

FAMILY INVESTMENT ADMINISTRATION

Policy Number:	26-12
Policy Title:	OHEP Mass Certification
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Approved By:	Augustin Ntabaganyimana Executive Director Family Investment Administration
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Originating Office:	Office of Home Energy Programs, Rigel Moore rigel.moore1@maryland.gov
Required Actions:	This policy provides official guidance on the mass certification OHEP process.
Key Words:	Mass Certification, Local Agencies, Central OHEP Approval
Related Federal Law	42 USCA § 8624
Related State Laws	Md. Code Ann., Hum. Servs. §§ 5-5A-07 and 5-5A-09
COMAR	COMAR 07.03.21.06 and 07.03.22.06
State Plan Implications?	No

 Maryland Department of Human Services Department of Human Services 25 S Charles Street Baltimore MD 21201	FAMILY INVESTMENT ADMINISTRATION (FIA) ACTION TRANSMITTAL
Control Number: # 26-12 Revised	Effective Date: June 1, 2026 Issuance Date: June 29, 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.

Revised text is in bold-italics. Strikethrough indicates deleted text.

Required Action

Agencies must obtain **written** approval from the Central OHEP to participate in Mass Certification. **Mass certification-approved** 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 authorizes 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 **on Central OHEP letterhead** 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 **the household's eligibility has been determined**. 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 **within the OHEP data management system, mass certification-approved** LAAs must conduct Mass Certification daily via 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. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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. ***These directions have been updated as of June 29, 2026.***

Reviews and Reporting

Mass certification-approved 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.

Monthly Mass Certification Case Review Requirements

Every month, mass certification-approved LAAs must identify the number of cases that were mass certified in the prior month and review the corresponding percentage of cases as identified in the chart below:

Total Monthly Count of Mass Certified Applications	Case Review Requirement	
	Percentage	Count
0-50	15%	1-8
51-150	12%	6-18

Total Monthly Count of Mass Certified Applications	Case Review Requirement	
	Percentage	Count
151-300	10%	15-30
301-600	8%	24-48
601-1,000	7%	42-70
1,001-2,000	5%	50-100
2,001 and above	3%	60-101

Please note that review limits include a minimum and maximum number of cases, they are not set by percentage alone. At least one case must always be reviewed, even if that exceeds 10%, and no more than 101 cases will be reviewed, even if that is less than 3%.

LAAAs are encouraged to use the Mass Certification Checklist to guide them through this process. These reviews must assess case accuracy and adherence to ***the Standard Operating Procedure for Processing OHEP Applications***, 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

Mass certification-approved LAAs must provide staff training based on errors identified 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.

Corrective Action for Elevated Error Rates

Mass certification-approved LAAs are expected to maintain a mass certification error rate below 25%. Error rates are determined by non-adherence to the Standard Operating Procedure for Processing OHEP Applications. A mass certification error rate of 25% or more is considered an elevated error rate, which triggers Central OHEP's corrective action process. Corrective action will include one or more of

the following:

- 1. Issuance of a formal notification outlining identified deficiencies;**
- 2. Required submission of a Corrective Action Plan detailing planned process improvements, staff training, and internal quality controls;**
- 3. Increased sampling percentages for subsequent monthly reviews; and**
- 4. Targeted staff training by Central OHEP.**

From April to September 2026, LAAs are expected to train their staff on the Standard Operating Procedure for Processing OHEP Applications. Central OHEP will continue to monitor monthly application error rates but will not initiate corrective action for elevated error rates during the training months. Beginning with October 2026 mass certifications, reported to Central OHEP on November 15, 2026, Central OHEP will begin taking corrective action for elevated error rates.

An LAA that is subject to corrective action is expected to reduce its mass certification error rate to less than 25% within 3 months. Failure to do so may result in Central OHEP suspending the LAA's mass certification privileges, mandating pre-certification review requirements, or requiring other administrative actions to ensure program integrity.

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.

cc: DHS Executive Staff
Constituent Experience
DHS Help Desk
FIA Management Staff
Office of Administrative Hearings