MEPD and Texas Works Bulletin 20-22

Date: September 11, 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: 1. TIERS Updates Related to Pre-Tax Contributions
2. MAGI Updates for Alimony
3. MAGI Updates for Moving Expenses
4. Determining Good Cause for SNAP Employment and Training Noncompliance
5. Revised SNAP Income Limits, Deductions, and Allotments
6. Revised TANF Maximum Grant Amounts
7. Revised SNAP-CAP Allotment

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:

1. TIERs Updates Related to Pre-Tax Contributions

Background
Pre-tax contributions are excluded from a household’s countable earned income when determining financial eligibility for MAGI programs.

Current Policy

Texas Works Medicaid and CHIP
Review income verification documents to determine if the person makes pre-tax contributions through their employer. Do not pend the case for verification if unable to identify pre-tax contributions from the person’s income verification. (TWH A-1323.5, Wages, Salaries, Commissions, and Tips)

New Policy

Texas Works Medicaid and CHIP
When the household reports pre-tax contributions, pend the EDG for verification if verification is not provided or staff are unable to identify pre-tax contributions from the person’s income verification. Pre-tax contributions can be verified with any of the following:

- copies of pay stubs or earning statements indicating the pre-tax contribution amount and date contributed;
- completed Form H1028, Employment Verification, that shows the pre-tax contribution amount, contribution frequency, and dates contributed; or
- an employer statement of the pre-tax contribution amount, contribution frequency, and dates contributed.

If verification is not provided by the due date, the pre-tax contribution will not be excluded from the employment income. Count the gross income including the pre-tax contribution amounts. Staff must not deny the EDG for failure to provide pre-tax contribution information.

Automation
Currently, staff use Contingency Processing Method (CPM), #829306, *Excluding Pre-Tax Contributions from Gross Income for MAGI Determinations*, when processing eligibility determinations for MAGI programs.

TIERS functionality has been updated to appropriately exclude pre-tax contributions from household income for MAGI programs:
a new Pre-Tax Contributions screen was added to the Income-Employment LUW to collect the pre-tax contributions amounts, frequency, and verification source;
future pre-tax contribution amounts will be projected based on existing projection rules for income; and
two new Verification Check Lists (VCLs), Missing Pre-tax Contributions Payments and Employment Pre-tax Contributions, were created to request verification of the person’s pre-tax contributions.

The YourTexasBenefits.com website and the mobile app have been updated to collect a person’s pre-tax contribution amounts, the frequency of the contributions, and the dates of the contributions.

Changes to YourTexasBenefits.com, the mobile app, and TIERS are currently scheduled to be implemented with TIERS Release 107.3 on September 19, 2020. CPM #829306 will be retired with the implementation of this release.

Correspondence
Form H1028 will be updated to capture pre-tax contribution information with TIERS Release 108 on October 24, 2020.

Texas Works applications will be updated with a future TIERS release.

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

Updates to the MEPD Handbook are not required.

Training
Training will be made available through a job aid titled Pre-Tax Contributions and MAGI Updates on Friday, September 11, 2020.

Effective Date
This policy is effective with the implementation of TIERS Release 107.3 currently scheduled for September 19, 2020.
2. MAGI Updates for Alimony

Background
The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (Pub. L. 115-97), passed by Congress in December 2017, made changes to the Internal Revenue Code, including changes to Modified Adjusted Gross Income (MAGI) rules. These changes impact how alimony is counted as income in MAGI programs.

Current Policy
Texas Works Medicaid and CHIP
Count alimony received as unearned income for the person who receives the payment. (TWH A-1326.17, Alimony (Spousal Support) Received)

New Policy
Texas Works Medicaid and CHIP
Alimony received is excluded from unearned income for MAGI programs if the divorce or separation agreement that includes alimony was executed or last modified after December 31, 2018. The following sources can be used to verify the date of the divorce or separation agreement:

- divorce decree;
- separation agreement;
- court order; or
- court records.

Alimony received under a divorce or separation agreement that was executed or last modified on or before December 31, 2018, continues to be considered countable unearned income to the person receiving the payment.

