

Issuing Benefits

210 TYPES OF BENEFITS

Initial — the first month for which a new application benefit is issued. Untimely SNAP recertifications are processed like an initial (new) application.

Prorated — the benefit issued for the initial application month is based on the application date for SNAP or the date of approval/30th day, whichever comes first, for TANF.

Supplemental — additional benefits for the current or future month provided to a household when initial or monthly benefits have already been issued.

Retroactive — initial benefits issued for a month before the month the application is approved.

Restored — all other full- or partial-month benefits owed a household for a past month. These benefits can be used to offset claims against a household.

Replacement — benefits reissued due to circumstances resulting in a loss of all or part of the original benefit.

30-Day – Window of Opportunity (WOO) – Cooperation — Timely SNAP recertifications that close due to noncooperation and later cooperate within the 30-day window of opportunity beginning with the first day after the certification end date are processed as a timely recertification, not a new application. These households receive benefits for this month based on the date of cooperation. For example, a household files a timely recertification to continue May 1 SNAP benefits, but fails to cooperate. The certification ends April 30. The 30-day window of opportunity is May 1 through May 30. The household cooperates on May 15. Benefits are prorated and issued from May 15, unless good cause for reinstatement is applicable.

220 BENEFIT ISSUANCE METHODS

The issuance of benefits via Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) is the principal method of payment for TANF benefits.

Issuance of a paper check, also known as a warrant, for TANF benefits will only be allowable in extenuating circumstances and only with prior written approval from the TANF Social Services Program Specialist in the Eligibility and Payments Unit.

All SNAP benefits are issued by EBT. Food Stamp coupons were de-obligated in June of 2009.

220.1 Benefit Amount

- The amount of the benefit is based on the assistance unit size and net income.
 - Issue benefits for less than \$10 only for
 - supplemental payments, and
 - payments made after recoupment is processed.
- A household allotment (benefit) is based on household size and net income.
 - The system will not issue benefits for \$1, \$3, or \$5, and will round up these benefits to \$2, \$4, or \$6.

230 AUTHORIZING BENEFITS

TANF and SNAP benefits are authorized by the case manager when they post an eligible version for the program in the system.

230.1 Issuance of Benefits via Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT)

EBT is a system that allows a recipient to authorize transfer of their government benefits from a federal account to a retailer account to pay for products received.

When a household is certified to receive either TANF or SNAP benefits, their benefit amount is deposited into their EBT account monthly. They access their account by use of an EBT card and Personal Identification Number (PIN).

The EBT card is a plastic card similar to a debit or credit card. When paying for groceries other services, or to access funds from their TANF benefits, the EBT card is swiped through a Point-of-Sale (POS) terminal, and the recipient enters their PIN to access the account. The processor verifies the PIN and the account balance, and sends an authorization back to the retailer/individual. The recipient's account is then debited for the amount of the purchase/withdrawn amount. The recipient will receive a receipt indicating the amount of the debit and the balance of their remaining benefits.

230.2 EBT Benefit Availability

EBT issuances are transmitted to the EBT contractor each business day. Newly approved benefits are deposited into the EBT account by 7:00 a.m. the next morning with the benefit immediately accessible thereafter with a valid EBT card and PIN. Monthly EBT issuances are available on the issuance effective date regardless of holidays or weekends.

SNAP ongoing monthly EBT issuance effective dates are based on the last digit of the head of household's birth year (0 through 9).

Example: The head of household was born in 1990 so the case issuance date is the 10th of the month or born in 1994 so the issuance date is the 4th of the month.

Note: Newly approved benefits authorized (posted) on a Saturday or Sunday are transmitted to the contractor on Monday and will be available by 7:00 a.m. Tuesday morning. Holidays will result in early transmission of benefits records to ensure access to benefits are not delayed.

230.3 EBT Card Issuance

EBT cards are issued over-the-counter by authorized staff in each district office. EBT cards may be issued at any time during the application process, but no later than the day benefits are approved. Reasonable efforts should be made to issue the card at application or interview to minimize the number of visits to the office.

