TITLE 8 SOCIAL SERVICES
CHAPTER 139 FOOD STAMP PROGRAM
PART 610 PROGRAM BENEFITS - ISSUANCE AND RECEIPT

8.139.610.1 ISSUING AGENCY: New Mexico Human Services Department
[2/1/1995; 8.139.610.1 NMAC - Rn, 8 NMAC 3.FSP.000.1, 5/15/2001]

8.139.610.2 SCOPE: General public
[2/1/1995; 8.139.610.2 NMAC - Rn, 8 NMAC 3.FSP.000.2, 5/15/2001]

8.139.610.3 STATUTORY AUTHORITY: The supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP) is authorized by the Food Stamp Act of 1977 as amended (7 U.S.C. 2011 et. seq.). Regulations issued pursuant to the act are contained in 7 CFR Parts 270-282. State authority for administering SNAP is contained in Chapter 27 NMSA, 1978. Administration of the human services department (HSD), including its authority to promulgate regulations, is governed by Chapter 9, Article 8, NMSA 1978 (Repl. 1983).
[2/1/1995; 8.139.610.3 NMAC - Rn, 8 NMAC 3.FSP.000.3, 5/15/2001; A, 7/24/2018]

8.139.610.4 DURATION: Permanent
[2/1/1995; 8.139.610.4 NMAC - Rn, 8 NMAC 3.FSP.000.4, 5/15/2001]

8.139.610.5 EFFECTIVE DATE: February 1, 1995, unless a later date is cited at the end of a section.
[2/1/1995; 8.139.610.5 NMAC - Rn, 8 NMAC 3.FSP.000.5, 5/15/2001; A, 7/24/2018]

8.139.610.6 OBJECTIVE: Issuance of the revised SNAP policy manual is intended to be used in administration of the SNAP in New Mexico. This revision incorporated the latest federal policy changes in SNAP not yet filed. In addition, current policy citations were rewritten for clarification purposes or were simply reformatted. Issuance of the revised policy manual incorporated a new format which is the same in all income support division policy manuals. A new numbering system was designated so that similar topics in different programs carry the same number. The revised format and numbering standards were designed to create continuity among ISD programs and to facilitate access to policy throughout the human services department.
[2/1/1995; 8.139.610.6 NMAC - Rn, 8 NMAC 3.FSP.000.6, 5/15/2001; A, 7/24/2018]

8.139.610.7 DEFINITIONS: [RESERVED]

8.139.610.8 [RESERVED]
[2/1/1995; 8.139.610.8 NMAC - Rn, 8 NMAC 3.FSP.610, 05/15/2001; A, 02/28/2007; A, 07/15/2013; A, 07/24/2018; Repealed, 3/1/2020]

8.139.610.9 [RESERVED]

8.139.610.10 ISSUANCE DATE:
A. HSD is responsible for timely and accurate benefit issuance to certified eligible households. A participating household has a definite issuance date so that SNAP benefits are received on or about the same time each month. The issuance date is based on the last two digits of the social security number of the individual to whom the SNAP benefits are issued. A household must have the opportunity to participate before the end of each issuance month.

B. Opportunity to participate: Opportunity to participate means a household is provided with SNAP benefits no later than 30 calendar days after the date an application is filed.

(1) Newly certified household: All newly certified households must be given an opportunity to participate no later than 30 calendar days following the date the application was filed. In EBT issuance situations, benefits must be authorized by the 29th day to be available to the household on the 30th day.

(a) Combined issuance: Households with an application date after the 15th of the month and are eligible for expedited assistance are eligible for combined issuance.

(i) SNAP benefits for the initial month and the second month will be
issued the day after approval of expedited service. (ii) SNAP benefits for the third month will be issued the first day of the third month after approval.

(iii) SNAP benefits for the fourth month will be issued during the first ten days of the month based on a ten day compressed staggered issuance schedule. The issuance schedule uses the last two digits of the head of households SSN to determine the day of the month benefits are issued.

(iv) SNAP benefits for the fifth and ongoing months will be issued on the 20 day staggered issuance schedule. The issuance schedule uses the last two digits of the head of household's SSN to determine the day of the month the benefits are issued.

