



MEPD and TW Bulletin 23-01

Date: January 03, 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: Additional Emergency Allotment Supplement**
2. COVID-19 Update: Additional Emergency Allotment Supplements 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: Additional Emergency Allotment Supplement

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

HHSC has been granted approval from the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) to issue January 2023 Emergency Allotment (EA) supplements to participating Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) households. Households approved for SNAP in January 2023 will automatically be issued supplements to bring the household up to the maximum monthly allotment for the household's size. All SNAP households will receive a minimum of \$95 in EA supplements.

All EA supplements will be automatically issued on the SNAP household's existing EBT card. SNAP households do not need to take any action to receive EA supplements.

HHSC will issue EA supplements for January on a randomized staggered schedule starting Jan. 3, 2023. The expected completion of January EA supplement issuance for active SNAP households is Jan. 10, 2023. Households determined eligible for SNAP after Jan. 10, 2023, will be issued their supplement within approximately 60 days from disposition. Staff call in a ticket when the SNAP household reports not receiving the supplement by that timeframe.

TIERS will add the following case comment "COVID-19 SNAP supplements issued" for a case where the EA supplement was issued. HHSC will not send a notice to households regarding the EA supplement.

Additionally, during the pandemic, Quality Control and other case reading reviews will continue to ensure accuracy. Although SNAP households will receive a minimum of \$95 in EA supplements, staff must still ensure regular monthly benefits are calculated correctly when processing any case actions.

Automation

January EA supplements for active SNAP households are expected to be issued between Jan. 3, 2023, and Jan 10, 2023. Households determined eligible for SNAP after Jan. 10, 2023, will be issued their January EA supplement within approximately 60 days from disposition.

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.

2. COVID-19 Update: Additional Emergency Allotment Supplements Ending

Background

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (P.L. 116-127), signed into law on March 18, 2020, authorized state agencies to issue emergency allotment supplements to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) households to help address temporary food needs during the COVID-19 public health emergency.

The Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) has granted Texas HHSC continued monthly approval since April 2020 to issue Emergency Allotment (EA) supplements to participating SNAP households. Households approved for SNAP were automatically issued supplements to bring the household up to the maximum monthly allotment for the household's size. All SNAP households received a minimum of \$95 in EA supplements.

Additionally, EA supplements were automatically issued on the SNAP household's existing EBT card. SNAP households did not need to take any action to receive EA supplements.

The Consolidated Appropriations Act 2023, (HR 2617) signed into law on Dec. 29, 2022, designates February 2023 as the last month for EA supplements. SNAP households will no longer receive additional benefits starting in March 2023.

COVID-19 Policy

Beginning with the March 2023 issuance month SNAP households will no longer receive the monthly EA supplement. SNAP households will continue to receive their regular monthly benefits based on their eligibility.

Note: The discontinuation of EA supplements cannot be appealed.

Information will be posted to "THE LOOP" to assist with any questions staff receive about the ending of EA supplements. Staff will be notified when the information has been posted.

All SNAP households will receive a notice informing them that the EA supplements are ending effective March 2023. Additionally, HHSC websites, YourTexasBenefits.com, the mobile application and various IVRs will contain notification that EA supplements are ending.

Automation

Automation changes are not required.

Correspondence

Form H1809, Special Emergency Notification, will be sent to all SNAP households beginning the weekend of January 7, 2023, to notify recipients of the ending of the EA supplements.

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 January and February 2023 will be automatically extended by six months. This policy applies to all SNAP households, including TSAP, SNAP-SSI and SNAP-CAP recipients.

All households with certification periods ending in:

- January 2023 will receive an automatic extension through July 2023; and
- February 2023 will receive an automatic extension through August 2023.

This policy will not apply to SNAP households that:

- received an automated certification extension in July 2022 and August 2022 (MEPD and TW Bulletin 22-11, COVID-19 Update Extend SNAP Certification Periods, released June 24, 2022);
- have an Able-bodied adult without dependents (ABAWD) as the only household member; or
- have an ABAWD household member in their third or sixth Federal Time Limit month in the last benefit month of the household's certification period.

TIERS automation will adjust the recertification due dates for households who receive the extension. No staff action is needed to extend SNAP certification periods.

Staff Procedures

If a redetermination packet is received:

1. perform inquiry to determine if the SNAP household received an extended certification period to July or August 2023.

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

Automation

TIERS will automatically extend active SNAP EDGs with recertifications due in January or February 2023 beginning on January 12, 2023. TIERS will also add the following information in case comments for SNAP EDGS that received the extension, "SNAP certification period automatically extended due to COVID-19."

Correspondence

Households will receive 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. Staff will be notified when COVID-19 policy and clarifications no longer apply.