When an EBT card is issued, the applicant and/or their Authorized Representative (A/R) is provided the EBT Instruction Documents; these forms provide information about EBT cards and instructions on how to use the card to access benefits. By signing and dating the EBT Card Issuance Authorization, Form 2321-EGB_EBT, the applicant and/or their A/R acknowledges that they:

- understand their Rights and Responsibilities;
- received training on the use of the EBT system, including the purpose of the card;
- have been provided notification of the potential fees for EBT withdrawals in Automated Teller Machines (ATM's);
- understand the appropriate use of SNAP benefits;
- understand the appropriate and restrictive access of TANF NEON and TANF Child-Only benefits along with the consequences that restricted usage may result in the assignment of benefits to a protective payee who will receive future benefits on behalf of the assistance unit; and
- understand what illegal usage is and the penalty for illegal use.

A copy of this form is provided to the client and one is kept in the casefile.

When the applicant or their Authorized Representative is not available in person to sign the acknowledgement form, the case manager will mail the form to the household and indicate in the casefile the date the form was mailed.

Note: Benefits only become available once the household is approved for assistance and the benefit amount is transmitted to their EBT account.

230.3.1 EBT Card TANF Restricted Use

Effective January 1, 2014, TANF NEON and TANF Child-Only EBT benefits cannot be accessed from ATM machines or used to purchase items in the following locations:

- casinos;
- gaming establishments;
- liquor stores; or
- retail establishments which provide adult entertainment.

Nevada further restricts the use of EBT benefits in any benefit transfer transactions in any cannabis/marijuana dispensary or lounge.

The EBT Specialist in the Eligibility and Payments (E&P) unit will provide a quarterly report of POS/ATM TANF cash usage. The report will be used to review for EBT use in prohibited locations.

The Social Services Managers or their designees will be notified of the report results and when restricted use is detected on the quarterly report.

Note: If a household has used its EBT card in a prohibited location, the Social Services Manager or their designated staff may consider, on a case-by-case basis, whether the use in a restricted location was the household's only means available to obtain their TANF benefits. If so, DWSS may consider lack of access as reasonable cause and not impose an adverse action on the household. However, the prohibited POS/ATM location will still be prohibited, and DWSS will continue to work to fulfill our federal requirement to provide recipients adequate access to their cash assistance in non-prohibited locations, including the ability to withdraw their assistance with minimal fees at no charge.

When restricted usage is detected, a warning letter is sent to the household indicating the benefits provided are to cover a family's ongoing basic needs such as shelter, utilities, food, clothing, etc. If another restricted usage is determined, they will no longer receive the cash benefits and instead a protective payee

B-230.3.1
ISSUING BENEFITS
EBT Card TANF Restricted Use

(someone they may select) will be established to receive the cash benefits on their behalf to ensure the family's basic ongoing needs are met.

When restrictive usage is determined a second time, and considering adverse action, the District Office is responsible for ensuring a "Protective Payee" (that the recipient may choose) meets the requirements to receive the benefit amount for the assistance unit. If a protective payee is initiated and the case is later closed or terminated, and the household reapplies for TANF cash, the assignment of a protective payee is still required to receive the TANF cash benefit through EBT.

230.4 Over-the-Counter (OTC) Card Issuance

EBT card issuance staff will issue a card in the district office by:

- Ensuring, the applicant or their A/R has signed and understands Card Issuance Authorization Form 2321-EGB;
- Swiping the EBT card through a Card Reader device. This action allows the system to "read" the card number and enter it into the EBT system;
- Entering the Individual Case Identification (ICI) Number in the EBT Administration Terminal;
- Allowing the applicant to select a four (4) digit PIN of their choosing.
- Verifying applicants have received their EBT Instruction Documents; and
- Ensuring all of the household's questions regarding the use of their EBT card are answered, and they are ready to access their benefits.

230.5 EBT Card Issuance by Mail

EBT cards may be mailed directly from the EBT contractor if the applicant or the caseworker indicates visiting the local office is a hardship. This includes, but is not limited to applicants who:

- are elderly;
- are ill or disabled;
- live in extremely rural areas; or
- have no reasonable means of transportation.

