



MEPD and TW Bulletin 22-15

Date: December 09, 2022

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. TANF Maximum Grant Amounts**
2. SNAP Income Limits Deductions and Allotments
3. SNAP-CAP Allotments
4. COVID-19 Update: Additional Emergency Allotment Supplement
5. Accessing The Work Number (TWN) Data Through the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Federal Data
6. Revised - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAP E&T) Provider Determinations
7. COVID-19 Update: Extended Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Certification Periods

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. TANF Maximum Grant Amounts

Background

State law requires the monthly Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) maximum grant amounts be adjusted to 17 percent of the current federal poverty level (FPL). Policy is revised to reflect the annual TANF maximum grant increase.

Current Policy

[TANF](#)

Staff must use the TANF Budgetary Allowances chart, effective October 1, 2021, to determine the maximum grant amount for TANF EDGs. ([TWH C-111](#), Income Limits)

New Policy

[TANF](#)

Staff must use the TANF Budgetary Allowances chart, effective October 1, 2022, to determine the maximum grant amount for TANF EDGs. There are no changes in the budgetary or recognizable needs amounts for these eligibility tests.

TANF Maximum Grants (Effective October 1, 2022)

Family Size	Non-caretaker Cases	Caretaker Cases Without Second Parent	Caretaker Cases with Second Parent
1	\$112	\$136	---
2	\$161	\$283	\$216
3	\$226	\$327	\$358
4	\$269	\$393	\$402
5	\$345	\$436	\$466
6	\$372	\$501	\$511
7	\$464	\$544	\$573
8	\$510	\$620	\$618
9	\$585	\$664	\$693
10	\$630	\$739	\$738
11	\$706	\$784	\$813
12	\$750	\$859	\$858
13	\$825	\$904	\$933
14	\$871	\$979	\$978
15	\$945	\$1024	\$1053
For each additional member	+ \$75	+ \$75	+ \$75

Policy for EDGs Processed After September Mass Update

For the benefit month of:	Use:
September 2022 or earlier,	The previous maximum grant amount.
October 2022 or later,	The updated maximum grant amount.

Automation

TIERS will update the TANF grant amounts during the weekend of September 3, 2022. The updated TANF grant amounts are budgeted in TIERS for benefit month October 2022 and ongoing. TIERS converts the benefit amount for TANF EDGs in ongoing status without an override designation and produces a combined Form TF0001, Notice of Case Action, for any SNAP, TANF, or Medical Assistance (MA) EDGs with a benefit change.

Note: A TIERS exception report for EDGs not included in the mass update is distributed for staff action. EDGs not updated will receive an explanation of the October cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) on the next Form TF0001 produced for that EDG.

Correspondence

The following language will be included on the Form TF0001 for TANF households with an increased allotment:

Benefit amounts for many people have changed. This is due to new federal and state laws or rules. Changes go into effect October 1, 2022.

Handbook

Updates to the MEPD Handbook are not required.

The Texas Works Handbook is currently scheduled to be updated in the October 2022 revision.

Training

Training is not required.

Effective Date

The policy is effective beginning with benefit month October 2022.

2. SNAP Income Limits, Deductions, and Allotments

Background

As part of the annual cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients, effective October 1, 2022, the following limits and amounts have changed:

- maximum SNAP income limits;
- standard deduction;
- standard utility allowance (SUA);
- basic utility allowance (BUA);
- maximum excess shelter deduction;
- homeless shelter deduction; and
- SNAP allotments.

Note: The telephone standard and standard medical expense deduction did not change.

Current Policy

SNAP

Staff must use the SNAP income limits, deductions, and allotment amounts effective October 1, 2021 to determine eligibility for SNAP eligibility determination groups (EDGs). ([TWH C-121](#), Maximum Income Limits; [TWH C-121.1](#), Deduction Amounts; [TWH C-1431](#), Whole Monthly Allotments by Household Size)

New Policy

SNAP

Staff must use the following income limits, deductions, and allotment amounts effective October 1, 2022, to determine eligibility for SNAP EDGs.

