



**MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**  
 Department of Human Services  
 311 West Saratoga Street  
 Baltimore MD 21201

**FIA INFORMATION MEMO**

**Control Number: # 21-03**

**Effective Date: Immediately**

**Issuance Date: July 17, 2020**

**TO: DIRECTORS, LOCAL DEPARTMENTS OF SOCIAL SERVICES  
DEPUTY/ASSISTANT DIRECTORS FOR FAMILY INVESTMENT  
FAMILY INVESTMENT SUPERVISORS AND ELIGIBILITY STAFF**

**FROM: NETSANET KIBRET, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

**RE: MARYLAND SENIOR NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (MSNAP)  
ALLOTMENT CHANGES.**

**PROGRAM AFFECTED: SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

**ORIGINATING OFFICE: OFFICE OF OPERATIONS**

**SUMMARY**

The Family Investment Administration (FIA) uses the Maryland Senior Nutrition Assistance Program (MSNAP) to simplify the application process once the Social Security Administration (SSA) approves elderly individuals for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits. The federal Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) agency approved FIA to use this Combined Application Project (CAP) as a way to improve the delivery of food assistance to qualified customers. CAPs involve partnerships between the Social Security Administration (SSA), state agencies, and FNS that simplify the SNAP application process for SSI recipients who live alone or with a spouse who also receives SSI.

The current MSNAP benefit allocations as of July 1, 2020, are as follows:

1. Customers with shelter costs **at or above** \$506 will receive the higher allotment of **\$140**.
2. Customers with shelter costs **below** \$506 will receive the lower allotment amount of **\$55**.

This Information Memo (IM) replaces Action Transmittal (AT)17-03.

## INQUIRIES

Please direct policy questions to FIA Policy by completing the [FIA Policy Information Request Form](#) found on Knowledge Base as shown in the screenshot below.

The screenshot displays the DHS Knowledge Base website for the Family Investment Administration. The top navigation bar includes 'Administrations', 'Tools', 'Resources', 'Links', and 'Local Offices'. A search bar is located below the navigation. The left sidebar contains a list of links, with 'Family Investment Administration' and 'Contact us with your FIA Program Eligibility Policy Question' circled in red. The main content area features the title 'Family Investment Administration' and a detailed description of the program. Below the description are two data boxes showing 'FFY 2017 Job Placement Data Statewide Annual Goal Total' of 13,021 and 'FFY 2017 Job Placement Data Statewide Annual Achieved Total' of 12,240. A 'Tools' button is visible at the bottom right.

For systems questions, please email [fia.bsdm@maryland.gov](mailto:fia.bsdm@maryland.gov).

cc: DHS Executive Staff  
FIA Management Staff  
Constituent Services

<b>DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES FAMILY INVESTMENT ADMINISTRATION</b>	<b>SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP) MANUAL</b>	
ESAP AND MSNAP PROJECTS	Section 107	Page 1

## 107.1 Purpose

This section describes the Elderly Simplified Application Project (ESAP) and the Maryland Senior Nutrition Assistance Program (MSNAP).

## 107.2 General Information

- A. Maryland has approved waivers to operate two projects for the elderly (defined as age 60 and over):
  - MSNAP, a Combined Application Project in effect since July 1, 2010, simplifies the application process for elderly and disabled people approved for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits; and,
  - ESAP, in effect since November 1, 2016, simplifies the application and verification processes for elderly applicants who have no earned income.
- B. Both MSNAP and ESAP have 36 month certification periods.
- C. MSNAP requires no interview and verification is accomplished through computer matches. ESAP requires an interview at application for applicants who are not already receiving SNAP, but no interview at redetermination.

## 107.3 MSNAP Policy and Procedures

- A. MSNAP is a demonstration project approved by the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). See SNAP Manual Section 107 for a complete description of MSNAP.
- B. MSNAP improves the way food assistance is delivered to elderly individuals, age 60 or older, who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI).
- C. MSNAP simplifies the application process for both participants and local department staff.

