



MEPD and TW Bulletin 23-09

Date: May 01, 2023

To: Eligibility Services Supervisors and Staff
Program Managers
Regional Directors
Regional Attorneys
Hearings Officers

From: Access and Eligibility Services Program Policy
State Office 2115

Subject: **1. COVID-19 Update: Resetting ABAWD Countable Months to Zero**
2. COVID-19 Update: SNAP Student Eligibility Ending
3. COVID-19 Update: Extended Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Certification Periods

The information in this bulletin will be included in a future handbook revision. Until the handbook is updated, staff must use the information in this bulletin. If you have any questions regarding the policy information in this bulletin, follow regional procedures.

Active bulletins are posted on the following websites:

- [Medicaid for the Elderly and People with Disabilities Handbook \(MEPDH\)](https://hhs.texas.gov/laws-regulations/handbooks/mepd/policy-bulletins) at <https://hhs.texas.gov/laws-regulations/handbooks/mepd/policy-bulletins>;
- [Texas Works Handbook \(TWH\)](http://hhs.texas.gov/laws-regulations/handbooks/texas-works-handbook/texas-works-bulletins) at <http://hhs.texas.gov/laws-regulations/handbooks/texas-works-handbook/texas-works-bulletins>.

1. COVID-19 Update: Resetting ABAWD Countable Months to Zero

Background

The Families First Coronavirus Act (H.R. 6201) passed in March 2020 requires all Able-Bodied Adults without Dependents have zero countable months under federal time limits beginning two months after the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE) ends. The PHE will end on May 11, 2023.

COVID-19 Policy

SNAP

The Federal Time Limit (FTL) months counted in each ABAWD's 36-month time limit period will reset to zero with the ending of the PHE. The original 36-month period established remains the same for each ABAWD. Remove the FTL months counted in the ABAWD's 36-month period through June 2023. Beginning in July 2023, count the ABAWD's FTL months according to current policy if they fail to meet the ABAWD work requirement. ([TWH A-1950, Counting Months Toward Time-Limited Eligibility](#)).

Texas Integrated Eligibility Redesign System (TIERS) automation will automatically remove countable FTL months accrued prior to July 2023. If ABAWD countable months remain on the case from June 2020 to June 2023 staff must override the countable months using the [Success Express-Correcting ABAWD Countable Months](#) found in the Job Aid Repository on the LOOP.

Automation

Changes to TIERS are currently scheduled for release on May 21, 2023.

Correspondence

Form H1809, Special Emergency Notification, will be sent to all ABAWDs to notify the households of possible additional months of eligibility and the removal of FTL countable months.

Handbook

Handbook updates are not required.

Training

Training is not required.

Effective Date

This policy is effective with the release of this bulletin.

2. COVID-19 Update: SNAP Student Eligibility Ending

Background

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (H.R. 133) signed into law on December 27, 2020, temporarily expanded student eligibility for students in higher education during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE). The PHE will end on May 11, 2023.

COVID-19 Policy

[SNAP](#)

Under the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, two new temporary criteria were added to the existing policy in [TWH B-412](#), Student Eligibility Requirements, during the PHE. ([MEPD and Texas Works Bulletin 21-04](#), 3. COVID-19: SNAP Student Eligibility released on March 8, 2021).

A student is eligible if they are enrolled at least half-time and meet one of the following additional criteria:

- Are eligible for participation in a state or federally funded work study program, regardless of actual participation in the program, during the regular school year; or
- Have an expected family contribution (EFC) of \$0 in the current academic year.

New Policy

[SNAP](#)

The additional temporary COVID-19 student eligibility criteria, regarding eligibility for participation in work study OR a \$0 EFC, will end 30-days following the end of the federal PHE. The federal PHE officially ends on May 11, 2023, and the temporary COVID-19 student criteria will no longer apply effective June 10, 2023.

Initial Applications

For initial applications filed on or before June 9, 2023, continue to apply the temporary COVID-19 student eligibility criteria. The temporary student criteria do not apply to initial applications filed on or after June 10, 2023.

Recertifications

For recertifications filed on or before June 30, 2023, continue to apply the temporary COVID-19 student eligibility criteria. The temporary student criteria do not apply to recertifications filed on or after July 1, 2023.

Changes

Households are not required to report if a student loses eligibility for the temporary criteria. If a household does report information indicating that a student is no longer eligible for the temporary criteria, staff must act on the change. If the reported information indicates the temporary student criteria no longer apply, screen for other student criteria.

If the reported information is not sufficient to determine if the temporary criteria still apply, do not take action to update student eligibility until the next recertification.

Staff Procedures

SNAP

Step 1: For applications and recertifications, proceed to *Step 2*. For reports of change, evaluate if the report of change has a known impact on the temporary student eligibility criteria:

- If the impact is known, proceed to *Step 1*.
- If the impact is unknown, staff must:

a. Document in case comments:

"Change to temporary student criteria is unclear, no action taken until recertification per MEPD and TW Bulletin 23-09." Clear the task.

Step 2: Evaluate student eligibility following normal procedures at application, recertification, and report of change indicating that a student is no longer eligible. Cold call the person. If successful, accept the person's statement according to existing student eligibility policy, unless questionable:

- If questionable or unable to contact the person, proceed to *Step 3*.
- For applications filed on or before June 10, 2023, and recertifications filed on or before June 30, 2023, if the person indicates they are eligible to participate in work study OR have a \$0 EFC, staff must:
 - a. Select "yes" in the **Education Details** page under the question **Enrolled in program or work study?** for either of the new criteria.
 - b. Select "Full-time" or "Half-time" as applicable under the **Enrollment Status** field.
 - c. Document in case comments which of the temporary exemptions applies to the household.
 - d. Enter "Client Statement" in the **Education Level Verification** field unless questionable.

