



Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance

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General Information System (GIS) Message

Section 1

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| From: | Jeffrey Gaskell, Deputy Commissioner Employment and Income Support Programs |
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Section 2

The purpose of this GIS is to provide guidance to social services districts (districts) on the extension granted to Temporary Assistance (TA) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) cases because of the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic may have had on the ability of households and districts to complete the recertification process for these cases.

The Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) is providing the following responses to some frequently asked questions raised by districts.

Mass Action to Extend TA and SNAP Certification Periods Ending March 2020

Q1. What cases were included in this action?

A1. Only TA and SNAP cases with recertifications ending March 31 were included, provided that the case also met the criteria outlined in [GIS 20 TA/WMS008](#).

Q2 The March mass action to extend recertification period for TA and SNAP cases with certification periods ending March 31 did not extend payments lines for shelter, heat, or utilities. Will there be additional systems action to extend these payments?

A2. No additional systems actions will be taken to extend these payments. Districts should review the eligible list and issue payments for April that have not been issued and take any necessary actions on those cases requiring extension of payment lines for shelter, heat, and/or utilities. Additionally, these paylines were not extended in the subsequent mass rebudgeting/reauthorization (MRB/A) and districts must also enter paylines for May 1, 2020 through the end of the authorization period.

Q3 In those TA cases included in the mass action (Eligible List), did the system create a new payline for both TA and SNAP?

A3. Not in all cases. The mass action created new paylines for TA only if a payment type 05 was present for March and only for SNAP if a payment type 96 was present. If the TA payment type for March was 69 (single issue), the mass action did not create a new payment line. If the SNAP payment code for March was 93 (single issue), the mass action did not create a new payment line. This means that some TA cases will have extensions for only TA or only SNAP. Districts must review the eligible list and make any necessary corrections.

Q4. Was the Medicaid (MA) coverage extended during the mass action for March?

A4. MA coverage for these cases was extended in this mass action.

Q5. What is the new recertification date for these cases?

A5. The initial new recertification date was April 30, 2020. These cases were further extended in the subsequent mass rebudgeting/reauthorization (MRB/A).

MRB/A to Extend TA and SNAP Certification Periods Ending April and May 2020

Q1. Some cases now have a payline that has an authorization TO date which is prior to the authorization FROM date. As these can't be corrected at the district level, how will these be resolved?

A1. Systems is aware of the issue and is working on a resolution. Instructions will be forthcoming. This issue occurred only in cases that had a TA recoupment or SNAP claim with an end date of less than 3 months. In these cases, Automated Budgeting and Eligibility Logic (ABEL) could not be updated by the MRB/A which consequently caused issues with the paylines.

Q2. Will these paylines be corrected with a systems action?

A2. Yes, as per [20 TA/WMS019](#), the problem paylines were cancelled and new paylines were written for one month greater than the latest existing paylines. Districts will need to store new budgets for the affected cases with an effective FROM Date one day greater than the current budget TO Date. Then, districts should review the CASE RECORD OF ASSISTANCE INQUIRY MENU found in the WMS BICS menu to determine the paylines that need to be written. Paylines should be written to cover the entire extended authorization period.

Q3. How will districts know which extended cases were affected?

A3. Districts will be provided a list of affected cases.

Q4. Was MA coverage extended in this action?

A4. No, a separate process to extend the MA coverage was completed. There will not be any gap in coverage for MA recipients.

Q5. This MRB/A only extended recertifications for 3 months but The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) provided approval for 6-month extensions. Will cases receive an additional 3-month extension?

A5. Yes, if the district has opted into the process. Districts were given the option to opt out of the additional extension. A subsequent MRB/A to provide the additional 3-month extension will be scheduled for all districts that did not affirmatively opt out of the process. Districts will be advised when the process is scheduled.

Q6. Some cases for individuals in Congregate Care facilities had the personal needs allowance (PNA) issued to the client's Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card instead of being issued directly to the facility. Do districts need to take any action on these?

A6. This happened in some cases for individuals in Congregate Care facilities that had an authorization period extending to April 30, 2020 prior to this MRB/A. In such cases districts are advised to evaluate the case and take appropriate action.

Mass Action to Issue SNAP Supplemental Benefits

Q1. Some cases were authorized with large supplements. Were any of these benefits made available or redeemed by recipients?

A1. No, the calculation issues were identified while the benefits were still in pending transaction status. All such benefits were cancelled.

Q2. When will issuance of these supplements resume?

A2. Issuance of the benefits resumed April 16, 2020 and the schedule is as follows: April 16, 2020 - April 17, 2020, April 20, 2020 - April 24, 2020, April 27, 2020.

Q3. Cases that were issued a single combined allotment for March and April received two supplements that do not add up to the maximum amount for March and April. How were these amounts calculated?

A3. To determine the amount of the individual supplement for March and April when a combined allotment was issued, the system divided the total payment received in the single issuance payline by the total number of days authorized by the single issuance payline. This amount was multiplied by the number of days the payline was authorized for in each individual month, subtracted from the maximum allowable benefit for the household size, and rounded up.

Reports

Q1. How do districts know what cases were impacted by each of these actions?

A1. Reports were produced for each mass action. See [GIS 20 TA/WMS010](#) for the cases included in the Mass Action to Extend TA and SNAP Certification Periods Ending March, 2020 and [GIS 20 TA/WMS012](#) for the subsequent MRB/A for the specific action and for report types and names.

Q2. Where can districts access these reports?

A2. All reports were sent to the BICS Queue and stored to Production Hosting Reports and Enterprise Documents (PHRED), the electronic repository for reports.

Q3. How do district staff access PHRED reports?

A3. The PHRED application can be accessed via CentraPort. Local district local area network (LAN) administrators must grant access to staff for specific reports.

Q4. Can local districts sort the report data?

A4. Local districts can search and sort data by developing and running COGNOS reports.

Welfare Management System (WMS) Availability

Q1. Many local district staff are working remotely and need expanded access to WMS (and related functions). Why can't WMS functions be made available for longer time periods?

A1. WMS hours are set to accommodate other functions that must occur when WMS is not available to users. Currently, WMS is available from 7 am – 10 pm, Monday through Friday and 7 am – 7 pm on Saturday and Sunday. OTDA will assess the ability to further extend hours after April 29th.