



MEPD and TW Bulletin 21-16

Date: October 1, 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. COVID-19 Update: Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) for Summer 2021**
 2. Revised - Afghan Special Immigrant Parolee (SI/SQ) and Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR) Status

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. COVID-19: Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) for Summer 2021

Background

The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA, P.L. 117-2) extends P-EBT to the summer of 2021 for children who were eligible to receive free or reduced-price meals during the 2020-2021 school year and children under age six in SNAP households.

In coordination with the Texas Department of Agriculture and the Texas Education Agency, HHSC received federal approval to operate the P-EBT program for summer 2021 to provide eligible Texas families with P-EBT payments.

COVID-19 Policy Information

SNAP

P-EBT for summer 2021 provides food benefits for families with children who:

- were eligible for free or reduced-priced meals through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) for the 2020-2021 school year;
- became eligible for NSLP by applying between July 1 and August 28; or
- are receiving SNAP and have children who are under six years of age.

Benefit Amount

The benefit amount for summer P-EBT is \$375 per child.

Application

There is no summer 2021 P-EBT application, however certain households may need to complete the school year 2020-2021 P-EBT application to receive summer 2021 benefits.

Households who were eligible for 2020-2021 school year P-EBT benefits but did NOT receive SNAP benefits between August 2020 and August 2021 and did not complete the P-EBT online application, can:

- complete the 2020-2021 school year P-EBT online application by September 13, 2021 to see if they are eligible for 2020-2021 school year and summer 2021 P-EBT; or
- complete and return the household NSLP form to their school by August 28, 2021 to see if they are eligible for summer 2021 P-EBT.

Issuance

Summer 2021 P-EBT benefits will be issued to the household's current Lone Star Card or P-EBT Card in phases between October 15, 2021 and November 19, 2021. Households do not need to take any action.

Note: P-EBT benefits can be used in the same manner as SNAP benefits following [TWH A-1554](#), Use of SNAP Benefits, and online through authorized FNS retailers, following policy in [MEPD and TW Bulletin 20-12, SNAP Online Purchasing Pilot, released on May 12, 2020](#). However, P-EBT benefits are not considered as SNAP benefits.

Staff Procedures

No staff action is required at this time.

If staff receive questions about P-EBT, FAQs have been posted to the following HHSC webpage: hhs.texas.gov/pebt. Families with additional questions about PEBT should be referred to the hhs.texas.gov/pebt webpage for information or to the PEBT Call Center at 833-442-1255 which is opened Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 6 pm (Central Time).

Automation

Summer P-EBT benefits will be automatically deposited on the household's Lone Star Card or P-EBT Card between Oct. 15, 2021 and Nov.19, 2021.

Correspondence

Correspondence changes are not required.

Handbook

Updates to the MEPDH are not required.

Updates to the TWH are not required.

Training

Training is not required.

Effective Date

This policy is effective with the release of this bulletin.

2. Afghan Special Immigrant Parolee (SI/SQ) and Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR) Status

Background

Afghan individuals who worked with or on behalf of the United States and their family members can be granted special immigrant Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR) or Special Immigrant (SI/SQ) Parole status when they are relocated to the United States. Under the requirements of the Afghan Allies Protection Act of 2009, Afghan individuals admitted to the United States with special immigrant status are eligible for the same benefits as persons who qualify as refugees under section 207 of the Immigration and Nationality Act, including the ability to receive federal benefits (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP), and Medicaid) without a waiting period if the person meets all other eligibility criteria.

The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has created two new codes of admission for Afghan individuals who qualify for special immigrant visas (SIVs). These include:

- SQ-4, Special Immigrant (SI/SQ) Parole; and
- SQ-5, Special Immigrant (SI/SQ) Parole.

Either of these codes are acceptable SAVE Class of Admission (COA) results for Afghan special immigrants.

Additionally, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) has provided guidance that an I-94, Arrival/Departure Record, noting SQ or SI Parole, is now a valid form of documentation of a qualifying immigration status for Afghan and Iraqi special immigrants.

Clarification: The ACF - ORR has recently announced that some Afghan individuals are entering the United States as humanitarian parolees. These individuals do not have special immigrant (SI/SQ) parole status or special immigrant visas (SIV). Humanitarian parolees are not eligible to receive federal benefits in the same manner as special immigrant (SI/SQ) parolees.

Current Policy

[Texas Works Medicaid, TANF and MEPD](#)

Acceptable verification of immigration status for an Afghan or Iraqi immigrant includes:

- A passport with a stamp noting the person has been admitted under a special immigrant visa category IV with one of the following codes of admission:

- Principal Applicant: SI-1, SQ-1, SI-6 or SQ-6;
- Spouse of Principal Applicant: SI-2, SQ-2, SI-7 or SQ-7;
- Unmarried Child of Principal Applicant (Under Age 21): SI-3, SQ-3, SI-9 or SQ-9; and a
- Department of Homeland Security (DHS) stamp or notation, on passport or I-94, showing date of entry.