Education Details			
Highest Level of Education Completed:	12th Grade or GED Completed	Education Level Verification:	Client Statement
Enrollment Status:	Full-time	H.S. Diploma required?	
Enrollment Status Verification:		Verification Date:	mm / dd / yyyy
FFCHE School Enrollment Verification:		Is this Individual enrolled in school?	
Type of Educational Institution:		Does this include Shop Practice?	
Type of Educational Institution Verification:		Verification Date:	mm / dd / yyyy
School Name:		Is this School located In Texas?	
FFCHE School Enrollment Verification Received Date:	mm / dd / yyyy	Type:	
Enrolled in training program?		Hours Work Study/Week:	
Enrolled in program or work study?	YES	If No, Verification:	
Able to work?			
Child care available?			

Step 3: If questionable or unable to contact the person and:

- pending the SNAP EDG for other verifications, add manual comments to the Form H1020, Request for Information, requesting the additional student eligibility verifications required.
- the application and case file do not provide enough information to determine student eligibility, and the SNAP EDG does not require additional verifications, staff must:
 - a. Navigate to **Generate Manual Correspondence** section in TIERS.
 - b. Search for the case or application number for the EDG that needs verification.
 - c. Select the appropriate SNAP EDG.
 - d. On the **Search Document Information** screen, select "Notice" for **Document Type** and enter "1020" for **Document Name**. Click Search.

e. Select the 1020-Request for Information or Action hyperlink.

Document Search

Document Type:

Document Name:

Search Results

Document Name

[1020-Request For Information or Action](#)

- f. Select "Other – see comments below" in the **We have not completed your case because** drop-down menu.
- g. Enter the final (30th day) due date in the **We will complete your case by** field according to policy.
- h. Specify the additional information needed from the household in the **Other Comments** field.

Generate Manual Correspondence

► We have not completed your case because
(Select one or more) :

We will complete your case by : / /

Other Comments :

- i. Click the **Preview** button to ensure the form has the correct information.
- j. Click the **Generate Form** button.
- k. Document the following in case comments:
"Manually pending the SNAP EDG following MEPD and Texas Works Bulletin 23-09. Verification Due Date MM/DD/YY".

- l. On the TLM task, click the Check Mark.
- m. Select "MI Requested" on the **Action** drop-down menu and click **Done**.



Specify the following and click done

Action

Comments

Additional comments can be added.
(Maximum characters: 500) You have 500 characters left

Done Cancel

The image shows a screenshot of a software interface. At the top, there is a purple header bar with the text 'Specify the following and click done'. Below this, there are two main sections: 'Action' and 'Comments'. The 'Action' section contains a dropdown menu with the following options: 'Select', 'MI Requested', 'Task Completed', and 'Transfer to MBI Queue'. The 'Comments' section contains a text input field with the placeholder text 'Additional comments can be added.' and a character count '(Maximum characters: 500) You have 500 characters left'. At the bottom of the form, there are two buttons: 'Done' and 'Cancel'.

- n. Record the outcome as "Pend" in EWMS.

Step 4: If the household does not return the requested verification and the case cannot be completed because of unverified eligibility criteria, deny the EDG for Failure to Provide.

Automation

Automation changes are not required.

Correspondence

Correspondence changes are not required.

Handbook

Handbook updates are not required.

Training

Training is not required.

Effective Date

This policy is effective with the release of this bulletin.

3. COVID-19 Update: Extended Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Certification Periods

Background

On January 27, 2020, the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services declared that a public health emergency exists nationwide due to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. Additionally, on March 13, 2020, Governor Greg Abbott also declared a state of disaster for all counties in Texas due to the COVID-19 outbreak. HHSC is providing the following temporary guidance regarding policies and procedures for processing case actions during the COVID-19 public health emergency.

COVID-19 Policy

SNAP

SNAP renewals due in June 2023 were automatically extended by six months. This policy applies to all SNAP households, including Texas Simplified Application Project (TSAP) and SNAP-Combined Application Project (SNAP-CAP) households.

Households with certification periods ending in June 2023 received an automatic extension through December 2023.

This policy does not apply to SNAP households who:

1. received an automated certification extension in December 2022 ([MEPD and TW Bulletin 22-20](#), 3. COVID-19 Update: Extend SNAP Certification Periods, released Dec. 1, 2022).
2. have an able-bodied adult without dependents (ABAWD) as the only household member; or
3. have an ABAWD household member whose third or sixth Federal Time Limit month falls in the last benefit month of the household's certification period.

Texas Integrated Eligibility Redesign System (TIERS) automation adjusted the recertification due dates for households who received the extension. No staff action is needed to extend SNAP certification periods.

Staff Procedures

If a redetermination packet is received, perform inquiry to determine if the SNAP household received an extended certification period to December 2023.

1. If an extension was not received, continue processing the SNAP redetermination following current policy and procedures.

2. If an extension was received, do not initiate the redetermination. Review the redetermination packet to determine if there is a change which could increase or decrease SNAP benefits, a change in address, or a request for additional program(s) is included:
 - a. If yes, process the application, change which could increase or decrease SNAP benefits, or change of address following current policies and procedures.
 - b. If no, document in case comments, "SNAP extended, no other programs/address change requested" and clear the task.

Automation

TIERS automatically extended active SNAP EDGs with recertifications due in June 2023, beginning on April 10, 2023. TIERS also added the following case comments for SNAP EDGs that received the extension, "*SNAP certification period automatically extended due to COVID-19.*"

Correspondence

Households received a notice informing them of the extension and their new certification period.

Handbook

Handbook updates are not required.

Training

Training is not required.

Effective Date

This policy is effective with the release of this bulletin.