



## **MEPD and TW Bulletin 21-17**

**Date:** September 03, 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. Revised TANF Maximum Grant Amounts**  
**2. Revised SNAP Income Limits Deductions and Allotments**  
**3. COVID-19 Update: Additional Emergency Allotment Supplement**  
**4. COVID-19 Update: Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD) Time Limits**

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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. Revised TANF Maximum Grant Amounts

### Background

State law requires that the monthly Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) maximum grant amounts be adjusted to 17 percent of the current federal poverty level (FPL). Policy is revised to reflect the annual TANF maximum grant increase.

### Current Policy

#### [TANF](#)

Staff must use the TANF Budgetary Allowances chart, effective October 1, 2020, found to determine the maximum grant amount for TANF EDGs. ([TWH C-111](#), Income Limits)

### New Policy

#### [TANF](#)

Staff must use the TANF Budgetary Allowances chart, effective October 1, 2021, to determine the maximum grant amount for TANF EDGs. There are no changes in the budgetary or recognizable needs amounts for these eligibility tests.

#### *TANF Maximum Grants (Effective October 1, 2021)*

| <b>Family Size</b>  | <b>Non-caretaker Cases</b> | <b>Caretaker Cases Without Second Parent</b> | <b>Caretaker Cases with Second Parent</b> |
|---------------------|----------------------------|--|---|
| 1                   | \$107                      | \$130  | ---                                       |
| 2                   | \$153                      | \$270  | \$206                                     |
| 3                   | \$215                      | \$312  | \$341                                     |
| 4                   | \$256                      | \$375  | \$383                                     |
| 5                   | \$329                      | \$416  | \$444                                     |
| 6                   | \$355                      | \$478  | \$487                                     |
| 7                   | \$443                      | \$519  | \$546                                     |
| 8                   | \$486                      | \$591  | \$589                                     |
| 9                   | \$558                      | \$633  | \$661                                     |
| 10                  | \$601                      | \$705  | \$703                                     |
| 11                  | \$673                      | \$748  | \$775                                     |
| 12                  | \$715                      | \$819  | \$818                                     |
| 13                  | \$787                      | \$862  | \$889                                     |
| 14                  | \$830                      | \$934  | \$932                                     |
| 15                  | \$901                      | \$976  | \$1004                                    |
| For each additional | + \$72                     | + \$72                                       | + \$72                                    |

*Policy for EDGs Processed After September Mass Update*

| <b>For the benefit month of:</b> | <b>Use:</b>                               |
|----------------------------------|---|
| September 2021 or earlier,       | The <b>previous</b> maximum grant amount. |
| October 2021 or later,           | The <b>updated</b> maximum grant amount.  |

**Automation**

TIERS will update the TANF grant amounts during the weekend of September 4, 2021. The updated TANF grant amounts are budgeted in TIERS for benefit month October 2021 and ongoing. TIERS converts the amount of benefits for TANF EDGs in ongoing status without an override designation and produces a combined Form TF0001, Notice of Case Action, for any SNAP/TANF/Medical Assistance (MA) EDGs with a benefit change.

**Note:** A TIERS exception report for EDGs not included in the mass update is distributed for staff action. EDGs not updated will receive an explanation of the October cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) on the next Form TF0001 produced for that EDG.

**Correspondence**

The following language will be included on the Form TF0001 for TANF households with an increased allotment:

*Benefit amounts for many people have changed. This is due to new federal and state laws or rules. Changes go into effect October 1, 2021.*

**Handbook**

Updates to the MEPD Handbook are not required.

The Texas Works Handbook is currently scheduled to be updated in the October 2021 revision.

**Training**

Training is not required.

**Effective Date**

The policy is effective beginning with benefit month October 2021.

## 2. Revised SNAP Income Limits, Deductions, and Allotments

### Background

As part of the annual cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients, effective October 1, 2021, the following limits and amounts have changed:

- maximum SNAP income limits;
- standard deduction;
- standard utility allowance (SUA);
- basic utility allowance (BUA);
- maximum excess shelter deduction;
- homeless shelter deduction;
- standard medical expense deduction; and
- SNAP allotments.

