



**Community**

Legal Services

Advocate. Litigate. Educate.

# Nutrition Assistance in Arizona During Covid-19

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# What is Community Legal Services?

**Community Legal Services** (CLS) is a non-profit law firm that provides legal assistance and education to Arizona's most underserved communities.

## Program Legal Areas

-  Consumer
-  Education
-  Employment (Unemployment & Farmworker Rights)
-  Family
-  Housing
-  Healthcare & Economic Benefits
-  Tax


## Website


[clsaz.org](http://clsaz.org)


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# What will this Zoominar Cover?

- 

**Overview** of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- 

Explanation of the **“Emergency Expansion” Waivers** that have been **Approved** for the SNAP in Arizona
- 

Inform on how income from **Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act** is counted when determining eligibility for SNAP
- 

**How to Apply** for SNAP
- 

**How to Appeal** SNAP decisions you don't agree with

# What is the Nutrition Assistance (NA) Program?

 Used to be called **Food Stamps** before 2008

 Also called **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)**

 Monthly funds received in an **EBT Card** that can **only** be used to buy **food** items

 Households must meet **citizenship**, **income**, and **resource** eligibility requirements

**\*\*\*Note:** *only allowed for those deemed disabled, elderly (over 60) or homeless.*

## Allowed

## Not Allowed



# What is the SNAP “Emergency Expansion”?



CORONAVIRUS  
EMERGENCY

Federal government authorization under the **Families First Coronavirus Response Act** (FFCRA) to allow states like Arizona to have **more flexible SNAP rules** in order to alleviate economic stress from Covid-19 to SNAP recipients through the **approval of state waiver requests**.

Granting on a **two-month** basis (March-April 2020)

**Waiver approvals** have allowed for:

-  Increased SNAP benefit amounts
-  More people to qualify and continue receiving SNAP
-  A simplified application process
-  Access to more food items and buying methods
-  Pandemic-EBT

# What waivers have been approved for Arizona?

## Emergency Allotment

**Increases** SNAP benefit amount to the **“maximum”** monthly benefit amount for **all** households in April & May

Increases will be posted automatically on EBT cards

**Note:** SNAP recipients already receiving the “maximum” allotment **will not** receive increases

| Household Size | “Maximum” Allotment |
|----------------|---------------------|
| 1              | \$194               |
| 2              | \$355               |
| 3              | \$509               |
| 4              | \$646               |
| 5              | \$768               |
| 6              | \$921               |
| 7              | \$1,018             |
| 8              | \$1,164             |



# What waivers have been approved for Arizona?

## Suspension of ABAWD Work Requirements

 **Able-bodied Adults without Dependents** (ABAWD) are generally limited to **3 months** of assistance without meeting work requirements. These **work** requirements have been suspended.

 SNAP benefits will **not** be terminated for:

 **Failure** to comply with **employment & training requirements**

 **Voluntary quit** or **reduced work effort**

 Beginning **April 15, 2020**, the Department of Economic Security (DES) will **send notices** to households whose SNAP applications were **denied** or **closed** between **April 1, 2019** to **March 10, 2020** due to reaching the **3 month time limit**. The notices **inform** participants that they **may be eligible** to receive SNAP benefits during the **state of emergency** and they will need to **submit** a **new application**.

 **Note: Students** who **do not** meet any of the non-work exceptions are **still required** to meet work requirement. Please contact CLS for specific case advice on student exceptions, if needed.

