

## **Request to Provide Emergency Allotments (Supplements) to SNAP Households**

The contents of this document do not have the force and effect of law and are not meant to bind the public in any way. This document is intended only to provide clarity to the public regarding existing requirements under the law or agency policies.

### **1. Type of request:**

Initial

### **2. Primary Citation:**

Families First Coronavirus Response Act

### **3. State:**

Pennsylvania

### **4. Proposed Alternative Procedures:**

The State proposes to provide emergency allotments to address temporary food needs to households to bring all households up to the maximum benefit due to pandemic related economic conditions for up to two months. Contingent upon the availability of funding and ongoing need, USDA may approve additional months of emergency issuances with an extension request from the State.

These households are eligible for temporary emergency allotments because:

- There is a public health emergency declared by the Secretary of Health and Human Services and there is a State-wide emergency or disaster declaration (copy attached); and
- Due to COVID-19:
  - ✓ Residents of the State are confirmed to have contracted COVID-19
  - ✓ Some or all areas of the State are containment or quarantine zones
  - ✓ Businesses have closed or significantly reduced their hours
  - ✓ The State's residents have experienced economic impacts due to job suspensions or losses
  - ✓ The State's residents have been directed to practice social distancing

## Issuing Emergency Allotments to Current SNAP Households:

Supplemental emergency allotments would be issued in the following manner:

A One-Time Issuance (OTI) will be issued in the amount necessary to bring the SNAP household's benefit up to the maximum SNAP allotment for their household size. The issuances will be provided on the second Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) payment day of April, based on the last digit of the household's case record number, as detailed in the table below. The issuance will be for both March and April benefits in a single OTI. This staggered issuance will ensure our SNAP recipients will not all receive the additional benefits on the same day and compete with each other for available food at grocery stores. The single OTI issuance will also allow for greater efficiency in issuing the benefits using systematic issuances which eliminates the need for manual work to be completed by the County Assistance Offices which are currently operating at reduced staffing levels due to the current COVID-19 emergency.

Last Digit	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0
Second Payment Date (April)	16 <sup>th</sup>	17 <sup>th</sup>	20 <sup>th</sup>	21 <sup>st</sup>	22 <sup>nd</sup>	23 <sup>rd</sup>	24 <sup>th</sup>	27 <sup>th</sup>	28 <sup>th</sup>	29 <sup>th</sup>

The State may provide the emergency allotment(s) without contacting the household. While individual notification is not required, States should notify clients consistent with SNAP requirements for mass changes, including notice that emergency allotments will be issued for up to two months. Should this schedule change and additional months are approved during the public health emergency, the State will provide a subsequent mass change notice at that time.

Cleanup OTIs will be issued to capture households authorized for SNAP benefits after the initial data pull. In order to capture as many SNAP recipients as possible and since a SNAP application may take up to 30 days to process, the final data pull for each month will be completed at least 30 days after the end of the month for which the cleanup issuances are being completed. Data for March will be pulled over the weekend of May 9, 2020. Data for April will be pulled on June 1, 2020. The benefits will then be issued within one week of the data pull. The cleanup issuances will be issued as follows:

- March 2020 cleanup issuances will be issued on May 15, 2020.
- April 2020 cleanup issuances will be issued on June 5, 2020.

## Other Requirements:

All emergency allotments will be delivered on the household's EBT card.

The Department of Human Services (DHS) also agrees to complete the FNS-292 on a timely basis in accordance with requirements as well as all other normally

recurring SNAP reporting including the FNS 46 and 388 reports, on a timely basis in accordance with requirements.

In addition, DHS will submit a monthly report to FNS with the following information for the entire State:

- The value of emergency allotments issued.
- The average issuance amount per household.
- The number of households issued an emergency allotment.

DHS is proposing a monthly report because March and April allotments will be issued as a single OTI spread out across only 10 days in April. A monthly report will assist with efficiency.

**Justification for request:** Coronavirus COVID-19, as provided by the Families First Coronavirus Response Act.

**5. Affected Caseload:**

**One month** estimates for existing SNAP households under these procedures:

- Number of households receiving emergency allotment benefits:  
570,739
- Amount of emergency allotment benefits issued for one month:  
\$99,069,384
- Number of months requested: Two months

**6. Anticipated Implementation Date:** April 16, 2020

**7. Signature and title of requesting official:**

Lisa M. Watson, J.D.  
Deputy Secretary for Income Maintenance

*Lisa M. Watson*

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**8. Date of request:** March 30, 2020