

Vermont Certified Fuel and Utility Vendors Training and Information Session



 **VERMONT**
DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
ECONOMIC SERVICES DIVISION

Why Are We Here?

- General Knowledge of Fuel and Utility Programs
- Understanding the Certification Terms, Conditions, and Pricing Agreements
- Your role in LIHEAP Federal Reporting Requirements
- Electronic Benefit Payments and Transmission of Client Data .TXT Files
- How to Complete Refund and Consumption Reports
- Ask Questions, Get Answers!

The Fuel and Utility Programs Team

- Richard Giddings, Fuel & Utility Programs Director
- Ivy Harris, Benefit Programs Assistant Administrator (BPAA)
- Barrie Brigham, Benefit Programs Assistant Administrator (BPAA)
- Tina Wilder, Benefit Programs Assistant Administrator (BPAA)

Exclusive Email Just For YOU!

AHS.DCFESDFUELMGMT@vermont.gov

- ESD Call Center, a.k.a., the BENEFIT SERVICE CENTER
 - 1-800-479-6151
- AHS, Department For Children and Families Website
 - DCF.VERMONT.GOV/BENEFITS/FUEL-ASSISTANCE

DCF Fuel Assistance Website

http://dcf.vermont.gov/benefits/fuel-assistance

Welcome to the Vermo... Fuel Assistance | De... X

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Lifeline Program

Micro Business Development

Post-Secondary Education

Reach Up

Reach Up Child Only

VSNIP

Weatherization

Child Care For Parents

Child Care Provider Resources

Children's Development

Child Protection

Child Support

Resources for Parents & Caregivers

Youth Involved With DCF

u. If you are ONLY applying for fuel assistance, print and use this [application form](#).

Where can I get fuel?

[Click here](#) for a list of fuel & utility suppliers certified with the Fuel Assistance Program. *Suppliers of firewood/wood pellets no longer need to be certified. Benefits will be paid directly to eligible applicants.*

What if I have questions? Need help applying?

- Call our Benefits Call Center at 1-800-479-6151 or visit a [district office](#)
- You can also [click here](#) for a list of other organizations that can help

Dealer Certification	Documents for Advocates	Vermont Rack Prices
Documents and forms to help fuel dealers get certified with ESD.	Documents and forms for fuel advocates in Vermont.	Rack prices in Vermont for fuel oil, kerosene & propane.
CLICK HERE	CLICK HERE	CLICK HERE

Economic Services Division (ESD)

Deputy Commissioner Sean Brown
 DCF - Economic Services Division
 280 State Drive
 Waterbury, VT 05671-1020

About ESD

[Career with ESD](#)
[Contact ESD](#)
[District Offices](#)
[ERT Card](#)

ESD Benefits

[3SquaresVT](#)
[3SquaresVT \(age 60+\)](#)
[Crisis Fuel](#)
[Emergency Assistance](#)

More ESD Benefits

[Fuel Assistance](#)
[Phone Assistance](#)
[Post-Secondary Education](#)
[Reach Ahead](#)

125%

Fuel Assistance Rules

- Federal funds – Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) block grant & limited state funding
- Providers must be Certified with the State to Receive Payments
- Automatic Renewal of Certification for up to 3 Years.
- Choose a Pricing Agreement for Each Fuel Type
- 30 Day Notice to Cancel/Non-renew/Terminate Certification
- Make Crisis Deliveries/Bill CAP Agencies
- Communicate via Email
- Accept funds electronically, Transfer benefits upon request
- Provide timely, accurate information for Federal Reporting

Margin Over Rack (MOR)

- Oil Price Information Service (OPIS) Provides Rack Pricing
- Average 4 Racks Plus \$0.50
- Post Daily on Website

The screenshot shows the Vermont Rack Prices website. The page title is "VERMONT RACK PRICES". Below the title, there is a message about technical difficulties: "Technical Difficulties: If you cannot see the rack prices below, please click here to see the data on another site (scroll down to see the most current data)." Below this message is a table of fuel prices for winter 2016/2017. The table has columns for Delivery Date, Kerosene, Fuel Oil, and Propane. The data is as follows:

