



SOCIAL SERVICES

VERONICA L. WRIGHT  
Director of Social Services

**Memo:**

To: Mayor April Capone-Almon

cc: Mr. Paul Hongo, Dir. Admin and Mngt.

Date: January 17, 2008

Re: Just for Your Information

Enclosed or attached, please see article in this January 16<sup>th</sup>, New Haven Register's regarding the increase demand for assistance to heat one's home.

Below, I listed the amount of applications my department has taken for energy assistance so far this year:

Month/year	Oil	Gas	Electric	Heat included
October 2007 Total: 156	145	8	3	0
November 2007 Total: 202	186	13	3	0
December 2007 Total: 152	88	48	16	0
January 2008 Total: 100	43	40	16	1
<b>In-house Total: 30</b>	12	14	4	0
<b>Pending Total: 7</b>	1	3	3	0
<b>Applications Total to date: 647</b>	475	126	45	1

We are booked for appointments thru March 2008. One (1), every half hour, Monday thru Wednesday, 9-1. We allow and take walk-ins. I do home visits on Fridays, and some days, traveling home or coming in to work.

I can't understand why Community Action Agency (CAA) who has been taking applications for Energy Assistance for so many years, are still unable to serve the local community in a more efficient manner. Although I help to complete the energy applications, my clients are relying on me to help them thru the process.

Early in the year, I received lots of calls from my clients regarding the wait time for someone to answer the phone. So I told all of my oil clients, to call us, we would put them on an emergency list and fax that list daily to Community Action Agency (CAA) This system seems to work.

Telephone etiquette, tack, interviewing skills and understanding are just a few of the tools and skills, we use with each person who applies for assistance. Most people who apply have thought long and hard about the application process. They are truly embarrassed and ashamed when he or she applies for assistance. They don't lavish having to bring in documentation showing what he or she has to live on. Many do without because of the way or manner in which he or she are spoken to or looked upon.

We were told that they (CAA) would pickup the applications, two to three days per week. That didn't happen because they did not have anyone within my area. Since I live nearby CAA, I would often swing by on my way home or work to bring in the completed applications.

I got a lot of complaints regarding bring-backs or additional information needed to complete applications. CAA was requesting most recent bank statements. The client brought in their last bank statement (It would be the last bank statement they had at the time of the application was completed. Questions were asked by the staff of deposits made on the client's statement. (You could have up to \$10,000 in liquid assets). I would ask my clients to bring any and all information into my office, so I would have a copy of it. CAA would take my copy but they won't share that info with me. So on a number of times I would make a copy of my files to fax and/or bring down to them.

Recently, a number of clients are coming in from other towns (walk-in policy) to apply for heating assistance. I take any and all applications because they must go to CAA for approval. However, most of these clients did go CAA and CAA sent them to me.

All applications from my site or office are taken by hand. I got a computer from CAA, three years ago. It sits idle. I was told a few months ago (November or December 2007), someone was going to program my computer to do applications for energy.....no one came.

I do home visits in my town and the areas close to my town line because the senior outreach workers does not cater to anyone under 65 (or CAA did not have people to perform this task). I travel out to persons who are disabled or who may not have transportation to come into the office.

I don't want to take the program away from CAA. I believe that if we, municipals people are doing a large chunk of the work....I believe, we, (the town) should be compensated for that work.

The monies are urgently needed in our budget to administer this program.

Submitted by  
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Town of East Haven, CT