



DATE: June 25, 2015

OPERATION MEMORANDUM #15-06-05

SUBJECT: Expedited Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) System Enhancements

TO: Executive Directors

FROM: Inez Titus
Acting Director
Bureau of Operations

PURPOSE

To inform County Assistance Offices (CAOs) about system enhancements to SNAP case processing workflow for evaluating the entitlement for expedited SNAP benefits; as well as to notify CAOs of the associated items changing with this enhancement, including notifications to issue the Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card, workload dashboard changes, notices, and the system transition.

These changes are expected to improve program accuracy and consistency by providing a standardized determination of expedited SNAP entitlement, as well as streamlining application processing. These changes will be implemented June 29, 2015.

BACKGROUND

Regulations at 7 CFR 273.2(i) require that all applications are to be screened for expedited service entitlement on the day the application is received. Once a household is entitled, eligibility for expedited benefits must be determined and benefits must be issued within five days. The household must also have an EBT card issued by the 5th day to participate in SNAP.

Currently, the CAO must answer eight expedited SNAP entitlement questions to determine if the household is eligible for expedited SNAP. After reviewing the SNAP application, the CAO must first complete manual calculations of household income, resources and expenses using the expedited SNAP scratchpad introduced to assist in properly determining the eligibility for expedited SNAP, as well as to continue to improve the SNAP negative error rate. The expedited screening questions must then be completed on the case summary page after completion of the scratchpad.

The Department of Human Services (DHS) is continuing the enhancements for expedited SNAP processing by building the expedited SNAP entitlement evaluation into the system using the data entry required for case processing.

DISCUSSION

Effective June 29, 2015, when an application is received for SNAP benefits the CAO must complete a preliminary review of the application for entitlement to expedited processing of SNAP.

Note: The CAO should front load all data for eligibility determination for each SNAP application on the date it is received if possible.

The entitlement to expedited SNAP evaluation information will be collected through case processing utilizing existing screens, allowing for the determination of eligibility for SNAP and expedited SNAP processing to happen simultaneously, streamlining application processing. The expedited SNAP evaluation will only be enabled in Case Open and Program Add workflows where SNAP is being added to ensure the expedited SNAP evaluation only takes place for new SNAP applications.

Four expedited entitlement questions will appear directly in the workflow, and will appear on the screens as detailed below:

Original Question	Modification	Screen
Is anyone in the application group receiving SNAP and not in a certified shelter for battered women and children?	Is anyone in the application group currently receiving SNAP in another State? Is this individual currently in a Pennsylvania certified shelter for battered persons?	Program Request Questions Screen
Is there any postponed verification from a previous expedited issuance that the household must provide?	N/A	Program Request Questions Screen
Is this a migrant or seasonal farmworker household?	Migrant or Seasonal Farmer?	Check box on the Individual Attributes screen
Has the client been contacted?	Has the client been interviewed for SNAP?	Program Request Questions Screen

The following four expedited SNAP entitlement questions will be system evaluated and will not be asked directly in the workflow:

- Are the household liquid resources equal to or less than \$100?
- Is the countable monthly gross income less than \$150?
- Are combined monthly gross income and liquid resources less than monthly shelter expenses?
- Is the household destitute?

The questions above will be answered using the information entered throughout the case processing workflow based on resources, income, and shelter/utility information. The system will complete all calculations and determine the household's entitlement and eligibility for Expedited SNAP. Detailed information on processing and eligibility will be provided in training.

Application Processing (AP) Summary Screen

The Expedited Food Stamp Entitlement Information of the CAPSUM screen will show the two new questions "Is anyone in the application group currently receiving SNAP in another state?" and "Is the individual currently in a PA certified shelter for battered persons?" In addition, the "Pending Name ID" field will be added to inform the CAO if ID verification is pending for the case. The screen will display the initial expedited SNAP entitlement evaluation and the latest evaluation.

EBT Card

The EBT card generation process is also being streamlined to ensure eligible households are able to participate as quickly as possible and within five days of the application date for expedited SNAP. The worker will see a message after case commit on the case search screen, informing the worker the household does not have an EBT card. The message will state: "Expedited SNAP benefits have been issued, but an EBT card does not exist for the SNAP payment name. Please verify if an EBT card needs to be issued." The worker is required to review if the payment name has an EBT card in the EPPIC system and inform clerical to issue a card to the household if one does not exist.

Workload Dashboard

Changes to workload dashboard include changes to both the activity assignments as well as the priority pane for supervisors.

The activity assignments details and information on when they are created and cleared are outlined in the table below:

Activity Assignment	When Created	Reason	When Cleared
SCREEN: Ex-SNAP Evaluation Needed	Upon creation of SNAP application in AP	Informs CAO that new SNAP application has been screened and must be processed to determine entitlement/eligibility for Ex-SNAP	When case processing is initiated
APP Entry: Ex-SNAP Evaluation Needed	When case processing is initiated for the application	Informs CAO that the application is in CP and an Ex-SNAP evaluation is needed	When eligibility is run to determine if the household is entitled for expedited SNAP.
APP Entry: Issue Ex-SNAP benefits	If a household is determined entitled for Ex-SNAP	Informs CAO to authorize the Ex-SNAP benefits	At case commit

Note: The work item type will switch from non-expedited to expedited if entitled to expedited SNAP. When not entitled to expedited SNAP benefits, the activity “App Entry: First Case Maintenance” is created and maintains the same functionality.