If the divorce or separation agreement was executed or modified after December 31, 2018, pend the EDG for verification of the date of the divorce or separation agreement and amount of alimony income. If verification is not provided by the due date, alimony will count as unearned income. Staff must not deny the EDG for failure to provide the date of the divorce or separation agreement.

For alimony received, verification of the date of the divorce or separation agreement is not needed if the person indicates the divorce or separation agreement was executed or last modified on or before December 31, 2018.
Automation
The YourTexasBenefits.com website has been updated to include this question, “Was the divorce or separation agreement executed or last modified on or before Dec. 31, 2018?”

TIERS functionality is updated as follows:

- A new question was added to the Unearned Income-Details screen:
  - Was the divorce/separation agreement executed on or prior to 12/31/2018? (yes/no);
- Additional fields were added to the Unearned Income-Details screen to document the type of verification the client provided and when the verification was received;
- TIERS will exclude alimony from unearned income for MAGI programs if the divorce or separation agreement was executed or modified after December 31, 2018; and
- A new Verification Check List (VCL), Divorce/Separation Agreement Execution Date Income, was created to request the verification of the date of person’s divorce or separation agreement.

Changes to YourTexasBenefits.com and TIERS are currently scheduled to be implemented with TIERS Release 107.3 on September 19, 2020.

Correspondence
Texas Works applications will be updated with a future TIERS release to capture the date of the divorce decree or separation agreement involving alimony.

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

Updates to the MEPD Handbook are not required.

Training
Training will be made available through a job aid titled Pre-Tax Contributions and MAGI Updates on Friday, September 11, 2020.

Effective Date
This policy is effective with the implementation of TIERS Release 107.3 currently scheduled for September 19, 2020.
3. MAGI Updates for Moving Expenses

Background
The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (Pub. L. 115-97), passed by Congress in December 2017, made changes to the Internal Revenue Code, including changes to Modified Adjusted Gross Income (MAGI) rules. These changes impact who can claim moving expenses as a MAGI deduction.

Current Policy
Texas Works Medicaid and CHIP
Moving expenses may be deducted when determining eligibility for a MAGI program. (TWH A-1410, General Policy) The previous year’s federal income tax return must be provided to verify the amount of the moving expenses. (TWH A-1440, Verification Requirements)

New Policy
Texas Works Medicaid and CHIP
Allow moving expenses as a MAGI deduction only for active duty members of the military who are moving to a new duty station. The previous year’s federal income tax return must still be provided to verify the amount of the moving expenses. (TWH A-1440, Verification Requirements)

Automation
Changes to TIERS are currently scheduled to be implemented with TIERS Release 107.3 on September 19, 2020.

Correspondence
Texas Works applications will be updated with a future TIERS release to indicate that moving expenses can only be claimed by active duty members of the military.

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

Updates to the MEPD Handbook are not required.

Training
Training will be made available through a job aid titled Pre-Tax Contributions and MAGI Updates on Friday, September 11, 2020.
**Effective Date**

This policy is effective with the implementation of TIERS Release 107.3 currently scheduled for September 19, 2020.
4. Determining Good Cause for SNAP Employment and Training Noncompliance

Background
The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) conducted an audit of the state’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment and Training (E&T) program and found the current process for determining good cause for noncompliance with SNAP E&T work requirements does not comply with federal regulations.

Current Policy

SNAP
SNAP recipients ages 16 to 59 who do not meet an exemption in TWH A-1822.1, E&T Exemptions, are required to participate in SNAP E&T. The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) determines when a mandatory SNAP E&T registrant fails to comply with work requirements and in some cases outreaches the person to explore good cause prior to notifying HHSC that the person noncompiled with SNAP E&T.

A person may have good cause for not complying with E&T if circumstances beyond their control prevent them from complying with the requirement. (TWH A-1860, Determining Good Cause, and TWH A-1861, Reasons for Good Cause) The person must contact TWC (i.e. their local Workforce Solutions office) to claim good cause for the noncompliance. HHSC staff review the good cause recommendation from TWC to make a final good cause determination and impose a sanction if good cause does not exist.

Good Cause Recommendation and Noncompliance Report Process
TWC reports the noncompliance and any good cause information gathered from the person to HHSC through an automated interface between the Texas Integrated Eligibility Redesign System (TIERS) and TWC’s automated system, The Workforce Information System of Texas (TWIST). HHSC captures the noncompliance and good cause information in TIERS in the Non-Cooperation - Details page.

