



MEPD and TW Bulletin 26-11

Date: June 19, 2026

To: State and Regional Operations Supervisors and Staff
Program Managers
Regional Directors
Policy Attorneys
Hearings Officers

From: Access and Eligibility Services Program Policy
State Office 2106

Subject: Pre-release Application Processing

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/handbooks/medicaid-elderly-people-disabilities-handbook) at <https://hhs.texas.gov/handbooks/medicaid-elderly-people-disabilities-handbook>;
- [Texas Works Handbook \(TWH\)](https://hhs.texas.gov/handbooks/texas-works-handbook/twh-policy-bulletins) at <https://hhs.texas.gov/handbooks/texas-works-handbook/twh-policy-bulletins>.

Pre-release Application Processing

Background

House Bill (H.B.) 1743, passed by the 88th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, 2023, requires the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) and the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) to assess SNAP eligibility for inmates before their release from a TDCJ or TDCJ contracted facility. This will ensure that recently released inmates may begin receiving SNAP benefits upon their release. Although the state legislation was passed in 2023, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) provided the federal approval necessary to implement H.B. 1743 on April 10, 2024.

Current Policy

SNAP

During application processing, do not include incarcerated inmates in the SNAP certified group because prisons and jails:

- Provide more than half of an inmate's meals, and
- Are not considered approved institutions. ([TWH A-232.1, Nonmembers](#))

If an inmate—as the only household member—applies for benefits prior to release from incarceration, deny the application during processing. ([TWH B-490, Determining Whether a Person Who Resides in a Facility Is Institutionalized](#))

New Policy

SNAP

Working in partnership with TDCJ, HHSC will assess inmates for SNAP eligibility before their discharge or release from a TDCJ or TDCJ contracted facility. To receive an eligibility determination before release, the person must apply and be considered a **pre-release applicant**.

A pre-release applicant is an inmate who is:

- Incarcerated in a TDCJ or TDCJ contracted facility when they apply for SNAP benefits;
- Within 30 days of their release;
- Not already receiving or renewing SNAP benefits;
- Not a required member of an existing SNAP household upon release;
- Not joining a household with other responsible adult members who will receive SNAP when the inmate is released; and
- Not entering an ineligible institution when released.

People incarcerated in a facility other than a TDCJ or TDCJ contracted facility, such as a county jail, are not pre-release applicants. A list of TDCJ and TDCJ contracted facilities is available in the [TDCJ Unit Directory](#).

If a person applies for benefits from a TDCJ or TDCJ contracted facility, and they would like to receive SNAP for other responsible adult household members, the non-incarcerated adult household members should apply for SNAP.

Note: While processing the application, if it is discovered that other adult household members will become members of the pre-release applicant's SNAP Eligibility Determination Group (EDG), deny the application as application filed in error. If available, ask the pre-release applicant whether they would like a [Form H1010, Texas Works Application for Assistance – Your Texas Benefits](#), mailed to other responsible adult household members who would be part of the EDG.

Application Submission

TDCJ will direct all inmates applying for benefits to complete, sign and submit their SNAP application by calling 877-541-7905. To receive application assistance, inmates should contact HHSC by phone. For inmates who are unable to complete an application by phone, TDCJ will provide Form H1010, which can be mailed to HHSC to begin the application process.

The **pre-release received date** is the day HHSC receives an application from a pre-release applicant containing their name, address and appropriate signature. This date is day zero in the pre-release application process. For applications received outside of business hours when HHSC is closed, including weekends and holidays, the pre-release received date is the next business day.

Application Processing Time Frames

Applications are valid for up to 60 days after the pre-release received date when a pre-release applicant reapplies after denial for missing an appointment or failing to provide information or verification, including postponed verification.

By the 30th day after the pre-release received date:

- Deny the application;
- Certify the application if the applicant is released from incarceration; or
- Send Notice H0604, SNAP Pre-Release information, to notify the pre-release applicant they may be eligible to receive benefits after they are released from incarceration.