(b) Households not entitled to combined issuance: The following households will not be entitled to combined issuance of the SNAP benefits:

(i) a household certified for one month only;

(ii) a household determined ineligible for the month of application, but eligible for the second month;

(iii) a household entitled to expedited service who must provide postponed verification to obtain the second month’s SNAP benefits; or

(iv) a household that has been recertified.

(c) Standard Issuance: Households with an application date before the 15th of the month and approved in the month of application will have their prorated amount for initial month of benefits issued the day after the case is approved.

(i) SNAP benefits for the second month will be issued the first day of the month in the second month of approval.

(ii) SNAP benefits for the third month during the first ten days of month based on a ten day compressed staggered issuance schedule. The issuance schedule uses the last two digits of the head of households SSN to determine the day of the month benefits are issued.

(iii) SNAP benefits for the fourth and ongoing months will be issued on the 20 day staggered issuance schedule. The issuance schedule uses the last two digits of the head of household's SSN to determine the day of the month the benefits are issued.

(d) Expedited households: Households eligible for expedited service will receive SNAP benefits in the initial month within the expedited time limit. Benefits for the following month will be received on the household’s designated issuance date if all postponed verification is provided before the end of the initial month.


8.139.610.11 USE OF SNAP BENEFITS: Pursuant to Section 15(d) of the Food Stamp Act, SNAP benefits are an obligation of the United States within the meaning of 18 United States Code (U.S.C.) 8. The provisions of Title 18 of the United States Code, "crimes and criminal procedures," relative to counterfeiting, misuse, or alteration of obligations of the U.S., are applicable to SNAP benefits. Any unauthorized issuance, redemption, use, transfer, acquisition, alteration, or possession of SNAP benefits may subject an individual, partnership, corporation, or other legal entity to prosecution under Sections 15(b) and (c) of the Food Stamp Act or other applicable federal, state, or local law, regulation, or ordinance.

A. General uses: SNAP benefits are used by participants to purchase eligible foods, including seeds and plants, for home consumption. A household may designate other individuals to use SNAP benefits to purchase food for them. A household is not required to have cooking facilities or access to cooking facilities to participate in the program.

B. Special uses: Although SNAP benefits were originally intended to be used by eligible households to purchase food for home consumption, certain households are authorized to use SNAP benefits to obtain prepared meals or to facilitate their obtaining food. Authorized special uses for SNAP include:

(1) Communal dining: Eligible household members 60 years of age or over or SSI recipients and their spouses may use SNAP benefits to purchase meals prepared at communal dining facilities authorized by FNS. Communal dining facilities include senior citizen centers, apartment buildings occupied primarily by elderly persons or SSI households, public or private nonprofit establishments (eating or otherwise) that feed elderly persons or SSI recipients, and federally subsidized housing for the elderly at which meals are prepared and served to the residents. They also include private establishments under contract with an appropriate state or local agency to offer meals at concessional prices to elderly persons or SSI recipients.
Meals-on-wheels: Eligible household members 60 years of age or over or members who are homebound, physically handicapped, or otherwise disabled to the extent that they are unable to adequately prepare all their meals, and the spouses of such members, may use their SNAP benefits to purchase meals prepared and delivered to them by a nonprofit meal delivery service authorized by FNS. A meal delivery service is a political subdivision, a private nonprofit organization, or a private establishment with which a state or local agency has contracted for the preparation and delivery of meals at concessional prices to elderly individuals and their spouses, and to the physically or mentally handicapped and individuals otherwise disabled, and their spouses, such that they are unable to adequately prepare all of their meals.

Addicts and alcoholics in treatment programs: Members of eligible households who are narcotics addicts or alcoholics who regularly participate in a drug or alcoholic treatment and rehabilitation program may use their SNAP benefits to purchase meals prepared for them during the course of such programs by a nonprofit organization or institution or a publically operated community mental health center which is authorized by FNS to redeem SNAP benefits.

Residents in group living arrangements: Eligible residents of a group living arrangement may use their SNAP benefits to purchase meals prepared especially for them at a group living arrangement authorized by FNS to redeem SNAP benefits.

