NEWSROOM

SNAP Benefits Increasing Temporarily Due to COVID, Starting Jan. 8

Other Stimulus Provisions May Make More Post-Secondary Students and Louisianans Eligible for Benefits

January 07, 2021

BATON ROUGE - Recipients of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits will see an increase in their benefits for the first six months of 2021, following passage of the federal Consolidated Appropriations Act. The recently enacted federal legislation may also make more Louisianans eligible for SNAP by excluding both federal unemployment benefits and stimulus checks from consideration as income and expanding student eligibility.

The federal appropriations bill, signed by President Trump on Dec. 27, 2020, included a provision increasing SNAP maximum allotments by roughly 15% for January through June 2021, in response to the continuing coronavirus pandemic. The additional benefits for January will be loaded onto current Louisiana SNAP recipients' EBT cards on Friday, January 8. For February through June, the extra benefits will be loaded at the same time as recipients' regular benefit amount on their regularly scheduled issuance date.

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), which has responded to an unprecedented food need since the pandemic began, also received approval from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) to issue supplemental SNAP benefits for the month of January, bringing all households up to the maximum benefit amount for their household size. This will be the 11th consecutive month Louisiana has issued the emergency allotments due to the pandemic. The emergency supplements will be loaded on recipients' EBT cards on Friday, January 8.

Increased SNAP Allotments

The amount of SNAP a household receives each month depends on the number of people in the household and the amount of their net income. The regular maximum SNAP allotments for 2021, along with the temporary increased maximums, are as follows:

Household Size	Maximum Allotment	Max Allotment for Jan.-June 2021
1	$204	$234
2	$374	$430
3	$535	$616
4	$680	$782

Household Size	Maximum Allotment	Max Allotment for Jan.-June 2021
5	$807	$929
6	$969	$1,114
7	$1,071	$1,232
8	$1,224	$1,408
Each additional member	$153	$176

Changes Affecting SNAP Eligibility

Other provisions of the Consolidated Appropriations Act for 2021 may make more Louisianans eligible for SNAP.

Unlike the CARES Act in 2020, the latest legislation excludes the federal pandemic unemployment benefits ($300 weekly) from consideration as income or resources in determining SNAP eligibility. (State unemployment benefits would still be counted.) Receipt of federal unemployment benefits resulted in 44,165 (15.7%) of the 281,289 households who applied for SNAP between March and July of last year being denied food assistance, as the boost in unemployment benefits pushed those families over the income limit. Another 2,185 households who had been receiving SNAP saw their cases closed because of it. This time, the additional federal benefits will not be counted.

Stimulus checks, also known as Economic Impact Payments, will also be excluded from the eligibility calculation, just as they were with the first round of stimulus.

In addition, eligibility for college students has been expanded to include those who are enrolled at least half-time and are either eligible to participate in work study or have an expected family contribution of $0 in the current academic year, as determined by the institution of higher education. Previously, students from families with an expected family contribution (EFC) of $0 were not automatically eligible for SNAP. The new law changes that. Pending further guidance from FNS, students will need to provide either their FAFSA paperwork which includes their EFC or their proof of eligibility for work study to DCFS when applying for SNAP.

For more information about SNAP benefits changes, visit www.dcfs.la.gov/page/snap-updates. Information about applying for SNAP can be found at www.dcfs.la.gov/snap.

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1. *Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Ave. SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;*
2. *Fax: (202) 690-7442; or*
3. *Email: program.intake@usda.gov*

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