ineligible for SER.

SER ineligibility continues as long as the group member fails or refuses to pursue potential resources. Sanctioned groups that are able to comply are ineligible for SER until they comply.

LEGAL BASE

MAC R400.7001 et seq.

MAC R400.7021

DEPARTMENT POLICY

SER does not assist a group who failed to use their available money to prevent a shelter or non-energy utility emergency. A client-caused emergency is when an SER group fails to pay required payments for the six-month period prior to the month of application.

Include all members who were in the home and not excluded for each month. Include a deceased person if they were alive during the required payment period; see ERM 201, Group Composition, for excluded persons.

REQUIRED PAYMENTS

Completion of the SER Required Payments - Details screens is required for most SER services. Enter the Household Size, Net Countable Income Amount and Unusual Employment Expense Amount and indicate if the client had an obligation to pay for the service for each of the six months preceding the month of application.

Required payments are actual shelter costs or required non-energy utility payments as outlined in the Required Payments table in ERM 302. Required payment amounts are based on the number of group members in the home each month during the required payment period. Required payments include the deceased if alive during the required payment period.

Note: Previously issued SER funds cannot be used to make required payments. Contributions from any other source can count toward required payment amounts.

GOOD CAUSE

Good cause may exist as a basis for an applicant's failure to prevent an emergency. Good cause is determined separately for each of the six months.

Establish good cause for the following services:

- Relocation services.
- Home ownership services (except property taxes).
- Non-energy utility services.

Note: Good cause will be given for energy-related service requests since the required payment for energy services for the 6 months prior to the month of application is $0.

Net Countable Income Amount

The household's net countable income amount must be entered in each Month - Details screen for the six month required payment period. Accept the client's statement of net countable income IF the amount exceeds the Good Cause Amount listed in the table below for the appropriate SER group size.

Income verified for another DHHS program can be used to calculate the net countable income for the required payment period. If household income has not previously been budgeted or is questionable for any month included in the required payment period, the client must verify income for that month.

Good Cause - Failure to Meet Obligations

Good cause for failure to meet obligations for shelter or non-energy utilities exists if:

- The SER group's net countable income from all sources during each month the group failed to pay their obligations was less than the amount shown for the SER group size in the good cause table in this item.
- The income was not reduced by a disqualification of SSI or department benefits for failure to comply with a program requirement.

  Note: This includes income of people who were in the group during the required payment period.

Good Cause - Unexpected Expenses

If the emergency resulted from unexpected expenses related to maintaining or securing employment, verify expenses for each month the group failed to pay their obligations. The employment related expenses must equal or exceed the monthly obligation. Payment differences are the responsibility of the SER group.

VERIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

The following are acceptable sources of verification:

Required Payments

- Receipts showing date, amount and service paid.
- Statement from provider indicating date and amounts of payments made. This statement may be in the form of a fax, email, phone call or information obtained from the provider's secure Web site.

Employment Expenses

- Receipts that verify the date, type and amount of the employment expense.

GOOD CAUSE DETERMINATION TABLE

GOOD CAUSE DETERMINATION TABLE	
SER Group Size	**Good Cause Amount**
1	**$225**
2	**$240**
3	**$255**
4	**$270**
5	**$285**
6	**$300**
Groups larger than 6 persons: Add $15 for each additional person.	

SER QUICK REFERENCE CHARTS

Refer to ERM 100 for quick reference charts to SER services, required payments and good cause amounts.

LEGAL BASE

MAC R400.7001 et seq.

DEPARTMENT POLICY

Count all non-excluded assets of State Emergency Relief (SER) group members for all SER services with every application. Count only available assets when determining SER eligibility. Consider an asset totally available unless it is claimed and verified that a portion of the asset's value belongs to another individual.

ASSET LIMITS

Cash

The SER group must use countable cash assets to assist in resolving their emergency. The cash asset limit is $15,000. With the exception of burial, service requests with cash assets of $15,000 or more will be denied**.** See ERM 306 for information on asset policy for burial requests.

Non-Cash

SER groups have a $15,000 non-cash asset limit. With the exception of burial, service requests with non-cash assets of $15,000 or more will be denied. See ERM 306 for information on asset policy for burial requests.

Note: SER groups composed solely of Family Independence Program (FIP), State Disability Assistance (SDA), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Medicaid (MA) and Food Assistance Program (FAP) recipients have automatic eligibility on the basis of **non-cash** assets.

Burial Assets

For burials, if the decedent is the only group member, there is no asset exclusion. The decedent's homestead, vehicle, bank accounts, etc. are all countable if there are no surviving group members or if the asset is not jointly owned with rights of survivorship.

Allow a $15,000 cash asset exclusion if there is a surviving group member.

Allow a $15,000 non-cash asset exclusion if there is one or more surviving group members.

If any surviving group member is a current recipient of FIP, SDA, SSI, MA or FAP, there is automatic eligibility on the basis of non-cash assets only; see ERM 306, Burials.

TYPES OF ASSETS

Assets are cash or non-cash.

Cash Assets

Examples of **cash** assets are:

- Currency and coins.
- Amounts on deposit in banks, savings and loan associations, credit unions and other financial institutions.
- Money in a vendor pre-paid debit card (examples: Direct Express, ReliaCard, etc.).
- Uncashed checks, drafts and warrants.
- Traveler's checks.
- Stocks, bonds and other investments, including negotiable instruments.
- Individual retirement accounts.
- Keogh plans.
- Revocable prearranged funeral contracts.
- Nonrecurring lump-sum payments that do not represent an accumulation of monthly benefits, (such as lottery winnings).

Non-Cash Assets

Examples of **non-cash** assets are:

- Land contracts.
- Real property.
- Vehicles.

Excluded Assets

Count all assets except the following:

- Assets of non-responsible relatives for burials; see ERM 306, Burials.
- Homestead owned or being purchased. This includes the home, all adjoining land and any other buildings on the land.

  Note: If the homestead is owned solely by the deceased client, it is **not** excluded.
- Migrant homestead. The homestead may be outside of Michigan if the migrant group intends to return to the home. If the migrant group owns more than one homestead, either in Michigan or outside of Michigan, only one is exempt. All other homesteads are countable assets.
- Household goods (such as furniture, appliances, hand tools, equipment, and machinery).
- Personal goods.
- Burial space. One burial space for each SER group member.
- Assets that are essential to employment or self-employment, including all of the following:
  - Farm livestock and farm equipment.
  - Farmland.
  - Tools, equipment and machinery.
- Motor vehicle. One motor vehicle used as the SER group's primary means of transportation.
- Life insurance (whole life and term).
- Medicare Set-Aside account.
- Irrevocable funeral agreement.
- The budgetable portion of income deposited into a checking or savings account. Do **not** count the same funds as both income and an asset in the same month.

- Educational grants and scholarships: Any amount of a grant, scholarship on deposit or in the group member's possession is exempt as an asset.
- The accumulated earnings of a member of the SER group who is a dependent child (under age 21). The accumulated earnings are exempt if both of the following conditions are met:
  - The earnings are held in a savings account of which the dependent child who earned the money is the sole tenant.
  - The earnings are not commingled with money from any source except the earnings of the dependent child.

Value of Assets

Count the equity value of an asset when determining SER eligibility. Determine equity value of an asset by subtracting the amount legally owed and the cost of sale from the asset's market value.

Market value is the amount of money the owner would receive in the local area if the asset were sold on short notice. Deduct from market value:

- The amount legally owed on the asset.
- The cost of selling the asset.
- An amount which is claimed and verified to belong to a person outside of the SER group.

Verify the amount of cash the group would receive if they sold the non-cash assets. **Deny the application if the equity value of non-cash assets exceeds the non-cash asset limit.**

The value of retirement plans (IRA, 401K, 457, etc.) is the amount of money the person can currently withdraw or borrow from the plan. A repay agreement may be needed if the money is available but will not be received in time to resolve the emergency; see ERM 210, REPAY AGREEMENTS.

Jointly Owned Assets

Cash

Count jointly owned **cash** assets as totally available unless the SER group claims and verifies that a portion of the asset belongs to

someone not in the group. Each owner's share is the amount owned; see Value of Assets in this item.

Non-Cash

Count jointly owned **non-cash** assets as equal shares unless the ownership document specifies otherwise.

Burials

For burials, if the deceased jointly owns an asset and the asset ownership document indicates the joint owner has rights or survivorship, the asset is not counted for the SER burial.

Not Countable

Do not count an asset if the SER applicant cannot dispose of their share without the consent of other owner(s) who are not in the SER group and it is verified that the other owner(s) does not agree to the sale of the SER applicant's share.

Domestic Violence Situations

Count only available assets when the SER applicant is in a domestic violence situation. Assets owned exclusively by or under the control of the abusive co-owner are unavailable. This includes homesteads, jointly owned **non-cash** assets and cash assets in the abusive co-owner's possession. Count and verify available **cash** assets in the SER applicant's possession when determining eligibility.

Divestment

Determine divestment when both of the following have occurred within 90 days prior to the SER application:

- A member of the SER group transferred an asset to a person not in the SER group for less than the asset's fair market value, and
- The person transferred the asset to qualify for SER, to receive a larger SER payment than would otherwise have been payable under policy, or to avoid honoring a repay agreement.

There is no divestment if the person who transferred the asset can verify some reason for the transfer other than one of the above reasons.

If divestment has occurred, determine the amount divested by adding the SER group's current assets to the amount divested. Then subtract the appropriate cash asset exemption and non-cash asset limit from the total equity value of current assets. The result is the divested amount.

Deduct the divested amount from the amount that SER would pay. Treat divested funds like a copayment and subtract the funds from the cost of resolving the emergency. Refer the matter to the county prosecuting attorney if the reason for divestment is to avoid honoring a repay agreement.

VERIFICATION

The client's statement (written or verbal) is the only verification needed for assets, unless the self-attestation is questionable. If questionable, obtain verification of all countable assets at application.

Note: Verbal attestation must be documented in the case record.

Example: Client applies for SER. The household's total liquid assets are close to the asset limit. The specialist determines during a conversation with the client that the amount reported is questionable. Verification of the assets is requested.

Exception: Client statement in not an acceptable verification for trusts and annuities.

Do not require verification when countable assets exceed the limit based on a person's own statement of value.

Verification Sources

Verify the ownership and equity value of all non-excluded assets when the client's statement is questionable. Do not verify the value of assets that are not available.

You may use the:

- DHS-20, Verification of Assets.
- DHS-27, Release of Information.

- DHS-223, Documentation Record - used to document information verified by telephone contact with the appropriate source.
- Statement from the vendor or online printout which reflects the current account balance, (examples: Direct Express, ReliaCard, etc.).

Other forms/documents as appropriate.

- Deposit amounts in banks, savings and loan associations, credit unions and other financial institutions can be verified via:
  - Monthly account statement (examination of checkbook is **not** sufficient).
  - Written, faxed or emailed statement from financial institution.
  - Telephone contact with financial institution.
  - Statement from the vendor or online printout which reflects the current account balance (examples: Direct Express, ReliaCard, etc.).
- Money held by another:
  - Written statement from person holding the money.
- Real property/homestead/land contract:
  - Deed, mortgage, purchase agreement of contract.
  - State equalized value (SEV) on current property tax records multiplied by two.
  - Attorney or court records.
  - Contract holder.
  - County records.
  - Statement of real estate agent or financial institution.
- Retirement Account:
  - Written statement from plan administrator.
  - Current account statement.

- Savings Certificate:
  - Written statement from financial institution.
  - Certificate itself.
- Stocks and bonds:
  - Written statement from broker or company.
  - Listing in current newspaper.
- Trust:
  - Copy of trust document.
  - Copy of documents transferring ownership of assets to the trust.
  - Appropriate source for the asset types owned by the trust.
- U.S. Savings bond:
  - Statement from financial institution.
  - Bond.
- Vehicles:
  - Secretary of State Inquiry.
  - Title, registration or proof of insurance.
  - Blue book or NADA book wholesale (trade-in) value. Do **not** add the value of optional equipment, special equipment or low mileage when determining value.
  - Kelley Blue Book at www.kbb.com.
  - Loan statement or payment book.
  - Statement of vehicle dealer or junk dealer, as appropriate.
  - Allow the client to verify a claim that the vehicle is worth less (example: due to damage) than wholesale book value. If the vehicle is no longer listed, accept the person's statement of value.

Documentation

All assets must be entered into Bridges for eligibility and documentation purposes.

LEGAL BASE

Mich Admin Code, R 400.7001 et seq.

DEPARTMENT POLICY

Bridges establishes the SER countable income period and determines the SER group's net countable income based on the application date and entry of income information in the data collection screens. See ERM 208, Budget Computation, for policy on determining the group's SER financial eligibility and their required copayments.

COUNTABLE INCOME PERIOD

The SER budget computation period is 30 days. This is referred to as the countable income period. The first day of the countable income period is the date the local office receives a signed application for SER.

Example: The local office receives a signed application on November 16. The countable income period is November 16 through December 15.

COUNTABLE INCOME

Verify and budget all non-excluded gross income the SER group expects to receive during the countable income period. **Do not prorate income.**

Note: Bridges will average income with an irregular pay frequency based on the number of months calculated, from the period start month and the period end month, to determine countable income for the SER countable income period.

Unearned Income Examples

- FIP and SDA.
- Social Security benefits (RSDI/SSI) use the net amount received.

  Note: Do not count reimbursement of Medicare premiums.
- SSI State Supplemental payments. Refer to Reference Schedules Manual (RFS) Item 106, State SSI Payment Payroll Deadline Schedule.