Maximum SNAP Income Limits (Effective October 1, 2022)

Household Size	Gross (130%)	Net (100%)	165%**
1	\$1,473	\$1,133	\$1,869
2	\$1,984	\$1,526	\$2,518
3	\$2,495	\$1,920	\$3,167
4	\$3,007	\$2,313	\$3,816
5	\$3,518	\$2,706	\$4,465
6	\$4,029	\$3,100	\$5,114
7	\$4,541	\$3,493	\$5,763
8	\$5,052	\$3,886	\$6,412
9	\$5,564	\$4,280	\$7,061
10	\$6,076	\$4,674	\$7,710

For each additional member	+ \$512	+ \$394	+ \$649
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**The figures in the 165% column are used to determine if an elderly person with a disability living with others may claim separate household status even though the person purchases or prepares food with the others. The figures in this column are also the gross income limits for categorically eligible households.

Standard or Maximum Deduction Amounts Effective October 1, 2022

- Standard Deduction:
 - If household size is three or less — \$193
 - If household size is four — \$193
 - If household size is five — \$225
 - If household size is six or more — \$258
- Standard Medical Expense — \$170 (minus \$35)
- Maximum Excess Shelter — \$624
- Standard Utility Allowance — \$408
- Basic Utility Allowance — \$372
- Telephone Standard — \$38
- Homeless Shelter Standard — \$166.81

SNAP Allotment Amounts Effective October 1, 2022

SNAP allotment charts providing the whole monthly allotments by household size are included as an attachment to this bulletin. The minimum monthly SNAP allotment for a one- or two-person household has increased to \$23.

Policy for EDGs Processed After September Mass Update

For the benefit month of:	eligibility is determined using the:
September 2022 or earlier,	Previous income limits, standard deduction amount, SUA/BUA amounts, maximum excess shelter deduction and allotment amounts for determining that month's benefits.
October 2022 and ongoing,	Updated income limits, standard deduction amounts, SUA/BUA amounts, maximum excess shelter deduction

	and allotment amounts for determining that month's benefits. This includes households applying after September 15, 2022, who meet the combined allotment eligibility criteria. The updated 130% federal poverty level (FPL) amounts are used to notify a streamlined reporting household of the reporting requirement at application, recertification, or incomplete review when the action is disposed on or after October 1, 2022.*
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*TIERS will automatically use the correct amounts for each month.

Automation

TIERS will update all active SNAP EDGs during the weekend of September 3, 2022. The updated income limits, deductions, and allotments are budgeted in TIERS for benefit month October 2022 and ongoing. The appropriate income limits, deductions, and allotments are automatically applied for each benefit month, whether the benefit month is before or after the October COLA (including combined allotment situations). TIERS converts the benefit amount for SNAP EDGs in ongoing status without an override designation and produces a combined Form TF0001, Notice of Case Action, for any SNAP/TANF/Medical Assistance (MA) EDG with a benefit change.

Note: A TIERS exception report for EDGs not included in the mass update is distributed for staff action. EDGs not updated will receive an explanation of the October cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) on the next Form TF0001 produced for that EDG.

Correspondence

The following language will be included on the Form TF0001 for SNAP households with an increased or decreased allotment:

Benefit amounts for many people have changed. This is due to new federal and state laws or rules. Changes go into effect October 1, 2022.

Handbook

Updates to the MEPD Handbook are not required.

The Texas Works Handbook is currently scheduled to be updated in the October 2022 revision.

Training

Training is not required.

Effective Date

The policy is effective beginning with benefit month October 2022.

3. SNAP-CAP Allotments

Background

The shelter and allotment amounts for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Combined Application Project (SNAP-CAP) are adjusted periodically to reflect changes in SNAP and SSI benefit levels. Recent guidance from the Food and Nutrition Service directed HHSC to adjust the SNAP-CAP allotment amounts to align with the recent changes from the cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) for SNAP that are effective October 2022.

Current Policy

[SNAP-CAP](#)

SNAP-CAP recipients receive a standard allotment amount based on their monthly shelter expenses:

- if monthly shelter expenses are less than \$440 per month, the monthly SNAP-CAP allotment is \$101.
- if monthly shelter expenses are more than or equal to \$440 per month, the monthly SNAP-CAP allotment is \$168. ([TWH B-475.1](#), Overview)

New Policy

[SNAP-CAP](#)

Effective with the October 2022 benefit month:

- if monthly shelter expenses are less than or equal to \$440 per month, the monthly SNAP-CAP allotment is \$134.
- if monthly shelter expenses are more than \$440 per month, the monthly SNAP-CAP allotment is \$223.