Application Interviews

An interview is required for pre-release applicants. Do not attempt a cold call to complete an interview. Mail Form H1830-FA, Application/Review/Expiration/Appointment Notice, instructing the pre-release applicant to call the Flexible Appointment toll-free number. If HHSC is not contacted by the date listed on Form H1830-FA, send Form H1020-MA-FA, Request for Information or Action-Missed Appointment-Flexible Appointment, to inform the pre-release applicant of the final day to complete their interview. Pre-release applicants have until close of business on the final due date to contact HHSC for an interview. The final due date is the 30th day after the pre-release received date. During the interview, inform the pre-release applicant of their option to pick up their Lone Star Card from an HHSC local office after release. If the household is mailed a card and instead picks up a card in an HHSC local office, cancel the mailed card.

Information and Verification

Pre-release applicants must provide the same information and verification required of all SNAP applicants. In addition, pre-release applicants must provide the following.

Anticipated Release Date

The ***anticipated release date*** is the date that a pre-release applicant states they will be released from incarceration. This date establishes whether the applicant will be released from incarceration within 30 days of their pre-release received date. Deny a pre-release application if the person's anticipated release date is greater than 30 days from the pre-release received date. Accept either client statement or the projected release date available in the [TDCJ inmate search](#) as acceptable verification of the anticipated release date.

Physical and Mailing Address After Release

While a person is incarcerated, forms and notices sent to the pre-release applicant must:

- Be mailed to TDCJ's centralized mailing address at 4616 West Howard Lane Suite 200, Austin, TX 78728; and
- Include the person's state identification number (SID), listed on their application or available through TDCJ inmate search.

During the interview, ask the pre-release applicant to provide their address after release. If the client is unable to provide an address after release that is different from the TDCJ centralized mailing address, send [Form H1020, Request for Information or Action](#), requesting the applicant provide their address after release. If the client does not provide their address after release by the Form H1020 due date, deny the application for failure to provide.

Living Arrangement After Release

During the interview, ask the pre-release applicant to explain where they will be living and who they will be living with after release. Following [TWH B-490](#), disqualify a pre-release applicant if they will be considered institutionalized after release from incarceration.

Eligibility Determination

When a pre-release applicant completes their interview, provides all verifications and meets all other SNAP eligibility criteria:

- Notice H0604 is sent to inform the pre-release applicant that they can begin receiving benefits when they provide verification of their release date.
- A request is automatically sent through the TDCJ interface for the date the person is released from incarceration, and the address the person will be released to after incarceration.

TDCJ Interface

A TIERS interface has been created for TDCJ to provide HHSC an applicant's release date and their mailing address after release when available. TIERS will generate *Alert 917: Process SNAP Pre Prisoner Application – Post-release address discrepancy* when the TDCJ interface:

- Is unable to find a match with a person incarcerated at TDCJ; or
- Returns a mailing address which is either out of state or different from the address after release provided by the client.

If the alert comments indicate that information should be reviewed, review the name, address, date of birth, and SID number in TIERS and make sure the information is correct.

If the alert comments indicate to complete case processing, eligibility staff should review the TDCJ interface and check to see if the address in the interface matches the address after release provided by the client:

- If the information matches, dispose the case.
- If information in the interface does not match the address after release provided by the client, contact the client to determine if the address in the TDCJ interface is correct. Then, if the client states the address reported in the TDCJ interface is correct, update the case address and any applicable changes to living arrangement and shelter costs.
- If the address reported in the TDCJ interface is incorrect or staff are unable to contact the client, send Form H1020 requesting verification of residency.

Then, if verification of residency is not provided by the Form H1020 due date, deny the application for failure to provide.

Release Date

As verified by either TDCJ documentation or through the TDCJ interface, the release date is the actual date that a pre-release applicant is physically released from incarceration. When a pre-release application is certified, the release date is automatically set as the application file date. This means the release date is the first day that SNAP benefit eligibility can begin and the date benefits should prorate from. If a person who meets all other SNAP eligibility criteria does not provide a release date within 60 days of the pre-release received date, the application is denied. All pre-release applications are certified as non-streamlined reporting or SR-3 households.

To verify release date, **do not**:

- Use a future date to verify whether a person will be physically released from incarceration;
- Use the TDCJ Inmate Information Search as it only provides information about the projected release date, not the date that a person is physically released from incarceration; or
- Accept client statement as acceptable verification.