Residents of shelters for battered persons: Residents of shelters for battered persons may use their SNAP benefits to purchase meals prepared specifically for them at a shelter authorized by FNS to redeem SNAP benefits.

Residents of shelters for the homeless: Homeless households may use their SNAP benefits to purchase prepared meals from homeless meal providers authorized by FNS.

SNAP benefits as income: SNAP benefits provided to an eligible household will not to be considered income or resources for any purpose under federal, state, or local laws, including but not limited to, laws on taxation, welfare, and public assistance programs. No participating state or political subdivision may decrease any other assistance provided to an individual or individuals because such individuals receive SNAP benefits.

8.139.610.12 GENERAL (BENEFIT AMOUNT)

A. The SNAP benefit amount to be issued depends on the number of eligible members in the household and the net monthly income used to determine eligibility.

(1) HSD uses a 30-day calendar month to determine a household's SNAP benefit amount. A household applying on the 31st of the month will be treated as if it applied on the 30th.

(2) When a household is determined eligible, the SNAP benefit amount is calculated, issuance authorization is processed that night, and SNAP benefits are issued the following work day.

B. Maximum SNAP allotments:

(1) The maximum SNAP allotment shall be based on the thrifty food plan (TFP). TFP means the diet required to feed a family of four persons consisting of a man and a woman 20 through 50, a child six through eight, and a child nine through 11 years of age, determined in accordance with USDA calculations. The cost of such diet shall be the basis for uniform allotments for all households regardless of their actual composition. In order to develop maximum SNAP allotments, USDA shall make household size and other adjustments in the thrifty food plan taking into account economies of scale and other adjustments as required by law. The TFP amounts and maximum allotments are adjusted annually.

(2) Except when SNAP benefits are prorated and when reductions are made at the national level, a household's monthly SNAP benefit amount is equal to the maximum SNAP allotment for the household's size reduced by thirty percent of its net monthly income.

(3) The maximum SNAP allotment can be calculated by multiplying a household's net income by thirty percent, rounding the result up to the next whole dollar, and subtracting that amount from the TFP for the appropriate household size (https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/cost-living-adjustment-cola-information).

C. Initial month: A household's SNAP benefit amount for the initial month of certification will be based on the day of the month the household applies for SNAP benefits. The household receives SNAP benefits from the date of application to the end of the month, unless the applicant household consists of residents of a public institution.

(1) Applying from institutions: For households applying for SSI and SNAP benefits before release from an institution, the SNAP benefit amount for the initial month of certification will be based on the date of the month the household is released from the institution. The household will receive SNAP benefits from the date of the household's release from the institution to the end of the month.
(2) Benefits less than ten dollars ($10.00): If the initial month's calculations yield a SNAP benefit amount of less than ten dollars ($10.00), then no issuance will be made for the initial month. For households entitled to no SNAP benefits in the initial month, but eligible in subsequent months, ISD shall certify a household beginning with the month of application.

D. Minimum benefit amount:
(1) Except during an initial month, all eligible one- and two-person households, including categorically eligible households, will receive a minimum monthly SNAP benefit amount.
(2) Determination: Minimum amounts are determined by federal guidelines and may be adjusted each year. All eligible one and two person households, including categorically eligible households, will receive the minimum monthly SNAP benefit amount, which can be found at https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/cost-living-adjustment-cola-information.
(3) All eligible households with three or more members which are entitled to no benefits (except because of the proration requirements and the provision precluding issuances of less than ten dollars ($10.00) in an initial month as per Paragraph 2 of Subsection C of 8.139.610.12 NMAC), ISD shall deny the household's application on the grounds that its net income exceeds the level at which benefits are issued.


