

## **FAMILY INVESTMENT ADMINISTRATION**

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| <b>Policy Number:</b>           | 26-12   |
| <b>Policy Title:</b>            | OHEP Mass Certification   |
| <b>Release Date:</b>            | 1/27/2026   |
| <b>Effective Date:</b>          | 1/31/2025   |
| <b>Approved By:</b>             | Augustin Ntabaganyimana<br>Executive Director<br>Family Investment Administration |
| <b>Revision Date(s):</b>        | N/A   |
| <b>Supersedes:</b>              | N/A   |
| <b>Originating Office:</b>      | Office of Home Energy Programs, Rigel Moore<br>rigel.moore1@maryland.gov          |
| <b>Required Actions:</b>        | This policy provides official guidance on the mass certification OHEP process.    |
| <b>Key Words:</b>               | Mass Certification, Local Agencies, Central OHEP Approval                         |
| <b>Related Federal Law</b>      | 42 USCA § 8624  |
| <b>Related State Laws</b>       | Md. Code Ann., Hum. Servs. §§ 5-5A-07 and 5-5A-09                                 |
| <b>COMAR</b>                    | COMAR 07.03.21.06 and <a href="#">07.03.22.06</a>                                 |
| <b>State Plan Implications?</b> | No  |



**Department of Human Services**  
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Baltimore MD 21201

## **FAMILY INVESTMENT ADMINISTRATION (FIA) ACTION TRANSMITTAL**

**Control Number: # 26-12**

**Effective Date: 1/31/2025**

**Issuance Date: 1/27/2026**

**TO:** LOCAL ASSISTING AGENCIES (LAAs), LOCAL DEPARTMENTS OF SOCIAL SERVICES (LDSS) DIRECTORS, LDSS DEPUTY/ASSISTANT DIRECTORS FOR FAMILY INVESTMENT, FAMILY INVESTMENT SUPERVISORS, AND ELIGIBILITY STAFF

**FROM:** AUGUSTIN NTABAGANYIMANA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**RE:** IMPLEMENTATION OF MASS CERTIFICATION

**PROGRAM AFFECTED: MARYLAND ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (MEAP), ELECTRIC UNIVERSAL SERVICE PROGRAM (EUSP), ELECTRIC ARREARAGE RETIREMENT ASSISTANCE (EARA) PROGRAM, GAS ARREARAGE RETIREMENT ASSISTANCE (GARA) PROGRAM**

**ORIGINATING OFFICE: OFFICE OF HOME ENERGY PROGRAMS**

### **Summary**

This Action Transmittal details the policies and procedures for the Office of Home Energy Assistance Program (OHEP) Mass Certification process. Mass Certification allows approved agencies to certify eligible applications for the Electric Universal Service Program (EUSP), the Maryland Energy Assistance Program (MEAP), Gas Arrearage Retirement Assistance (GARA), and Electric Arrearage Retirement Assistance (EARA) in bulk while maintaining program integrity through required documentation, local review, and monitoring standards.

### **Required Action**

Agencies must obtain approval from the Central OHEP to participate in Mass Certification. Participating agencies must comply with all policies and procedures detailed below. Noncompliance may result in removal from Mass Certification.

## **Policy**

Certification within the OHEP system confirms that a household has been determined eligible and is ready for assistance payment issuance. Mass Certification is an automated process that allows approved jurisdictions to certify multiple cases at once, expediting processing and ensuring timely assistance. It is intended for large jurisdictions and LAAs experiencing application backlogs or high application volumes at the start of the fiscal year, while maintaining program integrity through required documentation, review, and monitoring standards.

### *Approval*

LAAs must be approved by Central OHEP to participate in Mass Certification. LAAs may request to participate by emailing the State OHEP Director and Deputy Director. The Central OHEP grants approval based on operational capacity, operational need, staffing, and demonstrated compliance with program requirements. LAAs can be approved on an indefinite or month-to-month basis.

Mass certification may be performed only after determining a household's eligibility. Once eligibility is confirmed, approved LAAs must conduct Mass Certification daily using the automated queue in the OHEP system. This process ensures that only eligible cases advance to certification while maintaining program integrity, consistency, and compliance. Approved LAAs must strictly follow the procedures outlined below when conducting Mass Certification.

Failure to comply with any Mass Certification policies and procedures may result in the suspension or revocation of Mass Certification privileges at the discretion of Central OHEP leadership.

### *Procedures*

Once the eligibility of a case is determined, participating LAAs must conduct Mass Certification daily using the automated queue in the OHEP system. When conducting Mass Certification, approved LAAs must adhere to the following procedures:

1. Select only those applications where all requested programs are in "awaiting" status.
2. Certify the oldest eligible applications to prevent backlogs and meet the 45-day application processing benchmark.
3. Review each application individually before certification to confirm that eligibility is accurate, documentation is complete, and program requirements are satisfied.
4. Resolve any application that results in an error, as follows:

- a. Select the individual affected cases within each applicable program (EUSP, MEAP, GARA, and EARA) to properly complete certification.
  - b. Fully document every case with appropriate application notes to reflect the corrective action taken.
5. Enter an application note for every Mass Certified application.
  - a. At a minimum, the note must include the phrase "Mass Certification Application," the certification date, and the certifying staff member's name.
  - b. While benefit amounts are not required to be included in the note, documentation must clearly support the certification action.
6. If the system indicates "program exhausted" at any point in the Mass Certification process, email the State OHEP Director and Deputy Director to request additional program funds. This process is necessary for accurate tracking of allocated and expended funds.

These procedures are detailed with system screenshots in the [Mass Certification Step by Step Directions](#).

#### *Reviews and Reporting*

Participating LAAs are required to conduct weekly reviews of the duplicate payment and duplicate application reports to ensure immediate corrective action and fiscal accountability. Central OHEP ensures compliance with this requirement by monitoring data dashboards. All overpayments, underpayments, duplicate payments, and duplicate applications resulting from Mass Certification must be reported to Central OHEP.

Additionally, every month, participating LAAs in large jurisdictions<sup>1</sup> must review 10% of the Mass Certification cases paid in the prior month. All other participating LAAs must review 100% of paid Mass Certification cases monthly. LAAs are encouraged to use the [Mass Certification Checklist](#) to guide them through this process. These reviews must assess case accuracy and adherence to procedures, including the completeness and accuracy of all pages and tabs in the OHEP data system, Enterprise Content Management (ECM) System document scanning, and compliant application notes. LAAs are required to document their monthly reviews on the [Mass Certification Tracker form](#). Completed forms must be submitted to Central OHEP by the 15th of each month.

#### *Staff Training*

Participating LAAs must provide staff training based on errors identified

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<sup>1</sup> Large jurisdictions: Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Montgomery County, and Prince George's County.

during the monthly reviews of Mass Certification cases. LAAs must provide training that directly addresses identified deficiencies. All training must be recorded in the Mass Certification Tracker form, including the training topic, facilitator, and completion date.

### **Inquiries**

Please direct policy questions to FIA Policy by completing the [FIA Policy Information Request Form](#). Montgomery County staff may submit their policy questions via email at [fia.policy@maryland.gov](mailto:fia.policy@maryland.gov).

cc: DHS Executive Staff  
Constituent Services  
DHS Help Desk  
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Office of Administrative Hearings