**Note:** The telephone standard did not change.

### Current Policy

#### SNAP

Staff must use the SNAP income limits, deductions, and allotment amounts effective October 1, 2021 to determine eligibility for SNAP eligibility determination groups (EDGs). ([TWH C-121](#), Maximum Income Limits; [TWH C-121.1](#), Deduction Amounts; [TWH C-1431](#), Whole Monthly Allotments by Household Size)

### New Policy

#### SNAP

Staff must use the following income limits, deductions, and allotment amounts effective October 1, 2021, to determine eligibility for SNAP EDGs.

#### *Maximum SNAP Income Limits (Effective October 1, 2021)*

| Household Size | Gross (130%) | Net (100%) | 165%**  |
|----------------|--------------|------------|---------|
| 1              | \$1,396      | \$1,074    | \$1,771 |
| 2              | \$1,888      | \$1,452    | \$2,396 |
| 3              | \$2,379      | \$1,830    | \$3,020 |
| 4              | \$2,871      | \$2,209    | \$3,644 |
| 5              | \$3,363      | \$2,587    | \$4,268 |
| 6              | \$3,855      | \$2,965    | \$4,893 |
| 7              | \$4,347      | \$3,344    | \$5,517 |
| 8              | \$4,839      | \$3,722    | \$6,141 |
| 9              | \$5,331      | \$4,101    | \$6,766 |
| 10             | \$5,823      | \$4,480    | \$7,391 |

|                                   |         |         |         |
|-----------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| <b>For each additional member</b> | + \$492 | + \$379 | + \$625 |
|-----------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|

\*\*The figures in the 165% column are used to determine if an elderly person with a disability living with others may claim separate household status even though the person purchases or prepares food with the others. The figures in this column are also the gross income limits for categorically eligible households.

*Standard or Maximum Deduction Amounts Effective October 1, 2021*

- Standard Deduction:
  - If household size is three or less — \$177
  - If household size is four — \$184
  - If household size is five — \$215
  - If household size is six or more — \$246
- Standard Medical Expense — \$170 (minus \$35)
- Maximum Excess Shelter — \$597
- Standard Utility Allowance — \$367
- Basic Utility Allowance — \$345
- Telephone Standard — \$38
- Homeless Shelter Standard — \$159.73

*SNAP Allotment Amounts Effective October 1, 2021*

SNAP allotment charts providing the whole monthly allotments by household size are included as an attachment to this bulletin. The minimum monthly SNAP allotment for a one- or two-person household has increased to \$20.

*Policy for EDGs Processed After September Mass Update*

| <b>For the benefit month of:</b>  | <b>eligibility is determined using the:</b>   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| <b>September 2021 or earlier,</b> | <b>Previous</b> income limits, standard deduction amount, SUA/BUA amounts, maximum excess shelter deduction, standard medical expense deduction, and allotment amounts for determining that month’s benefits. |
| <b>October 2021 and ongoing,</b>  | <b>Updated</b> income limits, standard deduction amounts, SUA/BUA amounts, maximum excess shelter deduction, standard medical expense deduction,  |

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <p>and allotment amounts for determining that month's benefits.</p> <p>This includes households applying after September 15, 2021 who meet the combined allotment eligibility criteria.</p> <p>The updated 130% federal poverty level (FPL) amounts are used to notify a streamlined reporting household of the reporting requirement at application, recertification, or incomplete review when the action is disposed on or after October 1, 2021.*</p> |
|--|---|

\*TIERS will automatically use the correct amounts for each month.