Note: Budget the actual amount if it is expected to be received in the countable income period. (For example, do not budget $14 per month as a prorated amount.)

- Alimony, child support and child support participation payments.
- VA benefits, except clothing allowance or the court ordered amount for aid and attendance.
- Lump sum payments of accumulated monthly benefits.
- Payments from sick and accident insurance plans.
- Pensions and retirement benefits.
- Unemployment benefits, railroad unemployment benefits, and other governmental unemployment benefits.
- Worker's compensation.
- Strike benefits.
- Income received from the sale of property.
- Military allotments.
- Investment income, such as dividends, interest and royalties paid directly to the client.
- Income from annuities, bonds, stocks and trusts.
- Refugee Resettlement Funds. If a client receives resettlement funds, email the policy mailbox at Policy-SER, Policy-SER-DHS@michigan.gov.
- Adoption subsidy payments.
- Guardianship Assistance Program (GAP) payments.

Earned Income Examples

- Earnings from work as an employee (wages, salary, college work-study, commissions, tips).
- Earnings from self-employment (includes USDA PIK income).

- Training allowances paid to persons enrolled in sheltered work-shops.
- Rental income, room and board.
- Chore services payments to providers.

EXCLUDED INCOME

Do not count or verify income from the following sources:

- Americorps income.
- Income of non-responsible group members in burial cases.
- Reimbursement of Medicare premiums.
- Income in kind (not in the form of cash).
- Earned income of a dependent child when both of the following conditions are met:
  - The accumulated earnings are held in a savings account of which the dependent child who earned the money is the sole owner.
  - The accumulated earnings are not commingled with money from any other source; see ERM 205, Assets.
- Michigan Homestead Property Tax Credit and Home Heating Credit.
- Earned Income Credit.
- All services program benefits paid by the department on behalf of an SER group member (such as foster care payments).
- Income of the SER applicant's spouse when the applicant is in an emergency shelter as a victim of domestic violence.
- Reimbursement for past, current or future training-related, medical or volunteer expenses.
- Compensation awarded for a particular use (such as Victim's Compensation Award).
- Disaster relief assistance.

- Child care payments and allowances made by DHHS.
- Housing assistance that is paid pursuant to any state or federal law. Examples include:
  - Title II of the Uniform Relocation and Real Property Acquisition Act of 1970.
  - U.S. Housing Act of 1937.

    This includes Experimental Housing Allowance Program made under Annual Contribution Contracts entered into prior to January 1, 1975.
  - National Housing Act.
  - Section 101 of the Housing and Urban Development Act (HUD) of 1965.
- Educational grants, scholarships and benefits.
- Michigan Department of Community Health family support subsidy payments.
- WIC program benefits.
- Title VII nutrition program for the elderly.
- LIHEAP energy assistance benefits.
- Child nutrition and school lunch benefits.
- Food assistance benefits.

INCOME EXPENSES

Unearned Income

Net unearned income must be determined by deducting all of the following from the gross amount received:

- Mandatory withholding taxes.
- Court ordered child support paid, including arrears, but not more than the amount ordered by the court. No deduction is made for paid, voluntary child support.

- Payments for health insurance.
- Medicare premiums that will not be reimbursed.

Earned Income

Net income from employment or self-employment must be determined by deducting allowable expenses of employment from the gross amount received.

Note: SER does not allow deductions for garnishment actions or expenses of **producing** self-employment income (such as capital expenditures, labor costs, transportation costs while on the job, materials, loan and property payments, taxes, insurance, etc.).

Expenses of employment are **limited** to the following:

- Mandatory withholding taxes (25 percent of the gross).
- Deductions required by employer as a condition of employment.
- Deductions for health insurance.
- Court-ordered child support paid, including arrears. Expense amount cannot exceed the court ordered amount; no deduction is made for paid, voluntary child support.
- The cost of dependent care for either of the following:
  - A dependent child who is less than 13 years old.
  - A person who is 13 years old or older who needs care due to a mental or physical impairment.

  Deduct the unsubsidized cost of care or $200, whichever is less for each qualifying individual. The cost of dependent care must not be allowed as a deduction from the earnings of more than one member of the SER group.

  Do not deduct the cost of child care if caregiver is any of the following persons:

  - A member of the SER group.
  - A responsible relative of the employed person or of the person who needs care.
  - A dependent relative of the employed person.

- A person who is not a member of the SER group, if the care can be provided reasonably and safely by one of the following persons living in the home:
  - A member of the SER group.
  - A responsible relative of the employed person or the person who needs care.
  - A dependent relative of the employed person.

SER INCOME NEED STANDARDS

Group Size	Income Need Standard
1	$445
2	$500
3	$625
4	$755
5	$885
* 6	$1015
* Groups larger than 6 persons: Add $100 for each additional person.	

VERIFICATION

Verify all non-excluded income, expenses and deductions. The client must make a reasonable effort to obtain required verifications. The specialist must assist if the applicant needs and requests help. If neither the client nor the specialist can obtain the verifications despite a reasonable effort, use the best available information. If no evidence is available, the specialist must use their best judgment.

For energy services, income verification used in the current eligibility determination for any other Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) program may be used if available. If not available, income must be verified; see ERM 301, Energy Services.

Unearned Income

Acceptable methods of verification include:

- Written statements from the department, organization or person administering the payment, which shows the monthly amount of the benefit, the amount of deductions, and confirming whether or not the deductions are mandatory.
- Recipient award letters if dated within the last 60 days.
- Copies of checks or check stubs if dated within the last 60 days.
- Electronic data exchange with reliable income source.

Earned Income

- Pay stubs.
- DHS-38, Verification of Employment.
- Written statements of the employer.
- Business receipts.
- Accounting and other business records for self-employed persons.
- Written statements of persons paying money to an SER group member in cases where the SER group member provides child care, chore services, room and board, or other services for pay.
- Electronic data exchange with reliable income source.

LEGAL BASE

MAC R400.7001 et seq.

DEPARTMENT POLICY

Housing affordability is a condition of eligibility for State Emergency Relief (SER) and applies only to Relocation Services (ERM 303) and Home Ownership Services and Home Repairs (ERM 304). Housing affordability does not apply to other SER services.

Requirements

In this item, total housing obligation means the total amount the SER group must pay for rent, house payment, mobile home lot rent, property taxes and required insurance premiums. Renters can have a higher total housing obligation if heat, electricity and/or water/cooking gas are included.

Note: See chart at the end of this item or ERM 100, SER Quick Reference Charts.

Authorize SER for services only if the SER group has sufficient income to meet ongoing housing expenses. An SER group that cannot afford to pay their ongoing housing costs plus any utility obligations will not be able to retain their housing, even if SER is authorized.

Deny SER if the group does not have sufficient income to meet their total housing obligation. The total housing obligation cannot exceed 75 percent of the group's total net countable income.

Exception

A person/family who receives a voucher from one of the following meets affordability requirements:

- Family Re-Housing Program (replaces Rapid Re-Housing Initiative which ended 5/31/2015) effective 10/1/2015.
- Rural Homeless Permanent Supportive Housing Initiative (RPSH).

These clients should not be denied because they do not have the income for the rent. Because the program pays FMR (fair market rent) with the client paying 30 percent of their income, only the 30 percent should be counted as their obligation. Also, if the person does not have any income or 30 percent is too high, exceptions can and are granted by the MSHDA agents to waive the 30 percent contribution fee.

Affordability Calculation

Determine whether an SER group meets the Housing Affordability requirement:

- Multiply the group's total net countable income by 75 percent. The result is the maximum total housing obligation the group can have based on their income, and be eligible for SER housing services, and
- Refer to the table at the end of this item for any increases in the basic 75 percent test if the group is renting and heat, electric or water/cooking gas is included in the rent. Multiply the resulting percentage by the group's total net countable income. The result is the absolute total housing obligation the group can have and be eligible for SER housing services.

Bridges documents affordability on the SER budget.

Examples

A SER group is receiving RSDI of $550. They are responsible for paying their own heat, electric and water bills. Multiply $550 by 75 percent for a total of $412.50. Drop the cents. The maximum total housing obligation this group can have and be eligible for SER relocation, home ownership or home repair is $412.

A SER group receiving FIP has total net income of $420. Their rent includes heat, electricity and water. Add 25 percent to the basic 75 percent from the table at the end of this item. Multiply $420 by 100 percent for a total of $420. The maximum total housing obligation this group can have and be eligible for SER relocation, home ownership or home repair is $420.

A SER group receives FIP of $420 plus $100 in kind income each month. They pay all their own utilities. Since the in kind income is excluded (ERM 206), multiply $420 by 75 percent. $315 is the maximum total housing obligation the group can have and be eligible for SER relocation, home ownership or home repair.

A SER group of 2 adults has no income. Their housing costs $125 per month, nothing included. Multiply zero income times 75 percent for a total of $0. The maximum total housing obligation this group can have and be eligible for SER relocation, home ownership or home repair is zero.

BASIC 75 PERCENT HOUSING COST STANDARD INCREASES

INCREASES IN THE BASIC 75% HOUSING COST STANDARD	
Utility Include in the Rent	**Add this percentage to the basic 75% housing cost standard**
Heat	15%
Electric	5%
Water or Cooking Gas, or Both	5%

SER QUICK REFERENCE CHARTS

See ERM 100, SER Quick Reference Charts, for quick reference charts to SER services, payment maximums and coding.

LEGAL BASE

Mich Admin Code, R 400.7001 et seq.

POLICY

SER group members must use their available income and cash assets that will help resolve the emergency. Do not authorize a SER payment unless it will resolve the emergency.

Budget Computation

Bridges determines eligibility or ineligibility for each SER application and service requested. The worker is responsible for verifying information, certifying the eligibility results and authorizing the payment. It is not necessary to place a printed copy of the budget in the case record.

Asset Copayment

In most cases cash assets in excess of $15,000 will result in a denial. See *ERM 306, Burials*, for more information on assets for burials.

Income Copayment

A group is eligible for non-energy SER services with respect to income if the total combined monthly net income that is received or expected to be received by all group members in the 30-day countable income period does not exceed the standards found in the *SER Income Need Standards for Non-Energy Services* at the end of this item.

Income that is more than the basic monthly income need standard for the number of group members must be deducted from the cost of resolving the emergency. This is the income copayment.

There are no income copayments for SER energy services. With respect to income, clients are either eligible or they are not. For a group to be eligible for energy services, the combined monthly net income that is received or expected to be received by all group members in the 30-day countable income period, cannot exceed the standard for SER energy/LIHEAP services for the number of group members. If the income exceeds the limit, the request must be denied; see *SER Income Need Standards for Energy Services* in this item.

Total Copayment

The income and asset copayments combined together determine the SER group's total copayment.

The total copayment is the amount the SER group must pay toward their emergency. Copayment amounts are deducted from the cost of resolving the emergency.

Example: The applicant has a water shutoff for $100. The shortfall copayment is $15 and the income copayment is $100. Subtract the total $115 copayment from the $100 need. SER is denied because the copayment exceeds the need.

Example: The applicant has an eviction for $400. The shortfall copayment is $15 and the income copayment is $100. Subtract the total $115 copayment from the $400 need. The available SER payment is then $285. The $285 payment may be made once it is verified that the client's $115 copayment has been paid.

The group is not required to pay the copayment more than once during the 30-day authorization period. If multiple services are requested, the client is only required to pay the copayment on one service. However, the copayment must be paid before any other service is paid.

The client is notified on the DHS-1419, Decision Notice, of their copayment amount and the deadline to return verification that they have paid their copayment. In Bridges, the worker must pseudo-authorize the application in order to establish the deadline date and to issue the DHS-1419. The deadline date is always the last day of the 30-day eligibility period regardless of when the client requests the service. The client must provide verification of their payment by the last day of the 30-day eligibility period.

INCOME COPAYMENT MODIFICATION

First line managers can modify an income copayment for non-energy services. The manager must approve the modification in Bridges. This applies **only** if one of the following circumstances exist:

- The SER group used available income:

- To meet unusual expenses essential to protect their safety.
- To secure or maintain employment.

- The provider demands payment in advance, but the income is not available to the SER group until later in the budget period. **(Example:** RSDI is the only source of income and will not be received for three weeks.)

When modifying an income copayment, the copayment may be reduced or waived entirely. The full copayment amount up to the SER need may be paid. Take this alternative when no other alternative exists for meeting the emergency. The SER group may be required to sign a DHS-2157, Repay Agreement, for the income copayment amount; see ERM 210.

Reminder: Repay agreements cannot be taken against RSDI/SSI.

Copayment Corrections

Decrease the income copayment when a member of the SER group notifies the specialist of a shortfall in projected income within the 30-day budget period.

Do not increase an income copayment once a copayment has been determined and the client has been notified of the amount.

Client Contribution

The SER group must contribute toward the cost of resolving the emergency if SER does not cover the full cost of the service. Other persons or organizations can also contribute funds on behalf of the SER group. Verification that the contribution has been paid must be received before any SER payment can be made. For burial contributions; see ERM 306.

For energy services, verification from a MEAP grantee that the household will be enrolled into an energy provider's Affordable Payment Plan (APP) can be used to satisfy the household's client contribution. Any additional payment made by another agency to reduce the balance on the client's total bill to zero should not reduce the SER payment.

