

COVID-19 Guide for Cash Programs and SNAP

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Key: Sections highlighted in **blue** have been revised. Sections highlighted in **yellow** have been added.
Information for Cash programs refers to MFIP, DWP, GA, MSA, RCA and Housing Support.

Note: If a section has been removed from a previous version, follow pre-COVID-19 policies and procedures.
Review the Combined Manual and POLI/TEMP for additional guidance.

Introduction

This guide provides detailed instructions on policies and procedures for MFIP, DWP, RCA, GA, MSA, Housing Support and SNAP related to the COVID-19 public health emergency and COVID-19 waivers.

Note: The Federal Public Health Emergency (PHE) ended May 11, 2023. Some waivers remain in place after the end of the PHE while others will be transitioning back to standard policies and procedures. Follow the guidance below for each policy area for more information. For more information available to the public, see the end of the PHE website at: <https://mn.gov/dhs/changes-to-services-phe-ending/>

Applications

SNAP:

Applicants may be given the option to apply over the phone utilizing the verbal phone application process outlined below. This waiver began March 1, 2020. This is now an ongoing waiver and no longer considered a COVID-19 waiver. Information about this waiver can be found in Combined Manual 05.12.08 (Verbal Signatures).

Interview Waiver

SNAP

Effective May 1, 2023 – October 31, 2024, the SNAP interview waiver is in place. This waiver is optional and allows county agencies and Tribal Nations to:

- Waive SNAP application interviews
- Waive SNAP recertification interviews
- Waive both SNAP application and recertification interviews
- Complete SNAP interviews under normal policies and procedures in all sections of Combined Manual [05 \(Applications\)](#) and [09 \(Recertification\)](#).

The Food and Nutrition Service requires data collection for this waiver. By June 14, 2024 county agencies and Tribal Nations must submit a phaseout plan with detailed information on how they plan to transition off the waiver and resume SNAP interview schedules in accordance with regulatory requirements. Each phaseout plan must detail how the agency will ensure that it will resume interviews.

On November 1, 2024 we will ask counties and Tribal Nations for the following information:

- An estimate of the number of households impacted
- A summary of the impact the waiver had on administrative efficiency and providing timely, accurate benefits
- Any issues associated with the waiver, include an estimate of complaints (if any) associated with the waiver

All county agencies and Tribal Nations deciding to waive interviews will be responsible to share current county agency or Tribal Nation procedures regarding interview requirements with clients, which would include updating all areas and documents currently providing interview information for clients.

DHS encourages flexibility and counties and Tribes should consider not denying an application or closing a case at recertification time if the only thing needed is an interview. Track these cases to help satisfy the data collection requirement of this waiver.

Follow the guidance below to process applications and recertifications with this waiver in place.

- SNAP clients must still be contacted to clarify any questionable/incomplete information provided on the application or recertification as needed. This includes clarifying information that is left blank on the application or recertification form that is needed to determine eligibility. Review the information in MAXIS when available, the information provided on the application/recertification form and any verifications provided to determine when the client needs to be contacted to clarify information. Follow the guidance in the sections below if you are unable to reach the client at application and recertification.
- Verification requirements have not changed. Mandatory verifications need to be provided to determine eligibility for an application or recertification. Non-mandatory verifications still need to be provided to allow these expenses as deductions when applicable. See Combined Manual 10.18.02 (Mandatory Verifications – SNAP) and 10.18.02.03 (Non-Mandatory Verifications – SNAP) for more information.
- All of the mandatory forms/information listed in Combined Manual 05.12.12.01 (Forms/Handouts for Applicants) must still be mailed to the client at application and recertification time. These forms do not need to be verbally reviewed with the client if no contact is needed to determine eligibility.
 - If contact is made, only the DHS-8159 (SNAP Work Rules Notice) needs to be reviewed verbally with the client at the time of contact. When the DHS-8159 is verbally reviewed, state this was completed in CASE/NOTES. The remaining forms/information still need to be mailed.
- Interview requirements for Cash programs have not changed. If the client is applying for Cash and SNAP at once, interview requirements still apply for the Cash programs.
- Leave the interview date blank on STAT/PROG for new SNAP applications. On the STAT/REVIEW panel, enter the “FS Phone Interview (Y/N)” field as “N.”
- Enter the date that the unit provided the redetermination form as the interview date on STAT/REVIEW in MAXIS. Enter the “FS Phone Interview (Y/N)” field as “N.”
- Document when the interview is waived in CASE/NOTES.
- No changes have been made to overpayment policy. If information reported by the client is later found to be incorrect, assess for overpayments or supplements following Combined Manual [25.03 \(Determining Incorrect Payment Amounts\)](#).
- If your county agency or Tribal Nation opts to waive an interview for an Expedited SNAP case, questionable or incomplete information needs to be clarified before determining eligibility, and the application must pend until contact with the client is made. Once you have confirmed any questionable or incomplete information with the client, follow current procedure regarding postponed verifications and ongoing SNAP eligibility. Enter a MAXIS CASE/NOTE to document all actions taken.