	Delivery Date	Kerosene	Fuel Oil	Propane
1	Apr 14, 2017	\$2.59	\$2.25	\$1.37
2	Apr 13, 2017	\$2.59	\$2.25	\$1.36
3	Apr 12, 2017	\$2.59	\$2.24	\$1.35
4	Apr 11, 2017	\$2.57	\$2.23	\$1.33
5	Apr 10, 2017	\$2.56	\$2.21	\$1.32
6	Apr 09, 2017	\$2.56	\$2.21	\$1.32
7	Apr 08, 2017	\$2.56	\$2.21	\$1.32
8	Apr 07, 2017	\$2.55	\$2.21	\$1.32
9	Apr 06, 2017	\$2.54	\$2.19	\$1.32
10	Apr 05, 2017	\$2.51	\$2.17	\$1.33
11	Apr 04, 2017	\$2.52	\$2.18	\$1.33
12	Apr 03, 2017	\$2.50	\$2.17	\$1.35
13	Apr 02, 2017	\$2.50	\$2.17	\$1.35

The table is powered by Socrata. The website footer includes a message: "It looks like you haven't started Firefox in a while. Do you want to clean it up for a fresh, like-new experience? And by the way, welcome back!" and a "Refresh Firefox..." button.

Discount Off Retail (DOR)

- Fixed Discount
- \$0.15 Per Gallon Off Daily Posted Retail Price *in Addition to* Any Regular Cash or Prompt Payment Discount
- Example
 - \$2.25/gallon retail
 - \$.15 DOR
 - \$.10 Cash
- Price: \$2.00/gallon



Common Threads

- Customer Negotiated Contracts with Fixed or Cap Pricing Supersede MOR/DOR Agreements
- Pricing Agreement Applies to Crisis Funds Also (with Exception of Cash Discount After \$0.15 DOR)
- All Suppliers Are Subject to Audit of Records by AHS Audit Unit or designee.



Federal Reporting Requirements

- Section 2610 of the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Act (42 USC Sec. 8629) Requires States to Provide the Following Data to the Federal Government.

STUDIES

Section 2610.

(a) The Secretary, after consultation with the Secretary of Energy, shall provide for the collection of data, including--

- (1) information concerning home energy consumption;*
- (2) the amount, cost and type of fuels used for households eligible for assistance under this title;*
- (3) the type of fuel used by various income groups;*
- (4) the number and income levels of households assisted by this title;*
- (5) the number of households which received such assistance and include one or more individuals who are 60 years or older or disabled or include young children; and*
- (6) any other information which the Secretary determines to be reasonably necessary to carry out the provisions of this title. Nothing in this subsection may be construed to require the Secretary to collect data which has been collected and made available to the Secretary by any other agency of the Federal Government.*

Keys To Success

- Clear Instruction, Guidance, and Accurate Reporting



Plans For Consumption – Reporting and Beyond

- Total Energy Burden
- Heat Cost Tables
- Adjusting Benefit Levels
- Leveraging Weatherization Services



Program Descriptions (Seasonal Fuel)

- Program Description
 - Helps low-income families pay a portion of their home heating bills
 - Assistance is provided to home owners or renters who pay for heat or have heat costs included in their rent
- Eligibility Criteria
 - Monthly gross income must be at or under 185% of the Federal Poverty Level (adjusted annually)
 - There are no resource limits
- Benefit Payments
 - Eligible households receive a single benefit payment, paid between September and April. Benefits payments are for primary heating sources, including wood, pellets, electricity, oil, propane, kerosene, coal, and natural gas
- Administered by the Department for Children and Families

Program Descriptions (Crisis Fuel)

■ Program Description

- Emergency fuel and metered utility service for households facing a home heating crisis
- Crisis is defined as having a cord of wood or less, 25% or less in bulk fuel tank, or receipt of a disconnect notice

• Eligibility Criteria

- Monthly gross income must be 200% of the Federal Poverty Level or less
- There is a resource limit (between \$1,500-\$2,250)
- Maximum of 1-2 assists per season depending on FPL

• Administered by Five Community Action Agencies

- NECKA, CVOEO, CAPSTONE, BROCC, and SEVCA



Program Descriptions (UDEU)

- GMP Energy Assistance Program (EAP)
 - Program Description
 - Assists low-income GMP customers with their household energy costs by providing a 25% discount on the monthly energy bill
 - Eligibility Criteria
 - Must be a residential customer of GMP
 - Must have gross income of 150% of Federal Poverty Level or less
- VGS Low Income Assistance Program (LIAP)
 - Program Description
 - Assists low-income VGS customers with their household energy bills by providing a 20% discount to their total monthly natural gas bill

Program Descriptions (UDEU Cont.)