### 107.31 MSNAP Household Composition

An MSNAP household is an individual who the Social Security Administration has determined is eligible for SSI, and:

- A. Is age 60 or older

<b>DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES FAMILY INVESTMENT ADMINISTRATION</b>	<b>SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP) MANUAL</b>	
ESAP AND MSNAP PROJECTS	Section 107	Page 2

- B. Is not currently receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits

**107.31 MSNAP Household Composition (continued)**

- C. Is living alone or if living with others is purchasing and preparing meals alone
- D. has no earned income
- E. is a Maryland resident

**107.32 Operating Procedures**

- A. The Family Investment Administration (FIA) identifies these individuals through a match with (SSA's) SDX files from the SDX/SVES system.
- B. This match identifies eligible individuals by matching specific:
  - 1. Living arrangement codes, and
  - 2. Determines that the applicant is not a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program recipient.
- C. The FIA central office sends the identified individuals an application.

**107.33 Application Procedures**

- A. The database records the dates of application mailings. If the customer does not return the application, a second application is sent.
- B. If there is no response to the second application, no further applications are sent.
- C. Current SNAP recipients are not converted to MSNAP. Only customers identified in the match can apply for the program.
- D. Applicants who wish to enroll in MSNAP complete and sign the simplified application and return it to the designated office.
- E. Applicants are alerted to the fact that they may be eligible for a higher benefit under the regular SNAP program.

<b>DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES FAMILY INVESTMENT ADMINISTRATION</b>	<b>SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP) MANUAL</b>	
ESAP AND MSNAP PROJECTS	Section 107	Page 3

- F. Benefits begin the first day of the month the application is received from the applicant. If there is an agency delay in completing the application, the local department must issue restored benefits.
- G. The certification period for these households is for 36 months. CARES generates notices to inform applicants of their eligibility.

### **107.33 Application Procedures (continued)**

- H. The applicant receives an EBT card in the mail.
- I. There is no expedited SNAP processing for this project.
- J. The case manager processes all applications without an interview unless information is unclear, in which case a telephone interview is completed.
- K. MSNAP applicants can apply for the regular Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program if they believe they will receive a greater benefit. Please be sure to inform applicants who have high medical expenses or shelter costs that they may receive greater benefits under the regular SNAP.

### **107.34 Allotment**

- A. Households with shelter costs at or above \$506 receive the higher amount of \$140. Households with shelter costs below this amount receive the lower benefit amount of \$55.
- B. Shelter costs include all ongoing shelter expenses, including the appropriate utility allowances.

#### **Examples:**

- #1 Mr. A receives SSI and lives by himself in public housing. His rent is \$50 and he is responsible for his heating bill. His shelter cost total \$464 (\$50 + \$414). He would receive a \$55 allotment.
- #2 Mrs. B receives SSI and although her daughter lives in the home, she purchases and prepares her food separately. The rent for the house is \$800, which they split and they share utilities. Mrs. B's shelter cost of \$814 (\$400 + \$414), she will receive a \$140 allotment.

**NOTE:** Mrs. B also has a large out of pocket medical expense for an item not covered under Medicaid. Although this expense will not change the MSNAP benefit, her case manager helped her determine that she would still receive more under MSNAP than under the regular SNAP.

<b>DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES FAMILY INVESTMENT ADMINISTRATION</b>	<b>SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP) MANUAL</b>	
ESAP AND MSNAP PROJECTS	Section 107	Page 4

### **107.35 Verification Process**

- A. MSNAP verification is fulfilled by using SDX data verified under SSI regulations. Any household that meets the verification criteria for SSI and additional State criteria meets the verification requirements for MSNAP.
- B. Verification of shelter is done only in questionable situations.

### **107.36 Recertification and Change Reporting**

Recertification:

- A. The certification period for MSNAP participants is 36 months.
- B. During the 34<sup>th</sup> month, a mail-in recertification form is mailed to each household.
- C. The household must complete and return the form by the end of the 36<sup>th</sup> month or benefits will stop.
- D. If the household returns the form in the 37<sup>th</sup> month, the case is reopened with no proration of benefits.

Change Reporting:

- A. MSNAP recipients are not required to report changes during the certification period. The SDX update process satisfies the reporting requirements for this project. If the recipient does report a change, the case manager must take action on it.
- B. MSNAP recipients are not required to report changes in their shelter costs to the local department. If a shelter change is reported and the change would move the household from one allotment to the other, the case manager is required to act on the reported change in shelter.

