



Department of Human Services  
311 West Saratoga Street  
Baltimore MD 21201

## FIA ACTION TRANSMITTAL

**Control Number: # 21-09**

**Effective Date: September 17, 2020**

**Issuance Date: September 17, 2020**

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

**FROM: LA SHERRA AYALA, ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

**RE: SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP)  
MASS CHANGES FOR OCTOBER 2020**

**PROGRAMS AFFECTED: SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE  
PROGRAM (SNAP)**

**ORIGINATING OFFICE: OFFICE OF OPERATIONS**

### Summary

Each August, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) publishes the updated standards for income and deductions for the next federal fiscal year (FFY). The deductions changed for FFY21. Effective October 1, 2020, standard deductions, excess shelter deduction, homeless shelter deductions, maximum allotments, and income eligibility for all categorical eligible customers for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) will increase. The standard deduction for a household of one to three will remain unchanged. This Action Transmittal (AT) replaces AT #20-03 (SNAP MASS CHANGES).

### Impacted Maximum Allotments, Income Eligibility Standards, and Deductions

Maximum allotments will increase for Maryland for all family sizes. The minimum benefit for Maryland will remain unchanged at \$16. Income eligibility for all household sizes has increased in each eligible category. The chart below provides a breakout of the income eligibility and maximum allotment amounts effective October 1, 2020.

Household Size	Maximum Gross Monthly Income* 130% of Poverty	Maximum Net Monthly Income* 100% of Poverty	Monthly Income Elderly/Disabled Separate Household* 165% of Poverty	Maximum Allotment
1	\$1,383	\$1,064	\$1,755	\$204
2	\$1,868	\$1,437	\$2,371	\$374
3	\$2,353	\$1,810	\$2,987	\$535
4	\$2,839	\$2,184	\$3,603	\$680
5	\$3,324	\$2,557	\$4,219	\$807
6	\$3,809	\$2,930	\$4,835	\$969
7	\$4,295	\$3,304	\$5,451	\$1,071
8	\$4,780	\$3,677	\$6,067	\$1,224
<b>Each additional member</b>	\$486	\$374	\$616	\$153

The required reporting threshold for a household is \$100.00.

The standard deduction for a household of one to three will remain unchanged at \$167. The standard deduction increases to \$181 (+\$3) for a household of four, \$212 (+\$3) for a household of five, and \$243 (+\$3) for a household of six or more. The new SNAP excess shelter deduction increases slightly to \$586 (+\$17). CARES will automatically generate customer notices for the above-listed increases at the time of the mass changes in September 2020.

Additionally, the maximum homeless shelter deduction increased to \$156.74 (+\$3.74).

### **Action Required Regarding Homeless Shelter Deduction**

Households in which all members are homeless, but who do not receive free shelter, qualify for the homeless shelter deduction. Use actual shelter expenses, rather than the homeless shelter deduction, if the actual shelter costs result in an excess shelter deduction that is higher than the \$156.74 homeless deduction.

SNAP benefit recoupment amounts do not require action by case managers. The only exceptions are recoupment cases when the payment plan source is a grant reduction (GR) or court order (CO). CARES generates a report identifying these cases. Case managers must then manually update those identified cases.