# What waivers have been approved for Arizona?

## Extension of Certification Period

 Certification period will be **extended** by **6 months** for recipients due to renew benefits in **March, April & May**

 For **combination cases** (NA & CA) the renewal period will be adjusted **according** to the **NA renewal period**

| Renewal Due | Adjusted Renewal Date |
|-------------|-----------------------|
| March 2020  | September 2020        |
| April 2020  | October 2020          |
| May 2020    | November 2020         |



# What waivers have been approved for Arizona?

## Simplification of Application Process

### Acceptance of Telephonic Signature

Applies to all applications dated March 1, 2020 through May 31, 2020

DES agent must document **all** information the applicant **verbally attested** to on application in case file. **Make sure to have the DES agent repeat all information that you provided for your application!**

### Waiving Interview Requirement

Applies to all determinations made between April 6, 2020 and May 31, 2020, **unless** more information is needed from the applicant

**Note:** Interviews can only be waived if mandatory information has been previously verified by DES or other government agencies that exchange information with DES.

Do you need help with this application? Visit [www.healtharizonaplus.gov](http://www.healtharizonaplus.gov) or call 1-855-HEA-PLUS (432-7587).

ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY  
Family Assistance Administration  
Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS)

#### APPLICATION FOR BENEFITS

Tear off and keep pages A through L for your records.

##### What is this application for?

Use this application to see if you and members of your household qualify for:

- Free or low-cost insurance from AHCCCS
- Help with your Medicare costs
- Nutrition Assistance
- Cash Assistance/Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Tuberculosis Control
- A new tax credit that can help pay your health insurance premiums

See pages B and C for a description of each program.

##### Who can use this application?

An application may be completed by you or anyone you choose who knows or can get the information needed to complete the application for you and your household members. You can use this application to apply for anyone in your household, even if they already have benefits, including health insurance.

Your household includes:

- Your spouse, if married
- Your children under age 22 who live with you
- Your partner who lives with you (but only if you have a child together who needs health insurance or Cash Assistance)
- People you claim on your income tax return even if they do not live with you
- Relatives in your care who are under the age of 19 and live with you
- People who you live with that purchase and prepare food with you

If you want to select a representative to complete your application, complete the Authorized Representative form on page 1 and 2 of the application.

##### Where else can I apply?

You can apply faster online at [www.healtharizonaplus.gov](http://www.healtharizonaplus.gov).

You can also apply in person at any local Department of Economic Security (DES)/Family Assistance Administration (FAA) office.

You can find a list of local FAA offices at <https://des.az.gov/> or call our 24 hour Interactive Voice Response system at 1-855-HEAPLUS (432-7587).

##### What if I need help?

If you need help filling out this application, please tell us. If you need a language interpreter or accommodations for a disability, please check the kind of help you need on page 1 of the application.

Online: [www.healtharizonaplus.gov](http://www.healtharizonaplus.gov)  
Phone: 1-855-HEA-PLUS (432-7587)  
In person: Visit [www.des.az.gov](http://www.des.az.gov) to find the office closest to you.

# What waivers have been approved for Arizona?

## Expansion of SNAP Use

Allows SNAP recipients to access a wider variety of food options during a time when families may be experiencing disruption, such as decreased access to kitchens, hot meals and shelter.

Walmart 

amazon 

Allows participants to purchase:

 Online from approved vendors

 Hot and prepared food sold in grocery stores (which is currently not permitted under SNAP).

 Note: This does not include restaurant food purchases unless *disabled, elderly (over 60), or homeless.*



# What waivers have been approved for Arizona?

## Pandemic-EBT

Provides extra SNAP EBT funds for households that have school-age children that would otherwise be receiving free school breakfast and lunch.



# How is income from the CARES Act Counted?

**Recovery Rebates** (Stimulus Payments) **do not** count as **income**.

However, payment **may** count as a **resource**.

**Note:** *SNAP resource limits: (\$2250 individual; \$3500 if you are over 60 or disabled)*

**Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation** (FPUC) **does** count as **income**.



# How to Apply for SNAP during Covid-19?

**Online:** [healthearizonaplus.gov](http://healthearizonaplus.gov)

**Telephone:** (855) HEA-PLUS (432-7587), Monday through Friday 7:00AM-6:00PM

**Fax:** Download paper application here: [des.az.gov/file/8269/download](http://des.az.gov/file/8269/download), print, and look up local DES office fax number at [des.az.gov/find-your-local-office](http://des.az.gov/find-your-local-office).

