



Area Agencies on Aging Bulletin 20-02

Date: May 5, 2020

To: Area Agencies on Aging Directors

From: Access and Eligibility Services Program Policy
State Office 2115

Subject: Use of Debit and Gift Cards During a Disaster

This information is shared with Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) directors who must share with all appropriate staff. Please direct any questions regarding the policy information in this bulletin to the Help Desk (AAA.Help@hhsc.state.tx.us).

AAA Communications (Bulletins, Broadcasts and Program Instructions) are posted on the following website:

- Area Agencies on Aging at <https://hhs.texas.gov/doing-business-hhs/provider-portals/long-term-care-providers/area-agencies-aging/aaa-communications>

Background

During a Presidential declared disaster, the use of debit and gift cards to expedite services to consumers is allowable. After the disaster situation has stabilized, this purchasing method is not permitted.

Current Policy

AAAs must request copies of receipts from the consumer as documentation of the purchase of debit or gift cards.

To support the purchase of a debit or gift card during a disaster, the AAA must:

- Make sure the card does not have a cash back option;
- Request copies of receipts from the consumer as documentation of the expenditure;
- Define the allowable services or goods to be purchased; and

- Report the purchase in the appropriate service category, rather than solely using the Income Support category.

New Policy

Receipts for the AAA's purchase of debit or gift cards from a retailer, service provider or financial institution are sufficient verification of the AAA's expenditure.

To support the purchase of a debit or gift card during a disaster, the AAA must:

- Assess the unmet need of the person receiving the debit or gift card. (For example: the need for groceries, medicine, or the purchase of a refrigerator required for the safe storage of food or medicine.)
- Document in the consumer's file the approved services or goods as determined by the assessment, including the type of debit or gift card and the dollar amount. (For example: Approved purchase of \$100 CVS gift card for medicine; or Approved purchase of \$200 HEB gift card for groceries.)
- Maintain receipts for the AAA's purchase of the debit or gift cards from a retailer, service provider or financial institution. The purchase receipts are sufficient documentation of the AAA's expenditure.
- Report the purchase in the appropriate service category in SPURS based on the type of assistance needed by the person receiving the card and identify the funding source used for the purchase. (Income Support or Health Maintenance)

Communication

AAA Program Instruction, AAA-PI 315, is updated to reflect the new policy.

Effective Date

This policy is effective March 1, 2020.