8.139.610.13 CALCULATING THE BENEFIT AMOUNT: A household's net income is used to determine its SNAP benefit amount. The net income is the gross amount less allowable deductions. To determine the household's net income:
A. The gross monthly income earned by all household members is added to the total monthly unearned income of all household members, less income exclusions, to determine the household's total gross income. The household must qualify at the gross income calculation.
B. The total gross monthly earned income is multiplied by twenty percent; the result is subtracted from the total gross earned income; add the result to the total monthly unearned income; or multiply the total gross monthly earned income by eighty percent and add the result to the total monthly unearned income.
C. Subtract the standard deduction.
D. If the household is entitled to an excess medical deduction, determine if total medical expenses exceed 35 dollars ($35.00). If so, subtract the amount which exceeds 35 dollars ($35.00).
E. Subtract the child support deduction as determined by Paragraph 2 of Subsection G of 8.139.520.11 NMAC.
F. Subtract allowable monthly dependent care expenses, if any, up to the maximum amount per dependent; if the household has no shelter expenses, the net income has been determined at this point; go to step J.
G. If the household has shelter expenses, divide the result in Subsection F by two.
H. Determine if the household is entitled to an excess shelter expense deduction as follows:
(1) For households not entitled to uncapped shelter:
   (a) total the allowable shelter expenses;
   (b) subtract from the total shelter expenses fifty percent of the household’s monthly income after all other deductions have been subtracted, i.e., the result in Subsection G;
   (c) the remaining amount is the excess shelter expense; compare this amount to the current excess shelter deduction limit as found at https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/cost-living-adjustment-cola-information;
   (d) subtract the current excess shelter deduction amount or the result in Paragraph (c), whichever is less, from the household's monthly income determined in Subsection F; the household's net income has been determined; go to step I.
(2) For households entitled to uncapped shelter: Households containing an elderly or disabled member are entitled to an uncapped shelter expense deduction. Such households have the full amount of the shelter expense exceeding fifty percent of the households net income subtracted. To determine the net income for a household entitled to an uncapped shelter expense deduction, complete steps A through G as described above, and then:
   (a) total the allowable shelter expenses;
   (b) subtract from the total shelter expenses fifty percent of the household's monthly income after all other deductions have been have been subtracted (the result in Subsection G); the remaining amount is the excess shelter expense;
   (c) subtract the amount in Paragraph (b) from the monthly income amount.
determined in Subsection F; the household's net income has been determined; go to step I.

I. Round each income calculation to the nearest dollar (one cent ($0.01) through 49 cents ($0.49) round down; 50 cents ($0.50) through 99 cents ($0.99) round up).

J. Multiply the household's net income by thirty percent; round the cents up to the nearest dollar, and subtract that amount from the maximum SNAP benefit amount for the household's size. The SNAP benefit amount for the household is determined.

[2/1/1995, 10/1/95; 8.139.610.13 NMAC - Rn, 8 NMAC 3.FSP.621, 5/15/2001; A, 7/24/2018]

8.139.610.14 REPLACEMENT OF BENEFITS:

A. Conditions for replacement: Subject to certain restrictions, households may be authorized a replacement issuance when the household reports the food purchased with SNAP benefits was destroyed in a household misfortune or natural disaster. The loss must be reported within ten calendar days of the day the food purchased with SNAP benefits was destroyed. The loss is ineligible for replacement if the loss is not reported timely.

(1) Replacing benefits: Subject to certain restrictions, households may be authorized a replacement issuance of SNAP benefits when the household reports that food purchased with the SNAP benefits was destroyed in a household misfortune or natural disaster.

(2) Reporting the loss: The loss of food purchased with SNAP benefits must be reported in a timely manner by the household. The report will be considered timely if the loss is reported within 10 days of the date the food purchased with SNAP benefits is destroyed in household misfortune or natural disaster.

(3) Ineligible for replacement: Food purchased with SNAP benefits will not be replaced if:

(a) the household reports that the food purchased with SNAP benefits was destroyed after receipt in an event other than a household misfortune or natural disaster; or

(b) the loss was not timely reported by the household.

(4) Household responsibilities: To qualify for a replacement, the household must:

(a) report the loss in a timely manner, either orally or in writing; and

(b) sign an affidavit or statement attesting to the loss of the household’s food purchased with SNAP benefits.

(5) HSD responsibilities: HSD shall issue the replacement SNAP benefit amount if warranted, within 10 days after the report of loss, or within two working days of the date that HSD receives the signed affidavit or statement, whichever is later. Replacement of SNAP benefits will be delayed until a determination of the value of the benefits can be made.

