



MEPD and Texas Works Bulletin 21-03

Date: February 5, 2021

To: Eligibility Services Supervisors and Staff
Program Managers
Regional Directors
Regional Attorneys
Hearings Officers

From: Access and Eligibility Services Program Policy
State Office 2115

Subject: **1. COVID-19: Additional Emergency Allotment Supplement**
2. Mileage Rate Decrease
3. Temporary Census Income
4. 2021 Federal Poverty Level

The information in this bulletin will be included in a future handbook revision. Until the handbook is updated, staff must use the information in this bulletin. If you have any questions regarding the policy information in this bulletin, follow regional procedures.

Active bulletins are posted on the following websites:

- [Medicaid for the Elderly and People with Disabilities Handbook \(MEPDH\)](https://hhs.texas.gov/laws-regulations/handbooks/mepd/policy-bulletins) at <https://hhs.texas.gov/laws-regulations/handbooks/mepd/policy-bulletins>;
- [Texas Works Handbook \(TWH\)](http://hhs.texas.gov/laws-regulations/handbooks/texas-works-handbook/texas-works-bulletins) at <http://hhs.texas.gov/laws-regulations/handbooks/texas-works-handbook/texas-works-bulletins>.

1. COVID-19: Additional Emergency Allotment Supplement

Background

On March 13, 2020, Governor Greg Abbott declared a state of disaster for all counties in Texas due to the COVID-19 outbreak. On the same date, former President Donald J. Trump declared a national emergency. HHSC is providing the following policy clarifications and temporary changes to eligibility policies to accommodate processing of case actions during this emergency period.

COVID-19 Policy

SNAP

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) granted approval to HHSC to issue February 2021 emergency allotment (EA) supplements to participating Supplemental Nutrition Assistance (SNAP) households. Households who are approved for SNAP in February 2021, will automatically receive supplements to bring the household up to the maximum monthly allotment for the household's size.

All EA supplements will be automatically issued on the SNAP household's existing EBT card. SNAP households do not need to take any action to receive EA supplements.

Note: SNAP households that already receive the maximum monthly allotment for their household size do not qualify for EA supplements.

HHSC will issue EA supplements for February, on a randomized staggered schedule Starting February 2, 2021. The expected completion of February EA supplement issuance for active SNAP households is February 8, 2021. Households determined eligible for SNAP after February 8, 2021 will be issued their supplement within approximately 60 days from disposition. Staff should call in a ticket when the SNAP household reports not receiving the supplement by that timeframe.

TIERS will add the following case comment "COVID-19 SNAP supplements issued" for a case when issued the EA supplement. HHSC will not send a notice to households regarding the EA supplement.

Additionally, during the pandemic, Quality Control and other case reading reviews will continue to ensure accuracy. Although SNAP households will receive the maximum allotment, staff must still ensure regular monthly benefits are calculated correctly when processing any case actions.

Automation

Between February 2, 2021, and February 8, 2021, active SNAP households can expect issuance of February EA supplements. Households determined eligible for

SNAP after February 8, 2021 will receive their February EA supplement within approximately 60 days from disposition.

Correspondence

Correspondence changes are not required.

Handbook

Handbook updates are not required.

Training

Training is not required.

Effective Date

This policy is effective with the release of this bulletin. Staff will be notified when the COVID-19 policy and clarifications no longer apply.

2. Mileage Rate Decrease

Background

On December 22, 2020, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) issued the standard mileage reimbursement amount for 2021. The mileage rate is revised for state travel based on the current IRS rate.

Households may claim deductions for transportation expenses related to self-employment for all programs and medical costs for SNAP. ([MEPDH E-6210](#), Self-Employment Expenses, [TWH A-1323.4.5](#), Allowable Costs of Producing Income, and [TWH A-1428.1](#), Allowable Medical Expenses)

Current Policy

All Programs

The mileage rate for 2020, is 57.5 cents per mile.

New Policy

All Programs

The mileage rate for calendar year 2021, is 56 cents per mile.

Automation

Automation changes are not required.

Correspondence

Correspondence changes are not required.

Handbook

The MEPD Handbook is currently scheduled to be updated in the June 2021 revision.

The Texas Works Handbook is currently scheduled to be updated in the April 2021 revision.

Training

Training is not required.

Effective Date

This policy is effective for all case actions disposed on or after March 1, 2021.

3. Temporary Census Income

Background

Every 10 years, the U.S. Census Bureau hires temporary workers to conduct census activities. Census activities in 2020 were scheduled to be conducted primarily from January 2020 through June 2020. The U.S. Census Bureau is continuing to hire temporary workers to participate in the U.S. Census Bureau's Post-Enumeration Survey (PES) operations from February 2021 through October 2021.