Note: The current activity assignment “SCREENED: First Case Initiation” will no longer be created for SNAP applications.

With the updates, supervisors will see the two priority pane items described below:

Priority Pane Item	Description	Associated WLD Activities
EXSNAP Pending Eval > 2 Days	Informs the supervisor of the total number of SNAP applications that have not been processed through eligibility to determine entitlement to Expedited SNAP and more than two calendar days have passed since the application was received. This item is dropped after the entitlement evaluation is	‘SCREENED: Ex-SNAP Evaluation Needed’ ‘APP ENTRY: Ex-SNAP Evaluation Needed’

	completed	
Ex-SNAP Pending Issuance > 2 days	<p>Informs supervisors if Ex-SNAP applications are pending for benefit issuance for more than two days.</p> <p>This item is dropped upon case commit.</p>	'APP Entry: Issue SNAP Benefits'

Notices

The changes to the SNAP processing workflow affect the following three types of notices:

- PA 1599
- PA 253 and
- PA/FS 163

The PA 1599 will no longer be sent.

Pending items will be captured and the household is notified via the PA 253.

The PA/FS 163 notice will be triggered and sent when the SNAP Budget Authorization screen is loaded, after eligibility is run, rather than after the application processing entitlement evaluation. This allows for sending the notice to inform the SNAP household of its entitlement evaluation without fully committing the case. Another PA/FS 163 notice will not be generated at case commit for Expedited SNAP.

NOTE: In instances when a household is not entitled to Expedited SNAP benefits, but there is verification pending to authorize ongoing SNAP benefits on the Pending Verification Items screen, it is critical that caseworkers continue to the Budget Authorization screen to ensure the PA/FS 163 is sent to the applicant. This requires processing through the Pending Verification Items, Food Stamp Recurring Benefits, and Eligibility Results Summary screens to get to the Budget Authorization screen.

IMPORTANT: Expedited SNAP benefits will only be issued as an NCE when income or resources is pending. If a household should not be processed for ongoing SNAP when processing expedited due to pending non-financial, shelter and utility expenses, or because an interview has not been completed the worker must navigate back to the Program Request Screen and pend ongoing SNAP benefits.

- A warning message will be displayed on the Eligibility Screen only for ongoing SNAP authorization.

- The warning message will be a green warning message with the following:
 - “Ongoing SNAP will be authorized. To process expedited NCE and pend ongoing navigate back to Program Request Screen.”
- CAOs will be notified when the future enhancement planned to streamline this process is complete.

System Transition

Over the weekend of June 27th, 2015 when the system is updated to incorporate the changes discussed above, there are three additional scenarios the CAO must be aware of as detailed below:

Existing Applications with an incomplete expedited SNAP entitlement evaluation:

The Expedited SNAP entitlement responses will be updated in the case processing module, if an incomplete entitlement is already present for the application in App Entry Status.

Existing Applications in App Entry and Screened status with completed expedited SNAP entitlement evaluations:

The system will pre-populate the mandatory Expedited SNAP entitlement questions on the Program Request Questions screen from the completed Expedited SNAP entitlement evaluations. This ensures the caseworker will not have to enter the Expedited SNAP entitlement responses again during case processing if they had already been answered for Expedited SNAP entitlement evaluation.

Existing Workload Dashboard activities:

Current SNAP applications have Workload Dashboard activities such as First/Next Case Initiation, Evaluate Expedited Food Stamps (EXFS), or First/Next Case Maintenance. These activities remain with the system updates; however, some minor changes will take place.

- The system will modify the Evaluate Expedited Food Stamps (EXFS) activity to the “Screened: EXSNAP Evaluation Needed” activity as the Evaluate Expedited Food Stamps (EXFS) activity is no longer supported in the updated system.

- Other activities like First/Next Case Initiation and First/Next Case Maintenance will not be modified and are cleared automatically by the system when the worker completes the activity.
- The “Screened: Ex-SNAP Evaluation Needed” activity will be completed once the case workflow starts. This will create a new activity: “App Entry: Ex-SNAP Evaluation Needed”, which will be disposed after running eligibility on the case. If the case workflow is cancelled, the system will reopen the “Screened: Ex-SNAP Evaluation Needed” activity for the user to track the potential Ex-SNAP evaluation case.
- The new “Issue Ex-SNAP Benefits” activity will be created only if the Eligibility outcome of the Ex-SNAP evaluation is “Yes”.

NEXT STEPS

1. Review this Operations Memorandum (OPS) with all CAO staff.\
2. Direct questions regarding this OPS to your Area Manager.
3. This OPS will become obsolete when all information is incorporated into eCISstance and the SNAP Handbook.