



Updates and Frequently Asked Questions about Public Benefits during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Public Health Emergency as of January 7, 2021

To mitigate the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19), programs across the District are modifying operations. Below is the most updated information on cash, food and medical assistance public benefits available in the District. Please be aware that this guidance is based on the best information currently available and will be updated as needed. Thank you for your patience. If you have additional questions, please contact the DHS Call Center at (202) 727-5355. For more information and resources regarding COVID-19, please visit coronavirus.dc.gov.

Q: Which DHS Service Centers open during the COVID-19 public health emergency?

A: Effective Monday, April 13, 2020, the DHS Service Centers located in **Congress Heights**, **Taylor Street** and **H Street** are open only for picking up and dropping off public benefits applications and documents. The DHS Service Centers in **Anacostia** and **Fort Davis** are closed.

All applications and documents must be placed in an envelope provided at an open DHS Service Center. Applicants must write their **full name** and **phone number** on the front of the envelope prior to placing it in application drop boxes located in the Service Center lobby.

DHS Service Center	Address	Operating Status
Congress Heights	4049 South Capitol Street, SW	Open
Taylor Street	1207 Taylor Street, NW	Open
H Street	645 H Street, NE	Open
Anacostia	2100 Martin Luther King Avenue, SE	CLOSED
Fort Davis	3851 Alabama Avenue, SE	CLOSED
<p>DHS Service Centers Hours: 7:30 am - 4:45 pm Monday – Friday</p> <p>Visit the DHS Service Center modified operations information page for updates.</p>		

Q: Why are the Anacostia and Fort Davis DHS Service Centers being closed temporarily?

A: Beginning Monday, April 13, DHS is temporarily closing the DHS Service Centers in Anacostia and Fort Davis to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19. In-person visits to pick up and drop off applications and documents at these DHS Service Centers has decreased as residents comply with Mayor Bowser’s stay-at-home order and complete public benefit transaction either online (dhs.dc.gov) or through the Call Center (202-727-5355).



Q: How can I apply for public benefits provided through DHS?

A: Residents are strongly encouraged to complete an application and submit documentation electronically. Please see information on how to apply for benefits.

Public Benefit Program	How to Apply
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SNAP • TANF • Medicaid: Residents 65 and older, blind or disabled • DC Healthcare Alliance (Alliance) • Immigrant Children's Program (ICP) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobile App: DC Access mobile app from Apple's App Store or Google's Play Store. Additional information: dhs.dc.gov/dcaccess • Online: dcbenefits.dhs.dc.gov • By Mail: Downloading, printing, completing, signing and sending and application to: Department of Human Services Economic Security Administration Case Record Management Unit P.O. Box 91560 Washington, DC 20090 • In Person: Downloading, printing, completing, signing, and dropping off the application at an open DHS Service Center <p>District residents may also contact the Call Center at (202)-727-5355, Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. - 4:45 p.m. to request an application via mail.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medicaid: Children (ages 0 – 20), parent/caretaker relatives, women who are pregnant, and adults (ages 21 – 64) without dependent children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online: https://dchealthlink.com/ • By phone: DC Health Link Customer Service at 1-855-532-5465 • By submitting a completed and signed application (applications available at DCHealthLink.com) by fax (202-671-4400) or via mail to: DC Department of Human Services Economic Security Administration Case Record Management Unit P.O. Box 91560 Washington, DC 20090
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long Term Care services and supports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For individuals living or transitioning to a nursing facility: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ By submitting applications through a DC Medicaid nursing facility provider • For individuals seeking home and community-based services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities (EPD) Waiver Program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ By contacting the Department of Aging and Community Living at 202-724-5626 or email at Ask.ADRRC@dc.gov. ○ For the Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities (IDD) Waiver Program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ By contacting the Department of Disability Services at 202-730-1700 to schedule an appointment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burial Assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online: https://dcbenefits.dhs.dc.gov/ • Request an application calling the DHS Call Center at (202) 727-5355 Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. - 4:45 p.m. • Picking up an application at the H Street Service Center • Applications can continue to be mailed to ESA.CPU@dc.gov



Q: Since DHS Service Centers are for pick up and drop off services only, who may DC residents contact with questions?

A: Residents may contact the Call Center at (202) 727-5355, Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. - 4:45 p.m.

Q: Are interviews required when applying for SNAP or TANF/cash assistance?

A: Beginning October 1, 2020 until further notice, interviews are waived. DHS may still need to speak with you in order to complete the application or recertification process. If DHS cannot contact you, your benefits may be delayed or stopped. **Please ensure DHS has a valid telephone number where you can be reached.** Provide your telephone number on the application form, when reporting a change, or contacting the DHS Call Center at (202) 727-5355.

Q: Are interviews required when applying for Medicaid, Immigrant Children's Program (ICP), or DC Healthcare Alliance?

A: Interviews are *never* required for Medicaid or ICP benefits. DC Healthcare Alliance (Alliance) interviews have been suspended until 60 days after the end of the COVID-19 public health emergency period in the District.