Required Payments/ Shortfall

If an application is made for shelter, or non-energy utilities, a determination of required payments must be made. Required payments are determined based on the group size, the group's income and the obligation to pay for the service that existed during each month of the six months prior to application; see ERM 204, ERM 302, ERM 303, ERM 304. If the client failed without good cause to make required payments, a shortfall amount is determined. The client must pay the shortfall amount toward the cost of resolving the emergency. Verification that the shortfall has been paid must be received before any SER payment can be made.

Prorated Payments

Undocumented aliens are not eligible for SER, **but their presence does not disqualify the group**. Bridges determines how much the ineligible group members must pay to help resolve the emergency. This is called the prorated payment. To determine the prorated payment:

- Count the income and assets of all household members, including the undocumented alien(s).
- Include all household members when determining required payments, affordability and other eligibility requirements.
- The portion of the final SER payment is prorated to remove the undocumented aliens' share. That share is the prorated amount that the group must pay toward the cost of service.

Note: MEAP funds cannot be used to pay the prorated amount.

Notification

If the SER group meets all eligibility criteria but has a copayment, shortfall or contribution, do not issue payment until the client provides proof that their payment has been made or will be made by another agency. Verification from a MEAP grantee that the household will be enrolled into an energy provider's Affordable Payment Plan (APP) can be used to satisfy the household's client contribution for energy-related SER services.

Verification of payment must be received in the local office within the 30-day eligibility period or no SER payment will be made. The client will then have to reapply. The DHS-1419, Decision Notice, must be used to inform the SER group of the amounts that they must pay and the due date for returning proof of their payment.

Use the DHS-849, Authorization/Invoice, to notify the vendor and local office fiscal unit of the SER group's copayment and approved services.

See ERM 103, Application Procedures, and the DHS-1419, Decision Notice, regarding timeframes allowed for the client to make their payment when all other eligibility criteria are met.

Verification

Before authorizing the department's portion of the cost of services, verify that the copayment, shortfall, and contribution have been paid by the client or will be paid by another agency. See ERM 306 for burial copayments and contributions.

Avoid creating situations where the department issues a partial payment for services, but the SER group fails to pay the remainder of the payment and the vendor does not provide the service. This can result in loss of the SER payment and no benefit to the SER group.

A written statement from the MEAP grantee that indicates the household will be enrolled into an energy provider's Affordable Payment Plan (APP) can be used as verification that the client's client contribution amount has been met for energy-related SER services.

Emergency Services (ES) Funds

In some instances, it may be prudent to use ES funds to resolve an emergency. See ERM 209, Emergency Services (ES) Fund for current instructions and allowable uses for ES funds.

SER INCOME NEED STANDARDS FOR NON-ENERGY SERVICES

NON-ENERGY SERVICES	
SER Group Size	**Income Need Standard**
1	$ 445
2	$ 500
3	$ 625
4	$ 755
5	$ 885
6	$1015
Groups larger than 6 persons: Add $100 for each additional person.	

SER INCOME NEED STANDARDS FOR ENERGY/LIHEAP SERVICES

ENERGY/LIHEAP SERVICES Effective 10/01/2020	
Family Size	**150% Federal Poverty Level/Month**
1	$1595
2	$2155
3	$2715
4	$3275
5	$3835
6	$4395
7	$4955
8	$5515
For each additional family member add $560 per month.	

LEGAL BASE

Mich Admin Code, R 400.7001 et seq.

Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Act of 1984; Section 2605(2)(B)

DEPARTMENT POLICY

In the majority of cases, State Emergency Relief (SER) is sufficient to resolve threats to health and safety. However, due to the nature of emergencies and variations in SER group circumstances, unusual situations may exist which cannot be resolved through SER.

Emergency Services (ES) funds are allocated to each local office to provide assistance when SER will not cover the requested service or the SER payment will not resolve the emergency.

USE OF ES FUNDS

An SER application must be submitted and eligibility must be determined prior to any service or cost being paid using ES funds. SER should be authorized whenever the household qualifies for a benefit through the SER program. Since ES is a funding source, this is not a program that the client can apply for directly. The issuance of ES funding is made in conjunction with the submission of an SER application, at the local office's discretion.

Any issuance of ES Funds must be recorded in the Bridges electronic case record. Case comments must include the following:

- Details of the service requested.
- Extenuating circumstances resulting in the use of ES funds.
- Provider name.
- Amount of ES payment.

The first priority of emergency funding is to assure that clients have safe and decent housing, and providing needed services to help persons or families remain in their own home. ES funds may be used to expand payment maximums if **all** other eligibility requirements have been met.

Example: An SER group needs their septic system repaired at a cost of $1650. The group has the full $1500 non-energy lifetime limit available and meets all other eligibility requirements for home repairs. However, they do not have the extra $150 and have been unable to find private or community agencies that will contribute the $150 difference. The $1500 limit may be paid from SER and the additional $150 supplemented from ES funds.

SERVICES & COSTS NOT COVERED BY ES FUNDS

ES funds may **not** be used to:

- Pay energy services, (heat, electricity, furnace repair or replacement).
- Pay legal or court costs.
- Repair or purchase a vehicle.
- Purchase bus passes or tokens or pay for any other travel expenses, unless it meets the criteria of medical transportation.
- Pay or reimburse for employment related costs such as car repair.
- Reimburse a provider, individual, or MDHHS employee.
- Pay for physical examinations or medical treatment not listed previously in this item.
- Pay for medical records or photocopies.
- Establish contracts, including emergency shelter contracts.

ES COVERED SERVICES

ES funds may be used to assist with the following:

1. **Emergency food**: Issue emergency food if the need results from an event that is beyond the group's control and the group was not eligible for Food Assistance Program (FAP) benefits in the current month.

   ES funds may be used to:

   - Replace food within 60 days from the date of fire, civil disorder or natural/chemical disaster.
   - Prevent children from being removed from the home.
   - Allow children to return to the home.

The daily food allowance is $6.00 per day per SER group member for a maximum of 15 days, or the shortest period of time that meets the SER group's needs.

Verification is required and may include any of the following:

- Fire report.
- Police report.
- Statement from the MDHHS services worker or manager regarding the removal or return of the children to the home.
- Newspaper article or other reliable source that provides the date and details of the fire, disorder or disaster.

2. **Homeless prevention**: includes mortgage and back taxes to avoid eviction or foreclosure. Rental payments and security deposits are also allowed to establish or maintain safe housing. Mortgage and property tax payments are only allowed for homeowners or individuals who are purchasing their home. Housing must be affordable.

   Note: Households facing an immediate crisis may also be assisted by the county's Housing Assessment and Resource Agency (HARA); see the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) website for referral information, [http://michigan.gov/mshda/0,4641,7-141-5515---,00.html]

3. **Emergency home repair**: is used to prevent removal of a family from their home for health and safety reasons. Two quotes (minimum) must be obtained from licensed providers, with the lesser of the two being awarded the home repair work. Home repairs are only allowed for homeowners or individuals who are purchasing their home. Housing must be affordable.

4. **Non-energy utilities**: (water, sewer and cooking gas); payment may be issued if the client is in arrears on non-energy related utility payments, and at risk of shut off.

5. **Emergency medical**: MDHHS may pay the provider for the actual cost of the service, up to $500, or the minimum amount needed to resolve the emergency if the services are not covered by a third-party resource, Medicaid, Medicare or a health insurance provider.

6. **Limited-cost household goods**: Includes one table with chairs and beds sufficient for all household members, with a $500 maximum. Room air conditioners may be purchased or repaired only if the recipient is 55 or older or provides a statement from a physician that air conditioning is medically necessary.

7. **Limited-cost household items**: Includes dishes, silverware, pots and pans, brooms or mops, bed sheets and pillows, and towels, with a $100 maximum issuance.

8. **Emergency medical transportation**: Includes a one-time trip to a hospital or doctor's office for a life threatening situation or illness, a trip to the pharmacy to fill a prescription for an illness, or a trip to resolve another type of medical emergency.

   Note: Ongoing trips for regular office visits, family visitations, etc., are not covered.

9. **Other limited-cost items**: Contribution to a burial is limited to the cost of an oversized casket. No other burial costs are allowed. Clothing is limited to the replacement of clothing lost in a natural or chemical disaster, fire, civil disorder or other catastrophic event.

10. **Bulk purchases**: are allowed with the following stipulations:

    - Bulk purchases shall be made according to MDHHS purchasing guidelines.
    - Bulk purchases may be made up to $1,000. Purchases exceeding $1,000 require central office approval.
    - Bulk purchases are to relieve one time emergencies such as: diapers, baby formula or small incremental gift cards, up to the maximum of $25 each. Gift cards must not exceed $25 in value.
    - Purchases may be made on a monthly or quarterly basis in anticipation of the use during that period. Purchases must not carry over to the next quarter.
    - Purchases made during the last quarter of the fiscal year must not be more than the quarterly average purchased for the preceding three quarters.

- The items must be purchased and used in the same fiscal year.
- Documentation, including the client's name, case number, and purpose for issuing the item must accompany the distribution log and fiscal records, with a copy filed in Bridges ECF and case comments must be entered.

Note: Large items and furniture, including beds and cribs, do not qualify as a bulk purchase but can be approved on a case by case basis for qualifying households.

11. **Extermination services for renters**: including the treatment for bed bugs, requires a Program Policy Office Exception. The CM-0023, Contract Program Policy Exception Request form, along with supporting documentation, must be completed and emailed to the SER mailbox for consideration.

AUTHORIZATION OF ES FUNDS

Follow the local office business process for review of ES authorization prior to submitting documentation to DHHS Accounting for final payment. The DHHS Accounting email is InvoiceMDHHS@michigan.gov. Each ES authorization requires the completion of the MDHHS-5602, Payment Request, and must have the signature of the worker, supervisor or manager. ES payments may only be issued to Bridges-enrolled providers.

For payment of services not listed under the ES Covered Services section above, the local county office director has the discretion to approve the use of ES funding. If approved, the local county office director, or signatory designee, must sign the MDHHS-5602, Payment Request form prior to any payment issuance. Payments cannot be authorized for services and costs specifically listed as non-covered services.

All supporting documentation, including the signed MDHHS-5602, must be scanned into the electronic case file in Bridges.

Note: As a result of the implementation of SIGMA, the MDHHS-5602, Payment Request form will be replacing the DHS-1291.

LEGAL BASE

Mich Admin Code, R 400.7001 et seq.

DEPARTMENT POLICY

State Emergency Relief (SER) provides immediate assistance to meet a current emergency. If the SER group expects to receive income or assets in the future, but not in time to resolve the emergency, a repay agreement may be necessary. It is a condition of SER eligibility that the SER group agree to repay the SER issued at the time they receive the expected income or assets.

Lottery Winnings

If an SER group member is identified on the lottery match, from the date of application until the date the benefit is issued, the SER group must repay the SER benefit. The repayment amount shall not exceed either the lottery winning amount or the actual SER payment amount. Please follow Incorrect Issuances Policy in ERM 401 to request a refund from the SER group.

Income/Asset Repayment

Take repay agreements against any of the following future resources if an application for them is pending, or if there is another reason the SER group expects to receive them in the future.

- Workers compensation benefits.
- Settlement of a claim or lawsuit.
- Other expected income and assets not excluded from repay agreements.

Note: Do not take repay agreements against future wages (income beyond the 30-day authorization period) or any type of Social Security benefits (RSDI or SSI). The department no longer takes repay agreements for shelter or utility deposits. Refer providers who want to voluntarily return a deposit to the local office fiscal unit.

DHS-2157, Repay Agreement

Any adult member of the SER group who expects to receive income from a source specified in this item must sign a DHS-2157, Repay Agreement. Attach the original DHS-2157 to the DHS-849, Authorization/Invoice, and send the documents to the local office

fiscal unit. Give the second copy to the person who signed the form. Place the third copy in the case record.

The fiscal unit processes the DHS-2157 according to policy in Accounting Manual (ACM) Items 480 and 481-1.

LEGAL BASE

MAC R400.7001 et seq.

DEPARTMENT POLICY

Low-income households who meet all State Emergency Relief (SER) eligibility requirements may receive assistance to help them with household heat and electric costs. Funding for energy services assistance is provided through the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).

A household may receive one SER payment for heat and one for non-heat electricity, up to the SER cap, each fiscal year.

CRISIS DEFINED

In compliance with Section 2604 of the LIHEAP statute, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) must provide some form of assistance within 48 hours of receiving an application for crisis assistance.

Eligibility staff must contact the energy provider to secure a hold on the pending disconnect to resolve the immediate emergency and allow time to determine the household's eligibility for program benefits.

An energy crisis is one of the following:

- An individual or household has a past due account or shut-off notice on an energy bill for his or her household.
- A residential fuel tank is estimated to contain no more than 25 percent of its heating fuel capacity.
- A stated need for household deliverable fuel or nontraditional fuel source such as wood, corn, cherry pits, etc.
- A notice that the balance of a prepayment account is below $100.
- A statement from a licensed service provider indicating the homeowner's furnace is inoperable and in need of repair or replacement.

LIFE THREATENING CRISIS DEFINED

In compliance with Section 2604 of the LIHEAP statute, MDHHS must provide some form of assistance within 18 hours of receiving an application for crisis assistance.

A household is considered to have a life-threatening energy crisis if **all** of the following criteria is met:

- The household is not protected by Michigan's Winter Protection Plan (WPP) or some other shut off protection/moratorium.
- The household has experienced disconnection of natural gas or electric service, has ran out of their household heating fuel, or the household has a statement from a licensed service providing indicating that the furnace is inoperable and in need of repair or replacement;
- Restoration of energy service(s) is medically necessary;
- The household does not have any temporary housing alternatives while the emergency is being resolved.