**Automation**

TIERS will update all active SNAP EDGs during the weekend of September 4, 2021. The updated income limits, deductions, and allotments are budgeted in TIERS for benefit month October 2021 and ongoing. The appropriate income limits, deductions, and allotments are automatically applied for each benefit month, whether the benefit month is before or after the October COLA (including combined allotment situations). TIERS converts the amount of benefits for SNAP EDGs in ongoing status without an override designation and produces a combined Form TF0001, Notice of Case Action, for any SNAP/TANF/Medical Assistance (MA) EDG with a benefit change.

**Note:** A TIERS exception report for EDGs not included in the mass update is distributed for staff action. EDGs not updated will receive an explanation of the October cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) on the next Form TF0001 produced for that EDG.

**Correspondence**

The following language will be included on the Form TF0001 for SNAP households with an increased or decreased allotment:

*Benefit amounts for many people have changed. This is due to new federal and state laws or rules. Changes go into effect October 1, 2021.*

**Handbook**

Updates to the MEPD Handbook are not required.

The Texas Works Handbook is currently scheduled to be updated in the October 2021 revision.

**Training**

Training is not required.

**Effective Date**

The policy is effective beginning with benefit month October 2021.

### **3. 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 September 2021 EA supplements to participating SNAP households. Households who are approved for SNAP in September 2021 will automatically be issued supplements that will 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 September, on a randomized staggered schedule starting September 7, 2021. The expected completion of September EA supplement issuance for active SNAP households is September 13, 2021. Households who are determined eligible for SNAP after September 13, 2021 will be issued their supplement within approximately 60 days from disposition. Staff should 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 be sending 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**

September EA supplements for active SNAP households are expected to be issued between September 7, 2021, and September 13, 2021. Households who are determined eligible for SNAP after September 13, 2021 will be issued their September 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. Staff will be notified when the COVID-19 policy and clarifications no longer apply.

#### **4. COVID-19 Update: Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD) Time Limits**

##### **Current COVID-19 Policy**

###### SNAP

Based on federal law, HR 6201 (Families First Coronavirus Response Act), states must suspend counting months towards the ABAWD time limit during the pandemic. ABAWDs not working or participating in work activities an average of 20 hours per week are not subject to federal time limits until further notice. No action is needed to suspend counting ABAWD. TIERS modifications were made to suspend counting the ABAWD months. ([MEPD and TW Bulletin 20-05, COVID-19 Policy Updates #2, 6. Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents \(ABAWD\) Time Limits, released on March 27, 2020](#))

##### **New Policy**

###### SNAP

HHSC will resume counting ABAWD time limits effective October 1, 2021. Staff must follow all current policy and procedures.

An ABAWD is a person age 18 to 49 who:

- is physically and mentally able to work at least an average of 20 hours per week;
- is not a member of a SNAP EDG where a household member on the SNAP EDG is under age 18; or
- is not pregnant.

ABAWDs are initially limited to three months of SNAP eligibility in a 36-month period if they are not working or participating in a work program an average of 20 hours per week. ([TWH A-1910](#), General Policy)

ABAWDs who have received the three months of time-limited benefits may qualify for one additional consecutive three-month period of eligibility in the 36-month period if the person is not meeting the work requirement but has worked or participated in a work program at least 80 hours in a 30-day period after receiving the initial three months of time-limited benefits. ([TWH A-1961](#), Second Time-Limited Three-Month SNAP Eligibility Period)

Months are counted toward the ABAWD time limit if the person:

- receives SNAP benefits in Texas or any other state that month;
- is not exempt from the work requirement that month; and

- fails to work an average of 20 hours per week that month. ([TWH A-1950](#), Counting Months Toward Time-Limited Eligibility)

The ABAWD is not eligible to receive SNAP if they have received the maximum number of months under the federal time limits. ([TWH A-1951](#), After the Three Months of Time-Limited SNAP Eligibility)

**Automation**

Changes to TIERS are currently scheduled to be implemented during the weekend of September 4, 2021.

**Correspondence**

Correspondence changes are not required.

**Handbook**

Handbook updates are not required.

**Training**

Training is not required.

**Effective Date**

This policy is effective beginning with benefit month October 2021.