### **Payment Accuracy**

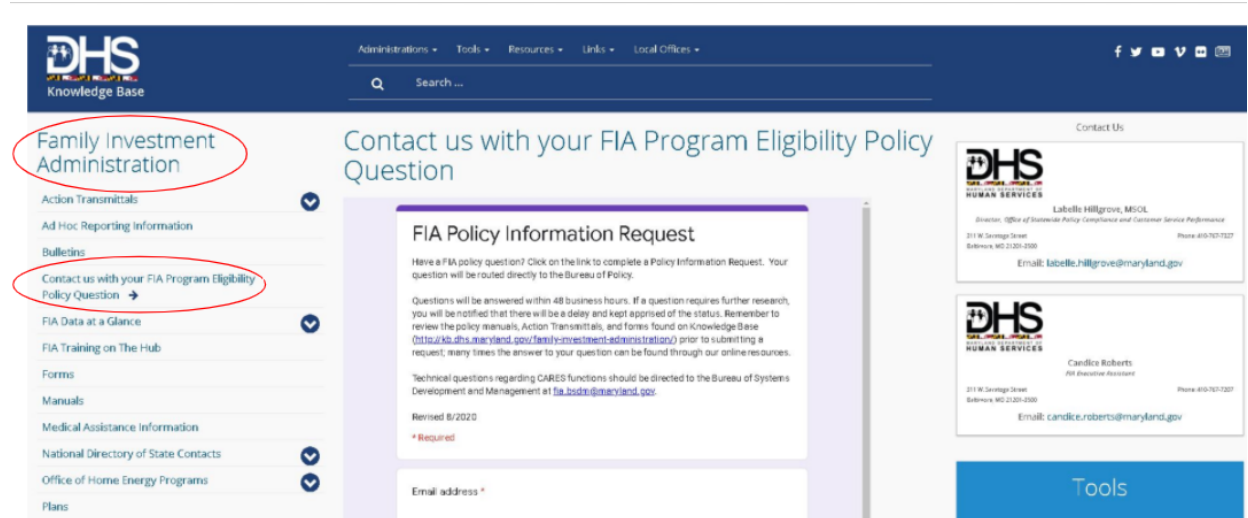
The changes in income and standard deductions for SNAP benefits will not affect payment accuracy.

**Attachments:**

SNAP Policy Manual Section 115  
SNAP Policy Manual Section 600

**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.



- c: DHS Executive Staff
- Constituent Services
- DHS Help Desk
- FIA Management Staff

<b>DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES FAMILY INVESTMENT ADMINISTRATION</b>	<b>SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM MANUAL</b>	
CATEGORICAL ELIGIBILITY	Section 115	Page 1

## 115.1 Definition

Categorical eligibility means that a household is considered eligible for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits based on its eligibility for a public assistance grant or service. Households in which all members receive or are authorized to receive Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA), a service or benefit funded by Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Temporary Disability Assistance Program (TDAP), or Public Assistance to Adults (PAA) are categorically eligible. This includes a household with a mix of TCA, SSI, TDAP, or PAA members or a household authorized to receive a TANF funded service.

**NOTE:** Categorically eligible households are not subject to the gross and net income test and do not have to meet resource limits. This means we do not verify vehicle or bank account ownership for the SNAP.

## 115.2 Categorically Eligible Individuals and Households

Categorically eligible individuals and households include the following:

- A. Individuals who receive TCA, SSI, TDAP or PAA;
- B. Individuals who have been authorized but have not accessed TCA, SSI, TDAP or PAA;
- C. Individuals authorized to receive TCA, SSI, TDAP or PAA but who have not yet received the SNAP benefit;
- D. Household members receiving TCA, SSI or PAA whose benefits are suspended or recouped; or
- E. TCA households that are not paid because the grant is less than \$10.
- F. Broad-Based Categorical Eligibility
  1. To confer broad-based categorical eligibility to SNAP households, all households with income below 200 percent of federal poverty guidelines are authorized to use a non-cash Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funded program.
  2. TANF funds were used to print the brochure, Family Planning, A Guide for You. This meets the criteria for broad-based categorical eligibility. With broad-based categorical eligibility, there is no requirement that there be minor children in the household. Give the customer the Family Planning brochure when the customer requests a copy. There is no requirement to give it to everyone.

