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

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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 or are still pending for 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.
What is the SNAP “Emergency Expansion”?

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 though the approval of state waiver requests.

Granting on a month-to-month basis

Waiver approvals have allowed for:

- Increased SNAP benefit amounts
- More people to qualify and continue receiving SNAP
- A simplified application process
- 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.

- SNAP recipients already receiving the “maximum” allotment **will not** receive increases.

- Households approved under “eligible-no pay status” **will not** qualify for emergency allotment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household Size</th>
<th>“Maximum” Allotment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>$194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>$355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>$509</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>$646</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>$768</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>$921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>$1,018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>$1,164</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Renewal Due</th>
<th>Extended Renewal Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 2020</td>
<td>September 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2020</td>
<td>October 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2020</td>
<td>November 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2020</td>
<td>December 2020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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. Make sure answer ALL questions on application to avoid unnecessary delays!

Note: Interviews can only be waived if mandatory information has been previously verified by DES or other government agencies that exchange information with DES.
What waivers have been approved for Arizona?

**Pandemic-EBT (P-EBT)**

*Provides food funds for households that have school-age children that would otherwise be receiving free school breakfast and lunch.*

**No application** is necessary. DES will work with the Arizona Department of Education (DOE) to identify households with children who were in the school breakfast and lunch program.

**Retroactive** benefit from March 16, 2020 through May 31, 2020

Will be **deposited**:

- On **SNAP EBT card** for households **currently receiving SNAP** benefits based on **parent/guardian’s first letter of last name** (see [here](#) for date chart).
- On **P-EBT card** for households **not receiving SNAP** benefits to be **mailed** to household’s last address of record with DOE in **mid-May 2020**. Make sure to update address ASAP with DOE if it has changed!

**All deposits will include benefits for March, April & May**

### P-EBT for Each Child

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>$69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>$126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>$120</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What waivers have been approved for Arizona?

**Online Purchases**

Allows SNAP recipients to purchase food **online** from approved vendors
What waivers are still pending for Arizona?

Expansion of SNAP Use

If approved, it would allow participants to purchase hot and prepared food sold in grocery stores (which is currently not permitted under SNAP).

Note: This would not include restaurant food purchases unless disabled, elderly (over 60), or homeless.
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 when FPUC is actually received by the household.

Applicants should report that they have applied for FPUC on SNAP application but that FPUC decision is still pending.

FPUC income must be reported to DES by the 10th day of the month following the month it was received.

**Example:** If FPUC is received on May 5th, households would have until June 10th to timely report the change of income.
How to Apply for SNAP during Covid-19?

**Online:** 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, print, and look up local DES office fax number at 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 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 Legal Services for possible legal assistance
**Telephone** (602) 258-3434, 8:00AM-3:00PM
**Online** clsaz.org/apply-for-services/

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