COORDINATION WITH MEAP

As required by Public Act 615, agencies receiving a grant to administer the Michigan Energy Assistance Program (MEAP) are required to offer services that will enable participants to become or move toward becoming self-sufficient, including assisting participants in paying their energy bills on time, assisting participants in budgeting for and contributing to their ability to provide for energy expenses, and assisting participants in utilizing energy services to optimize on energy efficiency.

A household receiving an energy-related SER payment, for services covered in this item, qualify for MEAP services and assistance. The DHS-1419, State Emergency Relief Decision Notice, must inform the applicant that additional services are available through MEAP. Include the following comment on each DHS-1419 when an energy service has been approved or when there is a denial due to the household already receiving the same type of energy assistance in the current fiscal year:

> DHHS will only issue one payment for heat and one payment for non-heat electricity between October 1 and September 30

each year. A SER payment for heat or non-heat electricity service qualifies your household for additional energy services through the Michigan Energy Assistance Program (MEAP). Please call 2-1-1 for a referral to a MEAP grantee to see what other assistance you may be eligible to receive.

Households that are currently enrolled in a provider-sponsored affordable payment plan (APP) through, Consumers Energy's Consumers Affordable Resource for Energy (CARE) program, DTE Energy's Low Income Self-Sufficiency Plan (LSP),SEMCO Energy's Monthly Assistance Program (MAP) or UPPCO's Energy Assistance, Self-Sufficiency & Education (EASE) Program are not eligible for SER energy services.

If a client is enrolled in a provider-sponsored program through Consumer's Energy, DTE,SEMCO or UPPCO for only **one** energy service, it may be possible for the household to receive SER assistance for the energy service not covered by the provider's program.

Information regarding MEAP, participating grantees and a list of providers who have opted out of participating in MEAP, can be found on the Michigan Public Service Commission's website under Michigan.gov/energygrants. Michigan law prevents electric companies, who have opted out of collecting the funding factor for MEAP, from disconnecting electric service to their customers between November 1st and April 15th. Deny requests for energy services between November 1st and March 31st if the service provider is a non-participating electric service provider for the current fiscal year.

SER eligibility for qualifying low-income households whose service provider opted out of collecting the MEAP surcharge resumes on April 1st.

COVERED SERVICES

Heating, Electric or Deliverable Fuels

When the group's heat or electric service for their current residence is in past due status, in threat of shutoff or is already shut off and must be restored, payment may be authorized to the enrolled provider. The amount of the payment is the minimum necessary to

prevent shutoff or restore service, not to exceed the fiscal year cap. Payment must resolve the emergency by restoring or continuing the service for at least 30 calendar days. Current bills that are not subject to shutoff should not be included in the amount needed.

Note: SER may be used to assist a household who is enrolled in the shut-off protection plan (SPP) as long as all other eligibility requirements are met.

Payment may be made on a prepayment account for natural gas or electric services when the balance remaining in the account does not exceed $100. The SER benefit amount must not exceed the average billing amount for the past six months.

Payment may be made up to the fiscal year cap for the necessary charges to deliver a 30-day supply of fuel for households that heat with deliverable fuel (fuel oil, propane or coal). For fuel oil and propane, a delivery to fill the tank is considered a 30-day supply. Payment for deliverable fuel will not be made if the deliverable fuel tank contains more than 25 percent of its heating fuel capacity. If, upon delivery, the existing supply is greater than 25 percent of the heating fuel capacity, the SER payment shall not be made.

Note: Wood is not considered a deliverable fuel.

Deposit, Reconnect Fees

Deposits, special trip charges, pilot relights, pressure checks, reconnect fees, and related charges such as storage tank (pig) installation, delivery or rental can be paid if they are necessary to prevent an emergency and are required by the provider. These fees are **not** included in the fiscal year cap but do have a dollar limit per occurrence.

SERVICES NOT COVERED

Do not authorize energy services to pay for:

- Repair or protection plans.
- Unauthorized or illegal use.
- Bankrupt accounts.
- Cooking gas; see ERM 302, Utility Services.

- Service used in businesses or nonresidential buildings or facilities such as rental units, garages, stores, or nonresidential farm uses. When a bill represents combined residential and nonresidential or business usage, pay only the residential portion if the utility can provide an approximate breakdown showing the residential use portion and the group applying for energy services pays the nonresidential costs. In the case of a client who works in their own home, if the bill is in the client's name and the service address is the same as the client's residence address, it is considered a residential bill and payment may be authorized. If the bill is in the name of the client's business, it is considered a commercial bill and payment cannot be authorized.

  Exception: Payment shall not be issued for energy services when the usage is in violation of the federal law.

  Example: A client has requested assistance for an electric shut off which includes costs associated to manufacturing "medical" marijuana. The client is not eligible for SER since federal law, 21 U.S.C. 841(a) prohibits the manufacturing of marijuana.

- Air conditioning billed separately from residential electric service.

- Common meter/service situations. This occurs when one meter or heat/electric unit services more than one residential unit or residence. If the energy provider can verify the group's actual usage and the provider will accept the SER group's portion and maintain services, payment may be made in full.

- Back rent when the client has a judgment which includes money owed on a heat or electric bill. This is considered a relocation service, not an energy service.

  Example: A client has requested payment for eviction which includes money owed on a heat or electric bill. The landlord has paid the bill up to date with the provider, but the client has not paid the landlord for the heat/electric, which is part of the rental agreement. The heat/electric payment would be included as part of the total amount needed to prevent eviction.

- Payments to residential landlords, residential management companies, billing service agencies, or collection agencies are

not eligible to receive emergency service (ES) or SER funds, as they are not the actual service provider. Examples of third party billing companies who are not eligible providers include:

- Universal Utilities.
- D & B Billing Services.
- Electrical Inspection Company.
- Infinity Billing Enterprises.

- Secondary household fuel types. Payment may only be approved for the primary heating source.

- Deposit for new service when the energy provider is regulated by the Michigan Public Service Commission.

- Late payment charges when the energy provider is regulated by the MPSC.

Note: Per MPSC billing rules, a regulated utility shall not assess a late payment charge against a customer whose payment is being made by MDHHS. The 2 percent late fee should **not** then become the responsibility of the customer but should be reduced to zero for any payments made by MDHHS through State Emergency Relief (SER) or the Michigan Energy Assistance Program (MEAP).

For a list of regulated Gas Utilities go to https://www.michigan.gov/mpsc/0,9535,7-395-93308_93325_93422_93762_94260-503211--,00.html.

For a list of regulated Electric Utilities go to https://www.michigan.gov/mpsc/0,9535,7-395-93308_93325_93423_93500_94218-503159--,00.html.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

The client must complete the DHS-1514, Application for State Emergency Relief, the MDHHS-1171, Assistance Application along with the MDHHS-1171-SER supplemental form or submit an application electronically through MI Bridges.

- All household members are included in the SER group.

- Income of all household members is budgeted.

- Assets of all household members are budgeted.

- Income verification used for current eligibility for any other MDHHS administered program may be used, if available. If not available, income must be verified.

- There is no income copayment for energy-related services. The household income must be at or below the LIHEAP income limit for the group to qualify for SER. See EXHIBIT II - SER INCOME NEED STANDARDS FOR ENERGY/LIHEAP SERVICES in ERM 208.

- The bill must be connected to the group's current address. If the bill, including old or transferred balances, must be paid to start or maintain service at the current or new address, payment may be authorized up to the fiscal year cap, as long as the payment resolves the emergency.

- The household fuel type must be correct for the type of payment requested.

- The requested amount in Bridges must match the amount on the past due or shut off notice/bill, or the declared amount needed for a deliverable fuel. If there is a discrepancy in the amount needed to resolve the emergency, there must be documentation in the case record.

  Note: The requested amount for a prepayment account must equal the group's average billing amount for the past 6 months.

- Verification that the required copayment(s) has been paid must be obtained prior to the MDHHS payment being issued. All other non-financial eligibility requirements must be met.

- Payment can only be made to an enrolled energy provider, see ERM 401, Payments.

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Good Cause

The required payment amount for both heat and non-heat electricity is $0, therefore Good Cause is granted for each energy-related service request. A SER group is not required to make payments in the 6 months prior to the SER application or energy-related service request in order to be eligible for energy assistance.

The SER Required Payments - Details screen should be completed as follows for any of the 6 months prior to the SER application month:

The dropdown value next to the applicable SER service type(s) should contain a “No” response to the question, “Did the client have an obligation to pay for this month?”

Decision Notice

The DHS-1419, Decision Notice, must be sent to the client for every energy request. The notice must include the required payment amounts to inform the client of their obligation; see ERM 103, Application Procedures.

The DHS-1419, State Emergency Relief Decision Notice, must inform the applicant that additional services are available through MEAP. Include the following comment on each DHS-1419 when an energy service has been approved or when there is a denial due to the household already receiving the same type of energy assistance in the current fiscal year:

> DHHS will only issue one payment for heat and one payment for non-heat electricity between October 1 and September 30 each year. A SER payment for heat or non-heat electricity service qualifies your household for additional energy services through the Michigan Energy Assistance Program (MEAP). Please call 2-1-1 for a referral to a MEAP grantee to see what other assistance you may be eligible to receive.

Note: The DHS-1150, Application Eligibility Notice, may be used to notify a client of a denied SER request and must be issued in instances where no DHS-1419 is generated through Bridges.

SALES TAX ON DELIVERABLE FUELS

Most payments for deliverable fuels are subject to sales tax. The only MDHHS payments for deliverable fuels under SER that are **not** subject to sales tax are those for clients who have their delivery pre-authorized with the DHS-849, Authorization/Invoice.

Be sure the provider has their copy of the DHS-849 **before** they provide the service.

TRIBAL PAYMENTS

Indian tribal organizations may receive LIHEAP funds directly from the federal government to help with heat, electric and furnace repair bills. Payments are made available by the tribal organization to the members of the tribe, usually in the form of direct payments to the provider. The tribal members may apply for SER, but payments are limited to the highest amount available either from MDHHS or the tribal organization.

The worker must notify the program office, via an email to: Policy-SER@michigan.gov, of the tribal LIHEAP payment so the fiscal year cap can be adjusted.

To avoid duplicate payment, verify any tribal LIHEAP authorizations. Notify Front End Eligibility (FEE) if necessary.

VERIFICATION OF NEED AND COST OF THE EMERGENCY

Verify past due status, threatened shutoff or the need for reconnection of natural gas or electricity, by contacting the energy company. For SER groups who have a prepayment account, verify that their prepayment balance does not exceed $100. Contact can be in the form of a written notice, telephone call, fax, email or information on the provider's secure website. The case record must contain documentation of this verification.

Accept the group's statement as verification of need for deliverable fuels, wood and other non-metered heating sources.

A bill must be obtained before authorizing a payment. A fax, email or scanned copy of the bill received directly from the provider is acceptable as long as it includes all the pertinent information that would be included on the actual bill.

Exception: The specialist may only use a DHS-223, Documentation Record, for deliverable fuels, wood and other non-traditional heating source estimates or to clarify discrepancies. The DHS-223 may not be used as a verification source for natural gas, non-heat electric or other energy types that receive monthly statements and shut off notices. Documentation on the DHS-223 must include:

- Date.
- Client name and case number.
- Amount needed to resolve the emergency.
- Name on account.
- Any other pertinent account information.
- The name of the person at the utility company who provided the information along with the signature of the MDHHS staff person obtaining the information.

Photocopies of bills are not accepted.

The original bill, including scanned copies, fax, email or DHS-223 must be attached to the original DHS-849 and forwarded to the fiscal unit. See ERM 401, Payments, for the proper use of the DHS-849.

PAYMENT LIMITS

Effective October 1, 2013

Energy Type	Service Code	Fiscal Year Cap
Natural gas and wood	63	$850
Deliverable fuel (fuel oil, propane, coal)	63	$1200
Other fuel (kerosene, corn pellets, cherry pits, etc.)	63	$850
Residential electric (not used for heat)	65	$850
All-electric home (combined heat & residential use)	64	$850
Deposits/fees for energy service	26 (heat)/27 (electric)	$200 per occurrence

Authorizations

Before authorizing the department's portion of the cost of services, verify that the alien proration and/or client contribution have been paid by the client or will be paid by another agency. Verification from a MEAP grantee that the household will be enrolled into an energy provider's Affordable Payment Plan (APP) can be used to satisfy the household's client contribution.

Approve payment if it will resolve the emergency and if the energy provider will maintain or restore service for at least 30 days. Do not

authorize any energy services payment that will not resolve the current emergency, even if the payment is within the fiscal year cap.

Note: MEAP cannot be used for alien proration. Additional payments made by another agency, which reduce the client's total bill to a zero balance, should not reduce the SER payment. The MDHHS payment is not reduced when another agency is paying the client's current balance (the amount **not** subject to shut off) so the client's account will have a $0 balance. If you are unsure if the additional agency commitment results in $0 owed on the account, please confirm the information with the energy provider.

Payments are applied to the cap of the client. Client is defined as the applicant for or recipient of SER and includes all group members. Every individual in the group who benefits from the payment, including minor children, will have payments applied to their individual cap. The payments applied to the cap follow the individual even if they move from one household to another.

In instances where a group member has met the cap but the rest of the household has not received an energy-related SER payment, an exception request should be submitted through Bridges. This will allow the household to qualify for additional MEAP services.