**In-person:** Available only when absolutely necessary, at limited locations, for those without phone or internet access. Check: [des.az.gov/find-your-local-office](http://des.az.gov/find-your-local-office) for more information.

# What to Do If SNAP is Denied, Reduced or Terminated ?

## Right to Appeal

**90** day appeal deadline from date of notice  
**10** day deadline, **if** requesting continuing benefits

## Ways to Appeal

**Telephone\*** appeals can be submitted to the:

DES Office of Appeals at (602) 514-4600

*\*Please remember to document the date and time you call and name of DES agent who accepted your appeal*

**Fax\*\*** appeals can be submitted to the:

DES Office of Appeals at (602) 257-7055

*\*\*Please remember to keep the fax receipt of your appeal request for your records.*

Click [here](#) for more detailed appeal instructions.

**Contact**  **Community** for possible legal assistance  
 Legal Services

**Telephone** (602) 258-3434, 8:00AM-3:00PM

**Online** [clsaz.org/apply-for-services/](https://clsaz.org/apply-for-services/)

FAA-0098A FORPD (1-20) ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY Page 1 of 3  
 Family Assistance Administration  
**APPEAL REQUEST**

Toll-free number: 1-877-528-3330  
 Appeals Processing Unit (APU):  
 Phone: 602-774-9279  
 Fax: 602-257-7058  
 Office of Appeals:  
 Phone: 602-771-9019  
 Fax: 602-257-7056 Phoenix  
 602-257-7055 Tucson

Complete the following **ONLY** when requesting an Appeal and FAX the completed form to any of the FAX numbers on the right-hand side

**CUSTOMER INFORMATION**

Name (Last, First, M.I.): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Social Security Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Case Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address (No., Street): \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP Code: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone Number (Include area code): \_\_\_\_\_

I want an Appeal for the following programs: (Check box)  
 Cash Assistance  Nutrition Assistance  AHCCCS Health Insurance  Tuberculosis Control

I want an Appeal because I do not agree with: (Check box)  
 End of Benefits  Amount of Benefits  Denial of Application  Overpayment  
 Other (Explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Reason(s) why I don't agree with your decision: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Notice I do not agree with: \_\_\_\_\_  
 I need an interpreter:  Yes  No (If Yes, what language?) \_\_\_\_\_  
 I need an accommodation for a disability:  Yes  No (If Yes, explain) \_\_\_\_\_

**IMPORTANT:** Read your Appeal rights on page 2 of this form before filling out this section about continued benefits.

**CONTINUED BENEFITS**

Check one of the boxes below if the benefits the participant is appealing is being decreased or stopped.  
 I DO want to keep getting benefits during my Appeal.  
 I DO NOT want to keep getting benefits during my Appeal.

**NOTE:** When none of the options for continued benefits are selected, benefits may continue automatically. You may be required to pay back any amount you are not eligible for.

Name (Print or Type): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

See page 3 for USDA/EQE/ADA/LEP/GINA disclosures

**Appeal Request** form should arrive with your denial notice, if not, it can be downloaded [here](#).

# Questions?



# Cash Assistance During the COVID-19 Pandemic

April 2020

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# The Cash Assistance Program

The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (“TANF”) Program gives families cash to spend on their basic needs. In Arizona, the TANF program is called the Cash Assistance Program. The Cash Assistance Program is run by the Arizona Department of Economic Security (“DES”).

You can apply for cash assistance on the same application for food stamps and medical assistance.

# Cash Assistance During the COVID-19 Pandemic

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, DES has made changes to the Cash Assistance Program.

This is general information and does not discuss all situations. We will cover:

1. Recent changes to the Cash Assistance Program.
2. Who is eligible for the program.
3. Income eligibility guidelines.
4. Program options.
5. How to apply.