Noncompliance without Good Cause
If a mandatory work registrant does not claim good cause for the noncompliance, TWC sends a recommendation to HHSC to impose the sanction. HHSC reviews the recommendation, makes a final determination of good cause, and determines whether to impose the sanction.

Noncompliance with Good Cause
If a mandatory work registrant claims to have good cause for the noncompliance, TWC provides a good cause recommendation and the report of SNAP E&T
noncompliance to HHSC through the interface. HHSC reviews the case information to determine if the sanction is applicable and if the accompanying recommendation of good cause meets one of the valid reasons listed in TWA A-1861, Reasons for Good Cause. HHSC also informs TWC whether good cause is approved or denied through the automated interface.

TWC chooses from a list of federally defined good cause reasons when sending a good cause recommendation to HHSC through the interface. If the good cause reason does not match any of the available good cause reasons, TWC selects “Other” as the good cause reason transmitted through the interface and faxes Form H1816, SNAP E&T Noncompliance Report, to HHSC describing the good cause reason. TIERS triggers Alert 872, SNAP Good Cause: Review the Form H1816 for a SNAP E&T Client, to prompt eligibility staff to review the good cause reason written within the Comments section of Form H1816 and to determine if good cause exists. Staff review and record the information in TIERS and approve or deny the good cause claim.

**Questionable Good Cause**

If the good cause reason is questionable, staff must verify the good cause claim. Questionable good cause claims may arise if the reason conflicts with other case information. (TWH C-920, Questionable Information) Staff should use the prudent person principle when evaluating good cause claims. (TWH A-137, Prudent Person Principle)

**New Policy**

**SNAP**

TWC will continue to determine when a mandatory SNAP E&T registrant fails to comply with work requirements and will notify HHSC of the noncompliance through the interface. Details of the SNAP E&T noncompliance from TWC received through the interface will also continue to be populated in TIERS in the Non-Cooperation - Details page. However, TWC will no longer contact noncompliant SNAP E&T participants to explore good cause. HHSC has the responsibility to notify the noncompliant SNAP E&T participant of the potential sanction, the opportunity to claim good cause, and how to contact TWC (Workforce Solutions) if they have good cause for not participating. HHSC staff will continue to review any good cause recommendations from TWC to make a final good cause determination and impose a sanction if good cause does not exist.

**Good Cause Recommendation and Noncompliance Report Process**

When a noncompliance notification is received from TWC through the automated interface, send a new good cause notice, Form H1818, Failure to Comply with SNAP Employment and Training, to the household if a sanction is potentially applicable
(i.e. is not exempt and was receiving SNAP at the time of the noncompliance). Form H1818 informs the mandatory participant they have failed to comply with E&T requirements, explains good cause, and provides a deadline by which the person must contact TWC (Workforce Solutions) to claim good cause. TIERS will automatically send Form H1818 and inform the person they have 10 days to contact TWC and claim good cause when HHSC receives a noncompliance notification through the automated interface.

**Note:** Refer persons who contact HHSC directly to claim good cause for noncompliance with SNAP E&T to TWC (Workforce Solutions) the same day to report their good cause reason.

**Noncompliance without Good Cause**
If HHSC does not receive a good cause recommendation from TWC though the automated interface within 13 days of the date the Form H1818 is sent, issue a Form TF0001, Notice of Case Action, to notify the person that an E&T sanction will be imposed. TIERS will automatically send the Form TF0001 if no good cause information is received from TWC within 13 days of the date the Form H1818 is sent. The additional three days between the Form H1818 issuance date and automated TIERS processing allows both TWC and HHSC staff time to process any good cause claims timely and prevents inaccurate denials.

**Note:** Sanctioned persons can continue to contact TWC to claim good cause during the adverse action period and avoid disqualification following existing policy in TWH A-1860, Determining Good Cause.