- Eligibility
 - Must be a residential customer of VGS
 - Must have a gross monthly income of 185% of the Federal Poverty Level or less
- Eligibility is Administered by the Department for Children and Families
- Fuel Assistance Clients Can Also Be Concurrently Enrolled in Either, or Both, Utility Discount Programs



Program Descriptions (ANR Tank Replacement)

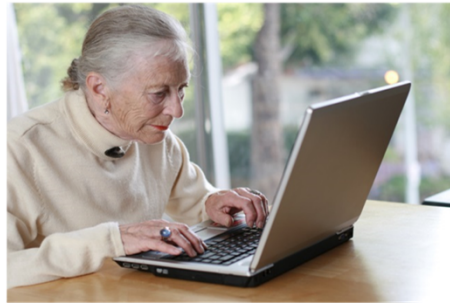
- The LIHEAP Block Grant provides \$75K Annually to the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to supplement the Aboveground Storage Tank (AST) Removal/Replacement Program
- Requirements
 - Proof of ownership
 - Verification of Income
- Program provides up to \$2,000 to remove and replace a red-tagged AST
- DEC has recently proposed new rules for this program

Program Descriptions (Weatherization)

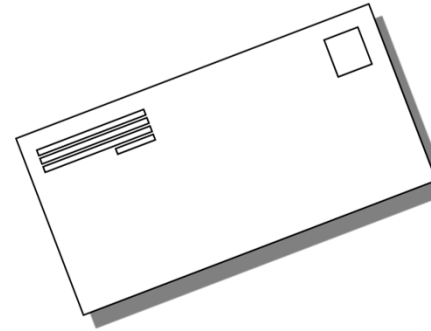
- A portion of federal LIHEAP funding is designated to the Office of Economic Opportunity for weatherization services.
- Community Action and Weatherization staff use the ACCESS database to verify information used to determine eligibility for services.
- Income eligibility for Weatherization services is different than other fuel programs
 - To be eligible for LIHEAP-funded weatherization activities, households must be under 60% of the State Median Income (SMI)



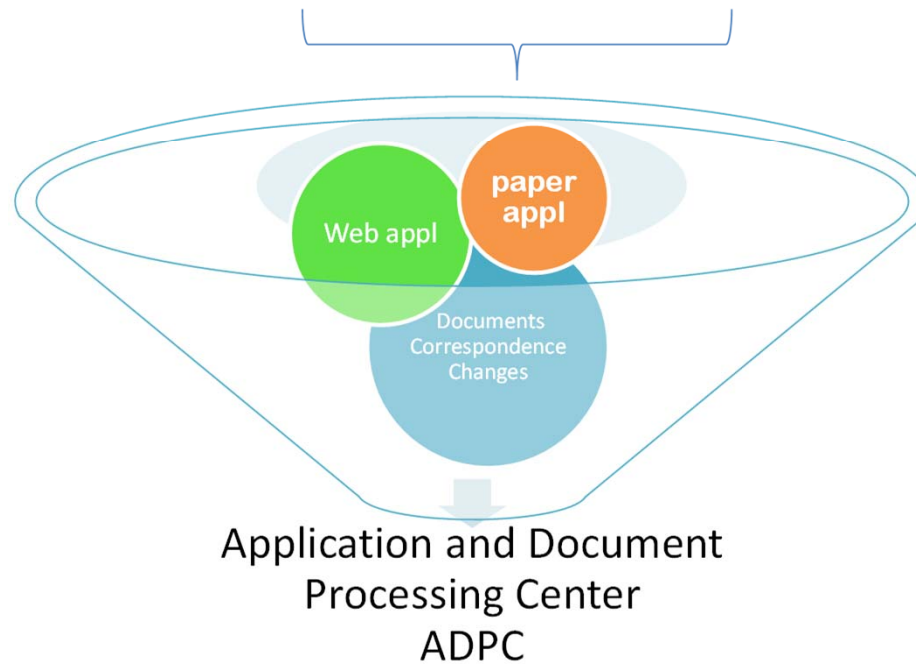
APPL for All/Any ESD Programs



<http://dcf.vermont.gov/mybenefits>



Paper by mail



OnBase and ACCESS Systems

- Benefit Program Specialists (BPS's), located in 12 District Offices and the Benefit Service Center (BSC), are responsible for determining eligibility using the OnBase and the ACCESS Systems.