When a card is mailed it will be sent in a cardholder with instructions for selecting a PIN by telephone and includes training materials describing how the recipient can access benefits.

Do not order an EBT card if a card has already been mailed to the correct address within

the last five (5) days. If a new card is requested, the previous card will automatically be canceled (stated), making it unusable. If the recipient subsequently receives the canceled card in the mail and attempts to use it, the transaction will be refused.

Example: On Monday, the case manager requests a mailed EBT card. On Wednesday, the recipient calls and reports they have not received the card and another card is requested. When the contractor mails the card requested on Wednesday, the original card is canceled (stated). On Thursday, the recipient receives the original card and goes to the grocery store where their transaction is refused. Unfortunately, the recipient must now wait for the card requested on Wednesday to arrive before they can access their benefits.

230.6 Who Receives an EBT Card

One EBT card is provided for each TANF case.

For TANF households, the card may be issued to:

- the applicant;
- the relative caregiver for Child-Only cases (i.e., an ineligible parent(s) or a relative caregiver);
- another adult household member included in the assistance unit;
- the designated Authorized Representative; or
- a protective payee when it's determined EBT benefits have been used in restricted areas at a POS/ATM. The head-of-household may select the protective payee to receive the benefits. See manual section B-300 for instructions on when an individual cannot be a protective payee.

One EBT card is provided for the head of household in each SNAP case. The card may be issued to:

- the head of household;
- the head of household's spouse, as long as the spouse is a member of the SNAP household;
- or
- an authorized representative appointed by the head of household.

Social Services Managers and Family Services Supervisors may authorize card issuance to individuals not listed above when a hardship exists and an exception is necessary to ensure the household has access to benefits.

Example: The head of household has been in an auto accident and is unable to appoint an Authorized Representative. A relative is caring for the children but needs access to the household's benefits to provide for the children.

The head of household may allow an authorized representative or other household member to use the card at their discretion; but the head of household remains responsible for all benefits accessed with the EBT card.

Under special circumstances, the head of household may request and be approved to have a second “active” EBT card issued to their Authorized Representative. This card will access the same benefit account, but have its own associated PIN selected by the Authorized Representative.

The case manager may approve the Authorized Representative for their own EBT card if:

- a written request is made by the head of household,
- the authorized representative does not reside with the head of household, and
- the household presents compelling reasons for the necessity of an additional card.

Example: An elderly recipient’s Authorized Representative (A/R) lives across town and does the majority of the household’s shopping at a grocery outlet close to A/R’s home. After shopping, the A/R then delivers the groceries to the recipient. It would be inconvenient for the A/R to travel across town to pick up the EBT card, shop and then return with the groceries. In addition, the recipient does not wish to give the A/R her card as they often pick up fresh milk and vegetables at a local market.

There will be no more than two “active” EBT cards for one benefit account at any one time.

240 INDIVIDUAL CASE IDENTIFICATION (ICI) NUMBER

The Individual Case Identification (ICI) number is assigned by NOMADS when a case is registered and is displayed on the APPL screen. When an EBT card is issued, the ICI links the card to a case with the electronic benefit account. The ICI is also used by the system when transmitting the demographic file and the benefit file to the EBT provider.

Note: An EBT card cannot be issued until the case is registered in NOMADS, and an ICI number is generated by the system.

250 PERSONAL IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (PIN)

The Personal Identification Number (PIN) is a four-digit numerical code the recipient selects to access their electronic benefit account.

An EBT card cannot be used to access the benefit account without the PIN. This prevents unauthorized individuals from accessing the recipient's benefits should the card be lost or stolen.

When a card is issued over-the-counter, a PIN is chosen by the applicant/recipient at the district office. When a card is issued by mail, the recipient will choose a PIN by phone.

Households should be advised to keep their PIN secure by:

- choosing a number no one else could easily guess;
- only giving their number to those they trust to access their benefits on their behalf (i.e., authorized representative or spouse);
- keeping the number secret from everyone else;
- not letting anyone see them enter the number on a POS device;
- not writing or keeping the number on or near the card; and
- changing the number immediately if it may have been compromised.

