



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Division of Benefit Programs

Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19

Updated March 25, 2020

(This information will be updated as additional information becomes available.)

Supplemental Nutrition and Assistance Program – SNAP FAQs:

1. Are Emergency SNAP or Disaster SNAP (D-SNAP) benefits going to be issued?

Yes. Virginia issued emergency allotments to households on March 25 and will issue them again on April 16. The emergency benefits will allow the household's current monthly allotment to increase to the maximum allotment for a household of that size.

2. Will there be an increase in the SNAP benefits to the current SNAP caseload during the COVID-19 public emergency?

Yes. Virginia issued emergency allotments to households on March 25 and will issue them again on April 16. The emergency benefits will allow the household's current monthly allotment to increase to the maximum allotment for a household of that size.

3. Why didn't I get an emergency allotment?

The emergency allotment was calculated by the maximum allotment issuance for the household size, minus the amount that was issued for March 2020. If you received the maximum benefit you would not be eligible to receive the emergency allotment.

4. Why was my emergency allotment so small?

The emergency allotment was based on the difference between what you received in March 2020 and the maximum of what a household your size could receive. If your amount was small, it is because you already received an amount that is close to the maximum amount allowed monthly.

5. When will I get my initial emergency allotment? And when will the next emergency allotment be issued?

The first emergency allotment issuance is March 25, 2020; the second emergency allotment issuance is April 16, 2020.

6. Will the regular SNAP issuance for April 2020 be issued?

Yes. The regular allotment will go out in accordance to the regular staggering schedule which occurs on the 1st, 4th and 7th of each month.

7. Am I eligible to receive SNAP benefits?

You may complete an online screening at www.commonhelp.virginia.gov. Scroll to the middle of the page and click "Am I Eligible?" Please remember this is a prescreening tool, you must apply for SNAP to get a final decision.

8. Has the application process changed for SNAP?

There are no policy changes to the SNAP application process. Households must file an application for SNAP benefits with the Local Department of Social Services in the locality where the household resides. Households may file applications in person, by mail, by fax, by telephone to the Enterprise Customer Service Center at 1-855-635-4370 or online at www.commonhelp.virginia.gov.

Most local agencies have a drop-box that customers can utilize while they are closed or if it's outside of the agency's business hours. Please contact your local agency for their email address and fax number; this information is also available at www.dss.virginia.gov.

9. What are the income guidelines for SNAP during the COVID-19 crisis?

The SNAP income guidelines remain the same. We encourage you to complete an online screening at www.commonhelp.virginia.gov. Scroll to the middle of the page and click "Am I Eligible?" Please remember this is a prescreening tool, you must apply for SNAP to receive a final decision.

10. What is the status of my application of case?

Households can check the status of their application by contacting their Local Department of Social Services or online at www.commonhelp.virginia.gov.

11. Is there assistance for college students who no longer have access to meal plans?

You are encouraged to apply which allows eligibility for SNAP to be determined based on your household's individual circumstances. Applications are accepted in person, by mail, by fax, by telephone to the Enterprise Customer Service Center at 1-855-635-4370 or online at www.commonhelp.virginia.gov.

Most local agencies have a drop-box that customers can utilize while they are closed or if it's outside of the agency's business hours. Please contact your local agency for their email address and fax number; this information is also available at www.dss.virginia.gov.

12. Will extra SNAP benefits be issued while children are out of school?

Emergency SNAP allotments were issued to some customers that receive benefits. The first emergency allotment was issued on March 25, 2020, the second emergency allotment will be issued on April 16, 2020. The April 2020 SNAP benefits will issue according to the regular schedule, which is the 1st, 4th, and 7th of each month.

Most of the local school districts are providing meals to the children eligible for free and reduced lunch. Contact the local school division for distribution sites.

13. What is P-SNAP and how can I get it?

P-SNAP is the term for benefits that may be available for households with children who receive free or reduced school lunch. At this time, the program is not operating P-SNAP. Please continue to view the news and check our website for updates.