### **107.37 Administrative Hearings**

Administrative Hearing requests for MSNAP are treated the same as any other request.

### **107.38 Quality Control**

- A. MSNAP cases are included in the Quality Control (QC) sample and reviewed under the rules of the demonstration project. QC reviews the following areas:
  1. Active error rate
  2. Completion rate
  3. Payment error rate







<b>DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES FAMILY INVESTMENT ADMINISTRATION</b>	<b>SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP) MANUAL</b>	
ESAP AND MSNAP PROJECTS	Section 107	Page 7

- ❖ All current SNAP notices are modified to include language that specifically addresses MSNAP eligibility.

### **107.39 CARES (continued)**

- ❖ The Weekly and Monthly application Compliance Report display a field for 'CAP' in the detail.
- ❖ There is a SNAP Combined application Outreach Report that displays customers who were mailed initial MSNAP applications.
- ❖ There is a second SNAP Combined Application Outreach Report that displays customers who were contacted, but did not respond within 30 days.

### **107.4 ESAP Policy and Procedures**

The Elderly Simplified Application Project is a five-year demonstration project operated under a waiver from the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). It applies to people sixty years old or older who have no earned income.

- A. A team of staff in FIA's Bureau of Local Operations will process ESAP applications filed through *myDHR*. When a customer or a customer's authorized representative comes to a local department to file an application, encourage them to use *myDHR* to apply for SNAP. The logic within *myDHR* will automatically screen the customer for ESAP (at least 60 years old with no earned income), and automatically assign the application to district office (DO) 006, the FIA Central team.
- B. If the customer opts to fill out a paper application, use the new ESAP application, which can be found in the Online Forms section of the FIPnet. Customers may also fill out the 9701 application. Using a paper application means that the case manager must process the application in the LDSS. If a customer applies for SNAP and another FIA benefit program through *myDHR*, the application will be routed to the local department for handling.

NOTE: The ESAP application signature page is located at the end of the Rights and Responsibilities. Customers must sign the application.

- C. For existing SNAP customers who are 60 or older and have no earned income, the local departments are responsible for converting them to ESAP at the next redetermination. These ESAP cases are maintained in the local department.

<b>DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES FAMILY INVESTMENT ADMINISTRATION</b>	<b>SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP) MANUAL</b>	
ESAP AND MSNAP PROJECTS	Section 107	Page 8

## **107.4 ESAP Policy and Procedures (continued)**

- D. Interviews at initial certification are required. Interviews at recertification are not required unless the case is denied. No case may be denied without an attempt to schedule an interview. In all cases, telephone interviews are preferred. Simplifying the application process includes NOT requiring the customer to come into the office.
- E. ESAP has reduced verification requirements for customers. Case managers in the central unit and local departments are responsible for obtaining verifications through computer matches and system clearances. The customer may verify required information that is questionable.
- ESAP-eligible customers are not required to verify unearned income, household size, residency, identity, and shelter expenses, unless questionable.
  - Use computer matches to verify the information. Systems such as SOLQ, SDX, MABS, and the WORK Number verify income, identity, and social security numbers.
  - Verify medical expenses to allow the customer the medical expense deduction. When medical expenses are not verified, request verification from the customer.
- F. ESAP customers have an extended certification period of 36 months.
- G. An annual contact with ESAP households is required.
- The FIA Central team sends out the 12 and 24-month contacts to customers managed in their unit. The contact form must be returned to the Central unit.
  - The local department must send the contact form (which can be found in the Online Forms in FIPnet) to ESAP customers managed in their units.
- H. If an ESAP customer requests a fair hearing, the hearing can be completed by telephone. The customer does not have to appear in person for a hearing. Just like in-person hearings, all required representatives must attend telephonic hearings.
- I. Case managers must complete and mail approval notices (found in the Online Forms on FIPnet) to ESAP customers. The application approval notice and redetermination notice are the only ESAP notices. Existing CARES notices will be issued if there is a denial, reduction in benefits, or case closing.
- J. ESAP cases will be included in the Quality Control (QC) sample and reviewed under regular QC rules, as the demonstration project does not significantly modify the rules for determining households' eligibility or allotment level.