Unable to Contact the Client at Application

In situations where you need to reach the client to clarify information but are unable to reach them, complete the following steps:

1. Send a DHS-2919 (Request for Verification) to the client requesting that they provide clarifying information and contact your agency to do so. If you are able to determine verifications needed based on the information provided on the application form, request these using the same DHS-2919. Indicate a 10-day return date on the DHS-2919. However, the unit has the full 30-day application processing period to provide the verifications and contact your county agency or Tribal Nation. CASE/NOTE the information being requested from the client.
2. When the unit contacts your county agency or Tribal Nation, clarify the information and request additional verifications as needed. Once all mandatory information has been provided, determine eligibility. CASE/NOTE all verifications and information provided and all actions taken on the case.
3. When the client:
 - a. **Has not** contacted your agency to clarify needed information, the application has pended for 30 days and the 10-day return date has passed, deny the application by coding the “FS” line on REPT/PND2 with “I” (Incomplete Appl, Deny). MAXIS will then deny the application in the nightly batch process. CASE/NOTE the denial reason and the steps taken to deny the case. If the client contacts the agency within 60 days of the initial date of application, use agency flexibility to determine if the client should reapply or if they can clarify needed information and provide mandatory verifications within the second 30-day application processing period. Determine which option is most advantageous to the client. Consider impacts to the resulting eligibility begin date, along with proration impacts based on whether the delay in the initial 30-day processing period was caused by the agency or the client. See Combined Manual [05.12.15.09 \(Delays Caused by the Applicant Household\)](#), Combined Manual [05.12.15.12 \(Delays Caused by the Agency\)](#) and TE02.05.104 REPT/PND2 – SNAP Coding Agency/Client Delay for more information and system guidance.
 - b. **Has** contacted the agency to clarify needed information within the 30-day application processing period but has not provided the mandatory verifications needed to determine eligibility and the 10-day return date has passed, deny the application through ELIG. CASE/NOTE the denial reason and the steps taken to deny the case. The client will have the second 30-day application processing period to provide these verifications. See Combined Manual [05.12.15 \(Application Processing Standards\)](#) for more information.

Unable to Contact the Client at Recertification

In situations where you need to reach the client to clarify information but are unable to reach them, complete the following steps:

1. Send out the DHS-2414 (Notice of Late or Incomplete Household Report Form, Health Care Renewal Form, Combined Six-Month Report or Recertification) to the client requesting that they provide clarifying information and contact your agency to do so. If any mandatory verifications are needed, also indicate this on the DHS-2414.
2. Enter the code of “I” (Incomplete) on STAT/RE VW in MAXIS. CASE/NOTE the information needed and that the DHS-2414 was sent to the client.
3. The unit has until the end of their current certification period to contact your agency and provide any mandatory verifications that are needed, or their case will auto-close.

- a. When the unit contacts your county agency or Tribal Nation, clarify the information and request additional verifications as needed. Once all mandatory information has been provided, determine eligibility. CASE/NOTE all verifications and information provided and all actions taken on the case.
- b. When the unit contacts the agency and provides all mandatory information within 30 days of their case closing, reinstate and pro-rate benefits from the date that they provided all the mandatory information.

SNAP Payment Accuracy Tips

The best way to help prevent errors during the SNAP interview waiver timeframe is to ensure the following actions on cases:

- Contact the household to resolve questionable or incomplete information and to obtain required verification for household circumstances not provided by the household
- Send a detailed 2919 verification request with accurate due date
- Allow the full 10 days for verifications to be provided
- Enter detailed MAXIS CASE/NOTES regarding all requests (verifications and reason for requests for contact), any conversations held with the client, and actions taken, including any income budgeted and why the income was budgeted

Work Requirements and Sanctions

SNAP:

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act, which was signed by the President March 18, 2020, ordered a nationwide suspension of the three-month time limit for Time-limited Recipients (TLRs) (formerly known as Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs)). This provision was effective April 1, 2020 – June 30, 2023. The number of months SNAP recipients receive benefits between April 1, 2023 – June 30, 2023 will not count against their “3 in 36 month” time limit.