Automation

TIERS will update all active SNAP-CAP EDGs during the weekend of September 3, 2022. The updated allotments are budgeted in TIERS for benefit month October 2022 and ongoing. The appropriate allotments are automatically applied for each benefit month, whether the benefit month is before or after the October COLA (including combined allotment situations). TIERS converts the benefit amount for SNAP-CAP EDGs in ongoing status without an override designation and produces a combined Form TF0001, Notice of Case Action, for any SNAP/TANF/Medical Assistance (MA) EDG with a benefit change.

Note: A TIERS exception report for EDGs not included in the mass update is distributed for staff action. EDGs not updated will receive an explanation of the

October cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) on the next Form TF0001 produced for that EDG.

Correspondence

[Form H1843](#), Your SNAP-CAP Food Benefits Have Changed, will be sent to all SNAP-CAP households and includes the following notice language:

Due to Federal Law, your food benefits will change as of October 2022.

- *If you got \$101 per month, you will now get \$134 per month if your housing and utility costs together are less than \$440 a month.*
- *If you got \$168 per month, you will now get \$223 per month if your housing and utility costs together are \$440 or more a month.*

Handbook

Updates to the MEPDH are not required.

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

Training

Training is not required.

Effective Date

This policy is effective beginning with benefit month October 2022.

4. COVID-19 Update: Additional Emergency Allotment Supplement

Background

On January 27, 2020, the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services declared that a public health emergency exists nationwide due to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. Additionally, on March 13, 2020, Governor Greg Abbott also declared a state of disaster for all counties in Texas due to the COVID-19 outbreak. HHSC is providing the following temporary guidance regarding policies and procedures for processing case actions during the COVID-19 public health emergency.

COVID-19 Policy

SNAP

HHSC has been granted approval from the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) to issue September 2022 Emergency Allotment (EA) supplements to participating SNAP households. Households who are approved for SNAP in September 2022 will automatically be issued supplements that will bring the household up to the maximum monthly allotment for the household's size. All SNAP households will receive a minimum of \$95 in EA supplements.

All EA supplements will be automatically issued on the SNAP household's existing EBT card. SNAP households do not need to take any action to receive EA supplements.

HHSC will issue EA supplements for September, on a randomized staggered schedule starting September 6, 2022. The expected completion of September EA supplement issuance for active SNAP households is September 12, 2022. Households who are determined eligible for SNAP after September 12, 2022, will be issued their supplement within approximately 60 days from disposition. Staff should call in a ticket when the SNAP household reports not receiving the supplement by that timeframe.

TIERS will add the following case comment "COVID-19 SNAP supplements issued" for a case where the EA supplement was issued. HHSC will not send a notice to households regarding the EA supplement.

Additionally, during the pandemic, Quality Control and other case reading reviews will continue to ensure accuracy. Although SNAP households will receive a minimum of \$95 in EA supplements, staff must still ensure regular monthly benefits are calculated correctly when processing any case actions.

Automation

September EA supplements for active SNAP households are expected to be issued between September 6, 2022, and September 12, 2022. Households who are determined eligible for SNAP after September 12, 2022, will be issued their September EA supplement within approximately 60 days from disposition.

Correspondence

Correspondence changes are not required.

Handbook

Handbook updates are not required.

Training

Training is not required.

Effective Date

This policy is effective with the release of this bulletin. Staff will be notified when the COVID-19 policy and clarifications no longer apply.

5. Accessing The Work Number (TWN) Data Through the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Federal Data Services Hub (FDSH)

Background

The Work Number (TWN) is an electronic data source that provides earned income and employment information. TWN was removed as an electronic verification source from Data Broker effective Nov. 1, 2019 (MEPD and TW Bulletin 19-10, Discontinuation of The Work Number (TWN), released Oct. 31, 2019).

As required by Rider 31, passed by the 87th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, 2021, HHSC will connect with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Federal Data Services Hub (FDSH) through Data Broker to access earned income and employment data from TWN.

Current Policy

[All Programs](#)

Staff must:

- Verify a person's income and employment to determine eligibility for all programs using applicable verification sources. (MEPDH Appendix XVI, Documentation and Verification Guide and [TWH A-1370](#), Verification Requirements); and
- Request a Data Broker Combined Report and resolve any questionable information per [TWH C-820](#) and [MEPDH R-3800](#) Data Broker.