(6) Affidavits: If a signed affidavit is not received by ISD within 10 days of the date the loss is reported, there will be no replacement. If the 10th day falls on a weekend or holiday, the deadline is the day after the weekend or holiday. The affidavit is retained in the client electronic case record. It attests to the destruction of food purchased with the original issuance and specifies the reason for the replacement. It shall also state that the household is aware of the penalties for intentional misrepresentation of the facts, including but not limited to, a charge of perjury for a false claim.

(7) Authorization: There will be no limit on the number of replacements a household may be authorized for food purchased with SNAP benefits which was destroyed in a household misfortune or natural disaster.

(8) Verification of conditions for replacement: Before replacing destroyed food purchased with SNAP benefits, ISD shall determine that the destruction occurred in a household misfortune or natural disaster, such as a fire, as well as in natural disasters affecting more than one household. This is verified through one of the following:

(a) collateral contacts; or

(b) documentation from a community agency such as but not limited to, the fire department or the red cross; or

(c) a home visit; or

(d) FNS has issued a disaster declaration and a household is eligible for emergency SNAP benefits; a household cannot receive both the disaster SNAP benefit and a replacement benefit for a household misfortune or natural disaster.

B. Calculation of replacement: A replacement of the actual value of the loss not to exceed one month’s SNAP benefit amount may be issued if food purchased with SNAP benefits is destroyed in a household misfortune or natural disaster affecting a participating household. HSD will provide a replacement issuance within 10 days of a reported loss.
C. **Fair hearings:** A household must be informed of its right to a fair hearing to contest denial of a replacement issuance. Replacements will not be authorized during the appeal process. A replacement is authorized if the appeal is decided in favor of the household.


### 8.139.610.15 NATIONAL REDUCTION OR SUSPENSION:

If funding for SNAP is depleted, Section 18 of the Food Stamp Act of 1977, as amended, provides for reduction, suspension or cancellation of SNAP benefits for one or more months, or a combination of these three actions.

#### A. Reduction:

1. If a reduction in SNAP allotments is deemed necessary, the maximum SNAP allotments amounts for all household sizes is reduced by a percentage specified by FNS. The maximum SNAP allotments amounts for each household size are reduced by the same percentage. This results in all households of a given size having their benefits reduced by the same dollar amount. The dollar reduction is smallest for a one-person household and greatest for the largest households. Since the dollar amount is the same for all households of the same size, the rate of reduction is lowest for zero net income households and greatest for the highest net income households.

2. All one- and two-person households affected by a reduction action are guaranteed a minimum monthly SNAP benefit, unless the action is a cancellation of SNAP benefits, suspension of SNAP benefits, or reduction in SNAP benefits of ninety percent or more of the total amount of benefits projected to be issued in the affected month. The benefit reduction notice issued by USDA specifies whether the minimum SNAP benefit amount will be provided.

3. SNAP benefits shall also be able to be adjusted to provide for the rounding of benefit levels of one dollar ($1.00), three dollars ($3.00) and five dollars ($5.00) to two dollars ($2.00), four dollars ($4.00) and six dollars ($6.00), respectively.

#### B. Suspension or cancellation:

1. If a decision is made to suspend or cancel the distribution of SNAP benefits in a given month, FNS shall notify HSD of the date the suspension or cancellation will take effect. If SNAP benefits are suspended or cancelled, the minimum benefit provision for one- and two-person households is disregarded and all households will have their benefits suspended or cancelled.

2. **Resumption of benefits:** Upon notification by FNS that a benefit suspension has ended, HSD shall act immediately to resume benefit issuance to certified households.

#### C. Notices:

SNAP benefit reductions, suspensions, and cancellations are considered a federal adjustment to SNAP benefits. HSD shall notify all households of benefit reductions, suspensions, or cancellations in accordance with adequate notice provisions in Subsection A of 8.139.120.13 NMAC. HSD shall not provide an adverse action notice to a household affected by a benefit reduction, suspension, or cancellation.