Pandemic EBT (P-EBT)

P-EBT was a program authorized by the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) that provided assistance to families of children eligible for free or reduced-price meals dealing with school closures. Several phases of this program have been issued since summer 2020.

Due to the Federal Public Health Emergency ending on 05/11/23, eligibility for P-EBT benefits has ended. At this time, all P-EBT benefits have been distributed. The Department of Education and the Department of Human Services are no longer looking back for missed benefits.

Recipients of the program can check the amount of the P-EBT benefit by any of the following:

- Download the EBT Edge app to a mobile phone. Available for IOS and Android at [FISGlobal.com/EBTEdgeMobile](https://www.FISGlobal.com/EBTEdgeMobile).
- Call EBT Edge Customer Service at 888-997-2227.
- After each food purchase, find the balance of benefits on the receipt.

- Go to www.ebtEDGE.com, select ‘Cardholder Login’ and log in using the user ID and password.

For overpayments, please see the overpayment section of this guide.

SNAP Alternative EBT User

Clients may verbally designate someone to use their EBT benefits on their behalf. More information about designating an additional person to use a client’s EBT benefits can be found in POLI/TEMP TE16.02 (EBT – Additional Adults).

Overpayments

E-SNAP and P-EBT

No overpayments should be cited for E-SNAP or P-EBT.

Temporary 15% Increase

The 15% SNAP increase of the Thrifty Food Plan (TFP) and the Transitional and Family Wage Level amounts for the MFIP food portion grant should not be charged as part of an overpayment. When calculating an overpayment, the maximum chargeable amount is the amount of the SNAP or MFIP food portion amount without the increase in the TFP, Transitional Standard or Family Wage Level. CM [22.12.01](#) lists the regular SNAP TFP amounts. MFIP assistance standards are in CM [20.09](#). You will need to review the archived versions of these sections in the Combined Manual to determine the amounts used from 01/21 – 09/21.

MAXIS has been programmed to calculate the SNAP and MFIP food portion to include the 15% increase. Tables below show the increased amount for SNAP, Uncle Harry SNAP and the MFIP food portion.

SNAP and MFAP Temporary 15% Increase Allotment Table:

Household Size	SNAP Allotment
1	\$234
2	\$430
3	\$616
4	\$782
5	\$929
6	\$1,114
7	\$1,232
8	\$1,408
Each additional	\$176

MFIP Food Temporary 15% Increase Allotment Table

Family Size	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Over 10
Family Wage Level	\$597	\$981	\$1,256	\$1,508	\$1,739	\$2,008	\$2,185	\$2,415	\$2,642	\$2,863	\$220
Transitional Standard	\$543	\$892	\$1,142	\$1,371	\$1,581	\$1,825	\$1,986	\$2,195	\$2,402	\$2,603	200

Cash Portion	\$350	\$537	\$632	\$721	\$797	\$873	\$950	\$1,016	\$1,080	\$1,135	\$53
Food Portion	\$193	\$355	\$510	\$650	\$784	\$952	\$1036	\$1,179	\$1,322	\$1,468	\$147

Uncle Harry Food Support (UHFS) Temporary 15% Increase Allotment Table:

Household Size	UHFS Allotment
1	\$175
2	\$322
3	\$462
4	\$586
5	\$696
6	\$835
7	\$924
8	\$1,056
Each additional	\$132

If an overpayment exists starting in the benefit month of 1/21 through 9/21, the calculation must be based on the transitional standard that went into effect 10/20, prior to the 15% increase. The overpayment will need to be calculated manually. You will not be able to use the eligibility results from MAXIS. When completing the calculation form to mail to the client, you will need to include a note stating that the 15% increase amount of the benefits is not collectible and not included in the overpayment.

When entering the claim on MAXIS, enter the amount up to the regular SNAP or MFIP amount.

For example, if a unit of 1 receives the full SNAP increased benefit amount of \$234.00 for 02/21 and the overpayment calculation shows the overpaid amount as the full benefit of \$234.00, the amount that would be charged as an overpayment is the regular benefit amount of \$204.00. This is the maximum regular amount that the HH of 1 can receive. The \$30.00 is the temporary increased amount and is not included in the overpayment.

