



# Energy Assistance Program

BPRO Workshop Spring 2024

# Agenda



Common Error Findings in Subrecipient Monitoring



Documentation in VaCMS for the  
Energy Assistance Program (EAP)

# Common Error Findings in Subrecipient Monitoring



# Household Composition



- ▶ When a case is read for sub-recipient monitoring, we expect to see the same household members listed on the Client Additional information screen as what is listed on the application.
- ▶ If the household members are different in VaCMS from what is listed on the application, there should be documentation, explaining the difference.

For example, if a household reports a total of 5 people in the home, however, only enter four names in the household composition section, this will need to be clarified and documented.

# Authorized Representatives:

We cannot speak with persons not on the case unless they are the household's Authorized Representative.

For electronic applications, the authorized rep may be indicated within the application

For paper applications, an authorized rep form must be completed by the household.

Paper forms must be scanned into DMIS.

Once on file, an authorized rep is not removed, unless the client requests it.



# Be Prepared to pull SVES!

- \*Remember, we cannot use SOLQ for EAP for any reason.
- \*You must either scan SVES into the record or document your findings.



# Disability Fields - Client Additional Information screen

## Why are the disability fields important?

- ▶ Properly coded disability fields give the customer the medical deduction, help determine eligibility for Cooling Assistance applications and benefit amount for Fuel Assistance.
- ▶ Not coding the disabled verification reason can cause eligibility and payment errors.
- ▶ Both fields must be complete, if the customer is disabled.

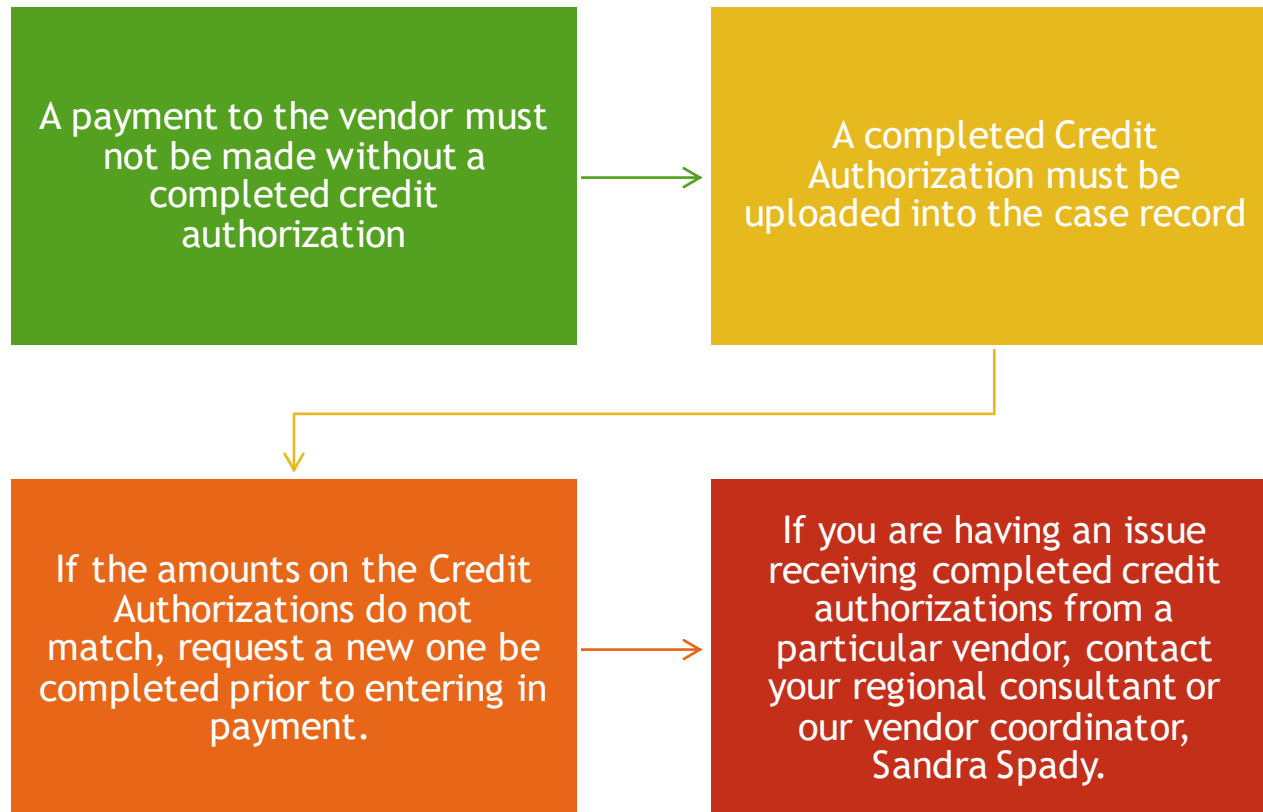
The Disabled and Disabled Verification fields are located on the Client Additional Information screen at the client level.

