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**ALERT** **(#)**

### Cyberattack

Data may have been compromised for some households involved in Child Protective Services cases in Spring 2020. If you believe your information may have been included in this breach, call 888-304-1021 from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m., M-F.
**Click here for more information (https://web.archive.org/web/20201022230351/https://dhs.georgia.gov/press-releases/2020-10-09/dhs-notifies-customers-about-breach-confidential-information)**

**ALERT** **(#)**

### Georgia Gateway

Please note that Georgia Gateway will be unavailable during these times for planned system maintenance: 6 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 24 until 11:59 p.m.

# DFCS resumes processing program recertifications

**SEPTEMBER 28, 2020**

**ATLANTA, GA –** Program recertification periods for Division of Family & Children Services (DFCS) constituents, that were previously suspended due to COVID-19, have now resumed.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) and Medicaid recipients all received extended recertification periods due to the pandemic. Under the provisions of the previously executed waiver:

SNAP and TANF cases due for renewal in March 2020 were due for renewal in

September 2020.

SNAP and TANF cases due for renewal in April 2020 will now be due for renewal in October 2020.

The Medicaid program has extended renewals coming due in September and October for another six (6) months. Those renewals will now be due March 2021 and April 2021, respectively.

Those currently participating in SNAP or TANF with upcoming recertification dates should watch their mail carefully for information regarding upcoming renewal date. Updates will also be available via online Georgia Gateway accounts. Households interested in continued participation in either program must resubmit information regarding income and other items requested in the timeframes specified in their recertification letters.

In response to COVID-19, DFCS was able to take advantage of waivers from federal partners that allowed streamlining of operations to handle the influx of applications from families needing assistance due to losses they experienced as a direct result of the pandemic.

Certification periods for each program were extended – which shifted the renewal period out for a period of six (6) months for those receiving benefits. This was an automatic process and there was nothing the customer had to do to receive the extension. This also allowed for DFCS staff to focus on the increased demand of incoming applications and providing the citizens of Georgia the assistance needed as quickly as possible.

Automatic system terminations for failure to submit a recertification was also suspended for cases with renewals due during these months. It was important to DFCS to remove any barriers to access during a time of such uncertainty. Additionally, households were not required to take any action to receive the six (6)-month period extensions. Families coming up for renewal in the months of March – August 2020, did not have to worry about meeting the requirement. DFCS allowed the full six (6) month period before recertification for benefit programs would be needed.

Office of Family Independence (OFI) Chief Deputy Division Director Jon Anderson said, “While families were trying to recover financially, mentally, and physically from COVID-19, DFCS didn’t want them to have to worry about where their next meal, medicine or assistance would come from.”

SNAP and TANF recipients can now expect to receive a Notice of Renewal to reapply for benefits by the 20th day of the month prior to the month in which the renewal for benefits is slated to end.

Director Tom Rawlings said, “These parameters were put in place to assist both staff and customers during the trying time of the pandemic. It was the agency’s intent to alleviate any unnecessary trauma that might have been associated with not knowing if benefits could potentially be lost, said Rawlings.”

DFCS is also working with recipients, providers, federal and community partners and others directly impacted by these decisions. Customers in need of assistance are asked to call the Customer Contact Center at 1-877-423-4746.

For more information and updates, visit: **dfcs.georgia.gov (https://web.archive.org/web/20201022230351/https://dfcs.georgia.gov/)**.

**About Georgia DFCS**

The Georgia Division of Family & Children Services (DFCS) administers the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), a federally funded program that provides monthly benefits to low-income households to help pay for the cost of food. DFCS is responsible for issuance of SNAP, Medicaid and TANF to low-income families; assistance for out-of-work parents to help them get back on their feet as well as multiple support services and programs to help families in need.