



Updates and Frequently Asked Questions about Public Benefits during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Public Health Emergency as of April 27, 2020

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 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as food stamps), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF, also known as cash benefits), Medicaid, Alliance, or other public benefits provided through the DHS?

A: District residents may apply for public benefits by:

- **Online:** Completing the application online at dcbenefits.dhs.dc.gov;
- **In Person:** Downloading, printing, completing, signing, and dropping off the application at an open DHS Service Center (list of open DHS Service Centers); or
- **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*

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.

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 public benefits?

A: In most cases, an interview is not required during the COVID-19 public health emergency. New applicants may be contacted by a DHS representative by phone if additional information is needed to complete application processing.

Q: Are Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards now being mailed?

A: EBT cards are how customers receive both SNAP and cash benefits. As part of the evolving response to COVID-19, effective April 20, 2020, all ESA customers will receive their new and replacement EBT cards via U.S. mail, which will be sent to their address on record with DHS. Customers can accept to receive their EBT cards in the mail within five (5) to seven (7) days. Customers will not need to visit an EBT Office to retrieve their card.

Q: How may I update my mailing address?

A: Customers may update their mailing address by contacting the Call Center at (202) 727-5355. Customers without an address on record with DHS, may retrieve EBT cards at the Downtown Day Service Center located at 1313 New York Avenue, NW, Monday – Friday from 12 PM – 1 PM.



Q: How do I request a replacement EBT card?

A: Effective April 20, 2020 customers may request a replacement EBT card by calling the EBT Call Center at 888-304-9167. Customers can accept to receive their EBT cards in the mail within five (5) to seven (7) days. The EBT Call Center **cannot** update customers' mailing addresses. Customers may contact (202) 727-5355 to update their mailing address on record with DHS.

Q: May I visit the EBT Card Distribution Office on Good Hope Road or the H Street Service Center to pick up my EBT card?

A: Effective April 20, 2020, the EBT card distribution office located on Good Hope Road is currently **closed**. The EBT card distribution office located at the 645 H Street is operating under the following limited hours:

- Monday | 7:30 AM – 4:45 PM
- Wednesday | 7:30 AM – 12 PM
- Friday | 7:30 AM – 4:45PM

Only customers **without** a permanent mailing address on record with DHS should visit the EBT card distribution office.

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

A: No. Residents do not need to take any action at this time to continue receiving existing benefits that would otherwise expire during the public health emergency. Those benefits will be automatically extended.

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

A. No. Residents will continue receiving their monthly allotment or receive medical coverage without interruption during the COVID-19 public health emergency. You will receive a written notice or a DHS representative will contact you when it is time to recertify.

Q: I was receiving cash, food, or medical assistance in February 2020, but did not recertify. What should I do?

A: **SNAP and TANF customers** must submit a new recertification application and any required verification. The application is [available on the DHS website](https://dhs.dc.gov) (dhs.dc.gov) and may be picked up at a DHS Service Center.

- **Medical beneficiaries:** Residents whose coverage terminated in February 2020 and did not take action to renew in March 2020 will need to reapply to receive Medicaid coverage. If a renewal was submitted and pending, coverage should have been extended in March 2020. Please contact DHS Call Center at (202) 727-5355 for confirmation of your current eligibility status.



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 by:

- **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** information/documents 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

**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.*

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. The District requested and received USDA approval to provide Emergency Allotments to eligible SNAP households. SNAP households not receiving the maximum SNAP allotment for the months of March and April will receive these benefits. SNAP households will receive these benefits automatically on EBT cards as follows:



Issuance Date	SNAP Households
April 4 -7	Households who received benefits in March
April 10	All ongoing households certified for April and newly certified households as of April 7
April 17	All ongoing households certified for April and newly certified households as of April 10
April 24	All newly approved households certified after April 17
May 1	All newly approved households certified after April 24

Q. How may I apply for medical assistance benefits?

A. Applying for Medicaid:

- **Children (ages 0 – 20), parent/caretaker relatives, women who are pregnant, and adults (ages 21 – 64) without dependent children may apply:**
 - Online at www.DCHealthLink.com, or
 - By phone with the DC Health Link Customer Service at 1-855-532-5465, or
 - By submitting a completed 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*

- **Residents 65 and older, blind or disabled may apply:**
 - Online at dcbenefits.dhs.dc.gov, or
 - By downloading a Combined Application at dhs.dc.gov/service/apply-benefits and submitting their completed and signed Combined Application to DHS in person at one of the open DHS Service Centers, via mail, or fax.

- **Individuals applying for Long Term Care services and supports may apply:**
 - For individuals living or transitioning to a nursing facility:
 - By submitting applications through a DC Medicaid nursing facility provider
 - For individuals seeking home and community-based services:
 - For the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities (EPD) Waiver Program:
 - By contacting the Department of Aging and Community Living at 202-724-5626 or email at Ask.ADRC@dc.gov.
 - For the Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities (IDD) Waiver Program:
 - By contacting the Department of Disability Services at 202-730-1700 to schedule an appointment.



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: 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 at this time.

 **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 as follows:

- Online: <https://dcbenefits.dhs.dc.gov/>
 - After creating an account, the customer can select “Burial Assistance” as the application type.
- Request an application be mailed to them by 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

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