**Noncompliance with Good Cause**
After the Form H1818 is sent, TWC staff will collect good cause information from persons who have noncompiled with E&T and share this information with HHSC through the automated interface. HHSC staff will continue to receive Alert 872, which has been renamed SNAP Good Cause: Review the Good Cause Reason for a SNAP E&T Client when TWC sends a recommendation of good cause through the automated interface. HHSC staff must individually evaluate and approve or deny all good cause recommendations. When evaluating a good cause recommendation, HHSC staff must review the case facts and circumstances in addition to the information provided by TWC. Staff must also continue to consider whether the person’s circumstances indicate they qualify for an E&T exemption and update the person’s work registration status in TIERS if applicable.

If appropriate, following the review of the case information, HHSC staff can enter a different good cause reason under “Final Good Cause Reason” on the **Non-Cooperation – Details** page in TIERS if they determine the person’s good cause
reason is different from the reason provided by TWC. Otherwise, staff should not enter a final good cause reason. Additionally, if staff select “Other” as the final good cause reason, they must explain the good cause reason and document the verification used to make the determination under “Good Cause Verification.” The final good cause reason is not reported to TWC but will appear on the View E&T Sanctions page in TIERS.

Staff may accept client statement for good cause claims. However, if verification of good cause is provided by TWC or the person, staff must document the verification used and enter the date under “Good Cause Verification Received Date” on the Non-Cooperation – Details page in TIERS.

**Questionable Good Cause**

Staff must verify questionable good cause information following existing policy. (TWH C-920, Questionable Information) If a good cause claim is questionable because it conflicts with other available information, send Form H1020, Request for Information or Action, to the household requesting proof of the questionable good cause. Staff **must** include in the comments section the specific action required of the person, or the documentation required to verify the good cause claim. If the person does not return the good cause verification by the Form H1020 due date, apply the E&T sanction.

Examples of questionable good cause include:

- a person claims good cause for a “work schedule conflict,” and there is no record of employment. Pend for questionable good cause and employment information.
- a person claims good cause for caring for a sick household member and no other household members are listed on the case. Pend for questionable good cause and household composition.

**Automation**

The following changes will be made to the Non-Cooperation – Details page in TIERS:

- a new field, “Good Cause Review Status,” will be added to allow staff to approve, deny or pend the SNAP EDG for good cause claims;
- a new field, “Final Good Cause Reason,” will be added to allow staff to update the good cause reason if it is different from what is received from TWC;
- a new field, “Good Cause Verification,” will be added to allow staff to document any verification used when making a good cause determination;
• the page will hide the “Good Cause Verification/Recommendation” dropdown menu for E&T sanctions; and
• “Work schedule conflict” has been added as an option in the “Good Cause reason” dropdown menu. This good cause reason is used when a person claims they could not attend an E&T orientation or complete an E&T activity because of a work schedule conflict.

The following changes have been made to the View E&T Sanctions page in TIERS:

• the “Good Cause Details” section is updated to show both the original “Good Cause Claim” received from TWC and the “Final Good Cause Reason” if it has been updated by HHSC staff; and
• the page hides the “Alert248 Reason Information” section.

New Verification Check List (VCL) language will be added to request verification when the good cause reason is questionable. Form H1020 will request the person provide verification of the reason they did not comply with SNAP E&T.

The Form TF0001 will be updated to include the Workforce Solutions website so persons can easily find their local Workforce Solutions office if they wish to claim good cause during the adverse action period.

Changes to TIERS are currently scheduled to be implemented with TIERS Release 107.3 on September 19, 2020.

**Correspondence**
Changes to Form H1020 and Form TF0001 will be implemented September 19, 2020.

Form H1818 will be available in TIERS on September 19, 2020.

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

Updates to the MEPD Handbook are not required.

**Training**
Training will be made available titled *SNAP Employment and Training Good Cause* on September 11, 2020. A training broadcast will be sent with further details.
The Change and Alert Guide will be updated with details about the updated alerts.

**Effective Date**
This policy is effective with the implementation of TIERS Release 107.3, currently scheduled for September 19, 2020.

