



# Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance

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## General Information System (GIS) Message

### Section 1

<b>Transmittal:</b>	21 TA/DC004 Upstate and New York City
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<b>To:</b>	Subscribers
<b>Suggested Distribution:</b>	Commissioners, TA Directors, SNAP Directors, HEAP Coordinators Employment Coordinators, WMS Coordinators, MA Directors
<b>From:</b>	Jeffrey Gaskell, Deputy Commissioner Employment and Income Support Programs
<b>Subject:</b>	Upstate and NYC – Impacts of the federal Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021
<b>Effective Date:</b>	Immediately
<b>Contact Information:</b>	SNAP Questions – SNAP Bureau (518) 473-1469 HEAP Questions – HEAP Bureau (518) 473-0332 or <a href="mailto:NYSHEAP@otda.ny.gov">NYSHEAP@otda.ny.gov</a> TA Bureau 518-474-9344 or <a href="mailto:otda.sm.cees.tabureau@otda.ny.gov">otda.sm.cees.tabureau@otda.ny.gov</a> MRB/A Upstate Questions – John Pezzulo (518) 473-3468 MRB/A NYC Questions – Angel Crespo (212) 961-8173

### Section 2

On December 27, 2020, the federal Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 was signed into law. This Act includes provisions which affect multiple public assistance programs, including temporary increases to the Thrifty Food Plan amounts, issuance of additional Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation benefits, temporary changes to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) student eligibility rules and the issuance of 2020 Recovery Rebate Payments. The purpose of this GIS is to communicate these changes and provide guidance to local social services districts (districts) on how these changes may affect eligibility for Temporary Assistance (TA), SNAP and the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP).

#### Thrifty Food Plan Increase

The Act increases SNAP benefits by raising maximum allotments to 115 percent of the June 2020 value of the Thrifty Food Plan (TFP). These increased SNAP allotments will be in effect from January 1, 2021 until June 30, 2021.

The Act also increases the minimum monthly SNAP allotment for households of one or two from \$16 to \$19.

The legislation requires that the increased maximum SNAP allotments take effect beginning on January 1, 2021, and remain for each subsequent month through June 30, 2021. On July 1,

2021, monthly SNAP allotments will revert to the FY 2021 benefit allotments released in August 2020 which can be viewed in [GIS 20 TA/DC087](#).

For January, and only January, the increased SNAP allotments will be issued as supplemental payments to all eligible SNAP households. These supplemental benefits will be issued simultaneously with the SNAP Emergency Allotment Supplements that maximize the SNAP benefits of households not already getting the maximum benefit for their household's size. **In New York City, the supplements will be issued on January 15, 19–22, and 25–29 with benefits available the next day. In Rest of State (ROS) districts, the supplements will be issued January 11–14 and 18-21 with benefits available the next day.**

Beginning in the last week in January, for February SNAP budgets and continuing through June, the 15% increase to the maximum benefits will be incorporated into ABEL budgets and will be incorporated and reflected in regular benefit issuance processes and amounts.

When calculating SNAP overpayment claims, the 15% increase is excluded from any and all SNAP overpayment calculations. Claims should continue to be calculated based on the October 1, 2020, benefit tables (that is the maximum amounts that went into effect on October 1, 2020; see the chart on page 2 of [GIS 20 TA/DC087](#)). This change will not complicate claims calculations as much as may first appear. Except for households of one or two persons that receive the \$16 minimum benefit amount and now will be receiving \$19, **the increase in benefits will be the same for every household depending on the household's size.** The amount of the increase will be the difference between the old maximum benefit amount and the new. For example, for all households of one (not getting the \$16/\$19 minimum) the increase will be \$30 per month. For all households of two, it will be \$56. For all households of three, it will be \$81. And so on.

The temporary increased maximum allotments are as follows:

Household size	Maximum Allotment
1	\$234
2	\$430
3	\$616
4	\$782
5	\$929
6	\$1,114
7	\$1,232
8	\$1,408
Each Additional Member	+\$176

As a result of the legislation, the New York State Nutrition Improvement Project (NYSNIP) benefits will also increase by 15% from January 1, 2021 until June 30, 2021. The temporary increases to the monthly NYSNIP allotments are listed below.

**NYSNIP BENEFITS MATRIX BY SHELTER TYPES**  
Effective 1/01/21 – 6/30/21

HOUSEHOLD		SNAP/FOOD STAMP MONTHLY BENEFIT		
		New York City	Nassau/Suffolk	Upstate
Shelter Type 94 (High Shelter/SUA)	SSI Only	\$234	\$234	\$232
	Other Income	\$234	\$234	\$223
Shelter Type 95 (Low Shelter/SUA)	SSI Only	\$232	\$215	\$190
	Other Income	\$223	\$206	\$181
Shelter Type 96 (High Shelter/SUA/\$21)	SSI Only	\$234	\$234	\$232
	Other Income	\$234	\$234	\$223
Shelter Type 96 (High Shelter/No SUA)	SSI Only	\$19	\$19	\$19
	Other Income	\$19	\$19	\$19
Shelter Type 97 (Low Shelter/SUA/\$21)	SSI Only	\$232	\$215	\$190
	Other Income	\$223	\$206	\$181
Shelter Type 97 (Low Shelter/No SUA)	SSI Only	\$19	\$19	\$19
	Other Income	\$19	\$19	\$19
Shelter Type 98 (No Shelter or SUA)	SSI Only	\$19	\$19	\$19
	Other Income	\$19	\$19	\$19

Federal regulations do not require individual notice regarding mass changes to SNAP benefit amounts. If individual notices are not provided, federal regulations require that public notice must be. OTDA will be providing public notice posters to districts and public notice in print media and social media outlets. Further information will be provided in a subsequent GIS.

**Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation Payments**

The legislation extends the Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation payments (FPUC). These payments will be issued by the New York State Department of Labor and will provide an additional \$300 in federally funded dollars each week to the Unemployment Insurance Benefit (UIB) of each eligible worker. These payments are treated differently than those discussed in the previously issued guidance as described in [20 TA/DC035](#).

For SNAP, the \$300 payments are excluded (not to be counted) as income, and are also disregarded as a resource when determining eligibility and calculating benefits for SNAP. If received retroactively, these payments are already excluded as income for SNAP and therefore are not subject to the lump sum provisions.

For TA, the \$300 FPUC payments are excluded as income and disregarded as a resource when determining eligibility for both emergency and ongoing TA. This includes Family Assistance (FA), Safety Net Assistance (SNA), Emergency Assistance to Needy Families with Children (EAF), Emergency Safety Net Assistance (ESNA) and Emergency Assistance for Adults (EAA). For TA applicants or recipients who are receiving UIB, the FPUC payments must be excluded from the budget. A note should be made in the case record regarding the individual’s receipt of these payments.

These payments, if received retroactively, are excluded as income and therefore are not subject to the lump sum provisions.

For HEAP purposes, FPUC payments provided to individuals and families will be excluded as countable income for HEAP eligibility and benefit determinations and must not be counted in the HEAP budget. These payments will be excluded from the HEAP household’s income when determining eligibility for Regular HEAP, Emergency, Heating Equipment Repair and Replacement (HERR), Heating Equipment

Clean and Tune (C&T) and Cooling Assistance benefits. Any remaining balance from these payments are not considered a liquid resource for the Emergency and HERR benefit components.

These payments, if received retroactively, are excluded as income and therefore are not subject to lump sum provisions.

## **Student Eligibility**

To participate in SNAP, a student enrolled at least half time in an institution of higher education must either be working an average of 20 hours per week or meet one of the exemption criteria listed in 7 CFR 273.5 (b). One exemption is **participation** in a state or federally-financed work study program (funded in full or in part under Title IV-C of the Higher Education Act of 1965 as amended) during the regular school year. The student needs to anticipate working during the time of attendance at the institution.

The legislation temporarily amends the student eligibility rules by amending the allowable exemptions to the work rule in two additional ways:

- A student is eligible if he or she is **eligible to participate** in state or federal work-study, regardless if the student is actively employed or participating in work-study; and,
- Any student that has an “expected family contribution” of \$0, according to Part F of Title IV of the Higher Education Act (which authorizes the major federal student financial aid programs) may participate in SNAP if otherwise eligible.

These amended eligibility qualifications for students will be in effect until 30 days after the COVID–19 federal public health emergency is lifted. This means that new applications received 30 days after the emergency has been lifted will be processed under normal student eligibility criteria. The same standard will apply to recertifications occurring more than 30 days after the end of the emergency declaration.

Students granted eligibility under the amended qualifications will maintain student eligibility until the next recertification regardless of the emergency declaration being lifted at any time during the certification period. Guidance regarding the termination of the amended eligibility will be issued when the emergency is lifted.

## **2020 Recovery Rebate Payments for Individuals**

The legislation authorizes \$600 rebate payments to eligible individuals, including children—similar to those authorized under the CARES Act Section 2201.

For SNAP, these rebates are excluded from consideration as income in the month of receipt and as a resource for 12 months following receipt for SNAP purposes. A household would not be considered to have exceeded the income limit due to these payments because they are excluded, but receipt of these payments could affect a household’s eligibility after 12 months if the payments cause the household to exceed the resource limit.

For TA, any of these federally funded stimulus rebates paid directly to individuals related to the 2020 coronavirus pandemic must be excluded as income for initial and recurring TA eligibility determinations and benefit calculations for FA, SNA, EAF, ESNA and EAA cases.

For FA and SNA, the rebates must be excluded as income in the month received and as a resource for twelve months from the date of receipt. The payments cannot be counted toward the \$2,000/\$3,000 resource limit for twelve months.

For EAF, ESNA and EAA, the rebate is not counted as income, or as a resource for a 12-month period from the date of receipt, in determining an individual’s eligibility for emergency assistance.

These income and resource exclusions apply to both federally and State/locally funded categories of assistance (SNA-FP, SNA-FNP, FA, EAF, ESNA, and EAA).

For HEAP, 2020 Recovery Rebate payments provided to individuals and families will be excluded as countable income for HEAP eligibility and benefit determinations and must not be counted in the HEAP budget. These payments will be excluded from the HEAP household's income when determining eligibility for Regular HEAP, Emergency, Heating Equipment Repair and Replacement (HERR), Heating Equipment Clean and Tune (C&T), and Cooling Assistance benefits. Any remaining balance from these payments are not considered a liquid resource for the Emergency and HERR benefit components.

These payments, if received retroactively, are excluded as income and therefore are not subject to lump sum provisions.