

Families to Receive Enhanced Benefits to Ensure Food Access

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To help families access food during the COVID-19 pandemic, the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services is temporarily increasing benefits for March 2020 and April 2020 to current [Food and Nutrition Services](#) (FNS) recipients in North Carolina. NCDHHS received federal authority to implement the program from the U.S. Department of Agriculture on March 27.

“People need to be able to feed their families while also practicing good social distancing and following the governor’s stay at home order. This will help families make fewer trips to the grocery store and help protect themselves and those in their communities from getting sick,” said NCDHHS Secretary Mandy Cohen, M.D.

All families that receive FNS will receive the maximum amount allowed for March 2020 and April 2020 for their household size. For example, a family of four would be eligible to receive a total of \$646 for each of the two months regardless of their usual benefit amount. The increase is subject to the following guidelines:

- Households that have already received the maximum amount for their household size will not receive the temporary increase.
- The household size will not include ineligible or disqualified members.
- Households that were ineligible in either March 2020 or April 2020 will not receive a temporary increase for the month(s) they were ineligible.

Approximately 360,000 households will begin receiving the temporary increased benefit on their Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card on April 1 and April 22. They will be randomly generated and staggered every other workday until all eligible households have received their temporary increase.

Recipients will continue to receive their regular benefits and should be aware they will receive two separate payments for March and two for April.

To check availability of benefits families should:

- Call 1-888-622-7328.
- Visit www.ebtedge.com. Click on More Information under EBT Cardholders.
- Download the ebtEDGE mobile app. The app is available as a free download on the [Apple Store](#) and [Google Play](#).

To help limit the spread of COVID-19, NCDHHS has also received approval to extend FNS certification periods so that beneficiaries don't have to visit county Social Services offices to qualify for continued services.

In addition, with many businesses closing to reduce the spread of COVID-19, work requirements for able-bodied adults without dependents are being temporarily and partially suspended. All eligible beneficiaries are being notified of this change.

Questions about the emergency supplements and the FNS program should be directed to the EBT Call Center at 1-866-719-0141.

Families and individuals who do not currently receive benefits can apply online with [ePass](#).

Automated Supplements for Active FNS Households

- As part of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act of 2020, which was signed on March 18, 2020, NC DHHS will be issuing Food and Nutrition Services (Food Stamp) supplements for the months of **March 2020 and April 2020**.
- A supplement is the difference between the household's actual March 2020 and April 2020 benefits and the maximum allotment for their household size.
- Example: A household of 3 received an allotment of \$200 for March 2020 and an allotment of \$193 for the month of April 2020. The maximum allotment for a household of 3 is \$509. The household will be issued a supplement of \$309 ($\$509 - \$200 = \309) for the month of March 2020 and a supplement of \$316 ($\$509 - \$193 = \316) for the month of April 2020.
- Households that have already received the maximum allotment for their household size will **not** receive a supplement.
- The household size will **not** include ineligible and disqualified members.
- Households that were ineligible in either March 2020 or April 2020 will **not** receive a supplement for the month(s) they were ineligible.
- March supplements will automatically be issued to active FNS households beginning **April 1, 2020**. April supplements will automatically be issued to active FNS households beginning **April 22, 2020**. The supplements will be randomly generated and staggered every other workday until all households have been supplemented.
- This is effective April 1, 2020 for all FNS households that were active in March 2020 and April 2020.

HOUSEHOLD SIZE	MAXIMUM BENEFIT ALLOTMENT
1	\$194
2	\$355
3	\$509
4	\$646
5	\$768
6	\$921
7	\$1,018
8	\$1,164
Each Additional Member	+ \$146

Individuals who would like to make an application for Supplemental Food and Nutritional Services (Food Stamps) may make an application at <https://epass.nc.gov/>. Individuals who are unable to complete an application through epass may contact our office at 336-342-1394 for additional assistance.