Example: A SER payment is made for heat on the mother's case. The payment applies to the mother's cap and to all the children who live with her. One child leaves the home and moves in with the father. The father then applies for SER for heat. The child's cap is applied to the father's eligibility determination because the child has benefited from the previous heat payment.

Bridges tracks all energy service authorizations and cap limits for each individual. In order to view the payment caps, complete an inquiry in Bridges for each SER group member. Caps can be viewed in *Benefit Issuance/SER Adjustments/View SER Cap*.

ACCESSING CLIENT ENERGY ACCOUNT INFORMATION

On-line Account Access

DTE – Online Resource for Agencies (ORA)

URL: https://agency.dteenergy.com

Consumers Energy – Consumers Energy Portal for Agency Self Service (CE PASS)

URL: https://www.consumersenergy.com/cepass

MDHHS local office security coordinators and their backups are the designated account administrators for DTE and Consumers Energy online access. Security coordinators are responsible for enrolling staff and maintaining appropriate access to ORA and CE PASS to determining SER eligibility.

Changes to local office security coordinators should be reported directly to the SER policy mailbox, do not contact DTE or Consumers Energy directly with these requests.

- All MDHHS staff and managers who intend to use the online access must provide all necessary profile information requested by the energy provider, which may include personal information.
- MDHHS staff must be trained and supplied with a user ID and password prior to use.
- All trained staff and managers are allowed to access the website to obtain payment history, other account information, and to allow a confirmation of payment.
- MDHHS staff can use the account statement provided on the website in lieu of an actual bill. If the online statement is used, a copy must be attached to the DHS-849 for fiscal. Another copy must be retained in the case record.
- MDHHS staff should submit a payment confirmation via the website. The commitment requires the approved DHS-849 invoice number and amount.

- An application for assistance includes a disclaimer to allow access to account information with energy providers via fax, email, and phone or company website. When the client signs the application (which is required for all SER energy requests), they are giving MDHHS staff permission to access the site. No separate release of information is required.

- Energy providers' websites are to be used for business purposes only, are not for unauthorized or personal use and are monitored. Providing false information for a user profile or conducting personal activity can result in disciplinary actions.

LEGAL BASE

Mich Admin Code, R 400.7001 et seq.

DEPARTMENT POLICY

State Emergency Relief (SER) helps to restore or prevent shut off of a utility service specified in this item when service is necessary to prevent serious harm to SER group members.

Covered Services

The following are covered utility services:

- Payment of an arrearage to maintain or restore service for the following utilities: water, sewer or cooking gas. The payment must restore or continue service for at least 30 days at the current residence. However, payments for current charges are not allowed.
- A deposit (including membership fees and lease/rental payments for an on-site storage tank) required by the utility provider to begin, maintain, or restore one of the following services currently or previously the responsibility of the SER group: water, sewer and cooking fuel.
- Fees for connection, reconnection, or hookup of utility services.

The bill does not have to be in the client's name but it must be connected to the group's current address. If the bill, including old or transferred balances, must be paid to start or maintain service at the current or new address, payment may be authorized up to the fiscal year cap as long as the payment resolves the emergency.

Services Not Covered

Do not approve the following services under any circumstances:

- Telephone arrearages, installation costs or deposits.
- Unauthorized or illegal usage of any utility.
- Bankrupt accounts.
- Utility service that does not reflect the SER group's actual usage. An example of this is common service, when one meter serves more than one residence. If the local utility can verify the SER group's actual usage in these situations and the utility

will accept payment for the SER group's portion and maintain service, common meter service is no longer a barrier to eligibility.

- Back rent when the client has a judgement which includes money owed on a utility bill. This is considered a relocation service, not a utility service.

  Example: A client has requested payment for eviction which includes money owed on a utility bill. The landlord has paid the bill up-to-date with the provider, but the client has not paid the landlord for the utility, which is part of the rental agreement. The utility payment would be included as part of the total amount needed to prevent eviction.

- Payments to residential landlords, residential management companies, billing service agencies, or collection agencies are not eligible to receive emergency service (ES) or SER funds, as they are not the actual service provider. Examples of third party billing companies are who are not eligible service providers include:

  - Universal Utilities.
  - D & B Billing Services.
  - Electrical Inspection Company.

Required Payments

The SER group has to pay the minimum monthly amounts for water, sewer and/or cooking gas for the last six months. See the Payment Limits chart below. The required payment period is always the six-month period prior to the month the SER group applies. If required payments of the requested service were not met, determine if good cause for non-payment exists. Unmet required payments are also referred to as a shortfall. See ERM 204, Client Caused Emergencies and ERM 103, Application Procedures.

SER cannot be used to make required payments.

Shortfall payments cannot be waived.

Use the DHS-1419, Decision Notice, each time a utility services payment is approved, acknowledging that the utility required payment must be met before utility services are again authorized.

Authorizations

Before authorizing the department's portion of the cost of services, verify that the income and asset copayment, shortfall, and contribution have been paid by the client or will be paid by another agency. Approve payment up to the fiscal year cap if it will resolve the emergency and if the provider will maintain or restore service for at least 30 days. Do not authorize any payment that will not resolve the current emergency, even if the payment is within the fiscal year cap.

Payments are applied to the cap of the client. Client means the applicant for or recipient of SER and includes all group members. Every individual in the group who benefits from the payment, including minor children, will have payments applied to their individual cap. The payments made to cap follow the individual even if they move from one household to another.

Example: An SER payment is made for water on the mother's case. The payment applies to the mother's cap and to all the children who live with her. One child leaves the home and moves in with the father. The father then applies for SER for water. The child's cap is applied to the father's eligibility determination because the child has benefited from a water payment.

Bridges tracks all service authorizations and cap limits for each individual. In order to view the payment caps, complete an inquiry in Bridges for each SER group member. Caps can be viewed in *Benefit Issuance/SER Adjustments/View SER Cap.*

Water/Sewer/Cooking Gas Cap $175 per fiscal year Security Deposits for Utility Service $200 per occurrence	
Group Size	Monthly Required Payments
1	$8
2	$9
3	$10
4	$11
5	$13
6 or more	$15

Verification

Verify actual or possible shutoff of water, sewer or cooking gas service by:

- A disconnect notice from the utility.
- Information from the utility provider's secure website.
- An overdue or delinquency notice when the water or sewer is not disconnected but the arrearage is added to the local tax bill.
- The client's statement of need for cooking fuel.

Verify that the SER group has made required payments by:

- A statement from the provider.
- Utility payment receipts.
- Fax/email/phone call from the provider.
- Information from provider's secure website.

LEGAL BASE

MAC R400.7001 et seq.

DEPARTMENT POLICY

State Emergency Relief (SER) assists individuals and families to resolve or prevent homelessness by providing money for rent, security deposits, and moving expenses.

Households facing an immediate crisis may also be assisted by the county's Housing Assessment and Resource Agency (HARA). Please visit the following website for referral information, http://michigan.gov/mshda/0,4641,7-141-5515---,00.html

COVERED SERVICES

Accept the decision of the SER group regarding use of the relocation funds authorized. The issuance amount must resolve the group's shelter emergency. Authorize any combination of the following services:

- Moving expenses (to relocate household effects).
- Security deposit (if required).
- First month's rent.
- Rent arrearage.
  - Mobile home lot rent for owners or purchasers is a home ownership service found in ERM 304.
  - Mobile home lot rent for renters is a relocation service covered by this Item.

Note: Court costs and fees included in a judgment is an allowable cost for a *rent to prevent eviction* request.

Example: Group A decides to use their entire relocation services amount for a rent arrearage; Group B wants to use their relocation services amount for the first month's rent on a new apartment; Group C requests first month's rent and rental of a U-Haul trailer. Process payments for these situations as requested.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Authorize relocation services only if one of the following circumstances exists and all other SER criteria are met.

- The SER group is homeless. The definition of homelessness for SER means that there is no housing that the group can return to. To be considered homeless, the SER group must meet one of the following criteria:
  - Has a primary night-time residence that is a public or private place not meant for human habitation, (the group is sleeping in a car or on the streets).
  - Is living in an emergency shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels).
  - Is exiting an institution where (s)he has resided for 90 days or less and who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution.
- The SER group is at risk of homelessness

  Note: Groups who voluntarily left their home, but can return without a threat to their health or safety, are not homeless.
- The SER group meets the eligibility requirements for one of the following homeless assistance programs:
  - Family Re-Housing Program (replaces Rapid Re-Housing Initiative which ended 5/31/2015) effective 10/1/2015.
  - Rural Homeless Permanent Supportive Housing Initiative (RPSH).

  Note: Update the Living Arrangement screen in Bridges to reflect the appropriate homeless assistance program.

Group Living With Friends or Relatives

A group living with friends or relatives is not homeless, even if the arrangement is temporary unless one of the situations below exists:

- The group is living temporarily with other persons following a fire or natural disaster that occurred not more than 60 days before the date the group files an application for SER.

- The group is living with other persons to escape a domestic violence situation.
- The group meets eligibility criteria for one of the homeless assistance programs listed above.

DOCUMENTATION OF NEED

Persons who are homeless; living in an emergency shelter, on the street, in a car or place unfit for human habitation must provide a written observation by an outreach worker, written referral by another service provider, or a written statement from the head of household stating that the SER group is living on the streets. Verification from an outreach worker or service provider must be on official letterhead, signed and dated.

Persons eligible for one of the homeless assistance programs listed above must have a written referral by the service provider verifying that the SER group is eligible for the program. The verification must be on agency letterhead with the homeless assistance program identified, signed and dated.

Persons at imminent risk of homelessness must provide a court summons, order or judgment resulting from an eviction action.

Legal Notice

A court summons, order, or judgment was issued which will result in the SER group becoming homeless.

Foster Care

The SER group needs adequate housing to avoid a foster care placement or before a child or children can come home from foster care.

Unsafe Housing

A MDHHS services worker or MDHHS specialist, with supervisory approval, determines the family must be relocated from unsafe housing for the protection of the children.

Condemned Housing

The SER group receives final written notice to vacate condemned housing from a local public agency authorized to issue such an order.

High Energy

The energy multi-disciplinary team has identified the group as living in high energy housing that cannot be rehabilitated.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Bridges will determine whether the SER group's rental housing is affordable. Approve SER for relocation services only if the group's rental obligation meets the criteria for housing affordability specified in ERM 207.

REQUIRED PAYMENTS

Verify the group shelter payments for the past six months and enter the obligation amount and verification source on the SER Required Payments screen. If required payments have not been made, Bridges will determine whether the SER group had good cause for non-payment of their shelter obligation during the last six months, regardless of the reason they are in need; see ERM 204.

Example: A group in a homeless shelter or homeless due to a fire must have met required payments.

Note: In cases where the group is residing in a homeless shelter, and there are extenuating circumstances, an exception request may be made through Bridges to Energy and Emergency Services. See ERM 104, Exceptions to Official SER Policy.

SHELTER VERIFICATION

Before relocation services can be approved for families with children under the age of six, a DHS-3688, Shelter Verification form, with a revision date of October 2009 or later, is required to verify that the home is free of lead paint or is certified lead safe.

The shelter provider is required to complete and sign the DHS-3688. If the shelter unit is not lead-paint safe, payment for relocation services for that residence may not be approved.

The signed DHS-3688 is only required when a family, with a child under the age of six, has requested relocation services to move into a new residence. An updated form is not required for relocation services (rent to prevent eviction) for the current residence.

PAYMENT AUTHORIZATION

Bridges will authorize the amount the SER group needs to keep or obtain permanent shelter, up to the amounts in the Issuance Maximums for Relocation Services at the end of this item.

VERIFICATION SOURCES

Verification of Need Amount

- A DHS-3688, Shelter Verification, form with a revision date of October 2009 or later must be completed and signed by the shelter provider.
- Written statement from the shelter provider, signed and dated.
- Order of judgment.
- Obtain a statement from the rental or moving company to verify the cost of moving the household belongings.
- DHS-223, Documentation Record may be used and must contain the following:
  - Date.
  - Client name and case number.
  - Amount needed to resolve the emergency.
  - Any other pertinent information regarding the emergency.
  - The name of the landlord or person at the rental company who provided the information along with the signature of the MDHHS staff person obtaining the information.

Shelter Costs

- DHS-3688, Shelter Verification, form signed and dated.
- Written statement from the shelter provider.

Homelessness

- Eviction, judgment, or court order from last residence.

  Note: A demand for possession non-payment of rent or notice to quit is not acceptable.

- Group's statement that they are living with others to escape domestic violence.

- Group's statement that they are sleeping in a car, or on the street and there is no housing they can return to.

- Fire department report, newspaper article, etc. verifying a fire or natural disaster.

- Statement from the releasing facility for persons exiting jail, prison, a juvenile facility, a hospital, a medical setting, foster care, a substance abuse facility or a mental health treatment setting indicating there is no available housing and the person has no residence to return to.

- Signed and dated statement on official letterhead of the agency or service provider, which identifies the persons and the homeless assistance program they are eligible for.

Potentially Homeless

- A judgment, eviction order or court summons regarding eviction. (A demand for possession non-payment of rent or a notice to quit is not sufficient.)

- Legal notice from local public agency ordering the group to vacate condemned housing.

  Note: A non-compliance notice with building code violations or condemnation notice granting a repair period does not qualify as a notice to vacate.

- Written statement from MDHHS services worker or MDHHS specialist, approved by a manager, when:

  - The current rental unit is unsafe structurally or is otherwise a threat to the health and safety of the family.