**Note:** COVID-19 policy from MEPD and Texas Works Bulletin #20-05, COVID-19 Policy Updates #2, 5. SNAP Employment and Training (E&T) Participation, which temporarily exempts all SNAP recipients from participating in E&T during the pandemic is still in effect until further notice.
5. Revised SNAP Income Limits, Deductions, and Allotments

Background
As part of the annual cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients, effective October 1, 2020, the following limits and amounts have changed:

- maximum SNAP income limits;
- standard deduction;
- standard utility allowance (SUA);
- basic utility allowance (BUA);
- maximum excess shelter deduction;
- homeless shelter deduction; and
- SNAP allotments.

Note: The telephone standard, standard medical expense deduction and minimum monthly SNAP allotment for one and two-person households did not change.

Current Policy
SNAP
Staff must use the SNAP income limits found in TWH C-121, Maximum Income Limits, deductions found in TWH C-121.1, Deduction Amounts, and allotment amounts found in TWH C-1431, Whole Monthly Allotments by Household Size, effective October 1, 2019, to determine eligibility for SNAP eligibility determination groups (EDGs).

New Policy
SNAP
Staff must use the following income limits, deductions, and allotment amounts effective October 1, 2020, to determine eligibility for SNAP EDGs.

Maximum SNAP Income Limits Effective October 1, 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household Size</th>
<th>Gross (130%)</th>
<th>Net (100%)</th>
<th>165%**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1,383</td>
<td>1,064</td>
<td>1,755</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1,868</td>
<td>1,437</td>
<td>2,371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2,353</td>
<td>1,810</td>
<td>2,987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2,839</td>
<td>2,184</td>
<td>3,603</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>3,324</td>
<td>2,557</td>
<td>4,219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>3,809</td>
<td>2,930</td>
<td>4,835</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>4,295</td>
<td>3,304</td>
<td>5,451</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>4,780</td>
<td>3,677</td>
<td>6,067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>5,266</td>
<td>4,051</td>
<td>6,683</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**The figures in the 165% column are used to determine if an elderly person with a disability living with others may claim separate household status even though the person purchases or prepares food with the others. The figures in this column are also the gross income limits for categorically eligible households.

*Standard or Maximum Deduction Amounts Effective October 1, 2020*

- Standard Deduction:
  - If household size is three or less — $167
  - If household size is four — $181
  - If household size is five — $212
  - If household size is six or more — $243
- Standard Medical Expense — $137 (minus $35)
- Maximum Excess Shelter — $586
- Standard Utility Allowance — $360
- Basic Utility Allowance — $331
- Telephone Standard — $38
- Homeless Shelter Standard — $156.74

*SNAP Allotment Amounts Effective October 1, 2020*

SNAP allotment charts providing the whole monthly allotments by household size are included as an attachment to this bulletin. The minimum monthly SNAP allotment for a one- or two-person household remains at $16.

*Policy for EDGs Processed After September Mass Update*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For the benefit month of:</th>
<th>eligibility is determined using the:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 2020 or earlier,</td>
<td>Previous income limits, standard deduction amount, SUA/BUA amounts, maximum excess shelter deduction, and allotment amounts for determining that month’s benefits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2020,</td>
<td>Updated income limits, standard deduction amounts, SUA/BUA amounts, maximum excess shelter deduction,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and allotment amounts for determining that month's benefits.

This includes households applying after September 15, 2020 who meet the combined allotment eligibility criteria.

The updated 130% federal poverty level (FPL) amounts are used to notify a streamlined reporting household of the reporting requirement at application, recertification, or incomplete review when the action is disposed on or after October 1, 2020.*

*TIERS will automatically use the correct amounts for each month.

**Automation**
TIERS updated all active SNAP EDGs during the weekend of September 5, 2020. The updated income limits, deductions, and allotments are budgeted in TIERS for benefit month October 2020 and ongoing. The appropriate income limits, deductions, and allotments are automatically applied for each benefit month, whether the benefit month is before or after the October COLA (including combined allotment situations). TIERS converts the amount of benefits for SNAP EDGs in ongoing status without an override designation and produces a combined Form TF0001, Notice of Case Action, for any SNAP/TANF/Medical Assistance (MA) EDG with a benefit change.

**Note:** A TIERS exception report for EDGs not included in the mass update is distributed for staff action. EDGs not updated will receive an explanation of the October cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) on the next Form TF0001 produced for that EDG.

