



MEPD and TW Bulletin 22-10

Date: June 13, 2022

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: Extended Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Certification Periods**
 2. COVID-19 Update: Interview Requirements

The information in this bulletin provides temporary guidance regarding policies and procedures for processing case actions during the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. Staff will be notified when the COVID-19 policy and clarifications should no longer be used for processing case actions and determining eligibility. 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: 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 2022, who were not previously extended in December 2021, will be automatically extended to December 2022. This applies to all SNAP households, including TSAP, SNAP-SSI, and SNAP-CAP Eligibility Determination Groups (EDGs), with recertifications due in June 2022. Households previously extended in December 2021 to June 2022 require a SNAP redetermination.

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

If a redetermination packet is received, do **not** review the packet for changes. Review the packet for additional program requests and process the application following current policy and procedures.

Staff Procedures

If a redetermination packet is received:

1. Perform inquiry to determine if the SNAP household received an extension for June 2022. Cases that receive an extension will have the following language in case comments: "SNAP certification period automatically extended due to COVID-19."
 - a. If an extension was not received for June 2022, continue processing the SNAP redetermination following current policy and procedures.
 - b. If an extension was received for June 2022, do not initiate the redetermination. Review the redetermination packet for requests for other programs and process the application following current policies and procedures.

- i. If the review has already been initiated, continue processing the SNAP redetermination.
- ii. If no new program request exists, document in case comments, "SNAP extended, no other programs requested" and clear the task.

Automation

TIERS will automatically extend active SNAP EDGs with recertifications due in June 2022 beginning on June 14, 2022. TIERS will also add the following information in case comments, "SNAP certification period automatically extended due to COVID-19."

Note: SNAP recertifications that were previously extended in December 2021 are excluded from this automated process.

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.

2. COVID-19 Update: Interview Requirements

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.

Current Policy

[SNAP and TANF](#)

An interview is required at initial application and redetermination. ([TWH A-130](#), Interview Procedures, [TWH B-114](#), Missed Appointment and [TWH B-122.3.1](#), Denied for Missed Appointment).

COVID-19 Policy

[SNAP and TANF](#)

An interview is not required at initial application or redetermination. Staff must **NOT schedule any appointments or conduct cold calls**. Staff must continue to perform collateral calls or contact the household to obtain missing information or clear discrepant information.

Note: Interview requirements continue to be waived for Medicaid for Parents and Caretaker Relatives (TP 08) as per MEPD and TW Bulletin 21-20, COVID-19 Update: Pending Medicaid Eligibility Determination Groups (EDGs) with Continuous Eligibility, released on October 8, 2021.

Staff Procedures

[SNAP and TANF](#)

Staff must make the following entries within Texas Integrated Eligibility Redesign System (TIERS) to bypass the interview requirement:

1. When using **Application Registration**, in the **Maintain Application – Summary** page OR when using **Complete Action Registration**:
 - a. for “Is an appointment required or requested to process this application?”, select **YES**;
 - b. for “Are you conducting a flexible appointment interview now?”, select **YES**; and
 - c. for “Contact Type”, select **INBOUND CALL**.

2. At the **Individual Interviewed - Summary** LUW, in the **Individual Interviewed - Details** page:
 - a. for "Was interview conducted?", select **YES**;
 - b. for "Interview Date", TIERS defaults to the current date (update to the date of processing if necessary); and
 - c. for "Name", select the head of the household.
3. In the **Appointment – Details** page, "Appointment Status" will indicate SHOW. Click Next.
4. In the **Appointment – Caller Authentication** page:
 - a. for "Did the caller accurately respond to the authentication questions?", select **YES**;
 - b. for "Authentication Response Date", enter the date of processing; and
 - c. in "Comments", enter "FNS no interview waiver."
5. In **TIERS Case Action Documentation Summary (CADS)**: in "*Other Information for the Finisher*", enter "FNS no interview waiver."

The Virtual Interview Center will remain open to complete interviews for applications and redeterminations that were scheduled prior to the effective date of the bulletin. If a person visits a local office with a flexible appointment letter, staff must complete the interview.

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