Expedited Applications

Pre-release applicants are eligible for expedited service if they meet criteria in [TWH A-141, Expedited Eligibility Criteria](#). To be determined eligible for expedited service, pre-release applicants must provide a release date and a mailing address after release that is not discrepant with TDCJ information. Pre-release applicants eligible for expedited service can postpone all verification until after receiving the first month's benefit except:

- Identity (a prisoner ID card is acceptable verification of identity),
- Release Date,
- Mailing Address After Release, and
- Proof they meet or are currently exempt from the SNAP ABAWD work requirement if they have already received the maximum number of benefit months without meeting the work requirement.

Note: As the application file date is the date the pre-release applicant is released from incarceration, benefits must be issued to the household no later than seven business days from the release date.

Examples

Scenario 1

Jane, an inmate in Woodman State Jail, applies for SNAP over the phone on July 15 and anticipates she will be released on August 11. Jane meets all criteria to be considered a pre-release applicant.

- Jane's pre-release received date is July 15; therefore, the final due date is August 14 (30 days after the pre-release receive date).
- If the interview is not completed by August 14, the SNAP application is denied for missed appointment.

Scenario 2

Jane, an inmate in Woodman State Jail, applies for SNAP benefits over the phone on July 15 and anticipates she will be released on August 11. Jane meets all criteria to be considered a pre-release applicant.

- Jane's pre-release received date is July 15; therefore, the final due date is August 14 (30 days after the pre-release receive date).
- If she completes her interview and provides all requested verifications by August 14, HHSC sends Notice H0604 to tell Jane she may be eligible to receive benefits if she provides verification of her release date from TDCJ.
 - If on August 16, the TDCJ interface confirms her address after release and verifies her August 11 release date, TIERS automatically updates the case address, file date, and living arrangement to reflect information collected about her circumstances after release. The case is certified as a non-SR household with an August 11 file date.
 - If no release date is provided by the 60th day after the pre-release received date (September 13), TIERS denies the application for failure to provide information as no release date was provided to establish eligibility.

Scenario 3

Jane, an inmate in Woodman State Jail, applies for SNAP benefits over the phone on July 15 and anticipates she will be released on August 11. Jane meets all criteria to be considered a pre-release applicant.

- Jane's pre-release received date is July 15; therefore, the final due date is August 14. (30 days after the pre-release received date)
- If she completes her interview and provides all requested verifications by August 14, HHSC sends Notice H0604 to tell her she may be eligible to receive benefits if she provides verification of her release date from TDCJ.

- If on August 16, the TDCJ interface confirms her Aug 11 release date, but provides a different mailing address than the address after release Jane provided, an Alert 917 is generated.
- Contact Jane to confirm whether her mailing address has changed to the address TDCJ provided.
 - If Jane reports her mailing address remains the same as what she originally reported on her application, pend the case for at least 10 days or until the final due date (whichever is later), to verify residency.
- If she does not provide verification by the Form H1020 due date, deny the case for failure to provide.
- If she provides residency verification by the Form H1020 due date, staff must ensure the case address reflects the address Jane verified and certify the case. The case should be certified as a non-SR household with an August 11 file date.

Automation

Changes to TIERS and YourTexasBenefits.com were implemented with TIERS Release 120.1 on July 12, 2025. Changes will be fully available in TIERS on June 13, 2026.

Correspondence

Changes to [Form H0011, Texas Simplified Application Project \(TSAP\) for SNAP benefits](#), [H1010, Texas Works Application for Assistance-Your Texas Benefits](#), Form H1020, Request for Information or Action, TF0001, Notice of Case Action, and new Notice H0604, SNAP Pre-Release Information were implemented on July 12, 2025. Changes to ensure a pre-release applicant's SID number is included on H1830-FA and Form H1020-MA-FA were also implemented on July 11, 2025.

Handbook

Updates to the MEPDH are not required.

The TWH is currently scheduled to be updated in the January 2027 revision.

Training

Training was made available in PALMS titled R120.1 HB 1743 Inmate Pre-Release on Saturday, July 12, 2025. Eligibility staff were scheduled to retake R120.1 Inmate Pre-Release training in PALMS between April 13, 2026, and April 24, 2026.

A Bulletin Buddy will be released on June 19, 2026 to support this bulletin.

Effective Date

This policy is effective for all SNAP Pre-release applications received on or after June 22, 2026.