Q: Are EBT cards now being mailed?

A: On Monday, April 20, the District began mailing all EBT cards for SNAP and TANF customers to the address on file for the customer. If a customer needs to update their mailing address, they should contact the DHS Call Center at 202-727-5355. If a customer has had trouble receiving their mailed EBT card or believes their card may be lost in the mail, they may still pick one up in person at the two EBT card centers located at 645 H St., NE and 1649 Good Hope Rd. SE.

Q: How do I request a replacement EBT card?

A: If a customer needs to request a new EBT card because theirs was lost, stolen, or damaged, and they are not sure if their mailing address is up-to-date should first call the DHS Call Center at (202) 727-5355 to confirm or update their mailing address. Customers who are sure their mailing address is correct then need to call the EBT call center at 888-304-9167 to request a replacement card be mailed. The EBT call center cannot update customer's address for security reason. Customers are reminded to **keep their EBT card secure at all times** to avoid having to request a replacement card which will take 5 to 7 days to arrive in the mail.



Q: Can I still visit the Good Hope Road or H Street EBT Distribution Center to pick up an EBT card?

A: Yes. Both the Good Hope Road and H Street EBT Distribution Center are open Monday – Fridays, 7:30am to 4:45pm.

However, only customers without a fixed mailing address should visit an EBT Distribution Center. All other customers will receive their EBT card through the mail.

Q: I am currently receiving cash or food benefits and received a notice that it is time to recertify. Do I need to complete a recertification?

A: No. You may disregard that notice. DHS has extended your SNAP and cash benefits and will notify you in 2021 when it is time to recertify.

Q: I am currently receiving food benefits and received a notice that it is time to complete a mid-certification or interim contact. Do I need to complete this action?

A: No. You may disregard that notice. DHS has waived SNAP mid-certification and interim contacts until further notice. DHS will notify you in 2021 when it is time to complete one of these actions.

Q: I am receiving Interim Disability Assistance (IDA). Is my certification period for the program being automatically extended during the pandemic?

A: No. The District is reviewing IDA cases on an individual basis to determine continued eligibility. In general, District residents receiving IDA with an outstanding claim at the Social Security Administration (SSA) will continue receiving benefits.

Q: I am currently receiving medical assistance and received a notice that it is time to recertify. Should I visit a Service Center for recertification?

A: Residents do not need to take any action at this time to continue receiving existing medical assistance benefits that would otherwise expire during the public health emergency. Those benefits will be automatically extended. If you have received notice that your benefits were terminated and you did not request termination, please contact the DHS Call Center at (202) 727-5355.

Q: I am currently receiving cash or food benefits and did not receive a recertification notice. Am I required to do anything?

A: Beginning October 1, 2020 until further notice, customers who were required to recertify in order to continue receiving benefits have been extended. DHS will notify customers in 2021 when it is time to complete the recertification process.



Q: I am currently receiving medical assistance and did not receive a recertification notice. Am I required to do anything?

A. No. Residents will continue receiving their medical coverage without interruption during the COVID-19 public health emergency, but they may be required to verify eligibility to continue receiving coverage 60 days after the end of the public health emergency. You will receive a written notice, or a DHS representative will contact you when it is time to verify or recertify.

Q: I am currently receiving cash, food, or medical assistance, and received a notice requesting additional information and/or verify eligibility. How may I provide this information?

A: Residents may provide additional information or verification eligibility documents as follows. The District encourages submission electronically over mail or in-person.

- **Mobile App:** Customers that have submitted an application through the DC Access mobile app can submit documents/verifications through the mobile app. Additional information on the DC Access mobile app can be found here: dhs.dc.gov/dcaccess
- **Electronic submission** at dcbenefits.dhs.dc.gov;
- **Mailing** information/documents to:
 - Department of Human Services*
 - Economic Security Administration*
 - Case Record Management Unit*
 - P.O. Box 91560*
 - Washington, DC 20090*
- **Dropping off** at an open DHS Service Center (list of open DHS Service Centers);
- **Email submission*** information/documents to one of the following email address listed below at an open DHS Service Center. Residents must include their **full name, date of birth, and telephone number when submitting documents/information via email.** *The following email address are ONLY for the submission of additional information or verification eligibility documents.*

DHS Service Center	E-mail Address*
Congress Heights	ESASC.CongressHeights@dc.gov
H Street	ESASC.HStreet@dc.gov
Taylor Street	ESASC.TaylorStreet@dc.gov
<i>*Providing personal information and documents to the DC Department of Human Services Economic Security Administration (ESA) via email is done at your own risk. Emails sent from your personal or business email account may not be secure. This means that there is a possibility that a third-party will intercept that information and use it for malicious purposes such as fraud or identity theft. ESA provides the following alternatives to sending us documents and information via potentially unsecured email, including mailing in documents or dropping them off at a service center.</i>	

Residents with questions may contact the Call Center at (202) 727-5355, Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 4:45 p.m.