If there is a partial overpayment for the month, two manual calculations will need to be completed to determine the overpayment.

Calculation 1 – complete the benefit calculation to determine the amount that the client would have received without the 15% increase and the original income amounts budgeted.

Calculation 2 – complete the benefit calculation to determine the amount that the client should have received without the 15% increase and with the amount of income that should have been budgeted.

For example, if a client did not report their Unemployment Insurance (UI) income timely, and the worker determined that for 02/21 \$600 per month of UI should have been budgeted when the only previously budgeted income for the client was child support of \$385 per month. The following steps will need to be taken to determine the overpayment:

1. Determine what the grant amount with only the \$385 of child support income budgeted using the TFP amount or the MFIP assistance standards prior to 01/01/2021.

2. Determine what the grant amount with the \$385 in child support, and the \$600 of UI benefits using the TFP amount or the MFIP assistance standards prior to 01/01/2021.
3. Determine the difference between the grant amounts manually calculated in step 1 and step 2. The difference is the overpayment.

Excel budget worksheets for SNAP and Uncle Harry Food Support are available to assist with these manual grant calculations. They are available on the SNAP Resources Page of SIR under the Claims category and are titled, "[SNAP Calculation Worksheet](#)" and "[Uncle Harry Food Support Calculation Worksheet](#)". The manual calculations must be entered on the [DHS-2776A \(Computation of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Overpayment Worksheet\)](#) for SNAP. **Note:** When using the Excel spreadsheets, all income and monthly expenses must be determined prior to entering the information into the spreadsheet. The monthly multipliers need to be used for earned and unearned income, and child support and dependent care deductions paid more than once per month. Please use the multipliers listed below. When calculating self-employment income, enter the net countable income after deductions have been subtracted (for the taxable budgeting method) or 50% has been subtracted off the monthly gross amount (for the 50% budgeting method). See POLI/TEMP TE02.08.192 (How to Code STAT/BUSI for SNAP Cases) for more instructions on how to calculate the monthly self-employment income.

Multipliers:

- Weekly – 4.3
- Bi-weekly – 2.15
- Semi-monthly – 2
- Monthly – 1

[DHS-2776 \(Computation of MFIP Overpayment Worksheet\)](#) should be used for the MFIP grant calculation.

Document this in claim and case notes.

One-Time Cash Payments

MFIP and RCA cases (or units) that were active in the month of September 2021 received a one-time payment of \$435. MFIP and RCA cases (or units) that were active in the month of August 2022 received a one-time payment of \$260 IF they did not receive a one-time payment in October 2021. The one-time payments were issued per unit, not per eligible unit member. If the entire unit is found to have been ineligible in the month of September 2021 or August 2022, a separate overpayment must be cited for the amount. Overpayments will be based on the unit's eligibility for the month of September 2021 and not based on October 2021 when the one-time payment was issued. Overpayments for the 2022 one-time payment will be based on the unit's eligibility for the month of August 2022 and not based on September 2022 when the one-time payment was issued.

IF it is determined that an overpayment for September 2021 or August 2022 exists, follow normal procedures to calculate the overpayment amounts and load MAXIS. Use the necessary forms to calculate overpayments: [DHS-2776 \(Computation of MFIP Overpayment Worksheet\)](#), [DHS-2776C \(Computation of DWP Overpayment Worksheet\)](#) and [DHS-2776D \(Computation of Refugee Cash Assistance \(RCA\) Overpayment Worksheet\)](#).

Load the claim(s) as follows:

- a. The program used for issuance must be the program used for any overpayments cited.
 - I. MFIP
 - II. DWP
 - III. RCA
- b. If the overpayment is due to agency error, load three separate claims:
 1. Non-collectible MFIP-cash portion or RCA
 2. Non-collectible one-time payment
 3. Collectible MFIP-food portion (does not apply to RCA)
- c. If the overpayment is due to household error or fraud, load two separate claims:
 1. Collectible MFIP cash and food portion, or RCA
 2. Collectible one-time payment

See CM [25.03 \(Determining Incorrect Payment Amounts\)](#), [25.12 \(Types of Overpayments\)](#), and [25.12.03 \(Overpayments Exempt From Recovery\)](#) for more information.