



Department of Human Services
311 West Saratoga Street
Baltimore MD 21201

FIA INFORMATION MEMO

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**TO: DIRECTORS, LOCAL DEPARTMENTS OF SOCIAL SERVICES
DEPUTY/ASSISTANT DIRECTORS FOR FAMILY INVESTMENT,
FAMILY INVESTMENT SUPERVISORS AND ELIGIBILITY STAFF**

FROM: LA SHERRA AYALA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR 

**RE: STATUS OF COVID-19 RELATED WAIVERS AND
PROGRAMS**

**PROGRAMS IMPACTED: SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE
PROGRAM (SNAP), TEMPORARY CASH ASSISTANCE
(TCA), TEMPORARY DISABILITY ASSISTANCE
PROGRAM (TDAP), PUBLIC ASSISTANCE TO
ADULTS (PAA)**

ORIGINATING OFFICE: OFFICE OF OPERATIONS

SUMMARY

During the pandemic, the Maryland Department of Human Services Family Investment Administration (DHS/FIA) exercised administrative waivers and flexibilities authorized through federal laws including the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, The Continuing Appropriations Act 2021, the Combined Appropriations Act, the CARES Act, and the Maryland RELIEF Act. Some of the waivers and flexibilities are tied to the State-issued emergency declaration. The Maryland State of Emergency (SOE) ended August 15, 2021 which has implications for FIA programs administration. The following allotments and waivers in effect during the COVID-19 Pandemic will end as of the date indicated:

1. Emergency Allotments

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act authorized emergency allotments to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) households to help address temporary food needs during the pandemic. Since March 2020, SNAP households have received Emergency Allotments (EA) in an amount equal to the maximum

benefit for the household size, minus their monthly base benefit. EA was contingent on a National Public Health Emergency (PHE) declaration. **EA benefits will end September 30, 2021.**

2. **Interview Waiver**

Continue to waive the interview at certification and recertification when identity is verified and mandatory verifications are complete. *Expires December 31, 2021.*

3. **Waiver to Extend Recertifications**

SNAP, TCA, and TDAP cases with recertification periods ending in October-December will be auto extended. *Expires December 31, 2021.*

4. **Waiver to Suspend Claims Activity**

Case Managers will temporarily suspend collection of active recoupment of overpayments for TCA and SNAP and delay collection action on newly established overpayments (i.e. AE, CE, and FR). The case manager should not consider payments delayed due to this suspension to be delinquent. Households remain liable for their outstanding SNAP debts and case managers will restart collection activity and delinquency determinations at the end of the waiver period. *Expires December 31, 2021.*

- **Resource:** AT: 21-24 (REVISED) ESTABLISHMENT OF OVERPAYMENTS DURING COVID

5. **Waive Fair Hearing Timeframes**

For hearings that were already in process and for requests for hearings between May 1, 2021, and December 31, 2021, the time frame of the fair hearings processes was extended up to 120 days from receipt of the request. The time frame for sending notices confirming oral withdrawal requests may be extended up to 30 days from receipt of the request for requests received during this same time period. Case Managers are encouraged to use existing flexibility to conduct hearings by alternate means, such as telephone or video conference, when possible, to meet the standard required deadlines, but flexibility is allowed when this is not possible. *Expires December 31, 2021.*

- **Resource:** An updated Request for Hearing DHS/FIA 334 Form can be found on Knowledge Base and the DHS public website.

6. **Suspension of QC Face to Face Interview**

Beginning with the July 2021 sample month, Maryland will resume regular SNAP QC operations. QC staff will conduct telephone interviews in lieu of face-to-face interviews. State QC employees reassigned during the QC suspension to make eligibility determinations are not permitted to conduct the QC review for any cases on

which they performed eligibility actions. *Expires December 31, 2021.*

7. Waive ABAWD Time limits and Work Requirements

FIA requested and received FNS approval to suspend ABAWD work requirements statewide until June 30, 2022. Case Managers will not close ABAWD households during this time for not choosing to participate or noncompliance with work activity. Case Managers should process the SNAP cases with countable ABAWDs as a regular SNAP case. When conducting SNAP interviews, case managers must assess applicants to determine if they are work eligible. Recipients who are eligible to participate in an E&T program should be registered for work and complete a referral to participate in a SNAP E&T program.

- **Resource:** AT: 21-11(Revised) ABAWD WAIVER EXTENSION AND REFERRAL GUIDANCE

8. Waiver prohibiting closure of TDAP cases

Effective February 15, 2021, the Maryland RELIEF Act prohibited TDAP cases from being closed unless the recipient received a final decision from the Social Security Administration. *Expired June 30, 2021.*

9. Waiver to issue \$100 in additional TDAP and TCA benefits for each recipient

Effective December 2020, an additional monthly amount of \$100 was issued to each active TCA recipient in a household. **This benefit will end on December 31, 2021.**

Effective February 15, 2021, the Maryland RELIEF Act appropriated an additional monthly benefit of \$100 to each TDAP recipient through June 30, 2021. The Governor elected to extend this benefit in alignment with TCA. **This benefit will end on December 31, 2021.**

Current Waiver Status

Waiver/Program	Tied to the existence of SOE (Y or N)	Start Date	Definitive Expiration Date (if applicable)
Emergency Allotment Waiver	Y	April 2020	September 30, 2021
15% increase of SNAP Maximum Allotment	N	March 2021	September 30, 2021
Interview Waiver	N	March 2020	December 31, 2021
Waiver to extend recertification for SNAP	N	March 2020	December 31, 2021
Waiver to extend recertification for Cash Programs	N	March 2020	December 31, 2021
Waiver to suspend overpayment collections	N	April 2020	December 31, 2021
Waiver to suspend Fair Hearing Timelines	N	April 2020	December 31, 2021
Waiver to suspend QC face to face interviews	N	April 2020	December 31, 2021
Waiver to suspend QC reviews	N	April 2020	June 30, 2021
Waiver of ABAWD Work Requirements	N	March 2020	June 30, 2022

TDAP closure moratorium	N	February 2021	June 30, 2021
TDAP additional \$100 <small>*countable toward SNAP eligibility</small>	N	February 2021	December 31, 2021
TCA additional \$100 <small>*countable toward SNAP eligibility; subject to change</small>	N	December 2020	December 31, 2021

NOTE:

Waiver to extend MA recertification	N	March 2020	December 31, 2021 (tentative)
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Training: Live webinars were held to walk through the information regarding interview scheduling in E&E and overall status updates on waivers at the following times:

Friday, September 17 - 10:00am, 12:00pm, and 2:00pm

A recording will be made available on the HUB for those that were not able to attend the above sessions.

INQUIRIES:

Please direct policy questions to FIA Policy by completing the [FIA Policy Information Request Form](#) found on Knowledge Base or via email at fia.policy@maryland.gov for Montgomery County only.

For systems questions, please email fia.bsdm@maryland.gov.

cc: DHS Executive Staff
 FIA Management Staff
 Constituent Services
 DHS Help Desk
 Office of Administrative Hearing