The screenshot shows a Citrix Receiver desktop environment. On the left, the OnBase 13 login screen is displayed, indicating that the session has expired and the user is required to log in again. On the right, a terminal window displays the following case status information:

```

12/10/14 15:01          *** CASE STATUS: PROG ***          (ASPEBB)

ADDRESS:                DO: A ST. ALBANS
                        IMS: GA1 ADO FINANCIAL
                        HOH CM: 319 MICHELLE AUCOIN
PHONE: [REDACTED]      REP FREQ: 12  LATEST STAT: 01 2015
                        NUMBER ACTIVE IV-D CASES: 2  EOG:

LOCATION OF PRIMARY HARD FILE: A  1ST MONTH CS HELD:
*** ASSISTANCE PROGRAM INFORMATION ***
VHC MED Status: Active as of 7/03/2014
* RUFA * * MED * * FS * * GA * * EP * * SF * * PSE *
STATUS:  ACTIVE  CLOSED  ACTIVE  GRANTED          PENDING

APPL DATE: 11 20 14          11 20 14  11 25 14          12 04 14
BEN. START: 11 21 14
CLOSURE DT:                05 31 14
LAST DATE: 09 15 14  05 31 14  11 30 14          10 31 14
NEXT REV: 10 15          10 15          11 14

FIAT/FAIR
HEARING:
USER: 605 FNX: CASE MODE: D RPTGRP: [REDACTED] COMMAND:
DO: A IMS: GA1 RPTGRP NAME: HEIDI L [REDACTED] 3
  
```

ACCESS

- The State's Mainframe Database is Called the ACCESS System
 - These are just a few examples of the many data feeds to ACCESS from other sources