<b>DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES FAMILY INVESTMENT ADMINISTRATION</b>	<b>SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM MANUAL</b>	
CATEGORICAL ELIGIBILITY	Section 115	Page 2

## 115.2 Categorically Eligible Individuals and Households (continued)

3. The following information is on the applications that are used for SNAP:

### Authorization to Receive Family Planning Information

If you want information, you can ask your case manager for a Family Planning Guide. You may also contact:

- 1-800-546-8900 if you need help in finding a provider for birth control or arranging prenatal care, or
- The Center for Maternal and Child Health at 410-767-6713 or <http://phpa.dhmh.maryland.gov/mch>

G. 200% of 2020 Monthly Federal Poverty Guidelines:

1	\$2127
2	2873
3	3620
4	4367
5	5113
6	5860
7	6607
8	7353

Each additional member is \$746

H. Examples:

1. Ms. A applies for assistance for herself and her two children, aged 10 and 12 because her earnings do not cover her bills. The local department enters the household's \$4,000 monthly income on CARES to determine SNAP eligibility. The household is not categorically eligible because the household's income is greater than 200 percent of poverty for a household of three. CARES denies the SNAP case because gross income exceeds the gross income limit.
2. Ms. B applies for assistance for herself and her son, aged 10. The case manager enters the household's \$2,800 monthly earned income and deductions on CARES. She is categorically eligible and was found to be eligible for the \$16 minimum benefit because the household size is two.
3. Mr. C applies for SNAP benefits for himself, his wife, and her two children because Ms. C had recently lost her job. The household's total gross income

<b>DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES FAMILY INVESTMENT ADMINISTRATION</b>	<b>SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM MANUAL</b>	
CATEGORICAL ELIGIBILITY	Section 115	Page 3

is \$2,500 earned income. The household is categorically eligible because the income is below 200 percent of the federal poverty level for a family size of 4.

#### **4. 115.2 Categorically Eligible Individuals and Households (continued)**

Mr. and Ms. C have \$10,000 in savings. They have high shelter costs and Mr. C pays child support for children outside the SNAP benefit household. CARES determines that this household is eligible for a SNAP benefit.

4. Mr. and Mrs. D apply for SNAP benefits. In the home is their 20-year old son who must be included in the household because he is under age 22. The household has gross monthly income of \$3,700. This household is not categorically eligible (income over 200% of the poverty level) and their income exceeds the gross income test. CARES will deny the household's application.

### **115.3 Application Processing**

- A. Local departments must notify households applying for public assistance that:
  1. They have the right to apply for SNAP benefits at the same time.
  2. The time limits or other requirements that apply to the receipt of TCA do not apply to the receipt of SNAP benefits.
  3. Households that stop receiving TCA because they have reached the maximum time limit for receiving TCA, have begun working or for any other reason, may still be eligible for SNAP benefits.
  4. Receiving SNAP benefits has no bearing on any other program's time limits.
- B. If the local department attempts to discourage a household from applying for TCA (and request a WAG instead, for example), it shall make clear that the requirements of applying for TCA do not apply to SNAP benefits.
- C. In order to determine if a household is categorically eligible for SNAP benefits, the local department may postpone (within the 30-day processing standard) the SNAP eligibility determination if the household is not entitled to expedited service and appears to be categorically eligible.
- D. The local department must postpone denying a potentially categorically eligible household until the 30<sup>th</sup> day in case the household is determined eligible to receive TCA, SSI, TDAP, or PAA benefits. Once the public assistance application

<b>DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES FAMILY INVESTMENT ADMINISTRATION</b>	<b>SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM MANUAL</b>	
CATEGORICAL ELIGIBILITY	Section 115	Page 4

is approved, the household is considered categorically eligible, provided no exceptions listed in “E” below are applicable.

