

DATE: January 28, 2021 – **May 7, 2021**

OPERATIONS MEMORANDUM #21-01-02

SUBJECT: **Revised** - Temporary Expansion of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Eligibility for Students of Higher Education

TO: Executive Directors

FROM: Inez Titus
Director
Bureau of Operations

PURPOSE

To inform the County Assistance Offices (CAOs) that SNAP eligibility will be temporarily expanded to certain students of higher education, including students who are eligible for, but not necessarily participating in, a state or federal work study program, or whose Expected Family Contribution (EFC) on their Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is \$0.

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION

Congress passed the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, which was signed by the President on December 27, 2020. Section 702(e) of this Act temporarily expands SNAP eligibility for students of higher education. To be eligible under the expanded rules, a student must be:

- Enrolled at an institution of higher education at least half-time as defined by the institution, AND
 - Eligible for a state or federal work study program, even if not enrolled, OR
 - Have an EFC of \$0 on their FAFSA for the current academic year.

The household's statement may be accepted for this policy unless questionable. If questionable, verification of the above items may include, but is not limited to, the FAFSA Student Aid Report form, a financial aid award letter from the institution, a statement from the institution, or collateral contact with the school verifying \$0 on their FAFSA. **Students who receive the maximum Pell Grants are considered to have an EFC of \$0. Maximum Pell Grant amounts for the 2020-21 award year are \$3,172 per semester for full-time students, \$2,379 per semester for three-quarter-time students, and \$1,586 per semester for half-time students. This information can be found on the**

financial aid award letter. Not all students who have an EFC of \$0 actually receive Pell Grants, but those who do receive the grants will receive the maximum amount.

This policy is effective immediately **and applies to all applications processed after January 16, 2021, regardless of application date.** It will remain in effect for new applications until 30 days after the COVID-19 public health emergency is lifted. The CAO should discuss this change in policy with families of potentially eligible students at their next renewal or at any household contact. Students determined eligible for SNAP under this policy will remain eligible until their first recertification that occurs at least 30 days after the COVID-19 public health emergency is lifted.

NOTE: The Act also requires schools to provide outreach to eligible students informing them they would be eligible for SNAP as an eligible student. Students and their families may reach out to the CAO due to this outreach.

Processing Scenarios:

1. A SNAP application including a college student was received on January 11, 2021. All necessary information to process the application was also received that day. The caseworker processed the application on January 11, 2021. The new student eligibility rules do not apply to that application.
2. A SNAP application including a college student was received on January 4, 2021. A pending list was sent to the household. All necessary information to process the application was received on January 19, 2021, and the application was processed that day. The expanded student eligibility rules should be applied to the college student on that application.

NEXT STEPS

1. Review this Operations Memorandum with appropriate staff.
2. Direct questions regarding this Operations Memorandum to your Area Manager.
3. This policy is in effect until 30 days after the COVID-19 public health emergency is lifted.