

Basic Food Education Forum

DSHS Updates for Community Services Division (CSD)

January 2021

Community Services Office Lobbies Are Offering Reduced Services

- All business conducted over the phone 877-501-2233
- Identocard service is back
- Telephonic signature for all applications and eligibility reviews
- No EBT cards issued at the local offices except for clients with general delivery
- Case Managers can be contacted through the Customer Service Contact Center
 - They will call clients back
- Drop-boxes are still available at local offices

Submitting Documents Through MyDocs

- A new option allows customers to email verification documents using the MyDocs Attachment service option by creating a Secure Email Portal account.
- If your client has questions, needs help or would like to receive an invitation to participate in this service, refer them to the Customer Service Contact Center at 877-501-2233.

New Telephone Options

- Social Service questions and answers
- TANF questions and answers
- TANF intakes with Comprehensive Evaluation Part 1

Certification Period Extensions

- Food/Cash ER due in Jan. or Feb. = 4 month extension
- MCRs are waived from Nov. to June 2021
- Medical ERs will continue to get auto-extended at least through January

Basic Food Allotments

- All households will receive the maximum benefit amount for their household size
- March – Dec 2020
- **Also, January 2021**

Basic Food Benefit Increases

- Due to the Consolidated Appropriations act passed by Congress, food benefits will *temporarily* increase by 15%..
- No action is needed from clients.
- Clients will not receive a letter advising them about the increase in Food benefits.
- Food benefits will return to regular issuance amounts July 2021.
- We anticipate it will be several weeks before they are issued.

Expanded Basic Food Eligibility for Students

- Effective January 19, 2021, student eligibility for Basic Food is temporarily expanded.
- The [Consolidated Appropriation Act, 2021](#) passed by Congress in late December included this expanded student eligibility for federal food benefits as a result of the COVID-19 public health emergency. This includes students who:
 - Are eligible to participate in work study without actually participating or having the intent to participate as determined by the school, or
 - Have an Expected Family Contribution of \$0 in the current academic year.
- Exemptions for *new applicants* for food assistance will continue until 30 days after the COVID-19 public health emergency is lifted.
- Exemptions for *food recipients* will continue until their first recertification no earlier than 30 days after the COVID-19 public health emergency is lifted.
- Students previously ineligible for food assistance due to student requirements may now be eligible. Schools may reach out to students to advise of possible eligibility for food assistance.
- DSHS's Community Services Division is working with schools to develop an approved notification that will be sent to eligible students.

Disaster Cash Assistance (DCAP)

- Ended state-wide on January 4
- No new applications accepted
- For those applications received timely, they must be completed by February 6
- Gov. disaster proclamation expired January 4

Department of Children, Youth and Families

Child Care – COVID-19

- Homelessness grace period extended to 12 months
- Expanded eligibility for single parents to attend school/training
- Max co-pay \$115 (January 2021 – June 2021)

Stimulus & UC Benefits

Income Type	Cash Assistance	Basic Food	Classic Medical
Coronavirus Federal Stimulus Payment (\$600/person)	<i>Not counted</i>	<i>Not counted</i>	<i>Not counted</i>
Additional \$300 Unemployment	Counted	<i>Not counted</i>	<i>Not counted</i>
Expanded or Extended Unemployment	Counted	Counted	<i>Not counted</i>
Pandemic Relief Payments (WA State Program for gig workers, \$550)	Counted	Counted	<i>Not counted</i>

Pandemic EBT

- Spring 2020 P-EBT program closed
- Received approval from the Federal Government regarding P-EBT benefits for Fall 2020-21 school year
- More information is coming soon
- Clients will likely receive info directly from their schools

Child-Support “Pass-Through” Payments

- Previously, DCS collected *all* child support on behalf of TANF recipients
- Starting February 1, TANF recipients may begin to receive a portion of that collected child support
- “Pass-Through” payments
- \$50 max for one child or \$100 max for more than 1 child
- Not counted against cash assistance but counted for food and medical

Asset Verification System

- Applicants and recipients must authorize asset verification search to be eligible for medical
- Online resource verification
- For SSI-related medical and Medicare Savings Program applications and eligibility reviews
- Similar to HCS and ALTSA system

NEW: Customer Connect

- New Interactive Voice Response System
- Front-end of the Customer Center Contact Center phone number
- Allows clients to choose self-service or assisted service

NEW: Customer Connect

FEATURES:

- Verify case status, including benefit amounts, next benefit payment, benefit balances and when their next review is due.
- Confirm if CSD has received and processed a document they submitted.
- Check on appointment dates and times.
- Learn the answers of many frequently asked questions.
- Decide between self-service and speaking with an agent after hearing wait times during business hours.
- Request a call back.



- Curbside pick-up for SNAP EBT
- Order online, choose EBT at checkout
- Bring EBT card to Safeway when picking up

Client Survey

- Clients may receive a letter and/or call about a survey for DSHS.
- These are legitimate and those who participate and meet certain criteria may be eligible for a \$20 gift card from Safeway.
- All respondents get entered into a contest for a \$125 Safeway gift card.

Community Support Team

- Customers experiencing difficulties establishing a Client Benefit Account can receive assistance by:
 - Asking the Customer Service Contact Center call navigator or a call agent to make a referral to the Community Support Team.
 - Worker will make attempts to call back.
 - If unable to reach by phone, an email will be sent with instructions to request another call back.

Questions?

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