# Changes to the Cash Assistance Program

**In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been changes to the Cash Assistance Program. Some of those changes are:**

- **During the pandemic, there are no work requirements for adults.**
- **During the pandemic, Arizona's time limit on how long you can get cash benefits is suspended.**
- **The adult does not have to sign the Personal Responsibility Agreement.**

# What if a person applied before and was denied Cash Assistance?

- If you applied before and were denied, you may be eligible.
- A stimulus check will not be counted as income for the Cash Assistance Program.
- Unemployment insurance benefits are not counted as income for the Cash Assistance Program.

# Who is eligible for Cash Assistance?

Low-income families with a minor child living with them are eligible for cash assistance. Some cases are referred to as “child only.” Examples are:

A parent can apply for cash assistance for just the child, because the parent does not have an immigration status that allows them to get public benefits.

A parent who gets Supplemental Security Income (SSI) can apply for their child.

If the child lives with a specified relative, the relative of the minor child can apply for cash assistance for the child.

# **Is a child in a mixed immigration status household eligible for Cash Assistance?**

A person can get cash assistance if they are:

1. A US citizen, or
2. A “qualified” immigrant.

The child must be in one of the above categories. A parent may apply for cash assistance for their child and if the parent is not asking for assistance for themselves, the parent cannot be asked about their immigration status.

# **Can a family with both parents living together get Cash Assistance?**

Yes. This is called the Two Parent Employment Program (TPEP).

# What are the income guidelines for Cash Assistance?

The general income guidelines for cash assistance are:

- 130% of the current federal poverty level for a family when the head-of-household is not the parent of the child and wants cash assistance only for the minor child. For a family of 3, this is \$2,311 per month. An example is a child living with her grandparents.
- 100% of the current federal poverty level for all other families. For a family of 3, this is \$1,778 per month.



# How much can a family get in Cash Assistance?

The amount of cash assistance benefits you can get depends on your situation. DES will look at the number of persons in your household, income, and whether you pay for basic costs, such as rent, mortgage payments and property taxes.

It is important to fill out the cash assistance application with as much information as you have available. DES will give you the cash assistance on an Electronic Benefit Transfer (“EBT”) card that works like a debit card.

# How much can a family get in Cash Assistance?

DES uses 2 payment charts for cash assistance.

Families who pay shelter costs (rent, mortgage, taxes, etc.)

| Number of Participants | CA Monthly Payment Standard |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1                      | \$164                       |
| 2                      | \$220                       |
| 3                      | \$278                       |
| 4                      | \$335                       |
| 5                      | \$392                       |
| 6                      | \$449                       |
| 7                      | \$506                       |
| 8                      | \$563                       |
| 9                      | \$620                       |
| 10                     | \$677                       |
| 11                     | \$734                       |
| 12                     | \$791                       |

Families who do not pay shelter costs

| Number of Participants | CA Monthly Payment Standard |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1                      | \$103                       |
| 2                      | \$139                       |
| 3                      | \$175                       |
| 4                      | \$211                       |
| 5                      | \$247                       |
| 6                      | \$283                       |
| 7                      | \$319                       |
| 8                      | \$355                       |
| 9                      | \$391                       |
| 10                     | \$427                       |
| 11                     | \$463                       |
| 12                     | \$499                       |

# Do parents have to meet work requirements to get Cash Assistance?

**No.** Because of recent changes in state law, parents do not have to meet the cash assistance program's work requirements *during the COVID-19 pandemic*.

When the pandemic ends, DES may decide to require parents to participate in work activities to get cash assistance.

Getting your high school equivalency degree or GED qualifies for the work activity requirement.

# How long can a family get Cash Assistance?

Recent changes in state law suspended the cash assistance time limits during the COVID-19 pandemic. Until the pandemic is over, you can get cash assistance for as long as you are eligible for the benefits.