Note: Division staff never choose, view or have access to the household's PIN.

250.1 Changing the PIN

Individuals may change their PIN at any time. To change the PIN, they must visit the EBT authorized personnel in the district office or call Fidelity Information Services (FIS) directly at 1-866-281-2443 to change their PIN.

260 MAILING ADDRESSES

Ensure benefits are only mailed to the household's home address in Nevada.

Exceptions:

- The household is temporarily living at another address.
- The household has a post office box or general delivery address.
- The household has an alternate payee (enter the alternate payee name and address on the ALTP screen).
- The household provides a good reason for a different mailing address, showing they would suffer hardship if benefits were mailed to their home address.
- No checks or Medicaid cards are mailed out-of-state without prior approval by the Chief of E&P.
- EBT cards may be mailed to an out-of-state address when it is their intent to return and reside in Nevada, and with the Social Service Manager's approval.

DO NOT send benefits to a Division employee's home address (unless the employee is an applicant or recipient).

SNAP households must be living in Nevada. There is no durational residency requirement in SNAP.

Nevada SNAP households may access or receive benefits out of state as follows:

- Once approved, Nevada SNAP households can access their SNAP EBT account from any point of sale (POS) location in- or out-of-state that accepts the Nevada Quest card.

SNAP benefits can be accessed for up to 274 days from the date the benefit became available. Unused benefits are expunged and reported to Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) after 274 days.

*******IMPORTANT*******

Update the mailing address as soon as a change is reported. If a reported change of address is not updated by cutoff, the notice of decision and/or Medicaid card will be mailed to the old address. The TANF and SNAP EBT card will also be returned if the address is not updated.

When a household reports a change in address, ALWAYS review the case to determine if there is an alternate payee, and update the address on the ALTP screen at the same time if required.

270 REPLACEMENT OF EBT CARDS

An EBT card is valid until canceled by the household. As long as the applicant has a valid EBT card, do not issue another one.

If an EBT card is lost, stolen, damaged, or the recipient no longer wants the Authorized Representative (with an authorized card) to access their account, it is the recipient's responsibility to report the circumstances as soon as possible.

Recipients are instructed to report lost/stolen cards immediately by calling the Division's Voice Response Unit (VRU) at (775) 684-7200 or (702) 486-1646 and selecting the lost/stolen option. They will be directed to call the EBT contractor's 24-hour, 7-days/week, Service Center for assistance at 1-866-281-2443 to report a lost/stolen card. Once reported, the benefit account is immediately "frozen" to prevent an additional loss of benefits. **Benefits accessed with a lost/stolen card prior to being reported cannot be replaced.**

A new card is mailed within 24-48 hours, depending on weekends and holidays, of the reported loss. During normal business hours, the recipient is asked to come to the office with identification to be issued a replacement card. After hours, they will be asked by the Service Center if they would like to have a new card mailed, or if they prefer to visit their local district office on the next business day. Once the recipient is issued their new EBT card, the account is reactivated.

280 REPLACING BENEFITS

TANF and SNAP benefits on an EBT card may be replaced if the client or agency can demonstrate the card was stolen and benefits were used by a person who was not authorized by either the client or the agency. In order for this to happen, the person using the benefits fraudulently must have obtained the PIN from some source other than the client willingly giving them the PIN. Have the client complete Form 1060-MF, Affidavit – General and Forged, to request replacement of stolen benefits.

280.1 Replacing TANF and SNAP Benefits in an EBT Account

The security of benefits deposited in an EBT account is the responsibility of the head of household. They may protect their benefits by storing their EBT card in a safe place, keeping their Personal Identification Number (PIN) secret and separate from the card, keeping their EBT receipts as proof of benefits used, and reporting lost/stolen cards immediately so account access is restricted until a new card is issued and the lost/stolen card is canceled (stated).

TANF and SNAP benefits ARE NOT replaced when benefits in an EBT account are used prior to the head of household reporting a card as lost or stolen, or prior to requesting the cancellation of an authorized representative's card to the EBT contractor or EBT specialist.