* Name:	<input type="text"/>	Relationship To Case Name:	<input type="text"/>
Disabled:	<input type="text"/>	Disabled Verification:	<input type="text"/>
* US Citizen:	<input type="text"/>	Alien Status:	<input type="text"/>
Alien Status Verification:	<input type="text"/>	* Household Status:	<input type="text" value="In Household"/>

### Did you know?

VaCMS does not consider an individual's disability status from SSA or SSI income on the disability screen. The disability indicator and verification fields must be completed on the Client Additional Information screen for VaCMS to consider the individual disabled for Energy Assistance purposes.

# Credit Authorizations:





# Required Documents Scanned into DMIS

## Examples:

-Signed Paper Application

-Any manually created document

-Authorized Rep Verification/Documentation

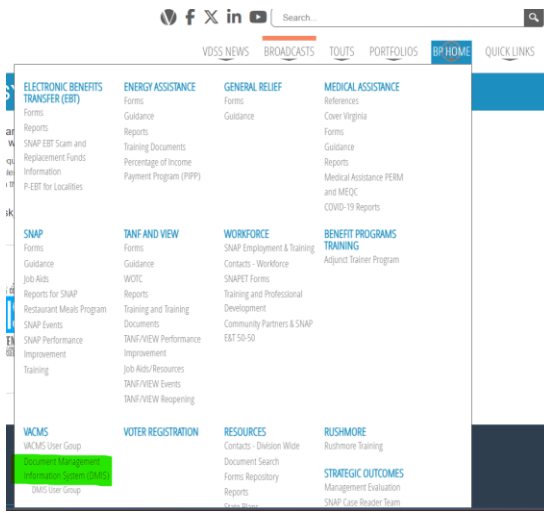
-Documentation to support household disqualification from EAP

-Documentation to support vendor payments

-Landlord Statement or other Verification

-Returned Mail by Post Office

-Signed Credit Authorizations



# STATE MATERIALS

## General

- Benefit Programs Required Scanning Documents
- How to Generate a SNAP Hotline Form
- ImageNow & DMIS: Common Error Messages and Solutions
- ImageNow & DMIS: Frequently Ask Questions (FAQs)
- ImageNow & DMIS: VACMS DMIS Reports
- Securing Client Documents
- Summitting Mt DMIS BPRO Presentation

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To Get to the Full List of Required Documents:

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-Go to the VaCMS section on Fusion

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-Click on the DMIS option

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-Click on Resources

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-The document link is under the General Section of the resources tab



# Verification of Exhausted Fuel benefit



- ▶ If a household was approved for Fuel Assistance, their Fuel benefit must be exhausted before they can receive Payment of Primary Heat Utility or Purchase of Primary Home Heating Fuel in the Crisis component.
- ▶ To verify the Fuel benefit has been exhausted:
  - ▶ Look in Benefit Issuance / EAP Credit Authorization, search by the case number and component to see if the benefit has been paid to the vendor.
  - ▶ If the benefit has not been paid, contact the vendor to verify if they have requested the benefit from the state. If they have billed VDSS for the entire or remainder of the Fuel benefit, it is considered exhausted, even if the payment has not yet been made. The contact with the vendor must be documented.