Q: Will I receive an increase (Emergency Allotment) in SNAP benefits?

A: Emergency Allotments provide a temporary increase in SNAP benefits to households not currently receiving the maximum SNAP allotment. SNAP households not receiving the maximum SNAP allotment during the COVID-19 public health emergency will receive an Emergency Allotment. SNAP households will receive these benefits automatically on EBT cards as separate payments from their normal SNAP issuance. Emergency Allotments are expected to continue while the Federal and District COVID-19 public health emergency designation is in place.

Q: Will I receive a temporary increase in my SNAP benefits and when will I receive it?

A: The temporary increase starts in the month of January and continues through June 2021. For the month of January, SNAP customers will see the increase as a separate deposit onto their EBT card during the week of January 11, 2021. For February through June 2021, the temporary increase will be reflected in customer's monthly SNAP benefit allotment

Q: How much will my SNAP benefits increase with the temporary increase?

A: The increase will be different for each person because it depends on your income and household circumstances such as number of household members or shelter expenses. DHS will automatically recalculate your monthly SNAP benefit using information provided by the Federal government to calculate your increase.

Q: How does the temporary increase impact Emergency Allotments?

A: months when the District is approved by the Federal government to issue Emergency Allotments, SNAP customers who are not certified to receive the new maximum allotments will receive an Emergency Allotment to cover the difference.

For example, if you are part of a three-person household receiving \$105 in SNAP and \$430 in Emergency Allotments totaling \$535 per month prior to January 2021, your household will receive \$186 in SNAP and a \$430 Emergency Allotment totaling \$616 per month.

The Federal government is only approving State request to issue Emergency Allotments on a month-by-month basis

Q: If I am receiving medical assistance, am I required to report individual or household changes in circumstance?

A: No. Reporting changes to individual or households changes is not required during the COVID-19 public health emergency.



Q: Will reporting changes in circumstance for TANF/SNAP eligibility affect my medical assistance eligibility?

A: In most cases, it will not. For most changes in circumstances, the District will not act on reported changes in circumstance to terminate medical assistance eligibility during the public health emergency, including the 60-day period after the end of the emergency. The District will terminate eligibility for medical assistance in cases where an individual has voluntarily requested termination. The District will act on changes to update information or add individuals to a household during the emergency.

Q: I am applying for Alliance coverage. Should I visit a DHS Service Center for an in-person interview?

A: No. During the COVID-19 public health emergency, in-person interviews are temporarily suspended.

Q: What documentation is required to apply for medical assistance?

A: Residents may self-attest to all verification requirements except U.S. citizenship, eligible immigration status, and level of care requirements for long term care and Katie Beckett/TEFFRA eligibility groups during the COVID-19 public health emergency. Level of care verifications may be waived in emergency circumstances identified by DHCF that impede access to the level of care assessment vendor, the beneficiary, or the technology needed to perform the assessments. DHS may verify eligibility factors after coverage has been provided. Applicants will need to provide verification once the Emergency has ended.

Q: Are child support sanctions in place?

A: At this time, no child support sanctions will be done as residents are unable to fully comply.

Q: Does DHS offer burial assistance?

A: DHS can provide limited financial help with funeral expenses for District residents whose loved ones are unable to cover the costs. The Burial Assistance program provides financial assistance (paid directly to contracted funeral homes) for cremation or burial services of deceased persons when eligibility requirements are met. Residents can apply for the burial assistance program at <https://dcbenefits.dhs.dc.gov/>. Alternatively, an application can be mailed to residents by calling the DHS Call Center at (202) 727-5355 or picked-up at the H Street Service Center. Completed applications can be e-mailed to ESA.CPU@dc.gov



Q: Can SNAP customers purchase food online?

A: District residents participating in SNAP may use their benefits to make online purchases of authorized food items using their Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card at participating retailers. For more information, visit <https://dhs.dc.gov/snapinfo>

Q: Can children who are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals receive benefits?

A: For the 2019-2020 School Year, District of Columbia children eligible for free or reduced-priced meals received additional food benefits under the Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) program. P-EBT benefits provided additional food assistance to families of children who receive or are newly qualified to receive free or reduced-price school meals. P-EBT benefits for August 2020 and September 2020 have been paid to children who were eligible for P-EBT during the last school year (2019-2020) AND this school year (2020-2021). If your child did NOT receive P-EBT benefits for the last school year, but are eligible for free or reduced-price meals this school year, they did NOT receive the September 2020 P-EBT payment due to the time limit and challenges in rules set by the federal government. Congress has also approved P-EBT benefits for the current school year, but the District is not yet authorized to issue additional new P-EBT benefits. For more information on P-EBT, visit: <https://dhs.dc.gov/p-ebt> or for more information on food resources during the pandemic, visit: <https://coronavirus.dc.gov/food>.

For more information and resources regarding COVID-19, please visit coronavirus.dc.gov.