No benefits will be replaced or restored if the client gives or sells their PIN number and card to another person. Benefits may be replaced and/or restored if the agency, contractor or retailer causes a benefit discrepancy and this is verified. This includes benefits used by an authorized representative, spouse, boyfriend, girlfriend, children, other household members, houseguests, friends, and strangers. If a card is stolen, benefits cannot be accessed unless the person knows the PIN.

Exceptions: TANF and SNAP benefits in an EBT account may be replaced at the discretion of the Chief of Eligibility and Payments, Chief of Investigations & Recovery, and/or the Eligibility and Payments program specialists when:

- A mailed EBT card is reported as lost in the mail (never received), and benefits were fraudulently accessed by someone other than a household member.
- Benefits were incorrectly debited by a retailer.
The recipient has ninety (90) days from the date of the error to report an EBT balance problem. I&R staff have ten (10) business days from the date the household reports a problem to investigate the issue and reach a decision. If the claim is substantiated, a benefit adjustment will be made to the account. If reported after ninety (90) days, there will be no benefit adjustment.
- Benefits are accessed AFTER the head of household has requested the cancellation of a card.

The EBT contractor is required to immediately cancel (status) a card when it is reported lost or stolen, or the head of household has requested their authorized representative's card be canceled.

If the contractor fails to cancel the card when requested by the household and benefits are subsequently lost, they must be replaced.

- The aforementioned individuals deem the household's particular circumstances warrant such a replacement.

When a recipient reports a loss of TANF or SNAP benefits in an EBT account, refer them to an EBT specialist. The EBT specialist will research the circumstances of the loss and request authorization for replacement, if deemed appropriate.

280.2 Check Replacement

Non-Receipt of TANF Check

When a recipient reports that a check was not received, the case manager must determine if;

- the missing check was issued, and
- the check has not been returned.

If the check has not been returned, Form 1060, Affidavit – General and Forged, must be completed by the case manager and the recipient.

The case manager completes Section 1 and the recipient must complete Section 2 and Section 4. Section 5 must be completed by a Notary.

Check Received but later Lost, Stolen, Forged or Defaced.

When a recipient reports that a check was received but was later lost, stolen, forged, or defaced, Form 1060, Affidavit – General and Forged, must be completed by the case manager and the recipient.

The case manager completes Section 1 and the recipient must complete Section 3 and Section 4. Section 5 must be completed by a Notary. If the recipient reports the check was defaced, the case manager must obtain the check and forward it with the affidavit.

Once the form is completed, the original must be forwarded to the Accounting Unit in Central Office for processing. A photocopy must be maintained in the case record and a photocopy given to the recipient.

Once a determination has been made that the check has not been returned or cashed, the Accounting Unit will notify the case manager that the check can be canceled and reissued on the NOMADS BMNT screen.

If the warrant **has been cashed**:

- the reissue process is suspended until the original check is returned to Central Office Accounting
- Central Office Accounting forwards the check in question, along with completed Form 1060 to the Investigations and Recovery Unit.

I&R will notify the case manager when or if a check can be reissued.

Note: If the household reports cashing or receiving the original check before it is reissued, immediately notify Central Office Accounting or Investigations and Recovery.

290 EBT CARD DESTROYED IN HOUSEHOLD DISASTERS

When the household requests replacement of an EBT card destroyed in a household disaster, issue a new card as soon as possible.

291 DESTROYED FOOD

When a household reports food purchased with SNAP benefits has been destroyed in a household disaster, issue a replacement unless:

- the household failed to report the loss within 10 days of the disaster, or
- the household was issued benefits using FNS-approved disaster issuance procedures during the same month as the replacement request.

If the reissuance is authorized the following action is taken:

1. The household must complete the Affidavit of Claimant, Form 2305-EFD;
2. The disaster is verified through a collateral contact, such as the fire department, Red Cross or a home visit. The loss must be reported within 10 days of the date of the disaster.
3. Reissue the benefits, not to exceed a one-month allotment.

Note: There is no limit to replacements of destroyed food.