### **115.3 Application Processing (continued)**

- E. A household is not categorically eligible and is subject to all SNAP eligibility and benefit provisions if:
1. Any member is disqualified for an intentional program violation (IPV) in accordance with Section 480.4 (Intentional Program Violation Disqualification Determination) of this manual; or
  2. The head of household is disqualified for failure to comply with the work requirements in accordance with Section 130.11 (Failure to Comply with Work Registration Requirements) of this manual.
- F. In addition to 115.3 E listed above, a TDAP household is not categorically eligible and is subject to all SNAP eligibility and SNAP benefit provisions if:
1. The household refuses to cooperate in providing the local department the information necessary to make a SNAP eligibility determination;
  2. The household is disqualified under the striker provisions in accordance with Section 101(Strikers) of this manual; or
  3. The individual has been disqualified for an IPV or for failure to apply for a social security number.
- G. If any of the following factors are questionable, verify that the household:
1. Contains only members that are recipients of TCA, a WAG, SSI, TDAP or PAA or is a household authorized to receive a TANF funded service or benefit as described in 115.2F;
  2. Meets the household composition definition as described in Section 100 of this manual;
  3. Includes all persons who purchase and prepare their meals together regardless of whether they are separate units for cash programs; and
  4. Includes no person who has been disqualified as described in paragraph 115.3E or F.

<b>DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES FAMILY INVESTMENT ADMINISTRATION</b>	<b>SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM MANUAL</b>	
CATEGORICAL ELIGIBILITY	Section 115	Page 5

H. If required, verify SNAP eligibility factors, as described in Section 408.3 (Mandatory Verification at Application) of this manual, that are not verified for the program conferring categorical eligibility.

### **115.3 Application Processing (continued)**

- I. Do not include any person as a member of a categorically eligible SNAP household if that person is:
1. An ineligible immigrant as defined in Section 120 (Immigrants) of this manual;
  2. Ineligible under the student provision as described in Section 102 (Students) of this manual;
  3. Institutionalized in a non-exempt facility as defined in Section 100.63 of this manual;
  4. Ineligible because of failure to comply with a work requirement in accordance with Section 130.12 of this manual; or
  5. Ineligible because of a drug-related felony offense.
- J. Eligibility factors that are accepted for SNAP eligibility without the verification required in Section 408.3 because of categorical eligibility are:
1. Resources
  2. Gross and net income limits
  3. Sponsored immigrant information
  4. Residency
  5. Social security number information

Reminders:

- **Do not verify the assets/resources of a categorically eligible household.**
- **Do not deny or terminate a categorically eligible household when the household fails to verify resources.**

K. When a household files a joint public assistance/SNAP application and is denied SNAP benefits but is later determined eligible for TCA, TDAP, or PAA, the case manager will Issue SNAP benefits as described in section 115.3L of this manual. The case manager will also use any verification or information provided subsequent to the application.



<b>DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES FAMILY INVESTMENT ADMINISTRATION</b>	<b>SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM MANUAL</b>	
CATEGORICAL ELIGIBILITY	Section 115	Page 6

The local department must be able to retrieve an original application when the application was initially denied but is subsequently authorized a SNAP benefit or service conferring categorical eligibility. The case manager should annotate changes on the application and mail it to the household for a signature.

### **115.3 Application Processing (continued)**

NOTE: Do not re-interview the household. However, the local department may make mail or telephone contact with the household or its authorized representative to determine any changes in circumstances.

- L. The department will provide benefits from the date of the SNAP application to any household determined eligible for TCA, TDAP, or PAA that is categorically eligible within the 30-day processing standard. Prorate SNAP benefits in accordance with Section 412 (Prorating Initial Allotment) of this manual.

A household that files a joint application that is found categorically eligible after being denied non-public assistance SNAP benefits will have its SNAP benefits for the initial month prorated from the date from which the public assistance benefits are payable, or the date of the original application, whichever is later.

Assume that the household is categorically eligible at recertification in the absence of a timely public assistance recertification.

- M. The local department will re-evaluate the original application either at the household's request or when the local department becomes aware of the household's public assistance or SSI eligibility.
- N. One and two person households that are categorically eligible are entitled to at least a \$16 per month allotment (plus the state supplement for participants over 62), except in an initial month. CARES will deny a categorically eligible household with three or more members that are not eligible for SNAP benefits because of their income.
- O. The resources of any household member who receives or is authorized to receive TCA, SSI, TDAP, TANF funded benefit or service, or PAA are excluded.

