MEPD and Texas Works Bulletin 20-12

Date: May 12, 2020

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: SNAP Online Purchasing Pilot

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:

SNAP Online Purchasing Pilot

Background
On April 21, 2020, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) approved Texas’ request to participate in an existing SNAP Online Purchasing Pilot and allow Texas to provide the option for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) households to purchase SNAP-eligible items online. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, FNS is allowing Texas to expedite the implementation of online purchasing with currently authorized SNAP retailers (Walmart and Amazon).

Current Policy

SNAP
SNAP benefits can be used to purchase food items and garden seeds at physical retail stores that are approved by FNS to accept SNAP benefits. Staff must inform households about how and where to use their Lone Star Card. (Texas Works Handbook (TWH) A-1554, Use of SNAP Benefits, TWH B-239.1, Advisor Interview Requirements for Client Training)

New Policy

SNAP
SNAP benefits can be used to purchase food items and garden seeds at physical retail stores and online using the Lone Star Card through authorized FNS retailers. Authorized online retailers currently include Amazon and Walmart. Staff must inform households that in addition to physical retail stores, SNAP benefits may also be used online at approved retailers to pay for eligible food items. Note: Fees of any type, such as delivery, shipping, service, or convenience fees cannot be paid with SNAP benefits. Households will be required to use an alternative payment method for any incurred fees.

Automation
Automation changes are not required.

Correspondence
Correspondence changes are not required.

Handbook
The Texas Works Handbook is currently scheduled to be updated in the October 2020 revision.

Updates to the MEPD Handbook are not required.
Training
Training is not required.

Effective Date
This policy is effective May 11, 2020.