Social Security
Administration
Benefit Data



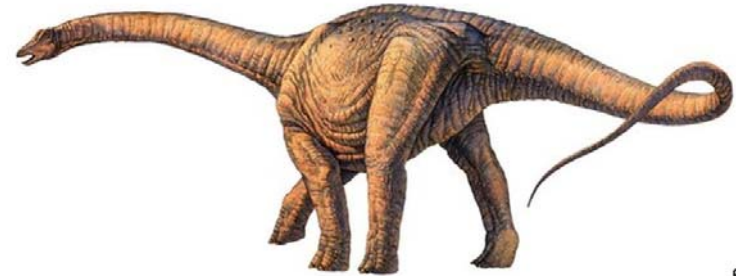
Office of Child
Support
Payments



DOL Unemploy.
Compensation
Benefits



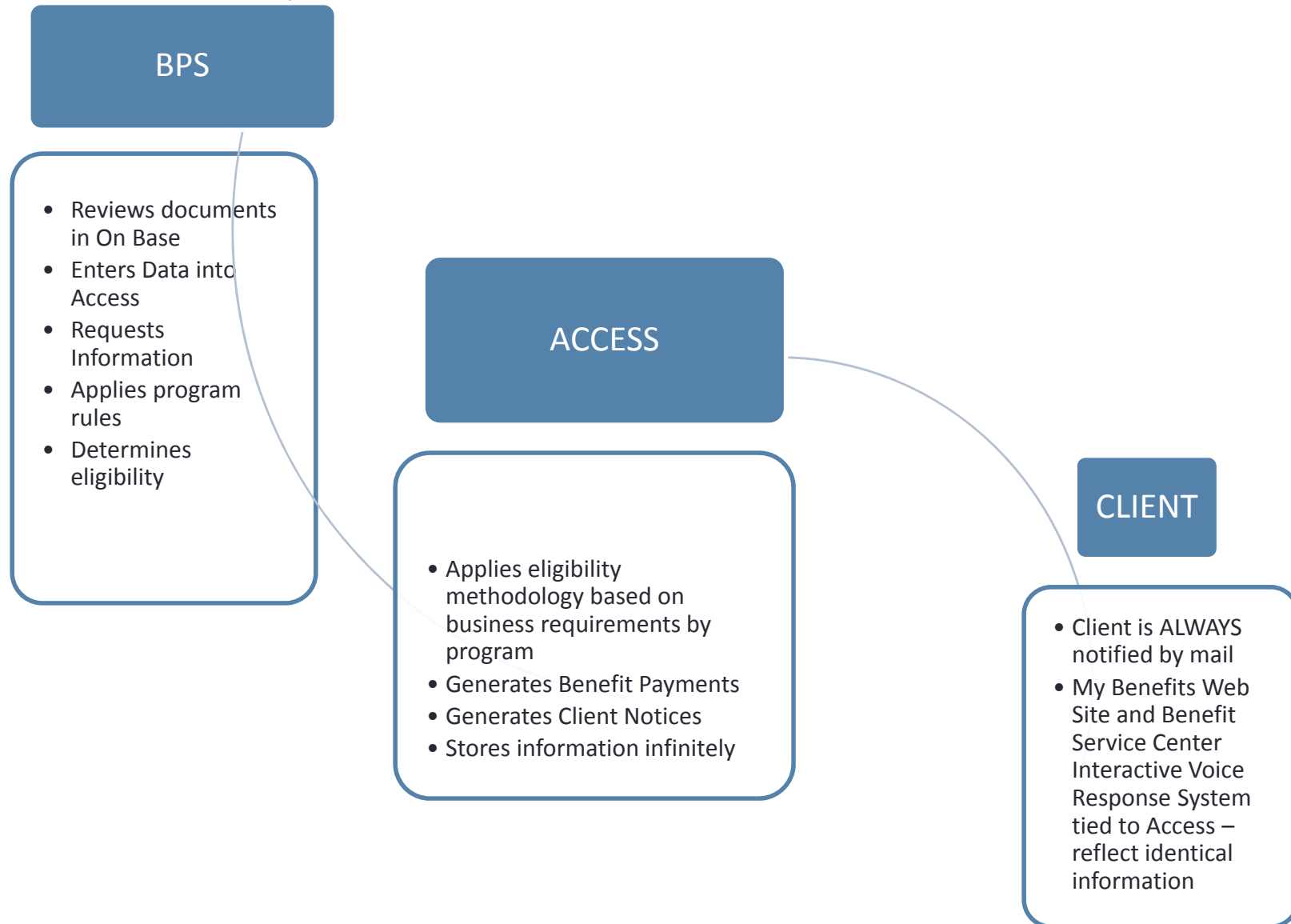
ACCESS
Data
Base



ESBL



Seasonal Fuel Work Flow



Fuel Benefits

- Eligibility Determination Based On
 - Household Composition
 - Income Limits
- Benefit Amounts Based On
 - Type of Housing
 - Type of Heat
 - Number of Bedrooms
 - Subsidized Rent

Standard Heat Cost Tables

Multi Family Homes

Fuel Type	1 Bedroom	2 Bedrooms	3 Bedrooms	4 + Bedrooms
Natural Gas	\$ 923	\$ 1,148	\$ 1,373	\$ 1,599
Propane	\$ 1,109	\$ 1,728	\$ 2,347	\$ 2,966
Oil	\$ 2,124	\$ 2,839	\$ 3,553	\$ 4,268
Kerosene	\$ 1,610	\$ 2,223	\$ 2,831	\$ 3,435
Electricity	\$ 967	\$ 1,060	\$ 1,152	\$ 1,244
Firewood, Wood Pellets and Coal	\$ 1,085	\$ 1,231	\$ 1,343	\$ 1,437

Single Family and Mobile Homes

Fuel Type	1 Bedroom	2 Bedrooms	3 Bedrooms	4+ Bedrooms
Natural Gas	\$ 1,228	\$ 1,454	\$ 1,679	\$ 1,904
Propane	\$ 2,141	\$ 2,760	\$ 3,379	\$ 3,998
Oil	\$ 2,408	\$ 3,123	\$ 3,837	\$ 4,552
Kerosene	\$ 2,300	\$ 2,897	\$ 3,494	\$ 4,091
Electricity	\$ 1,692	\$ 1,785	\$ 1,877	\$ 1,970
Firewood, Wood Pellets and Coal	\$ 1,550	\$ 1,604	\$ 1,658	\$ 1,711

Primary Fuel Type

- Title 33 Chapter 26 Subsection 2604 states that “annual heating fuel cost for a household unit shall be only for the cost of the primary heating fuel source of the unit.”
- Most living units in Vermont have more than one heat source. The primary fuel source is the one that heats the majority of space in the living unit