Once the pandemic is over, DES may decide to go back to time limits. The time limit for cash assistance was 12 months. Then you could ask for an additional 12 months of benefits. You also could ask for more months of benefits for a hardship reason: Examples are: you are a victim of a crime or domestic violence, homeless, have no transportation, or have no childcare.

## **Can a family get a one-time larger Cash Assistance payment?**

Yes. Under Arizona's **Grant Diversion Program**, you may receive a one-time larger payment of cash assistance benefits.

A payment under the Grant Diversion Program is equal to three months of cash assistance payments. The Grant Diversion Program is for when you need quick, short-term assistance. For example, you have a job lined up but it is not starting right away and you could use help from the Grant Diversion Program.

# **Can a family get a one-time larger Cash Assistance payment? (Continued)**

You may be eligible for the Grant Diversion Program, if you meet all of the following:

- Meet the cash assistance eligibility requirements
- Did not get cash assistance in the month they apply for Grant Diversion
- Did not get benefits through the Grant Diversion Program in the 12 months before they submit an application.

**You cannot get Cash Assistance benefits and the Grant Diversion Program benefits at the same time.**

# **If DES in the future starts to require a parent to sign a Personal Responsibility Agreement**

The parent must agree to do the following:

- Make sure all children ages 6 through 15 attend school;
- Keep the children's immunizations up to date;
- Not illegally sell, possess or use a controlled substance;
- Cooperate with the rules of the Cash Assistance Program, and
- Cooperate with the DES Child Support Services.

# Where can persons use their Cash Assistance?

**The Cash Assistance EBT card can be used at any ATM or store that accepts the EBT card. You cannot use your EBT card at a:**

- liquor store,
- casino,
- racetrack,
- adult entertainment establishment, and
- medical marijuana dispensaries.

You also cannot buy lottery tickets with a Cash Assistance EBT card.



## How do persons apply for Cash Assistance benefits?

- Submit an application online at [www.healthearizonaplus.gov](http://www.healthearizonaplus.gov).
- Print an application from the Arizona Department of Economic Security's ("DES") website ([www.des.az.gov](http://www.des.az.gov))

Fill it out and fax it to the telephone number on the application or mail it to:

Arizona Department of Economic Security  
Family Assistance Administration  
P.O. Box 19009  
Phoenix, Arizona 85005-9009

# How do persons apply for Cash Assistance benefits? (Continued)

- If persons need help with the application or have questions, call 1-855-432-7587 for assistance Monday-Friday from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.

There are a few DES offices still open to the public. DES is only seeing a person in the DES office for an emergency when the person does not have internet or telephone service. Check the DES website to see if an office near you is open: [www.des.az.gov](http://www.des.az.gov).

# Where can persons find more information about Cash Assistance Program?

Arizona Department of Economic Security, *Apply for Cash Assistance*, available at <https://des.az.gov/services/child-and-family/cash-assistance>.

Arizona Department of Economic Security, *Grant Diversion Program*, available at <https://des.az.gov/services/child-and-family/cash-assistance/grant-diversion-program>.

Arizona Department of Economic Security, *DES Services Related to COVID-19*, available at <https://des.az.gov/services/coronavirus>.

AZLawHelp.org

# What if persons need help getting medical care or food?

There are other programs available to help you through these difficult times. Persons can apply for **Cash Assistance, the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (“AHCCCS”) Medical Assistance** and **food stamps** in the same application. See the information in the previous slides.

# What about Unemployment Insurance Benefits?

Persons can apply for unemployment insurance benefits:

- Online at [www.azui.com](http://www.azui.com) and click the button “Apply for UI Benefits.” You can apply any time between 12:00 am on Sunday through 6:00 pm on Friday.
- By phone at 1-877- 600 -2722.
- A paper application is available in the documents center (UB-105 Arizona Initial Claim for Unemployment Insurance) at [www.azdes.gov](http://www.azdes.gov). The application will tell you where to mail or fax the application.

Thank you.