Current Policy

[SNAP, TANF, TP 32 and TP 56](#)

Temporary census income is excluded. ([TWH A-1323.6](#), Temporary Census Income)

[Texas Works Medical Programs except TP 32 and TP 56](#)

Temporary census income is countable as earned income. (TWH A-1323.6, Temporary Census Income)

[MEPD](#)

Temporary census income is countable for all MEPD programs except MSP. ([MEPDH E-3170](#), Census Bureau Wages)

Note: The applicant or recipient must provide verification of their status as a temporary census worker for the wages to be exempt.

New Policy

[All Programs](#)

There are no policy changes for the treatment of temporary census income. Follow current policy in TWH A-1323.6 and MEPDH E-3170 when income is received from the U.S. Census Bureau as part of PES operations.

Automation

Automation changes are not required. Staff should continue to select *Temporary Census* from the **Employment Type** drop-down menu when temporary census income from the U.S. Census Bureau is reported.

Correspondence

Correspondence changes are not required.

Handbook

Handbook updates are not required.

Training

Training is not required.

Effective Date

This policy is effective February 1, 2021.

4. 2021 Federal Poverty Level

Background

The United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) updates the federal poverty level (FPL) annually. Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) uses the FPL to annually adjust amounts used for eligibility determinations for certain Medicaid programs and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). HHSC converts the FPL to a monthly income amount to be used to determine the applicable FPL for each program and the Standard Modified Adjusted Gross Income (MAGI) disregard amounts.

Policy Update

MEPD

Medicare Savings Programs (MSP)

2021 Income Limits and Deeming Amounts

- Qualified Medicare Beneficiaries (QMB) – 100 percent FPL
 - Individual: \$1074
 - Couple: \$1452
 - Deeming amount: \$378
- Specified Low-Income Medicare Beneficiaries (SLMB) – 120 percent FPL
 - Individual: \$1288
 - Couple: \$1742
 - Deeming amount: \$454
- Qualifying Individuals (QI-1) – 135 percent FPL
 - Individual: \$1449
 - Couple: \$1960
 - Deeming amount: \$511
- Qualified Disabled Working Individuals (QDWI) – 200 percent FPL
 - Individual: \$2147
 - Couple: \$2904
 - Deeming amount: \$757

Medicaid Buy-in (MBI) Program

- The MBI income limit is 250 percent FPL for a person. The 2021 amount is \$2,684.
- Use the new 2021 FPL amounts listed below when calculating MBI premium payments:

2021 FPL Amounts for MBI

150% of FPL	\$1,610
185% of FPL	\$1,986
200% of FPL	\$2,147
250% of FPL	\$2,684

Medicaid Buy-In for Children (MBIC)

- The MBIC income limit is 150 percent FPL based on family size.
- The 2021 amounts are listed below:

2021 FPL Amounts for MBIC

Family Size	150% FPL
1	\$1,610
2	\$2,178
3	\$2,745
4	\$3,313
5	\$3,880
6	\$4,448
7	\$5,015
8	\$5,583

- The 2021 ineligible sibling exclusion amount is $(\$1,610 \times 2) + \$85 = \$3,305$.
- Use the new 2021 FPL amounts listed below when calculating MBIC premium payments:

2021 FPL Amounts for MBIC

Family Size	150% FPL	200% FPL	300% FPL
1	\$1,610	\$2,147	\$3,220
2	\$2,178	\$2,904	\$4,355
3	\$2,745	\$3,660	\$5,490
4	\$3,313	\$4,417	\$6,625
5	\$3,880	\$5,174	\$7,760
6	\$4,448	\$5,930	\$8,895
7	\$5,015	\$6,687	\$10,030
8	\$5,583	\$7,444	\$11,165

Texas Works Programs

2021 FPL Amounts by Type of Assistance (TP and TA)

Family Size	2021 FPL Amounts by TP and TA				
	133% FPL (3-1-21) TP 44, 34, TA 76	144% FPL (3-1-21) TP 48, 33, TA 75	185% FPL (3-1-21) TP 07	198% FPL (3-1-21) TP 40, 42, 43, 36, 35, TA 74	200% FPL (3-1-21 – 3-12- 21) TA 41
1	\$1,428	\$1,546	\$1,986	\$2,126	\$2,147
2	\$1,931	\$2,091	\$2,686	\$2,875	\$2,904
3	\$2,434	\$2,636	\$3,386	\$3,624	\$3,660
4	\$2,938	\$3,180	\$4,086	\$4,373	\$4,417
5	\$3,441	\$3,725	\$4,786	\$5,122	\$5,174
6	\$3,944	\$4,270	\$5,486	\$5,871	\$5,930
7	\$4,447	\$4,815	\$6,186	\$6,620	\$6,687
8	\$4,950	\$5,360	\$6,886	\$7,369	\$7,444
9	\$5,453	\$5,904	\$7,585	\$8,118	\$8,200
10	\$5,957	\$6,449	\$8,285	\$8,868	\$8,957
11	\$6,460	\$6,994	\$8,985	\$9,617	\$9,714
12	\$6,963	\$7,539	\$9,685	\$10,366	\$10,470
13	\$7,466	\$8,084	\$10,385	\$11,115	\$11,227
14	\$7,969	\$8,628	\$11,085	\$11,864	\$11,984
15	\$8,473	\$9,173	\$11,785	\$12,613	\$12,740
For each additional member	\$504	\$545	\$700	\$750	\$757