# Primary Heat source

The primary heat source is what heats the air.

For example, a household may have an oil or gas furnace which requires electricity to run, but the primary heat source is the oil or gas.

- ▶ Why is entering the primary heat source important?
  - ▶ Customer statement is accepted for primary heat source.
  - ▶ If there is a change, document the change.
  - ▶ The customer can declare the heat source they intend to heat with for that program year, with the beginning of Fuel Assistance.

There are certain circumstances where a household can change fuel types between the Fuel and Crisis components. Can anyone name them?

# Fuel types changes between Fuel and Crisis

VOLUME IX, CHAPTER D, PAGE 9



g. Fuel Type Changes to the primary fuel type may only be made when:

- 1) The household moves within the same locality and the new residence has a different fuel type; or
- 2) An LDSS error occurs; or
- 3) A client error occurs; or
- 4) The primary fuel type is changed due to the replacement of heating equipment. Fuel type changes will not result in a change to the benefit amount.

# Documentation in VaCMS for the Energy Assistance Program (EAP)

Who needs to document?

What needs to be documented?

When do you document?

Where do you document?

Why is documentation necessary?

How much is too much?

How much is not enough?

# Who should be documenting?



- ▶ Any local agency staff member who:
  - ▶ Process Energy Assistance (EAP) applications
  - ▶ Has contact with EAP customers or
  - ▶ Corresponds with vendors regarding their Energy Assistance application/benefits.

Note: Energy Assistance Consultants do not have the ability to add documentation to a case in VaCMS



# What information should be documented?

Anything pertinent to the case which cannot be deciphered from either the EAP application or fields on the EAP screens.

## Examples:

- Correspondence with the customer or vendor by telephone.
- Clarification of items missing on the application (if customer leaves the equipment type, living arrangement, primary fuel type, service request blank on the application).
- If you select "other" from the drop-down box for verification type, you must document how you verified the information.
- A customer's/household's request for withdrawal or reevaluation.
- Clarify discrepancies of anything that is different in VaCMS from what is listed on the application.



# More examples of when documentation is needed:



When a customer does not circle which type of assistance they need on the application, and you had to call them to clarify.



The customer called to report an address change after the application was submitted.



The vendor called the local agency to report they are out of air conditioners and the customer should select another vendor.



You selected “other” for income verification - you would need to explain what “other” means.



How the disconnection amount was verified with the vendor prior to approving a household for primary heat disconnection.



Document when a pledge was made to the vendor.

# What information does NOT need to be documented?

Any information clearly visible on the application or already keyed into VaCMS.

Example:

- The household members listed in the EAP case are the same as the household members listed on the application. That would not need documentation.

Can you think of another example of something listed on the application or in VaCMS that wouldn't necessarily need to be documented?

# When should you document?



As a best practice, documentation should be done while the application is being processed, immediately after the contact with the customer or vendor, or as close to the time the action occurs as possible.



Waiting to document until a later time, such as when the case gets pulled for monitoring, may lead to memory lapses, errors and is generally not a best practice.



Documenting at a much later time after the case has been processed can cause more problems and confusion than it helps.





# Where do I document for Energy Assistance?

- ▶ General information about the case itself, including contact with the customer or vendor, should be documented in the Case Narrative under EAP / EAP Case Comments in the appropriate category.
- ▶ Do not document by writing on utility bills, the application, or pieces of paper and upload it to DMIS. Documentation should be completed in the case comments.

When a comment is written on an application or utility bill, it isn't always clear who wrote the information (customer, LDSS staff).

# How do I add EAP Case Comments?

To add Case Comments for EAP, you must be inside the case.

- ▶ Go to the EAP Inbox and search/find the case and click Update Application/Case. Once you are on the EAP Application Details screen, go to the left navigation and click on EAP/PIPP Case Comments. Then you will be able to add comments into the EAP/PIPP Case Narrative-Summary.
- ▶ To view all case comments entered for each category on one page, click the  icon.
- ▶ On certain screens in the EAP module, you can go directly to the case narrative by clicking on this icon: .