- The family needs adequate, affordable housing to avoid a foster care placement or so children in foster care can return home.

- Written notification from the energy multi-disciplinary team that the group lives in high energy housing that cannot be rehabilitated.

Required Payments

- Rent receipts.
- Statement from the landlord.

TABLE - FISCAL YEAR MAXIMUMS FOR RELOCATION SERVICES

FISCAL YEAR MAXIMUMS FOR RELOCATION SERVICES	
SER Group Size	**Relocation Services Maximums Payment**
1	$410
2	$520
3	$620
4	$740
5	$870
6 or more	$1,040
Note: The amounts shown in the table are not monthly issuance amounts. They are the fiscal year maximum amounts per SER group. **Example:** A group of 6 persons with a 3-month rent arrearage would receive a maximum of $1,040 for a relocation service.	

LEGAL BASE

Mich Admin Code, R 400.7001 et seq.

DEPARTMENT POLICY

State Emergency Relief (SER) helps to prevent loss of a home if no other resources are available and the home will be available to provide safe shelter for the SER group in the foreseeable future. SER also assists with home repairs to correct unsafe conditions and restore essential services.

Covered Services

The following services are covered by this item:

1. Home ownership services.
   - House payments (mortgage, land contract payment or mobile home sales contract), including principal and interest, legal fees and escrow accounts for taxes and insurance.
   - Property taxes and fees.
   - Mobile home lot rent for owners or purchasers of mobile homes.
   - House insurance premiums that are required pursuant to the terms of a mortgage or land contract.
2. Energy-related home repairs.
3. Non-energy-related home repairs.

Home Ownership Services

Home ownership services payments are only issued to save a home threatened with loss due to:

- Mortgage foreclosure.
- Land contract forfeiture.
- Tax foreclosure or sale.
- Court-ordered eviction of a mobile home from land or a mobile home park.

- Repossession for failure to meet an installment loan payment for a mobile home.

The lifetime home ownership services maximum is $2,000. The lifetime maximum is the combined cumulative total of all home ownership service payments. Individual services (house payments, property taxes, etc.) do not have separate lifetime maximums.

Payments are applied to the cap of the client. Client means the applicant for or recipient of SER and includes all group members. So every individual in the group who benefits from the payment, including minor children, will have payments applied to their individual cap. The payments made to cap follow the individual even if they move from one household to another.

Bridges maintains a record of the lifetime home ownership services payments since 12/01/1991. Check Bridges under *Benefit Issuance/SER Adjustments/View SER Cap* for the balance available for home ownership services before authorizing payment.

Mortgage payments, land contract payments and property tax payments authorized between 10/01/1994 and 09/30/1997 required placing a lien on the homestead. Liens filed during period are still valid and must be repaid. See ERM 403, Lien on Real Property, for discharge procedures.

An adjustment to the home ownership lifetime limit exists when a lien is paid in full and discharged. Central office will notify the specialist when a lien is discharged by the county register of deeds office. See ERM 403, Lien on Real Property, for procedures.

Energy-Related Home Repairs

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is the funding source for energy-related repairs. Repair or replacement of a non-functioning furnace is currently the only allowable energy-related home repair. The lifetime maximum for energy-related home repairs is $4,000. All energy-related repairs approved since 1/1/1978 count toward this maximum, including previously authorized repairs covered as energy-related home repairs. View *Benefit Issuance/SER Adjustments/View SER Cap* to verify the cumulative total of energy related home repairs.

Non-Energy-Related Home Repairs

Non-energy-related repairs include all home repairs for client-owned housing except furnace repair or replacement. Examples include:

- Repairs to the basic structure.
- Hot water heater.
- Septic/waste disposal system.
- Doors/windows.
- Extermination services.
- Electrical.
- Plumbing.
- Roofs.
- Wells/water supply system.
- Wheelchair ramps.

Authorization for payment is only made if the repair(s) is essential to remove a direct threat to health or safety or is required by law or a mobile home park regulation. The repair(s) must restore the home to a safe, livable condition.

SER does not pay for improvements or nonessential repairs.

The lifetime maximum for non-energy-related home repairs is $1,500 per SER group. All non-energy-related repairs approved since 12/1/1991 count toward this maximum. Bridges has a record of all non-energy home repairs since 12/1/1991. View *Benefit Issuance/SER Adjustments/View SER Cap* to verify the cumulative total of energy related home repairs.

Non-energy home repairs authorized between 10/1/1995 and 09/30/1997 required placing a lien on the homestead. Liens filed during this period are still valid and must be repaid. See ERM 403, Lien on Real Property, for discharge procedures.

Do not merge or interchange the energy-related and non-energy-related home repair maximums. The lifetime maximum remains with each individual even if case numbers change.

Eligibility Requirements

Issue Home Ownership Services payments only to save a home threatened with loss due to mortgage foreclosure, land contract forfeiture, tax foreclosure, or court ordered eviction of a mobile home from land or a mobile home park. Issue home repair payments only if the repair(s) is essential to remove a direct threat to health or safety or is required by law or a mobile home park regulation. The repair(s) must restore the home to a safe, livable condition. **SER does not pay for improvements or nonessential repairs.**

In addition, **all** of the following conditions must be met (unless specified for a particular service):

- An SER group member is an owner or purchaser of the home, or holds a life estate on the home with the responsibility for home repairs. If the home is co-owned, the cost of the emergency is not split between the co-owners or co-purchasers.
- The home is the SER group's permanent, usual residence.
- The home is not listed for sale.
- The home is not in jeopardy of loss. (This only applies to home repairs.) Deny repairs if the home is in jeopardy of loss due to unpaid property taxes or foreclosure of a mortgage or land contract unless a workable plan exists for paying the arrearage.
- The ongoing cost of maintaining the home is affordable to the SER group; see ERM 207, Housing Affordability.
- The SER group did not cause the emergency. Do **not** authorize Home Ownership Services if the emergency was client-caused; see ERM 204, Client Caused Emergencies. (Property tax and home repair requests are exempt from the client-caused provision in Item 204.)
- The home is in livable condition and payment will guarantee safe, sanitary shelter both now and in the future. Do not approve any home ownership services payments for homes that are not in a livable condition or cannot be brought to a livable condition within the remaining SER home repair limit.

- The total amount of tax arrearage for **all** years does not exceed $2,000. (This only applies to home ownership for taxes.) Pay only the minimum amount required to resolve the tax emergency. Do not pay until loss of the home is imminent; see Verification below.

  Note: The total tax arrearage amount is the total for every year combined, not just for the tax years which assistance is being requested.

- The amount to be authorized does not exceed the home ownership services maximum of $2,000, the energy-related home repair maximum of $4,000 or the non-energy-related home repair maximum of $1,500, and the issuance amount will resolve the emergency.

Repair Estimates

Obtain at least one estimate of the repair cost. More may be requested, depending on case circumstances. Approve the most cost-effective repair. SER does not pay for estimates.

Licensed Contractors

Payment for the following services can only be issued if the contractor holds a valid license issued by the Bureau of Construction Codes through the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs.

- Electrical
- Plumbing
- Furnace repair or replacement
- Mobile home setup, installation or general repairs

Note: Specific service on manufactured homes requires an appropriate Michigan license for that type of service (such as, electrical, mechanical and plumbing).

Verification that a contractor holds a valid license may be obtained from the following Web site: https://aca3.accela.com/lara/. Other building repairs costing over $600 also require a licensed contractor. Septic system and water well installation require only a local permit and inspection by the Department of Public Health.

Purchase of Materials

SER will pay for building materials for non-energy home repairs if all SER eligibility requirements are met and a non-profit agency or volunteer group is completing the home repair. The non-profit agency or volunteer group will be responsible for licensing, inspection and local building codes.

Energy Efficiency

All new furnaces authorized must meet the following energy efficiency requirements:

- **Non-boiler furnaces** must be non-condensing models with AFUE (annual fuel utilization efficiency) minimum rating of 78 percent. However, a higher rated condensing model may also be approved.
- Boiler furnaces and mobile home furnaces must be non-condensing models with AFUE minimum rating of 70 percent.
- Furnaces/boilers having higher ratings do **not** require an exception from the SER program office.

Verification

Foreclosure/Forfeiture/Eviction

Foreclosure/forfeiture, or eviction from land or a mobile home park:

- Court order or a written statement from the contract holder or mortgagee that there is a payment arrearage and failure to correct the deficiency may result in foreclosure or forfeiture proceedings.
- A court summons, order or judgment that will result in the SER group becoming homeless.

Property Tax Sale

Property tax sale:

- Statement from taxing authority verifying total tax arrearage, **and**

- Notice scheduling a judicial foreclosure hearing. This occurs one year after forfeiture -- generally in February.

  Note: First, taxes become delinquent. Then, a year later forfeiture occurs and interest and fees increase. One year later, a circuit court hearing is held and foreclosure occurs.

  Payment of taxes may be made once the client provides a notice scheduling the judicial foreclosure hearing. It is not necessary to wait until the judgment has been entered. Once a judgment has been entered, the client must make payment within 21 days of entry of the foreclosure judgment but no later than March 31.

  Once the March 31 date has passed, ownership is transferred to the county and there is no redemption possible. Process the application within the SOP or by the date necessary to prevent the loss of the property, whichever is sooner.

Home Repairs

Home repairs:

- Statement from the mobile home park manager indicating the repair is required.
- Copy of mobile home park regulations.
- Statement from provider indicating the repair will remove a direct threat to health or safety or is required by law.

Home Ownership Services

Home ownership:

- Deed.
- Purchase agreement.
- Land contract.
- Life estate document.
- Attorney or court records.
- County records.
- Statement of real estate agent or financial institution.
- Mortgage.
- Property tax statement.
- Home insurance documents.

- For eviction from a mobile home park, an eviction order or court summons regarding eviction. (A demand for possession non-payment of rent or a notice to quit is not sufficient.)

LEGAL BASE

Mich Admin Code, R 400.7001 et seq.

DEPARTMENT POLICY

State Emergency Relief (SER) assists with burial when the decedent's estate, mandatory copays, etc. are not sufficient to pay for:

- Burial.
- Cremation.
- Costs associated with donation of a body to a medical school.
- Cremation permit fee for an unclaimed body.
- Mileage costs for an eligible cremation of an unclaimed body.

Staff Responsibilities

Staff must clearly explain SER burial eligibility requirements and program payment limits to any person making an inquiry. This includes the requirement that the application for SER burial must be submitted no later than 10 business days after burial, cremation or donation.

Application

An application for SER burial must be made no later than 10 business days after the date the burial, cremation or donation takes place.

Who May Apply

Only the following people may apply for SER burial benefits as authorized representatives. In other situations, decedents are unclaimed bodies.

- Any relative - including minors or their authorized representative.
- Person named in decedent's will to arrange burial.
- Special administrator appointed by probate court.
- Legal guardian who was appointed by probate court.
- Person who had durable power of attorney at the time of death.
- Funeral director with written authorization provided by a relative who is:
    - Incapable due to illness.

- Unable due to location.

- For unclaimed bodies, the following individuals may apply:
  - County medical examiner.
  - Person who has been designated as the funeral representative by the county medical examiner.
  - An attorney who has been appointed by the probate court to be the special fiduciary or personal representative for handling burial issues.

Note: The county medical examiner cannot designate a funeral director to be the funeral representative for an unclaimed body.

UNCLAIMED BODIES

The county medical examiner or their designated funeral representative may apply for SER burial of an unclaimed body. In instances where the county medical examiner has appointed someone else to make arrangements for the final disposition of the unclaimed body, verification of the designation must be made in writing.

The body must have been offered by the county medical examiner, their designee or the public administrator to at least one of the following universities prior to determining SER eligibility:

CONTACTS FOR UNCLAIMED BODIES

University	Counties Served	Phone Numbers
University of Michigan	Alcona, Allegan, Alpena, Antrim, Arenac, Barry, Benzie, Berrien, Branch, Calhoun, Cass, Charlevoix, Cheboygan, Clare, Crawford, Emmet, Gladwin, Grand Traverse, Gratiot, Hillsdale, Iosco, Isabella, Jackson, Kalamazoo, Kalkaska, Lake, Leelanau, Lenawee, Livingston, Manistee, Mason, Mecosta, Midland, Missaukee, Monroe, Montcalm, Montmorency, Muskegon, Newago, Oceana, Ogemaw, Osceola, Oscoda, Otsego, Ottawa, Presque Isle, Roscommon, Shiawassee, St. Joseph, Van Buren, Washtenaw, Wexford	734-764-4359 business hours 888-209-9191 after hours

University	Counties Served	Phone Numbers
Michigan State University	Alger, Baraga, Chippewa, Clinton, Delta, Dickinson, Eaton, Gogebic, Houghton, Ingham, Ionia, Iron, Kent, Keweenaw, Luce, Mackinac, Marquette, Menominee, Ontonagon, Schoolcraft	517-353-5398 business hours 517-335-1855 after hours/weekends
Wayne State University	Bay, Genesee, Huron, Lapeer, Macomb, Oakland, Saginaw, Sanilac, St. Clair, Tuscola, Wayne	313-577-2890 business hours 313-577-1198 after hours/weekends
In no case may a funeral director apply for SER for an unclaimed body.		

Accepted Donations

Authorize SER payment for one-way transportation if not provided by the teaching facility. Allow $.36 per mile up to $176.

Declined Donations

If the university has declined the donation, accept the statement of the county medical examiner or their designee as verification that the body has been declined.

