



CCSE Bulletin 21-02

Date: April 8, 2021

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: Recovery Rebates**
2. COVID-19 Update: Pandemic Unemployment Compensation
3. COVID-19 Update: Face to Face Home Visits
4. COVID-19 Update: Maintaining Eligibility

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:

- Case Worker Community Care for Aged and Disabled Handbook (CCADH) at <https://hhs.texas.gov/laws-regulations/handbooks/case-worker-community-care-aged-disabled-handbook>.

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.

1. COVID-19 Update: Recovery Rebates

COVID-19 Policy

To assist Americans impacted by the COVID-19 public health emergency, the federal COVID relief packages passed by the United States Congress provide direct one-time payments to eligible people. These payments, referred to as economic impact payments, stimulus payments or recovery rebates, are considered tax rebates.

[All Programs](#)

Income

Recovery rebates are excluded as income in the month of receipt when determining eligibility.

Resources

Any funds retained from a recovery rebate are excluded as a resource for 12 months following the month of receipt.

Applicants and recipients are not required to report the receipt of recovery rebates. If the person reports receipt of the payments at application or recertification, staff must document in case comments only and indicate that the payments are excluded for eligibility purposes.

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 the COVID-19 policy and clarifications no longer apply.

2. COVID-19 Update: Pandemic Unemployment Compensation

COVID-19 Policy

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act created the following programs to provide unemployment benefits to people affected by the COVID-19 pandemic: Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA), Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC), and Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC). These programs have been extended through September 6, 2021 by H.R. 1319.

[All Programs](#)

FPUC

The FPUC program provides payments in addition to the amount of regular unemployment benefits, extended unemployment benefits, PUA, or PEUC. The FPUC payments are \$300 per week through September 6, 2021.

FPUC payments **are not** considered countable income.

PUA and PEUC

The PUA program provides payments for certain people who are not eligible for regular unemployment benefits, extended unemployment benefits, or PEUC. This type of unemployment may be provided to a person who is otherwise unable to work because of certain circumstances related to COVID-19.

The PEUC program provides payments for people who have already received the maximum weeks of regular unemployment benefits.

PUA and PEUC payments are considered countable income. ([CCADH 3320](#), Determination of Countable Income)

Correspondence

Correspondence changes are not required.

Handbook

Handbook updates are not required.

Training

Training is not required.

Effective Date

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3. COVID-19 Update: Face to Face Home Visits

Background

According to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the COVID-19 virus is spread mainly from person-to-person. All agencies have been instructed to continue to identify ways to limit direct person-to-person contact by leveraging technology, where appropriate.

COVID-19 Policy

Based on the CDC guidance, staff must continue to complete all face to face assessments and monitoring visits by telephone contact with the person receiving services or their authorized representative.

[Primary Home Care \(PHC\), Community Attendant Services \(CAS\), Family Care \(FC\) and Adult Foster Care \(AFC\)](#)

The following initial assessments, monitoring visits and annual reassessments must be completed via telephone contact:

- initial assessments for new applicants;
- three-day and 30-day initiation of service monitoring visits:
 - recipients with priority status (three-day and 30-day); and
 - recipients who choose the Consumer Directed Services (CDS) option for service delivery (30-day only);
- 90-day CAS monitoring visits;
- six-month monitoring visits;
- Interdisciplinary Team Meetings (IDT);
- assessments for reports of changes; and
- annual reassessments.

When completing monitoring contacts by telephone, staff must continue to:

- complete Form 2314, Satisfaction and Service Monitoring;
- enter the contact information in the SAS Monitoring Wizard; and
- file a copy of the Service Authorization System (SAS) automated Form 2314 in the case record.

For CAS initial assessments, staff must provide information regarding the Medicaid Estate Recovery Program (MERP) during the telephone contact and mail Form 8001, Medicaid Estate Recovery Program Receipt, to the person or their authorized representative.

After each required monitor or assessment, staff must mail all required forms to the person or their authorized representative.

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

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4. COVID-19 Updates: Maintaining Eligibility

COVID-19 Policy

Based on federal law, H.R. 6201 (Families First Coronavirus Response Act), any person receiving Medicaid or determined eligible for Medicaid on or after March 18, 2020, must not have their Medicaid benefits denied or reduced before the end of the COVID-19 public health emergency unless the person:

- voluntarily withdraws;
- dies; or
- moves out of state.

Medicaid recipients may be transferred to another Medicaid program when a change in circumstances occurs if they meet the eligibility criteria for the new program and will continue to receive the same or better level of benefits.

[All CCSE Programs](#)

To ensure Medicaid recipients continue to receive essential services and supports, staff must not terminate benefits during the public health emergency. Staff must continue to maintain eligibility even if the recipient no longer meets the eligibility requirements.

Correspondence

Correspondence changes are not required.

Handbook

Handbook updates are not required.

Training

Training is not required.

Effective Date

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