292 USING THE EBT CARD

The EBT card may be used at any location displaying the QUEST logo, including grocery stores and ATM machines.

The TANF benefit can be used at a point of sale (POS) device to make cash purchases and receive cash back with no additional fees, depending on each store's policy. They may also withdraw cash from an ATM; however, there may be a minimal fee with additional surcharges, depending on the ATM used. There are no additional surcharges when using an ATM with the Quest logo.

The SNAP benefit may only be used to pay for food through a point-of-sale (POS) device located at the cash register. Once groceries are totaled, the recipient will choose the EBT option, swipe the card and enter their PIN. The system verifies the account has sufficient funds to cover the purchase and authorizes transfer of the funds from the account to the retailer. A receipt will be provided after each transaction and will indicate the amount debited and the remaining balance in the EBT account.

A paper voucher system may be used to purchase food if the EBT system is offline, or the SNAP authorized retailer does not have a POS device (i.e., small grocery outlets, farmer's markets, group homes). Retailers are provided with specific instructions for the voucher system, and may call the EBT Retail Service Center if they have additional questions.

293 EBT TRAINING AND RECIPIENT RESPONSIBILITIES

During the application interview, the case manager will provide the applicant with EBT training materials and review the following with them:

- using their EBT card;
- finding retailers that accept the EBT card by looking for the QUEST logo;
- finding their benefit balance by checking their last receipt;
- securing their card and protecting their secret PIN; and
- reporting lost/stolen cards by calling the numbers provided in the training material.

The recipient is advised **NOT TO**:

- write the PIN on the card;
- keep the PIN with the card;
- tell anyone their secret PIN, unless they want to give access to all of their benefits to another person, such as an authorized representative;
- bend or fold the card;
- scratch or write on the black strip on the back of the card;
- wash the card or get it wet;
- leave the card near magnets, TVs, stereos, VCRs or microwaves; or
- leave the card in the sun or other hot place, like the dashboard of a car.

EBT card issuance staff verifies the head of household has received the EBT training materials and understands their rights and responsibilities as part of the card issuance process by ensuring they have signed Card Issuance Form 2321-EGB.

294**EBT DORMANT/INACTIVE ACCOUNT STATUS**

An EBT SNAP account which is not accessed by the household for three hundred sixty (360) days becomes dormant. The system automatically locks the account, which denies the household access to any benefits remaining in the household's account. At this time, any pending debts are collected from the household's account. The system will attempt to satisfy the debt with benefits remaining in the account and unresolved debt is retained pending further availability of benefits.

Unlocking the household's account requires the household contact the office and may be reversed by EBT staff. Actions regarding a dormant account are entered into NOMADS, either automatically (I&R system [type 6 payment]) or by staff (CLOG).

295 EXPUNGEMENT

Benefits are available to the household based on the “period of intended use”. When the period of intended use has expired, the benefits are expunged from the account and may not be reissued or restored.

The period of intended use for TANF benefits is 180 days from issuance.

The period of intended use for SNAP benefits is 274 days from issuance.

296 REPAYMENT OF A SNAP CLAIM USING SNAP BENEFITS HELD IN AN EBT ACCOUNT

The head of household may choose to use SNAP benefits held in their EBT account to reduce or eliminate the balance of an established SNAP claim. Refer to manual section B-960 for specific policy and instructions.

Benefits due to be expunged will automatically be applied to any open SNAP claim before being reported/returned to FNS.

297 CONFERENCES AND HEARINGS REGARDING EBT ISSUES

Applicants have the same rights to conferences and hearings regarding EBT issues as they do for any other decision or issue. When the issue in question is related to EBT, the hearing representative should request an EBT specialist participate in the hearing process.

298 CANCELLATION/STATUS OF EBT CARDS UPON DEATH OF THE ENTIRE SNAP/TANF HOUSEHOLD

When the case manager receives notification the **entire** SNAP or TANF household is deceased, the case must be terminated as soon as administratively possible. After case termination the case manager must contact the EBT Specialist to status the EBT card. This will ensure improper use of the deceased individual’s/household’s SNAP or TANF benefits does not occur.