Electronic data from Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) wage records is used to verify earned income for all programs ([MEPDH R-3800](#), Data Broker, and [TWH A-1371](#)).

New Policy

[Medical Programs and CHIP](#)

TWN data from the FDSH is available through Data Broker and is an acceptable electronic data source to verify income for all medical programs at initial application, renewal, change, and Periodic Income Check (PIC).

Note: *TWN data must be used even if current TWC quarterly data is available.*

[SNAP and TANF](#)

Since TWN data is being provided through the FDSH, it can only be accessed when processing actions for medical programs. If medical programs are active or requested at the same time as processing an action for Supplemental Nutrition

Assistance Program (SNAP) or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), TWN data will be available in Data Broker. TWN data cannot be used as a sole verification source for (SNAP) and (TANF) Eligibility Determination Groups (EDGs). TWN data can only be used as a case clue if there is an associated Medicaid or CHIP EDG. If the person does not confirm that TWN data is accurate and matches the amount to the penny, additional income verification must be provided using sources in TWH A-1371, Verification Sources.

Automation

New questions and verification options have been added to Texas Integrated Eligibility Redesign System (TIERS) to determine when TWN data from the FDSH should be included in the Data Broker report.

- The question “Is Medicaid active/requested?” was added to the **Individual Logical Unit of Work (LUW)**. This question is mandatory when staff request Data Broker information.
 - Eligibility staff are responsible for correctly answering this question. The question is answered “Yes” when there is either an active medical program on the case or the application includes a request for Medicaid or CHIP.
 - Information from TWN will only be requested if this question is answered “Yes.”
- The question “Was this employment information disclosed by the client?” was added on the **Employment-Employer** page in the **Income LUW**.
- Additional verification options were added to the **Employment-Employee**, **Employer-Payments**, and **Employer-Loss of Employment** pages in the **Income LUW**. The options include:
 - **FDSH Employment and Income**. This verification option is only acceptable for medical programs; and
 - **FDSH Employment and Income with client statement**. This verification option is acceptable for all programs.

Changes to TIERS are currently scheduled to be implemented with TIERS Release 113.0 on Sept. 24, 2022.

Correspondence

Correspondence changes are not required.

Handbook

The MEPDH is currently scheduled to be updated in the March 2023 revision.

The TWH is currently scheduled to be updated in the April 2023 revision.

Training

Training titled Federal Data Services Hub Provides The Work Number Verification will be available in PALMS on Friday, Sept. 16, 2022.

Effective Date

This policy is effective with the implementation of TIERS Release 113.0 currently scheduled for Sept. 24, 2022.

6. Revised - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAP E&T) Provider Determinations

Background

On January 5, 2021, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) published a final rule that implemented certain changes to SNAP E&T based on provisions in the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018, commonly referred to as the 2018 Farm Bill.

The revision corrects the new policy by removing the statement specifying E&T staff will review whether there is a suitable component available for the participant after a provider determination is submitted to HHSC. This step in the process occurs prior to E&T staff submitting a provider determination to HHSC. This revision also clarifies staff must notify households of the provider determination within 10 days of receiving notification from E&T staff.

Current Policy

SNAP

Non-exempt SNAP participants, ages 16 through 59, are required to participate in SNAP E&T services through local Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) Workforce Solutions offices. The Texas Integrated Eligibility Redesign System (TIERS) uses the information entered by HHSC staff to determine work registration status, based on information provided by the SNAP participant and verification sources. A daily electronic file is sent to E&T staff when SNAP is certified or when a SNAP participant's work registration code changes (TWH [A-1831.1](#), Referral Process).

SNAP participants receive services related to one or more SNAP E&T components (such as supervised job search, vocational training, and work experience) through case management, provided by E&T staff or other contracted providers. If E&T staff determine a SNAP component is not a good fit for a participant (often through no fault of the participant), they:

- reassess the participant for physical or mental fitness; and
- move the participant to another available and suitable component.

E&T staff use [Form H1816](#), SNAP E&T Non-Compliance Report, and [Form H1817](#), SNAP Information Transmittal, to report non-compliance, recommend good cause, remove penalties and provide information that may affect a SNAP participant's work registration status to HHSC staff.