When an unclaimed body is declined, authorize SER burial assistance at the disposition of an unclaimed body rate.

COVERED SERVICES

Covered SER burial services include any goods or services normally provided to bury, cremate or donate a human body, including the following:

- Goods and services that are provided by a funeral director.
- An outside receptacle which is required by the cemetery and which consists of a metal or concrete rough box.
- A single burial space.

- Opening and closing the grave.
- The use of cemetery equipment.
- Transportation.
- Clothing.
- Clergyman's honorarium.

Memorial Service

A memorial service involves viewing and/or visitation. A service ritual (either faith-based or secular) is provided for the family and friends.

In the case of a cremation, there may only be a service ritual. The service ritual may be provided by the funeral home director or designee, a faith-based clergy person or a secular representative. The service ritual may be held at the funeral home, cemetery or other facility. To qualify for the memorial service rate, the funeral director must be in attendance at the service.

Services Not Paid

Decedents may not need all services.

Example: Veterans cemeteries do not charge the family for the grave site, opening or closing, vault or headstone.

In the case of a cremation, no vault is required. An urn or shipping container is not a vault.

If the deceased is being buried out of state or out of the country, there may be no local charges for the cemetery or a vault. If the family pays for these and/or transportation charges, they would be considered a voluntary contribution.

COPAYMENTS

Responsible Relatives

Determine mandatory copayments from responsible relatives based on whether the decedent and the relatives were living together at the time of death; see ERM 201, SER Group Composition. Responsible relatives are:

- Spouse for spouse.
- Parents for children and stepchildren under age 18.

People in the following living situations are considered living together unless they had been separated prior to admission to the facility:

- Long Term Care.
- Adult Foster Care.
- Hospital.

Exception: Responsible relatives who have been absent from the home for at least 90 consecutive days prior to death are not in the SER group.

Assets

Combine the decedent's and responsible relatives' cash and non-cash assets to determine the asset copayment.

Allow a $15,000 cash asset exclusion if there is a surviving group member.

Allow a $15,000 non-cash asset exclusion if there is one or more surviving group members.

If a surviving group member is a current recipient of FIP, SDA, SSI, MA or FAP, there is automatic eligibility on the basis of **non-cash** assets only. See ERM 205 for more information on assets.

A decedent who is the only SER group member does **not** qualify for any asset exclusion; see Estates in this item.

Examples:

- The deceased is an adult with a surviving spouse. Allow a $15,000 cash asset exclusion plus a $15,000 non-cash asset exclusion.

- The deceased is a child with two surviving parents/group members. Allow a $15,000 cash asset exclusion plus $15,000 non-cash asset exclusion.

- The deceased is an adult with no surviving spouse. There is no asset exclusion of any kind.

Asset Denial

Deny the application if the total countable value of cash and non-cash assets prior to exclusions exceed the SER payment maximum for burials. When assets exceed the payment maximum, the group cannot designate any of the assets as a supplement.

Example: The group's countable assets total $15,800. Deny SER as the assets exceed the payment maximum of $725.

Benefits

The following death benefits are deducted from the SER payment:

- Life insurance, when the beneficiary is a responsible relative.
- Social Security (RSDI) lump sum death payments if there is a surviving spouse.
- Veterans burial benefits.
- Soldiers and Sailors Fund benefits.
- Fraternal or social organization donations.
- Prearranged funeral agreements.

Prepaid Funeral Contracts

Approval

Approve a supplemental payment for beneficiaries who purchased any type of prepaid funeral contract (PFC) when the total face value of the PFC does not exceed the maximum allowable charge for services provided (see table in this item) and all other eligibility factors have been met.

Example: Mr. A. has a $300 revocable contract and a $300 irrevocable contract. Mr. A. chose a traditional funeral. The total of PFCs is $600.

$700	total allowable charges
- 600	total PFC
$100	supplemental payment

Denial

Deny SER burial when PFCs are in excess of the maximum allowable charge. The value of the PFC cannot be used as a contribution.

Exception

Exception: The beneficiary of a MDHHS DHS-8A, Certified Irrevocable Funeral Agreement, is only potentially eligible for a burial space (payment to the cemetery) and/or an outside receptacle (vault) when required by the cemetery. Vault and cemetery services can be provided even if the PFC exceeds the SER maximum burial payment.

Estates

When there is no surviving group member, assets owned by the decedent at the time of death constitute an estate. For a group of one, there is no automatic asset eligibility based on receipt of MA, FAP, SSI, etc. The estate includes all of the decedent's cash and non-cash assets such as a former homestead, auto, bank accounts, etc.

The probate court determines the value of a deceased person's estate and the amount available to meet burial expenses. Relatives or others must file a petition to start probate court proceedings.

Determine the SER Burial eligibility of a deceased person with an estate as follows:

- Estate Value Exceeds Burial Payment

  Deny the application if the value of the decedent's estate is projected to equal or exceed the SER burial payment. Estimates from expert sources (car dealers, tax statements, etc.) may be necessary to determine total estate value. Do not wait for a probate court final determination.

- Probate Court Determination

  Re-register and approve a denied application if probate court later establishes the amount available from the estate for burial expenses is less than the maximum allowable SER burial payment. All other eligibility factors must be met.

- Approval With Repay

Approve the application if the value of the decedent's estate is projected to be less than the SER burial payment. The person starting the proceedings in probate court must sign a DHS-2157, Repay Agreement, to repay the department if the probate court determines the amount available to meet burial expenses exceeded the SER maximum. The DHS-2157, Repay Agreement, must be signed prior to authorizing an SER payment.

Case Record Information

If the deceased was a current or former recipient of MDHHS services, existing case record material should be used to identify the possible existence of an estate.

Potential Recoupment/Fraud

If the existence of an estate is discovered after a SER payment has been made, recoupment must be pursued. Do **not** sign any documents for probate court indicating that MDHHS has no claims unless/until SER has been repaid. A fraud referral may be made if the applicant knowingly failed to inform the department of the existence of assets.

Income

Use income expected to be received by the decedent and the group members during the 30-day countable income period to determine the income copayment; see ERM 206, Income and ERM 208, Determining Required Copayments.

Calculations

Add the asset copayment and income copayment to arrive at the total mandatory copayment. Mandatory copayments are deducted from the department's payment.

Voluntary Contributions

Friends and relatives may supplement the SER burial payment in any amount up to $4,000 for additional services. There must be a signed statement from the friend/relative indicating the amount of their contribution. The contribution does not have to be paid prior to the SER payment authorization.

Responsible relatives required to make an income and/or asset copayment can designate $200 of the copayment for this purpose. Designating reduces the copayment.

Example: Mr. Smith passes away. There is a total income of $500. $200 is designated as a supplement, reducing the copayment to $300. The MDHHS burial payment is reduced by $300. Other friends and relatives could contribute up to $3,800 for additional services ($4,000 maximum minus the $200 designated copayment).

Denial

Deny SER if contributions exceed $4,000 **OR** if the total cost of the burial exceeds the SER maximum payment allowed plus the voluntary contribution.

Example: The decedent will be returned to a foreign country for burial. Local funeral director charges total $2800. Friends and family will also pay air-shipping charges of $2100. MDHHS payment maximum is $579. (There are no local cemetery or vault charges.) The total charges are $4900, which leaves $4321 as a family contribution. This exceeds the MDHHS maximum allowable, so no SER payment is made.

Payments

Authorize payment for burial, cremation or donation at the rates charged by the provider up to the maximum payments specified in the table at the end of this item. Payment is made via the DHS-849 only if it will resolve the emergency.

Local issuances are **not** to be paid to enrolled burial service providers.

VERIFICATION

- The case record must contain a statement of goods and services or the equivalent showing an itemization of all services provided, charges and payments made or expected. It must be signed by an employee of the funeral home and the person making the SER application. Funeral providers may submit more than one invoice to cover a decedent's funeral.

  Note: Do not duplicate payment or authorize payment for services/items not included on the invoice.

Note: No additional SER payments are made for oversize caskets; see ERM 209 and ES Program Standards.

- The case record must contain a signed statement from the friend/relative indicating the amount of their contribution. This must be obtained before SER payment may be made. If the statement of goods and services is properly itemized and signed by the applicant and funeral director (or designee) it would be considered the signed statement of contribution.
- If there is a surviving spouse who resided with the deceased person at the time of death, verification of the Social Security lump sum death benefit must be obtained prior to approval for any SER payment. Social Security Administration or the funeral director must provide a written statement verifying the amount expected.
- Value of the estate - written statements from knowledgeable sources (car dealers, tax statements, financial planners, attorneys, etc.).
- The case record must contain a signed and dated statement, on official letterhead, from the county medical examiner when a designee has been authorized to make burial or cremation arrangements for an unclaimed body.

SER MAXIMUM PAYMENTS FOR BURIAL SERVICES TABLE

MAXIMUM PAYMENTS FOR SER BURIAL SERVICES Effective 10/1/2015				
Burial Service	**Payment to Funeral Director**	**Payment to Cemetery or Crematory**	**Payment for Vault**	**Total**
Fetus or infant under age 1 month	$165	$45	$0	$210
Burial with memorial service	$520	$145	$100	$765
Burial without memorial service	$285	$145	$100	$530
Cremation with memorial service	$455	$145	$0	$600

MAXIMUM PAYMENTS FOR SER BURIAL SERVICES Effective 10/1/2015				
Burial Service	**Payment to Funeral Director**	**Payment to Cemetery or Crematory**	**Payment for Vault**	**Total**
Cremation without memorial service	$220	$145	$0	$365
Transportation of a donated or unclaimed body being cremated	$.34 per mile up to $176	$0	$0	$176
Cremation permit fee for an unclaimed body		$75		$75
Disposition of an unclaimed body	$595	$145	$100	$840
Maximum payment where irrevocable funeral agreement (8A) exists	$0	$145	$100	$245

SER QUICK REFERENCE CHARTS

Refer to ERM 100, SER Quick Reference Charts, for quick reference charts to SER services, payment maximums and coding.

LEGAL BASE

Mich Admin Code, R 400.7001 et seq.

MCL 700.3206(c)(i)

Public Act 57 of 2016

DEPARTMENT POLICY

Two programs provide hospitalization services for migrants:

- Medicaid (MA) provides medical services for migrants who meet all MA eligibility requirements.
- Migrant hospitalization (MH) provides inpatient hospital services and limited outpatient services during one 30-day period in 12 months for migrant household members who are not eligible for MA.

Eligibility Requirements

Approve MH only if all the following requirements are met:

- The person applying is not eligible for MA. This is especially important for pregnant women as MA is available to virtually all low-income pregnant women. Document the reason for MA ineligibility on the DHS 1171, Assistance Application and place it in the SER packet.
- The reason for MA ineligibility is not any of the following:
  - The applicant has excess income (an MA deductible is in effect).
  - The applicant failed to meet a procedural requirement for MA.
  - The applicant entered Michigan for reasons other than employment.
- The household must meet all eligibility requirements in the 100, 200 and 300 series of the State Emergency Relief Manual (ERM).
- No other family member received SER-MH within the 12 months proceeding the date of hospital admission under either of these MH program guidelines.
- The household members must be non-residents of Michigan and must move from place to place working in agriculture or a related industry such as canning.

- The family must include a child under age 21 who is living with, or during the past six months has lived with, a specified relative as defined in BEM Item 135.
- The household must not contain any member who has quit or refused employment or training without good cause during the last 30 days.

Covered Services

The following are covered services under MH:

- Inpatient hospital services.
- Outpatient services that are either:
  - A follow-up to inpatient services, and are performed within 30 days of the hospital admission.
  - Normally performed as inpatient services, but which the attending physician and the client have decided to have performed on an outpatient basis.

The following services are not covered under SER-MH:

- All services the MA program does not cover.
- Voluntary (elective) hospitalization.
- Ambulance service.
- Any inpatient or outpatient services performed outside the service eligibility period as defined in the section at the end of this item.

Payment Rates

Payment rates and conditions of coverage are the same as for MA or full charge, whichever is less.

Service Eligibility Period

Authorize SER-MH services for only one 30-day period in 12 months. This 30-day period is the service eligibility period.

- The first day of the service eligibility period is the date the household member needing medical care is admitted to the hospital or receives a medical service.

- The last day of the service eligibility period is the 29th day following the date of hospital admission or the first day a medical service is provided. For example, if July 1 is the first day of the service eligibility period, July 30 is the last day.

Authorize covered medical services performed only during the service eligibility period.

SER-MH Payments

Authorize SER-MH payments on an DHS-849, Authorization/ Invoice. Payments of $3000 or more require processing by the Energy and Emergency Services unit.

SER QUICK REFERENCE CHARTS

Refer to the SER Desk Aid in the Systems Instructions Codes (SIC) manual for quick reference charts to SER services, payment maximums and coding.

LEGAL BASE

MAC R400.7001 et seq.

DEPARTMENT POLICY

Authorize and issue payment for all State Emergency Relief (SER) covered services using the DHS-849, Authorization/Invoice. **A shut off notice or invoice must be obtained before authorizing a payment.** The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) Electronic Document Management (EDM) tracks and stores electronic (scanned) images of case documentation. EDM documents are considered the document of record and should be treated as the original.

The worker must ensure a copy of the bill or invoice has been scanned into the ECF for reconciliation purposes. The case copy of the DHS-849 can be found in Bridges Correspondence.

Bridges automatically creates the DHS-849 when a SER application has been approved and certified.