# Visual of the Case Narrative Screen

The screenshot shows the VaCMS interface for the Case Narrative screen. The header includes the VaCMS logo and the text "Virginia Case Management System" next to a building image. On the left, a "Case Actions" sidebar lists several case narrative entries with dates. The main area is titled "Case Narrative" and contains a form with the following fields:

- Entity:** Radio buttons for Household, Non-Financial, Income, Expenses, Resources, ESP, Enrollment/Vendor, and Other.
- Source:** A dropdown menu.
- Contact Date:** A text input field.
- Program:** Checkboxes for SNAP, EAP Fuel, SNAPET, Medicaid, EAP Cooling, PEBT, TANF, EAP Crisis, PIPP, and Child Care, VIEW.









Below the form are icons for user, currency, calendar, refresh, and a large text area with an "Add" button. On the right, a "Case Details" sidebar shows "Case Number" and "Case Name" (both redacted), and "Case Status" as "Approved". Below that is a "Keywords" section with a text input field.

▶ When entering case documentation, please select which component you are entering documentation for.

▶ Press the  icon to view all case notes on one page.

# Documentation categories

Document under the category that corresponds to the action you're clarifying.

 <a href="#">Household (1)</a>
 <a href="#">Non-Financial (0)</a>
 <a href="#">Income (0)</a>
 <a href="#">Expenses (0)</a>
 <a href="#">ESP (0)</a>
 <a href="#">Enrollment/Vendor (0)</a>
 <a href="#">Resources (0)</a>
 <a href="#">Other (7)</a>

If you have a need to document about a single topic, consider putting it under the corresponding category, instead of 'other'.

It is likely that each category will not need to be completed. ESP is related to VIEW and resources are not countable for EAP.





## What if I make a mistake while documenting?

- ▶ Add additional comments to explain the mistake and clarify the situation.
- ▶ LDSS staff with a supervisor role can delete comments.



# Who will be reading EAP documentation?



Anyone attempting to understand what actions were taken on an application needs documentation to explain case actions.

- Other worker or a supervisor answering a question for the customer.
- EAP consultant reading a case for sub recipient monitoring or providing technical assistance.
- Yourself - reviewing a case, attempting to remember case actions for writing an appeal or explaining an action to a customer.
- Fraud Investigators.
- Federal Auditors.

# Examples of not enough documentation

- ▶ A vendor was selected in VaCMS, but there is no documentation of how the client selected the vendor. (The client had not indicated a vendor on the application). Households must always select the vendor.
- ▶ The income on the SSA Award letter in the case record is different from the SSA amount listed in the EAP Income Details screen. There is no documentation explaining the discrepancy.
- ▶ The primary language on the application is different from what is selected on the EAP Application Details screen. There is no documentation of a conversation to explain how this was clarified.

How much  
(documentation)  
is too much?

Listing EAP household members in case comments, when they can be found on the EAP Client Additional information screen.

Documenting the application date when you can see the date stamp on the copy of the application in DMIS.

Listing the service requested, for example, an electric bill payment request, when it is clearly marked on the application.



# Best practices

- ▶ Put the T number of the call center or Commonhelp application in the case narrative.
- ▶ Time Sensitive Information
  - If the date you spoke with a vendor or household is different from the date you are entering the case comment, indicate the actual date you spoke with them.
  - Date you contacted the vendor to confirm the copayment was made.
  - Date of when the pledge was made.
  - Upload documents into DMIS before the end of the EAP component.

What is a best practice your agency has for documentation?

# Local agency discretion / conclusion

EAP Documentation guidelines are strong recommendations.



If you are a new worker or under supervisory authorization, your manager may require you to document more, or different information from what EAP requires.



If you're in doubt of what to document, please talk with your supervisor and/or contact your assigned EAP Consultant.

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