2021 FPL Amounts by TP and TA Cont.

Family Size	201% FPL (3-1-21) TA 84	202% FPL (3-1-21) TA 85	204.2% FPL (3-13-21) TA 41	400% FPL (3-1-21) TA 77	413% FPL (3-1-21) TP 70
1	\$2,158	\$2,169	\$2,192	\$4,294	\$4,433
2	\$2,918	\$2,933	\$2,965	\$5,807	\$5,996
3	\$3,679	\$3,697	\$3,737	\$7,320	\$7,558
4	\$4,439	\$4,461	\$4,510	\$8,834	\$9,121
5	\$5,200	\$5,226	\$5,282	\$10,347	\$10,683
6	\$5,960	\$5,990	\$6,055	\$11,860	\$12,246
7	\$6,721	\$6,754	\$6,828	\$13,374	\$13,808
8	\$7,481	\$7,518	\$7,600	\$14,887	\$15,371
9	\$8,241	\$8,282	\$8,373	\$16,400	\$16,933
10	\$9,002	\$9,047	\$9,145	\$17,914	\$18,496
11	\$9,762	\$9,811	\$9,918	\$19,427	\$20,059
12	\$10,523	\$10,575	\$10,690	\$20,940	\$21,621
13	\$11,283	\$11,339	\$11,463	\$22,454	\$23,184
14	\$12,044	\$12,104	\$12,235	\$23,967	\$24,746
15	\$12,804	\$12,868	\$13,008	\$25,480	\$26,309
For each additional member	\$761	\$765	\$773	\$1,514	\$1,563

*Standard MAGI Income Disregard***2021 Five Percentage Points of FPL**

Family Size	2021 Monthly Disregard Amount
1	\$53.70
2	\$72.60
3	\$91.50
4	\$110.45
5	\$129.35
6	\$148.25
7	\$167.20
8	\$186.10
9	\$205.00
10	\$223.95
11	\$242.85
12	\$261.75
13	\$280.70
14	\$299.60
15	\$318.50
For each additional person	\$18.95

2021 IRS Monthly Income Thresholds

The IRS monthly income thresholds are used to determine if a person's income must be counted when calculating MAGI financial eligibility, as explained in [TWH A-1341](#), Income Limits and Eligibility Tests, Medical Programs, Step 3.

- To determine whether a person is required to file a federal income tax return, compare the specified income types to the IRS thresholds in the following table:

2021 IRS Monthly Income Thresholds		
Type of Income	2021 Threshold	Apply Threshold Value in Form H1042, Modified Adjusted Gross Income (MAGI) Worksheet: Medicaid and CHIP
Unearned Income	\$91.67	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pages 4-6, Step 3, Part 7 Pages 4-6, Step 3, Part 9
Earned Income	\$1,033.33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pages 4-6, Step 3, Part 8

*Process Changes**Processing Case Actions*

When processing a case action on or after February 8, 2021, use the following chart to determine when the new FPL and IRS Monthly Income Threshold amounts will be used:

Processing Case Actions	
If providing coverage for...	use the...
March 2020 through February 2021	2020 income limits and threshold amounts
March 2021 through February 2022	updated 2021 income limits and threshold amounts

If providing coverage for months in both time periods, the 2020 income limits and threshold amounts are used for months before March 2021 and the 2021 income limits and threshold amounts are used for March 2021 and later.

Processing Form H1146, Medicaid Report, for Transitional Medicaid Cases

When processing a Form H1146 for Transitional Medicaid (TP 07) EDGs, use the following chart to determine when the updated 2021 income limits will be used.

Processing Form H1146

If Form H1146 is due...	use the...
February 2021 or earlier	2020 income limits
March 2021 or later	updated 2021 income limits

Automation

Changes to TIERS are currently scheduled to be implemented with TIERS Release 108.3.0.0 on February 6, 2021.

For MEPD programs, TIERS:

- uses the 2021 FPL amounts for coverage effective March 1, 2021, and later; and
- re-budgets all active MSP and MBIC cases using the 2021 FPL amounts.

For Texas Works programs, TIERS:

- uses the 2021 FPL amounts for coverage effective March 1, 2021 and later; and
- uses the 2021 IRS Monthly Income Thresholds for coverage effective March 1, 2021 and later when calculating MAGI eligibility.

Correspondence

Correspondence changes are not required.

Handbook

The MEPD Handbook is currently scheduled to be updated in the June 2021 revision.

The Texas Works Handbook is currently scheduled to be updated in the April 2021 revision.

Updates to Appendix XXXI, Budget Reference Chart, and Appendix L, Income/Resources Reference Chart are reflected on the LOOP.

Training

Training will be updated with the adjusted 2021 amounts.

Effective Date

This policy is effective March 1, 2021.