



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Transitional Assistance


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Online Guide Transmittal 2020-30A
May 1, 2020

 **To: Department of Transitional Assistance Staff**
From: Sarah Stuart, Associate Commissioner for Change Management
Re: SNAP: Updates Regarding SNAP Emergency Allotments to Households

Overview

As part of the Families First Coronavirus Act of 2020, Massachusetts obtained a waiver from the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) to issue SNAP Emergency Allotments to certain households for the months of March and April. This SNAP Emergency Allotment will bring impacted SNAP households up to the maximum benefit level for their current household size. More important, these additional benefits will enable clients to access better nutritional supports during this crisis.

Purpose

This Online Guide Transmittal provides updates regarding eligibility for and the processing of SNAP Emergency Allotments.

**March 2020
Benefits**

For the month of March, clients who did not receive the maximum benefit level for their household size were issued the difference in benefits by BEACON, starting March 31. A small subset of clients received the SNAP Emergency Allotment on April 2. For all cases, this allotment was issued as a **FSP Administrative Benefit** type and a batch narrative, "COVID-19 FNS Waiver – Emergency SNAP Supplement issued" was automatically entered into the Narrative.

Clients who were active at \$0 for March were issued a full SNAP Emergency Allotment for their household size.

Example: A household of 1 received \$100 for March. The maximum allotment for a household of 1 is \$194. This client will be issued a difference of \$94.

**April 2020
Benefits**

After April 2, clients will continue to receive SNAP Emergency Allotments for the month of March as cases continue to be approved for March.

For the month of April, clients who did not receive the maximum SNAP benefit for their household size or made whole through a supplement issued by a case worker, will receive the difference in benefits on May 2. BEACON will automatically issue this payment as a **FSP Administrative Benefit**.

For the month of April, case workers must select **Supplement/Immediate Issuance** when issuing supplements if the client's net income reduces to zero for that month. These cases will not be issued the SNAP Emergency Allotment for April as they have already received the maximum amount of benefits for their household size.

Example: Household of 1 received \$102 per month in SNAP benefits. The client reports loss of income in April which reduces the household's net income to zero. The maximum allotment for a household of 1 is \$194. The client must be issued the difference of \$92, for April, by the caseworker

April 2020 Benefits
(cont.)

For the example above, the system will not issue a SNAP Emergency Allotment as the client already received the maximum benefit amount. However, if the caseworker did not give the related benefit, the system would automatically issue the SNAP Emergency Allotment with the May 2 sweep. Similar to March's issuance, a batch narrative, "COVID-19 FNS Waiver – Emergency SNAP Supplement issued" will automatically populate in all cases that will be paid this SNAP Emergency Allotment.

After May 2, clients will receive SNAP Emergency Allotments for the month of April as cases continue to be approved for April benefits.

Note: Based on updated guidance from FNS, households active at zero are not eligible for the Emergency SNAP allotment. These households will not receive a supplement for April.

**Ongoing
Emergency
Allotments to
SNAP
Households**

FNS has indicated that states may be approved to issue additional months of SNAP Emergency Allotments. This will be based on availability of funding and the state of the pandemic. You will be informed as subsequent months are approved for SNAP Emergency Allotment payments.

Communications

Households that are issued a SNAP Emergency Allotment will be advised of this issuance via text messaging, if they have a cell phone on record.

Questions

If you have any policy or procedural questions, after conferring with the appropriate TAO personnel, please have your Systems Information Specialists or TAO management email them to DTA.Procedural Issues.

Systems issues should be directed to the Systems Support Help Desk.