New Policy

SNAP

SNAP participants cannot be sanctioned for non-participation with E&T when there are no available E&T components that are a good fit for the participant. Additionally, Able Bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWDs) will not receive a countable ABAWD month in any month there are no available E&T components. ABAWD federal time limit months begin counting the next full benefit month after notifying the ABAWD there are no available E&T components, unless meeting the work requirement or otherwise exempt (TWH [A-1940](#), SNAP ABAWD Work Requirements).

When E&T staff determine that a SNAP E&T component is not a good fit for a SNAP participant because the particular component to which they were referred does not match the SNAP participant's needs and skill level, E&T staff will determine whether the participant can be enrolled in another component. If another suitable component is not available, a provider determination will be completed through the current good cause recommendation process.

E&T staff will submit a good cause recommendation of 'Other' through the TIERS interface. Form H1816, SNAP E&T Non-Compliance Report, will be faxed to HHSC specifying that the participant received a provider determination.

When a provider determination is received as a good cause recommendation reason, HHSC staff must approve good cause following the existing good cause process. HHSC staff must also attempt to contact the SNAP household by phone to:

- explain a provider determination is used when an E&T component is not a good fit for a SNAP participant, the participant is not being sanctioned because of the provider determination, and (if the participant is an ABAWD) ABAWD federal time limit months will begin counting in the next month;
- explore whether the person is Code E (physically or mentally unfit for employment) and obtain verification of the exemption, as applicable (TWH [A-1822.1](#), SNAP Work Requirement Exemptions); and
- provide contact information for TWC and HHSC. Participants may contact:
 - TWC by visiting www.twc.texas.gov and clicking on the "Find your Local Workforce Solutions Office," or
 - HHSC by calling 2-1-1 or 1-877-541-7905 (option 2).

HHSC staff must document in TIERS whether the provider determination information was verbally explained to the SNAP household **within 10 days**. If unable to contact the SNAP household by phone, staff should send a [Form H1020](#), Request

for Information or Action, to explain the provider determination process, request verification of Code E (physically or mentally unfit for employment) and provide contact information for HHSC and TWC.

Automation

Automation changes are not required.

Correspondence

Correspondence changes are not required.

Handbook

Updates to the MEPDH are not required.

The TWH is currently scheduled to be updated in the January 2023 revision.

Training

Training is not required.

Effective Date

This policy is effective with the release of this bulletin.

7. COVID-19 Update: Extended Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Certification Periods

Background

On January 27, 2020, the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services declared that a public health emergency exists nationwide due to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. Additionally, on March 13, 2020, Governor Greg Abbott also declared a state of disaster for all counties in Texas due to the COVID-19 outbreak. HHSC is providing the following temporary guidance regarding policies and procedures for processing case actions during the COVID-19 public health emergency.

COVID-19 Policy

SNAP

SNAP renewals due in September, October and November 2022 will be automatically extended by six months. This applies to all SNAP households, including TSAP, SNAP-SSI, and SNAP-CAP Eligibility Determination Groups (EDGs).

All households with certification periods ending in:

- September 2022 will receive an automatic extension through March 2023;
- October 2022 will receive an automatic extension through April 2023; and
- November 2022 will receive an automatic extension through May 2023.

TIERS automation adjusts the recertification due dates for households who receive the extension. No staff action is required to extend SNAP certification periods.

Note: SNAP EDGs in *Review Initiate* mode receive automatic extensions for six months.

Staff Procedures

If a redetermination packet is received and the review has already been initiated, validate that the SNAP EDG received an extension and return the case to ongoing mode.

Note: Other programs that were initiated for review with the SNAP EDG must still be completed.

If a redetermination packet is received and the review has not been initiated, review the redetermination packet to determine if a change in address or a request for additional program(s) is included:

- If yes, process the application or change of address following current policies and procedures.
- If no, document in case comments, "SNAP extended, no other programs/address change requested" and clear the task.

Automation

TIERS will automatically extend all active SNAP EDGs with recertifications due in September, October and November 2022 beginning on Sep. 26, 2022. TIERS will also add the following information in case comments, "SNAP certification period automatically extended due to COVID-19."

Correspondence

Households will receive a notice informing them of the extension and their new certification period.

Handbook

Handbook updates are not required.

Training

Training is not required.

Effective Date

This policy is effective with the release of this bulletin.