The DHS-849 is available for viewing and printing in the *Correspondence/View Pending* link in the left navigation bar.

Once printed, it moves to the *Correspondence/View History* link in the left navigation bar and can be viewed there for reference or reprinting.

In some cases, the client and/or provider signature is required on the original DHS-849. For deliverable fuels, signatures on the DHS-849 are not required. For home repairs, the DHS-849 must be signed by the provider and the client. The client's signature on the DHS-849 is not needed if the provider submits an itemized bill or statement of services which states the client's name, address and is signed by the client. See attachment at the end of this item for more information.

In instances where the DHS-849 is returned to the department and contains the customer signature and/or provider signature, a copy must be scanned into the EDM.

Note: Payments for deliverable fuel, wood and home repairs will continue to pend until the worker completes the payment by accessing the Benefit Issuance/Pending SER screen. Payments will be generated to the provider *only after* the questions under *Worker Use* are answered. Payments will pend indefinitely until the worker completes this procedure.

SER Authorization

Do **not** authorize a SER payment **before** a service is provided, **or** before a SER group has made a required copayment, contribution, prorated or shortfall payment. See ERM 306 for burial copayments and contributions. This will avoid situations where payments are made without services being provided.

PROVIDER ENROLLMENT

All SER service providers must be enrolled in Bridges before payment can be issued. Energy providers must be enrolled by central office, however, the local office should provide a DHS-355, Energy Supplier Participation Agreement, to providers requesting enrollment.

Providers must register in the SIGMA Vendor Self Service (VSS) in order to receive a SER payment. Please refer providers to the VSS system, http://www.michigan.gov/VSSlogin, prior to enrollment.

See BAM 435, Provider Management, for more information and details.

Third party billing companies and collection agencies are not eligible to receive ES or SER funds, as they are not the actual services provider. Requests for enrollment by such companies will be denied.

Examples of third-party billing companies are:

- Universal Utilities.
- D & B Billing Services.
- Electrical Inspection Company.
- Infinity Billing Enterprises.

AUTHORIZATION PERIOD

The SER authorization period is 30 days. The authorization period begins on the date the local office receives a signed application for SER or receives an electronic application from MI Bridges and ends 29 days later. For example: Application filed on March 1. The authorization period is March 1 - March 30.

Additional requests for any SER service during the authorization period is entered in Bridges as an additional service, not as a new

application. Any copayments, shortfalls or contributions that must be paid are subject to the authorization period end date regardless of the date the service is requested.

SALES TAX ON DELIVERABLE FUELS

The department's payment for deliverable fuels are not subject to sales tax when the service provider has been provided with a copy of the DHS-849 prior to fuel being delivered. When issuing payments for deliverable fuels that do not include sales tax, check Emergency Assistance in box 20 of the DHS-849. Be sure the provider has their copy of the DHS-849 **before** they provide the service.

Note: Sales tax can be included for any portion of the bill not paid by the Department or another non-profit agency.

WARRANT REWRITE

The Provider Management Unit will issue a memo to notify the local office specialist when a treasury warrant, returned to central office, needs corrective action. Supportive documentation will accompany the memo for audit purposes. Attach the memo and documentation to a new DHS-849 authorization and forward to the fiscal unit after processing online. **Do not** replace a vendor/provider warrant unless notified by the program office; see BAM 435.

CORRECTION OF MISISSUANCES

Local offices are responsible for correcting SER issuances made in error. The correction process depends on the type of misissuance and eligibility status of the group. Take collection action on all overissuances regardless of case status. Correct all underissuances.

The DHS-1271, State Emergency Relief/LIHEAP Case Read Form, should be used to document eligibility and payment accuracy.

UNDERISSUANCE

When an underissuance is found, it is the responsibility of the specialist to determine the amount. The specialist is to authorize a supplemental DHS-849 payment if the group is eligible.

INCORRECT ISSUANCES

When an overissuance is found, it is the responsibility of the specialist to determine the amount and send communication to the provider to obtain a refund. The specialist must provide a copy of the letter and supporting documentation of the overissuance to the Collections Unit Mailbox, MDHHS-Collections-Unit@michigan.gov.

Providers should be instructed to include the customer name, address and case number and return the overpayment to:

Michigan Department of Health and Human Services
Collections Unit
P.O. Box 30259
Lansing, MI 48909

Note: When a refund is being requested from DTE, please send the request to the following email address: lipayments@dteenergy.com.

Correction of an issuance error may require a reissuance. For example, an issuance error may be a payment made under the wrong case number. To correct this, the local office must recover the incorrect issuance and re-process the original SER application in order to issue a new DHS-849 payment under the correct case number, if the group is eligible as described above.

Note: In some cases, the correct account may be paid but under the wrong case number or for the wrong client. If the provider has credited the correct group's account, recovery/reissuance is not necessary. However, the fiscal or lifetime cap(s) must be corrected for the correct client. Notify the Energy and Emergency Services program office of any needed adjustments to the fiscal year cap amounts.

Cap Adjustments for Refunds

Enter electronic case comments whenever requesting a refund. Details should include the reason the refund is necessary, the service(s) involved, and other actions taken to resolve the issue. Once a refund is received and processed by central office, the cap will automatically be adjusted in Bridges.If payment needs to be reissued prior to the refund being processed, the SER application must be re-processed **using the original application date**. If the client is at cap due to the incorrect payment, an exception request must be submitted through Bridges as an override is necessary to

approve the over cap amount. Be sure to include details in the override reason box and indicate when the incorrect provider was notified of the overissuance.

Other Cap Adjustments

The SER program office must make corrections to payment histories that have lifetime or fiscal year maximums. Requests for the correction of the cap must be in writing. When requesting a correction, include the case name and number, an explanation of the necessary changes, the amount to be adjusted and the service that was paid.

Email the request to Policy-SER@michigan.gov.

OTHER ENERGY PROCESSES

Energy Refunds

A deliverable fuel provider (or a provider receiving direct vendor payments) **may** forward credit balances to a new energy provider when a client moves or changes providers. The new provider should be informed of the client's name, case number and new residence address by the old provider when the credit amount is sent.

No energy refunds are to be made directly to a client without first going through the cost reconciliation process. Providers are to identify the credit amount being returned by client name, case number and the time period involved. Providers are to refund to: MDHHS Cashiers Unit, P.O. Box 30802, Lansing, MI 48909, where the cost reconciliation will occur.

Energy refunds to clients are supplemental warrants. The type of refund is indicated by Warrant Reasons:

- Heat refund.
- Non-heat electric refund.
- All-electric refund.

MANUAL ISSUANCE

Manual issuances will not be completed unless there is a valid DHS-849 and a budget. In most cases, an exception must be requested so that supporting eligibility is retained in Bridges. If a manual issuance is required, the supervisor may email the policy mailbox with the request.

LEGAL BASE

MAC R400.7001 et seq.

ATTACHMENT - SIGNATURES

REQUIRED SIGNATURES on DHS-849		
SERVICE	**CLIENT SIGNATURE REQUIRED?**	**PROVIDER SIGNATURE REQUIRED?**
Natural Gas, Wood/Other, All-Electric and Non-Heat Electricity	No	No - see Note 1
Deliverable Fuel	No	No - see Note 1
Water and/or Cooking Gas	No	No - see Note 1
House Payments	No	No - see Note 1
Rent and/or Lot Rent	No	No - see Note 1
Burial	No	No - see Note 1
Migrant Hospitalization	No	No - see Note 1
Home Repairs	Yes	Yes - see Note 2

Note 1. A bill identifying the client by name and address which contains an itemized statement of services and charges must be attached to the DHS-849.

Note 2. The client's signature on the DHS-849 is not needed if the provider submits an itemized bill or statement of services which states the client's name and address, and which is signed by the client. This statement must be attached to the DHS-849. In burial cases, client's signature on the provider's bill or statement means the signature of the person who applied for burial.

DEPARTMENT POLICY

Liens were placed on real property (homestead) when state emergency relief (SER) was issued for:

- Non-energy home repairs between 10/01/95 and 09/30/97, and
- Mortgage payments, land contract payments and property tax payments between 10/01/94 and 09/30/97.

Liens are no longer required for these payments; however, liens filed during this period are still binding and must be repaid.

$250 Exclusion

A one-time-only exclusion of $250 was given for the initial approval of lienable services in any combination. Only one exclusion applied to the entire application. Subsequent approvals did not receive an exclusion unless the $250 maximum was not reached.

Once a lien is discharged and a payment history adjustment has been made by central office, Bridges will display $250 in lienable services. The $250 is the amount the client did not repay. This amount will remain and will count against the lifetime limit for future SER approvals.

Filing Fee

A filing fee is required at the time a lien is discharged. The client is responsible for payment of the release fee. There may be situations that require the department to release a lien that was taken in error or that is uncollectable.

Payment Authorizations

Authorize discharge fees using DHS-849. Process payment as a local office issuance. Use service code 32 for filing fee.

Lien Termination

The lien may be repaid prior to the sale or transfer of the property. This requires payment in full, including the release fee, to the DHS office. Use an DHS-4742, Lien Discharge on Real Property to terminate the lien. (See the Accounting Manual Item 412-1, State

Emergency Relief Liens, for local office responsibility for lien discharge.)

Lifetime Limit Adjustments

An adjustment to the non-energy-related home repair or home ownership services lifetime limit exists when a lien is paid in full and discharged. The Energy and Emergency Services unit will notify the local office worker when a lien is released by the county Register of Deeds office. Attached to the worker's copy of the Lien Discharge on Real Property (DHS-4742) will be a memo for the specialist to complete and return to the Energy and Emergency Services unit for processing the payment history adjustment.

Note: After payment history adjustment, the homeowner may reapply for and receive SER funds for future needs.

Verifications

Retain in the case record copies of the following:

- Deed, mortgage, land contract, or other legal document verifying ownership.
- Legal description of the property.
- Manual tracking of the $250 exclusion.
- Legal proof the deed or land contract was recorded.
- Copy of the lien (DHS-4740).
- Decision Notice (DHS-1419).
- Lien Discharge (DHS-4742).

LEGAL BASE

MAC R400.7001 et seq.

CASE RECORD ORGANIZATION

Keep SER eligibility forms packeted together. Retain all SER eligibility materials for four years. Follow policy in BAM 300, The Case Record.

Exception: Payment for any service that has a lifetime limit must remain in the current case record until the limit is no longer allowed. This includes all energy-related home repairs from January 1, 1978.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Follow policy in BAM 310, Confidentiality and Public Access, regarding confidentiality.

HEARINGS

Follow policy in BAM 600, Hearings pertaining to SER.

REFERRALS TO OIG

Follow policy in BAM 700, Benefit Overissuances, regarding referrals to the Office of Inspector General.

RECOUPMENT OF SER OVERPAYMENTS

A SER overpayment is an amount of assistance issued that the SER group was not eligible to receive. The Department attempts to obtain repayment from the SER group of all SER overpayments. See ERM 306, Burials, for information concerning estates discovered after SER payment.

SER overpayments are recouped only by requesting the SER group to repay the amount overpaid in cash (cash recoupment).

Inform the local office fiscal unit when an SER overpayment is discovered. Provide the fiscal unit with the amount of the overpayment and the date the overpayment was issued. The fiscal unit collects receipts and records cash payments from the SER group. No other local office staff collects or accepts any cash payments.

Local office fiscal staff follow procedures in the Accounting Manual for cash recoupment on inactive cases; see Accounting Manual (ACM) item 481-2.

LEGAL BASE

1939 PA 280, as amended
MAC 400.7001 - 400.7049

OVERVIEW

A case record is the electronic storage of documents related to a specific case, individual or application that contains all forms and eligibility documentation relevant to the group's current and past eligibility for all programs.

All documents not maintained within Bridges Correspondence, including Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) forms, notices and other written correspondence regarding the group's eligibility, benefit status or benefit level must be maintained in the client's Electronic Case File (ECF). Case records must contain the application and all verifications used to make an eligibility determination.

Confidential Nature of Case Records

Federal and state laws restrict the use and release of client information. See BAM 310, Confidentiality and Public Access to Case Records, for the conditions and requirements.

Record Retention

No case record material can be removed and destroyed unless MDHHS policy regarding retention and disposal is met. For the MDHHS Record Retention and Disposal Schedules see Inside MDHHS/Work/Forms and Policies/Records Management.

PACKETS

Materials are grouped by document type and information is organized by document title within the tabs in the ECF. When a household/eligibility determination group receives benefits from **more than one program,** all documents related to any program eligibility are stored in the same ECF for the case. Documents specific to SER are required for all SER applications and service requests and must be filed in the group's ECF.

Supporting Documentation

Bridges retains the DHS-1419, Decision Notice State Emergency Relief, and DHS-849, Authorization/Invoice, in correspondence. Other documentation including verification of income, assets, required payments, billing invoice, client copayments, proof of emergency, etc. must be stored in the client's ECF.

Obsolete SER Packet

A SER obsolete packet may be created. File obsolete forms chronologically. However, information for the current and previous year must be retained in the current packet.

Note: Obsolete packets, if stored separately from the current packet, must be retained for an additional three years.

Lifetime Limits

Payment documentation for any service that has a lifetime limit must remain in the **current** electronic case record until the limit is no longer allowed or applicable. This includes any energy-related home repairs since January 1, 1978, all non-energy related home repairs, all information regarding previous liens from 1994 - 1997, all unpaid repayment agreements and all home ownership services.

LEGAL BASE

SER

MAC R400.7001 et seq