

# Policy Clarifications - Employment & Training - Policy/Procedures ESA-20048-135

Submitted: 5/26/2020

Agency: Headquarters

TR No. 20048

Citations: [CAH 135.6](#)

**Subject: Guidance on Special Allowances (SPALs) for TANF recipients related to electronic devices or personal computers.**

[OPS Memo 11-06-02](#) which was effective 07/01/2011(Revised 2/28/12) advised CAOs of changes to the types of SPALs that may be issued to TANF and SNAP-only participants and listed all allowable SPAL types as well as their annual and/or lifetime limits.

Under what circumstances can a TANF recipient receive a SPAL for a personal computer? What reason code can be used to issue the SPAL?

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**Response By: Laura Schlaghauser**

**Date: 05/26/2020**

TANF recipients can be issued SPALs to purchase electronic devices or personal computers (such as a desktop, laptop, Chromebook etc.) to support remote attendance for participants active in a DHS-approved credentialing program, Adult Basic Education (ABE), English as a Second Language (ESL), and/or High School Equivalency (HSE). This can include refurbished and preowned electronic devices or personal computers. A SPAL for electronic devices or personal computers should only be considered if program attendance is not otherwise possible without access to such a device and the individual does not already own or have access to an electronic device or personal computer. A DHS-approved credentialing program is defined as a program that leads to an industry recognized certificate, license, diploma, or degree in a high priority occupation or a growing job market in the local area. For questions surrounding whether the activity is a DHS approved credentialing program email: [RA-PWBEP.TANF@pa.gov](mailto:RA-PWBEP.TANF@pa.gov)

If a TANF recipient requests a SPAL to purchase a computer device, the CAO should review the request using the policy set forth in [CAH 135.6](#) adhering to timeframes and verification of need, including exhausting any other potentially available resources available to the participant.

A SPAL to purchase a computer device should be issued using Reason Code 257 and is subject to the \$1000 lifetime limit. As a reminder, the SPAL should always be the most practical, least expensive option to meet the participant's needs. The recipient of a SPAL must provide an original receipt showing that it was used for its intended purpose within 14 days of receiving the benefit.

**NOTE:** Participants who subscribe to the \$9.95/month [Internet Essentials from Comcast®](#) package may be eligible [to receive](#) a low-cost (\$150) desktop or laptop computer through Comcast.

**NOTE:** Related SNAP Policy for Additional Guidance on Special Allowances (SPALs) for SNAP-only recipients is provided in [ESA-396-535](#) issued 8/11/11. Under that policy, computers are **not** an allowable SPAL for SNAP-only recipients.