

Jackson-Vinton Community Action, Inc.

Dispute Review Procedure

Customers may initiate disputes for any aspect of the Energy Assistance Program services. Agency staff must first determine if customer is seeking clarification, disputing a decision, or filing an appeal. Customers may submit a dispute verbally by phone, in person, in writing by USPS, or by email to: info@jvcai.org.

Disputes may include, but are not limited to:

- Disagreements with the benefit/installment amount
- Household composition has changed since the application was submitted
- Income has changed since application was submitted
- Utility provider has changed or is incorrect
- Multi-Program discount was applied to HEAP, but customer is not in PIPP Plus
- Intake error while data is being input in client information
- Application not processed; under Compliance Review

If it is determined the customer has initiated a dispute, customer data will be reviewed and a verbal response will be given to the customer. If the customer is able to provide additional supporting documentation the agency will reevaluate the customer's application. If the new information, provided by the customer, does not match what was previously given for the disputed application the customer will be required to complete a new application based on the new information.

If the dispute is an appeal request, agency staff will provide the appropriate information for the customer to file a written appeal using the steps outlined below.

Energy Assistance Program Appeal Procedure

Customers will have 30 days from the date they receive denial of benefit notification to appeal decisions made regarding their HEAP, Winter Crisis Program, Summer Crisis Program, and PIPP Plus application. Customers may also appeal if their application is not approved or denied within 60 days after the application was submitted by any method including online, by USPS mail, or in person at our agency, unless the delay was the result of the customer's lack of cooperation in providing necessary and reliable evidence with which to determine eligibility.

Agency Written Appeal - All appeals must be submitted in writing with supporting documentation attached, to Pamela Pittenger, Emergency Services Director or the back-up coordinator, Melanie McDonald, when warranted. The customer appealing the decision must submit any applicable supporting documentation which could result in the initial decision being reversed or modified.

The customer review will be completed within 30 days from the date the customer's appeal is received. After the review is completed and the final decision has been determined by the coordinator the customer will be notified in writing within 10 days of the decision. All documentation pertaining to the appeal will be scanned into the OCEAN database and the

information will be provided to Michelle Rakes, ODSA Community Development Analyst of the decision.

Agency Hearing - The customer may request a formal hearing with the Executive Director, Cheryl Thiessen by submitting a written request within 10 days of the denial of assistance received from Pamela Pittenger or the back-up coordinator. The Executive Director will schedule a hearing within 30 days of receipt of the request for a hearing. The hearing shall be held at a mutually convenient location and a hearing officer shall be appointed by the agency. The customer will be notified of the hearing officer's decision within 10 days of the date of the hearing. All documentation pertaining to the hearing will be scanned into the OCEAN database and we will notify Michelle Rakes, ODSA Community Development Analyst of the decision.

State Appeal – If the customer wishes to pursue an appeal at the State level they must submit a request to ODSA within 30 days of the final decision, rendered by our agency. The appeal request must contain the Customer's name, address, telephone number, client number if available, reason for appeal, supporting documentation, and the customer's signature.

The appeal request may be mailed to:

Ohio Development Services Agency
Office of Community Assistance, Appeals
P. O. Box 2169
Columbus, Ohio 43216

Or faxed to (614) 387-2718 Attention: Appeals

ODSA will review an appeal which has been denied at both the agency Written Appeal and Hearing levels and that contains new information or information not considered during the two local appeals processes.