1.1 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.

1.2 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

   a. To confer broad-based categorical eligibility to SNAP households, all households with income below 200 percent of the federal poverty guidelines are authorized to use a non-cash Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funded program.

   b. 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

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1.2 Categorically Eligible Individuals and Households (continued)

requests a copy. There is no requirement to give it to everyone.

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

i. Authorization to Receive Family Planning Information

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

1. 410-396-9401 if you need help in finding a provider for birth control or arranging prenatal care, or

G. The Center for Maternal and Child Health at 1-800-456-8900 or www.dhmh.maryland.gov/mch.

2 200% of 2026 Monthly Federal Poverty Guidelines

Household Size	200% Federal Poverty Level
1	$2,660
2	$3,607
3	$4,553
4	$5,500
5	$6,447
6	$7,394
7	$8,340
8	$9,287
Each Additional Household Member	$947

1.3 Application Processing

A. Local departments must notify households applying for public assistance that:

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1.3 Application Processing (continued)

a. They have the right to apply for SNAP benefits at the same time.

b. The time limits or other requirements that apply to the receipt of TCA do not apply to the receipt of SNAP benefits.

c. 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.

d. 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 requests 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 30th day in case the household is determined eligible to receive TCA, SSI, TDAP, or PAA benefits. Once the public assistance application is approved, the household is considered categorically eligible, provided no exceptions listed in "E" below are applicable.

E. A household is not categorically eligible and is subject to all SNAP eligibility and benefit provisions if:

a. 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

b. 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:

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1.3 Application Processing (continued)

a. The household refuses to cooperate in providing the local department with the information necessary to make a SNAP eligibility determination;

b. The household is disqualified under the striker provisions in accordance with Section 101 (Strikers) of this manual; or

c. 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:

a. Contains only members that are recipients of TCA, a WAG, SSI, TDAP, or PAA, or are a household authorized to receive a TANF-funded service or benefit as described in 115.2(F);

b. Meets the household composition definition as described in Section 100 of this manual;

c. Includes all persons who purchase and prepare their meals together, regardless of whether they are separate units for cash programs; and

d. Includes no person who has been disqualified as described in paragraph 115.3(E) or (F).

H. If required, verify SNAP eligibility factors, as described in Section 408.4 (Mandatory Verification at Application) of this manual, that are not verified for the program conferring categorical eligibility.

I. Do not include any person as a member of a categorically eligible SNAP household if that person is:

a. An ineligible immigrant as defined in Section 120 (Immigrants) of this manual;

b. Ineligible under the student provision as described in Section 102 (Students) of this manual;

c. Institutionalized in a non-exempt facility as defined in Section 100.63 of this manual;

d. Ineligible because of failure to comply with a work requirement in accordance with Section 130.12 of this manual; or

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1.3 Application Processing (continued)

e. Ineligible because of a drug-related felony offense.

J. Eligibility factors that are accepted for SNAP eligibility without the verification required in Section 408.4 because of categorical eligibility is:

a. Resources

b. Gross and net income limits

c. Sponsored immigrant information

d. Residency

e. Social security number information

Reminders:

1. Do not verify the assets/resources of a categorically eligible household.

2. 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 115.3(L) of this manual. The case manager will also use any verification or information provided subsequent to the application.

The local department must be able to retrieve an original application when the application was initially denied but is subsequently authorized as 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.

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

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1.3 Application Processing (continued)

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 $24 per month allotment (plus the state supplement for participants over 62), except in an initial month. E&E 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 benefits or services, or PAA are excluded.

Examples:

1. Ms. A applies for assistance for herself and her children, aged 10 and 12, because her earnings do not cover her bills. The local department enters the household's $4,550 monthly income in E&E 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. E&E will deny 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 $1,850 monthly earned income and deductions in E&E. She is categorically eligible and was found to be eligible for the $24 minimum benefit because the household size is two.

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1.3 Application Processing (continued)

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 is $2,500 in 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. 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. E&E will determine 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 a gross monthly income of $4,550. This household is not categorically eligible (income over 200% of the poverty level) and their income exceeds the gross income test. E&E will deny the household's application.

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