For special immigrants who qualify as a Lawful Permanent Resident, acceptable verification of immigration status includes:

- An I-551, Permanent Resident Card, with one of the following codes of admission:
 - Principal Applicant: SI-1, SQ-1, SI-6 or SQ-6;
 - Spouse of Principal Applicant: SI-2, SQ-2, SI-7 or SQ-7; or
 - Unmarried Child of Principal Applicant (Under Age 21): SI-3, SQ-3, SI-9 or SQ-9.
- ([TWH A-342](#), TANF and Medical Programs Alien Status Eligibility Charts – Chart B Medical Programs) & ([MEPD D-8920](#), Entry On or After Aug. 22, 1996 – Qualified Alien No Waiting Period – Chart B)

Note: Adult Afghan parolees without SQ/SI parole status do not qualify for TANF or Medicaid. Qualified immigrant and non-immigrant children ages 18 and under who are lawfully residing in the U.S. may qualify for Medicaid regardless of their date of entry.

If, or when, an Afghan parolee's status is adjusted to reflect SI/SQ or SIV, that individual is eligible for Medicaid and TANF without a waiting period from the date of the adjustment if all other eligibility criteria are met.

SNAP

Acceptable verification of immigration status for an Afghan or Iraqi immigrant includes:

- A passport with a stamp noting the person has been admitted under a special immigrant visa category IV with one of the following codes of admission:
 - Principal Applicant: SI-1 or SQ-1;
 - Spouse of Principal Applicant: SI-2 or SQ-2;
 - Unmarried Child of Principal Applicant (Under Age 21): SI-3 or SQ-3; and a
 - Department of Homeland Security (DHS) stamp or notation, on the passport or I-94, showing date of entry.

For special immigrants who qualify as a Lawful Permanent Resident, acceptable verification of immigration status includes:

- An I-551, Permanent Resident (Green) Card, with one of the following codes of admission:
 - Principal Applicant: SI-6 or SQ-6;
 - Spouse of Principal Applicant: SI-7 or SQ-7; or
 - Unmarried Child of Principal Applicant (Under Age 21): SI-9 or SQ-9. ([TWH A-341](#), SNAP Alien Status Eligibility Charts – Chart A)

For Afghan parolees without SQ/SI parole status, acceptable verification of immigration status includes:

- I-94, Arrival/Departure Record, showing admission for at least one-year under INA Section 212(d)(5) or Parolee; or
- I-766, Employment Authorization Document, annotated with A-4 or C-11.

Afghan parolees without SI/SQ parole status do not automatically qualify for SNAP benefits as certain eligibility requirements must be met.

Note: If, or when, an Afghan parolee's status is adjusted to reflect SI/SQ or SIV, that individual is eligible for SNAP without a waiting period from the date of the adjustment if all other eligibility criteria are met.

New Policy

All Programs

Acceptable verification of immigration status for Afghan or Iraqi special immigrants (Principal Applicant, Spouse of Principal Applicant, or Child of Principal Applicant Unmarried and Under Age 21) includes any of the following:

- I-94 noting Special Immigrant Status (SQ or SI) Parole Section 602(B)(1) AAPA/Sec 1059(a) NDAA 2006.
- A passport with a stamp noting the person has been admitted under a special immigrant visa category IV with one of the following codes of admission:
 - Principal Applicant: SI-1, SQ-1, SI-6 or SQ-6;
 - Spouse of Principal Applicant: SI-2, SQ-2, SI-7 or SQ-7;
 - Unmarried Child of Principal Applicant (Under Age 21): SI-3, SQ-3, SI-8 or SQ-8; and a
 - Department of Homeland Security (DHS) stamp or notation, on the passport or I-94, showing date of entry.
- An I-551, Permanent Resident Card, with one of the following codes of admission:

- Principal Applicant: SI-1, SQ-1, SI-6 or SQ-6;
- Spouse of Principal Applicant: SI-2, SQ-2, SI-7 or SQ-7; or
- Unmarried Child of Principal Applicant (Under Age 21): SI-3, SQ-3, SI-8 or SQ-8.

Note: Any of the special immigrant annotations are acceptable SAVE COA codes: SI-1, SQ-1, SI-2, SQ-2, SI-3, SQ-3, SQ-4, SQ-5, SI-6, SQ-6, SI-7, SQ-7, SI-8, SQ-8.

Note: For Afghan parolees without SI/SQ parole status, there are no new changes to policy.

Automation

Automation changes are not required.

In the **Alien/Refugee - Details** LUW, select the appropriate document (I-94, passport or I-551) in the **Document** field.

If the applicant provides an I-94 or a passport, select *Special Immigrant Visa, Iraqi/Afghan* – Code SI1, SI2, SI3, SI6, SI7, SI8, SQ1, SQ2, SQ3, SQ6, SQ7, SQ8 (I-94) in the **Annotation** field.

If the applicant provides an I-551, select LPR Special Immigrant Visa, Iraqi/Afghan – Code SI1, SI2, SI3, SI6, SI7, SI8, SQ1, SQ2, SQ3, SQ6, SQ7, SQ8 (I-551) in the **Annotation** field.

Correspondence

Correspondence changes are not required.

Handbook

The TWH is currently scheduled to be updated in the April 2022 revision.

The MEPDH is currently scheduled to be updated in the March 2022 revision.

Training

Training is not required.

Effective Date

This policy is effective upon release.