14. What should I do, I need to pick up my SNAP EBT card, but my local office is closed?

While a local agency may be closed to the public, they must have procedures in place to provide access to EBT cards to meet certain circumstances. Please contact your Local Department of Social Services. To request an EBT card, you may call your Benefit Programs Specialist or call 1-866-281-2448. Contact information for local agencies is available at www.dss.virginia.gov.

15. **Can I go to another local department of Social Services if my agency is closed to pick up an EBT card?**
While a local agency may be closed to the public, they must have procedures in place to provide access to EBT cards to meet certain circumstances. Please contact your Local Department of Social Services. To request an EBT card, you may call your Benefit Programs Specialist or call 1-866-281-2448. Contact information for local agencies is available at www.dss.virginia.gov.
16. **Can an EBT card be used to purchase groceries online?**
At this time, Virginia does not allow customers to use their EBT card for online grocery orders.
17. **I need to apply for benefits, return information, and/or report a change, but my local agency is closed?**
Households can mail, fax, e-mail or drop off information. Most local agencies have a drop-box that customers can utilize while they are closed or if it's outside of the agency's business hours. Please contact your local agency for their email address and fax number; this information is also available at www.dss.virginia.gov . You may also submit an application for benefits, submit Change Report Form and/or report changes online at www.commonhelp.virginia.gov.
18. **Am I eligible for SNAP while I'm waiting for a decision from the Virginia Employment Commission about my unemployment claim?**
Yes; however, there are other eligibility criteria that will be accessed to determine your eligibility. We encourage you to complete an online screening at www.commonhelp.virginia.gov. Scroll to the middle of the page and click "Am I Eligible?" Please remember this is a prescreening tool. You will need to apply for SNAP to get a final decision.

Medical Assistance – Medicaid FAQs:

1. **How can I get health coverage?**
You can apply for Medicaid at any time at www.commonhelp.virginia.gov. Medicaid covers a variety of services, including testing and treatment for COVID-19.
2. **I am sick, but cannot afford my co-pay to see the doctor. What should I do?**
All Medicaid and FAMIS co-pays are eliminated. You do not need to pay anything to see a doctor.
3. **I am worried my prescriptions will run out. How can I prepare?**
Medicaid is allowing members to fill a 90-day supply of many routine prescriptions. Check with your pharmacist or doctor.
4. **Will my current coverage be canceled if I experience a change in circumstances and/or I was late mailing in my renewal documents?**
No, Virginia Medicaid will not cancel coverage for eligible individuals due to a change in circumstances or paperwork issues. Our priority is to maintain your coverage during this time. If you experience issues, please contact <http://www.dmas.virginia.gov/contactforms/#/general> so that we might assist you.
5. **I had to move out of Virginia temporarily because of the coronavirus, but I am still a resident of Virginia. Can I keep my Medicaid coverage?**
Yes, you will continue to be eligible for Medicaid coverage.
6. **Can I receive behavioral health services through telehealth or by telephone?**
Virginia Medicaid has issued guidance to providers allowing the following Medicaid services to be offered through telehealth and by telephone: care coordination, case management, peer services, needs assessments, and psychiatric services, including medication management and individual, group, and family therapy.

7. Will Medicaid make changes in the appeals procedures because of COVID-19?

Yes. DMAS is making the following changes:

- DMAS is seeking federal authority to accept client/member appeals filed during the COVID-19 emergency that miss the normal filing deadlines. If the authority is granted, those appeals will move forward as if the deadlines were met. This policy will apply retroactively for the length of the Governor's emergency declaration, which began on March 12, as soon as approval is received.
- For all appeals filed during the state of emergency, Medicaid members will automatically keep their health coverage and have access to Medicaid-covered medical services without any financial impact while the appeal is proceeding. Medicaid managed health plans will also approve continued coverage while their internal appeal process is underway.
- All DMAS State Fair Hearings will be conducted by telephone.
- DMAS will grant requests to reschedule hearings.
- Appeals may be submitted to DMAS via e-mail at Appeals@DMAS.Virginia.gov

State Fair Hearing decisions may not be issued within the normal timeframe, depending on the length of the emergency.