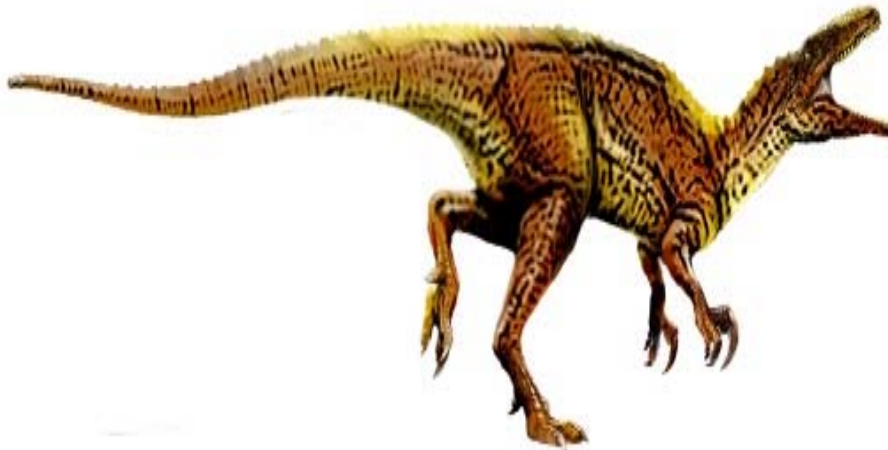


Primary Fuel Type (Cont.)

- Fuel benefit amounts are based on the type of heating fuel. Benefits may only be used for the primary fuel type, and may not be shared, split, or transferred unless the applicant's primary heat source changes after a benefit has been issued.
- Example
 - Fuel benefit issued for oil, applicant moves to a home heated with propane. The fuel supplier may transfer to a propane supplier who is certified with the seasonal fuel program.

November Big Benefit Run, Daily Thereafter

- Prenote Bank “Ping”
- ACCESS sends Email of .TXT File
- Conversion to EXCEL



- Account Numbers are not Mandatory (cannot require applicants to provide)
- Transfer of Benefits IS Mandatory (see Cert. Agreement)
- Our client/Your customer - Reporting Changes
- Questions via Email to Ivarrina (do not reply to the dinosaur)

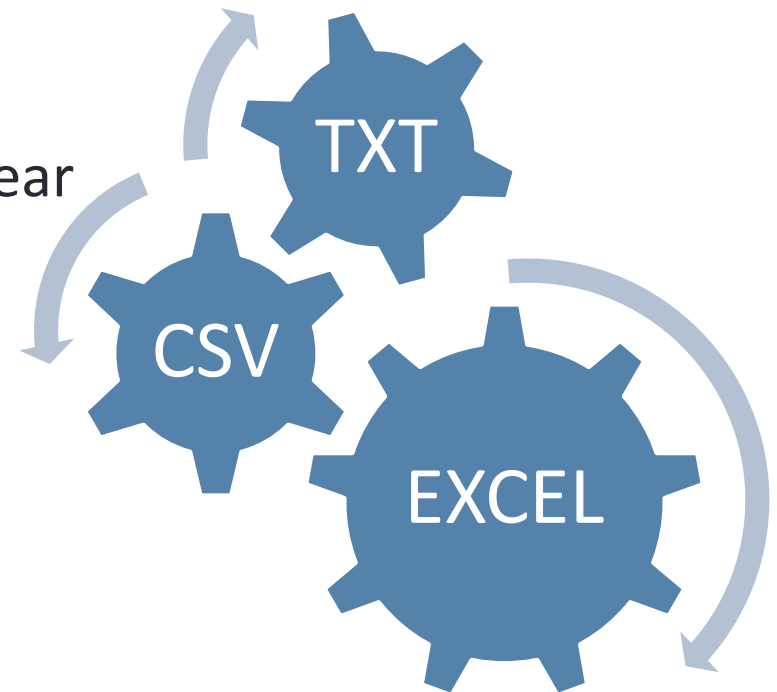
Credit Balance with a Fuel Supplier

- All benefit payments remain the property of the State of Vermont until used by the client for home heating fuel or energy
 - If a credit balance remains on the clients account after April 30th, then the balance must be returned to the Fuel Office.
 - If a fuel dealer can't make a delivery by April 30th due to road conditions, etc., then the dealer may get a delivery date extension from the Fuel Office.



Year End Refund and Consumption Report

- Consolidation of all benefits issued to your company
- Email .TXT file first week of May
- Return completed by June 15th
- Reconciliation by Fuel Office
- Data Integrity – Accuracy Matters
- Refunds go back into benefits next year
- LET'S DO THIS THING!



Miscellaneous

- Confirm delivery address before delivery
- Contact customer for missing information (account number, physical location, etc.)
- Direct customers with application / benefit questions to BSC 1-800-479-6151
- Report potential fraud or abuse of program funds