

Processing College Student Eligibility for SNAP Households

The Consolidated Appropriations Act that was signed on December 27, 2020 included a provision that expands college student eligibility in two areas.

- Students who are eligible to participate in a State or federally financed work study during the regular school year, but who may not be actively participating in work study are still eligible for SNAP; and
- Students with an Expected Family Contribution of \$0 in the current academic year are also eligible.

Note	Expected Family Contribution (EFC) is new to the SNAP student eligibility requirements. More information is provided below on EFC.
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College Student Eligibility

When a client reports that they or a household member is a college student, we must determine if they are subject to student rules; and if so, whether they meet the student eligibility requirements. For more information, see [Students](#).

If the client meets one or more student status rules such as, but not limited to, having a child under the age of six or working 20 hours per week, **no further verification of student eligibility is required** as the client has already satisfied eligible student status. However, when it is not evident a student is meeting one of the requirements, staff must engage the client further to determine if any student eligibility rules are met. **Staff must not request a completed EDUC-1 or CCE form to determine eligibility.**

Community College Students

If the student is attending community college and has **a declared major, this means they are an eligible student** under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006 (Perkins IV). **You must send a mandatory VC-1 for their class schedule or any document that verifies their major.** If the client provides their class schedule or any other document that verifies their major for the current academic year, this will be acceptable verification of eligibility. If the student does not provide verification the student must be denied or closed or failure to provide required verifications.

Note	Students with an undeclared major are not eligible under Perkins IV. Students enrolled under Perkins IV means they are enrolled in a course of study that will lead to employment and is not tied to the Perkins Loan which ended in 2017. Clients
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	must not be asked to verify the Perkins Loan as it is not tied to student eligibility.
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Receipt of MassGrant, Work Study, Maximum Pell Grant or Expected Family Contribution of \$0

Clients may also meet student eligibility by being in receipt of MassGrant, maximum Pell Grant, have been awarded Work Study or have an Expected Family Contribution of \$0.

Expected Family Contribution (EFC) is an index number that college financial aid staff use to determine how much financial aid a student is eligible for if they were to attend their school. The information reported on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), includes specific tax information and family income which is used to calculate the EFC.

Note	To be considered eligible, the student does not have to be actively working in a Work Study assignment, the student only needs to be awarded Work Study as part of their financial aid package.
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Acceptable verification includes a copy of their the **Department of Higher Education COVID Outreach Notice [Click on link](#), Financial Aid award letter, a letter from the college, Student Aid Report (SAR), or any other documentation** verifying that the student receives MassGrant, maximum Pell Grant, that the student has been awarded work study, or the student has an EFC of \$0 for the current academic year. If verification is not provided, a mandatory VC-1 must be sent.

Note	The SAR verifies an EFC of \$0 however does not display a dollar sign beside the EFC figure. When a student's EFC is \$0, the SAR will show a string of zeros.
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In addition, an EFC of \$0 may be verified through the receipt of Pell Grant. All students **receiving the maximum Pell Grant have an EFC of \$0**. In the 2020-21 award year, the maximum Pell Grants are:

- \$3,172 per semester for students enrolled full-time,
- \$2,379 per semester for students enrolled three-quarter-time, and
- \$1,586 per semester for students enrolled half-time.

The Pell Grant amount may be found on the financial aid award letter and may be used as verification that a student is receiving the maximum grant (based on amounts outlined above for corresponding enrollment status) and therefore has an EFC of \$0.

Note	Remind the student that if they had previously received their bill or Financial Aid award, class schedule or have misplaced the documents, they are usually easily retrieved by accessing their school account online. If the student indicates that they are having difficulty obtaining verification, a self-declaration will be accepted as a last resort and must be documented in the narrative.
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If the mandatory verification to determine student eligibility is not received timely the case will be denied or closed for failure to provide required verifications.

If the student provides verification however does not meet any of the student eligibility requirements the student must be removed from the household for reason: "In School Higher than Secondary Level."

Meal Plan

Verifying whether a student has a meal plan is another aspect of student eligibility that pertains to students who attend 4-year colleges or universities.

If a client reports that there is a college student in their SNAP household, staff must ask if the student resides on campus, off campus or lives at home. **If the student resides on campus**, you must verify whether the student has a meal plan. This can be verified by sending a **mandatory VC-1 requesting a copy of the student bill** or any other document the student can provide that shows whether or not they have a meal plan for the current academic year. If the student is having difficulty obtaining verification, assist the student by instituting collateral contact. It will be easier to make this call with the student on the other line so that the staff at the school understands that the student permits them to provide this information to DTA. **If two thirds or more of their meals are provided on-campus, they are not eligible for SNAP even if they meet one or more student eligibility factors.**

Presumption: A student attending community college is not boarding at school so you must not explore verification of meal plan for such students.

Note	If a student attends a 4-year college and boards at school, the student must verify whether they have a meal plan that provides most of their meals. As outlined above, staff must institute collateral contact to assist students who need help to verify their meal plans. Attempts at assisting a student via collateral contact must be recorded in the narrative. If the student advises that they do not have a meal plan, verification is still required.
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If verification is received that the student resides on-campus and more than 2 out of 3 daily meals are provided or the meal plan accounts for the majority of meals, the student must be denied for the Reason: **Institutionalized, including Incarceration**. This will generate

a notice that states, "you and/or a household member do not meet the program's rules because you are a resident of a facility that provides the majority of your meals."

Last Update: February 12, 2021