**Correspondence**
The following language will be included on the Form TF0001 for SNAP households with an increased or decreased allotment:

> Benefit amounts for many people have changed. This is due to new federal and state laws or rules. Changes go into effect October 1, 2020.
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 beginning with benefit month October 2020.
6. Revised TANF Maximum Grant Amounts

**Background**
State law requires that the monthly Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) maximum grant amounts be adjusted to 17 percent of the current federal poverty level (FPL). Policy is revised to reflect the annual TANF maximum grant increase.

**Current Policy**
**TANF**
Staff must use the TANF Budgetary Allowances chart, effective October 1, 2019, found in TWH C-111, Income Limits, to determine the maximum grant amount for TANF EDGs.

**New Policy**
**TANF**
Staff must use the TANF Budgetary Allowances chart, effective October 1, 2020, to determine the maximum grant amount for TANF EDGs. There are no changes in the budgetary or recognizable needs amounts for these eligibility tests.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Size</th>
<th>Non-caretaker Cases</th>
<th>Caretaker Cases Without</th>
<th>Caretaker Cases with Second Parent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>$105</td>
<td>$129</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>$152</td>
<td>$267</td>
<td>$204</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>$213</td>
<td>$308</td>
<td>$338</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>$253</td>
<td>$370</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>$325</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>$351</td>
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<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>$891</td>
<td>$966</td>
<td>$993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For each additional member</td>
<td>$71</td>
<td>$71</td>
<td>$71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Policy for EDGs Processed After September Mass Update

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For the benefit month of:</th>
<th>Use:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 2020 or earlier,</td>
<td>The <strong>previous</strong> maximum grant amount.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2020 or later,</td>
<td>The <strong>updated</strong> maximum grant amount.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Automation**

TIERS updated the TANF grant amounts during the weekend of September 5, 2020. The updated TANF grant amounts are budgeted in TIERS for benefit month October 2020 and ongoing. TIERS converts the amount of benefits for TANF EDGs in ongoing status without an override designation and produces a combined Form TF0001, Notice of Case Action, for any SNAP/TANF/Medical Assistance (MA) EDGs with a benefit change.

**Note:** A TIERS exception report for EDGs not included in the mass update is distributed for staff action. EDGs not updated will receive an explanation of the October cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) on the next Form TF0001 produced for that EDG.

**Correspondence**

The following language will be included on the Form TF0001 for TANF households with an increased allotment:

> Benefit amounts for many people have changed. This is due to new federal and state laws or rules. Changes go into effect October 1, 2020.

**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**

The policy is effective beginning with benefit month October 2020.
7. Revised SNAP-CAP Allotment

Background
HHSC operates a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Combined Application Project (SNAP-CAP) to simplify the application process for certain persons who are elderly or have a disability and receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI). States administering SNAP-CAP are required to adjust shelter and allotment amounts regularly to reflect changes in SNAP and SSI benefit levels.

Current Policy
SNAP-CAP
SNAP-CAP recipients receive a standard allotment amount based on monthly shelter expenses: (TWH B-4751, Overview)

- if the person’s monthly shelter expenses are less than $440 per month, the monthly SNAP-CAP allotment is $75;
- if the person’s monthly shelter expenses are more than or equal to $440 per month, the monthly SNAP-CAP allotment is $130.

New Policy
SNAP-CAP
Effective with the October 2020 benefit month:

- if the person’s monthly shelter expenses are less than $440 per month, the monthly SNAP-CAP allotment is $55.
- if the person’s monthly shelter expenses are more than or equal to $440 per month, the monthly SNAP-CAP allotment is $122.

Automation
TIERS updated all active SNAP-CAP EDGs during the weekend of September 5, 2020. The updated allotments are budgeted in TIERS for benefit month October 2020 and ongoing.

Correspondence
The following notice language will be included on the Form H1843, Your SNAP-CAP Food Benefits Have Changed, for SNAP-CAP households:

Your SNAP-CAP food benefits have changed. Due to federal guidance, your food benefits will change as of October 2020.

- If you got $75 per month, you will now get $55 per month if your housing and utility costs together are less than $440 a month.
● If you got $130 per month, you will now get $122 per month if your housing and utility costs together are $440 or more a month.

**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**
The policy is effective beginning with benefit month October 2020.