#### D. Effect of reduction on certification:

1. **Normal processing:** Eligibility determination for applicant households under normal (non-expedited) processing will not be affected by a benefit reduction, suspension, or cancellation. HSD shall accept and process applications during a month(s) in which a reduction, suspension, or cancellation is in effect in accordance with 8.139.110.12 NMAC, application processing. The determination of eligibility will also be made according to these provisions. If an applicant household is determined eligible for SNAP benefits and a reduction is in effect, the benefit amount is calculated by reducing the maximum SNAP allotments amount by the appropriate percentage for the applicant's household size and then deducting thirty percent of the household's net SNAP income from the reduced maximum SNAP allotments amount. If an applicant household is determined eligible for SNAP benefits while a suspension or cancellation is in effect, no benefits will be issued to the household until issuance is again authorized by FNS.

2. **Expedited service:** Expedited processing continues during the months in which reductions, suspensions or cancellations are in effect.
   
   a. **Reductions:** Households receiving expedited service in months in which reductions are in effect and that are determined eligible will be issued reduced benefits. The reduced SNAP benefit amount will be made available within the time frame specified for expedited issuance.

   b. **Suspension:** Households receiving expedited service in months in which a suspension is in effect and that are determined eligible will have a benefit determination made within the time frames for expedited issuance. If a suspension remains in effect at the time issuance is authorized, the issuance will be suspended until FNS lifts the suspension.

   c. **Cancellations:** Households eligible for expedited processing which apply for
SNAP benefits during months in which cancellations are in effect will receive expedited service. The deadline for completing the processing is five calendar days or the end of the month of application, whichever date is later. All other rules for providing expedited service are applicable.

(3) Certification periods: The reduction, suspension, or cancellation of SNAP benefits in a given month will have no effect on the certification period assigned to a household. Those households with certification period expiring during a month in which SNAP benefits have been reduced, suspended or cancelled will be recertified and have a new certification period assigned.

E. Fair hearings: Any household that has its SNAP benefit amount reduced, suspended or cancelled as a result of an order issued by FNS may request a fair hearing if the household disagrees with the action. The fair hearing process is subject to the following conditions:

(1) Basis for fair hearings: HSD is not required to hold fair hearings unless the request is based on a household's belief that the SNAP benefit amount was computed incorrectly under suspension, reduction, or cancellation rules or that such rules were applied or interpreted incorrectly. HSD shall deny a fair hearing to a household that is merely disputing the fact that a reduction, suspension, or cancellation was ordered.

(2) Continuation of benefits pending fair hearing: Since the reduction, suspension, or cancellation is necessary to avoid an expenditure of funds beyond those appropriated by congress, households do not have a right to continuation of SNAP benefits pending a fair hearing.

(3) Retroactive benefits: A household will receive retroactive SNAP benefits in an appropriate amount if it is found that its SNAP benefits were reduced by more than the amount by which HSD was directed to reduce SNAP benefits.

F. Restoration of benefits:

(1) HSD shall have issuance services available to serve households receiving restored or retroactive SNAP benefits for a previous, unaffected month if benefit reduction, suspension or cancellation has been ordered.

(2) Households whose SNAP benefits are reduced, suspended or cancelled as a result of these procedures will not be entitled to restoration of lost benefits at a future date. However, if there is a surplus of funds as a result of the reduction or cancellation, FNS will direct HSD to restore benefits to affected households, unless the secretary of agriculture determines that the amount of surplus funds is too small for this to be practical.

(3) HSD shall design procedures to implement the restoration of SNAP benefits promptly if FNS directs the restoration of benefits.


HISTORY OF 8.139.610 NMAC:
Pre-NMAC History: The material in this part was derived from that previously filed with the State Records Center and Archives:

ISD 450.0000, Determining Household Eligibility and Benefit Levels, 8/15/1980.
ISD 404.0000, State Agency Administration, 7/15/1980.
ISD 404.0000, Food Assistance - Coupons as Obligations of the United States, 2/10/1981.
ISD-Rule 436.0000, Food Assistance - Establishing Certification Periods, 5/111984.

History of Repealed Material: [RESERVED]