<b>DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES FAMILY INVESTMENT ADMINISTRATION</b>		<b>SNAP MANUAL</b>	
STANDARDS FOR INCOME AND DEDUCTIONS		Section 600	Page 1

## 1.1 Standards for Eligibility and Maximum Allotments

- A. The standards for the following appear in Section 600, page 2.
1. Column A - Maximum Gross Monthly Income Standards (130% of poverty)
  2. Column B - Maximum Net Monthly Income Standards (100% of poverty)
  3. Column C - Maximum Gross Income Standard for Elderly and Disabled Separate Household (165% of poverty)
  4. Column D - Thrifty Food Plan/Maximum Allotment
- B. Standards 1, 2, and 3 are used to determine household eligibility and not for computing allotments.

## 1.2 Formula Calculation

- A. Multiply the household's net monthly income by 30%.
- B. Round the product up to the next whole dollar if any cents result.
- C. Subtract the product from the maximum allotment amount for the household size found in Column D, Section 600.

**NOTE:** In an initial month, if the allotment is less than \$10, no benefit is issued. Except in an initial month, all eligible one and two person households must be issued the minimum allotment of \$16.

## 1.3 Deduction Standards

Standard Deductions	
Household size up to and including 3 people-----	\$167
Household of 4-----	\$181
Household size of 5-----	\$212
Household size of 6 or more-----	\$243
Excess Shelter Deduction-----up to	\$586
Homeless Household Shelter Allowance-----	\$156.74
Standard Utility Allowance (SUA)-----	\$392
Limited Utility Allowance (LUA)-----	\$240
Telephone Standard-----	\$ 40

\* The excess shelter deduction does not apply to households with an aged or disabled member. These households receive an uncapped shelter deduction.

<b>DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES FAMILY INVESTMENT ADMINISTRATION</b>	<b>SNAP MANUAL</b>	
STANDARDS FOR INCOME AND DEDUCTIONS	Section 600	Page 2

## 1.4 Determining the SNAP Allotment

A. Determine a household's monthly SNAP allotment by using the Basis of Issuance Tables:

1. Calculate the household's net monthly income.
2. Compare the household's net monthly income to the maximum net monthly income standard shown in Column B below. Households that are not categorically eligible for SNAP benefits will have net monthly incomes that are lower than or equal to the amounts shown in Column B.
3. Find the allotment by reading in the Basis of Issuance Tables, down to the appropriate income and across to the appropriate household size.

**NOTE:** A household that is categorically eligible is entitled to any allotment shown in the appropriate column on the tables. Persons in household sizes of one or two and categorically eligible are eligible for a monthly benefit of **\$16**, even if the tables do not show a benefit amount at their net income levels. (Please see Section 409 of the SNAP for information on the minimum state supplement to SNAP benefits for households with a member aged 62 and older.)

Effective October 1, 2020

Household Size	Maximum Gross Monthly Income* 130% of Poverty	Maximum Net Monthly Income* 100% of Poverty	Monthly Income Elderly/Disabled Separate Household* 165% of Poverty	Maximum Allotment
1	\$1,383	\$1,064	\$1,755	\$204
2	\$1,868	\$1,437	\$2,371	\$374
3	\$2,353	\$1,810	\$2,987	\$535
4	\$2,839	\$2,184	\$3,603	\$680
5	\$3,324	\$2,557	\$4,219	\$807
6	\$3,809	\$2,930	\$4,835	\$969
7	\$4,295	\$3,304	\$5,451	\$1,071
8	\$4,780	\$3,677	\$6,067	\$1,224
Each additional member	\$486	\$374	\$616	\$153

\* Maximum gross and net monthly income figures are not used for computing the SNAP allotment. They are included as a reference for determining the household's eligibility.

Household Type	Maximum Amount
Households with at least one member who is age 60 or older or is disabled.	\$3,500
All other households	\$2,250

\* The asset limit for elderly or disabled households also serves as the threshold for substantial lottery or gambling winnings.