



STATE OF NEW MEXICO
Human Services Department
Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham
David R. Scrase, M.D., Cabinet Secretary
Angela Medrano, Deputy Cabinet Secretary
Kari Armijo, Deputy Cabinet Secretary

April 9, 2020

Dwight Crudup
Regional Director
Southwest Region US DA/FNS
110 Commerce Street, Room 5-C- 30
Dallas, Texas 75242

Subject: SNAP Double Issuance Waiver

Dear Mr. Crudup:

New Mexico, like many of its surrounding states, is operating under a State of Public Health Emergency relating to the public health crisis caused by the coronavirus. There are currently over 800 cases in NM. It is also expected that the number of positive cases is set to increase exponentially. Social distancing is the primary non-hygiene related preventative measure identified to prevent the spread of this communicable disease. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is recommending that individuals maintain at least a "2- week supply of prescription and over the counter medications, food (emphasis added) and other essentials." (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/community-mitigation-strategy.pdf>)

Given that many SNAP recipients are particularly vulnerable to the coronavirus based on age and disability, SNAP participants would be severely disadvantaged should they be required to quarantine due to exposure. Additionally, the efforts at delaying and preventing community spread would be greatly enhanced if SNAP recipients are provided with a stocked food supply in order to practice social distancing. For these reasons, New Mexico is seeking approval to provide a special supplemental SNAP issuance to all active households. This special supplemental issuance would be a one-time full one month's worth of the maximum monthly benefit amount based on the household size.

Provision of a special supplemental issuance will permit New Mexico SNAP households with the resources necessary to purchase an adequate supply as recommended by the CDC and would be an effective mitigations strategy in prevention of, or limiting, the continued spread of COVID-19.

If additional information is needed, your staff may contact Gavino Archuleta, SNAP Program Manager, at 505-827-7244 or via e-mail at Gavino.Archuleta@state.nm.us.

Thank you for your assistance in processing this request.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karmela Martinez".

Karmela Martinez, Division Director
New Mexico Human Services Department Income
Support Division

WAIVER REQUEST

1. **TYPE OF REQUEST:** Initial
2. **REGULATION CITATION:** 7 CFR 273.10(e)(4)(i) and 272.1
3. **STATE:** New Mexico
4. **REGION:** SWRO
5. **REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS:** In accordance with 7 CFR 273.10(e)(4)(i), the maximum SNAP allotments are determined by the Thrifty Food Plan.
6. **DESCRIPTION OF ALTERNATIVE PROCEDURES:** New Mexico, like many of its surrounding states, is operating under a State of Public Health Emergency relating to the public health crisis caused by the coronavirus. There are currently over 600 cases in NM. It is also expected that since testing is relatively new, the number of positive cases is set to increase exponentially. Social distancing is the primary non-hygiene related preventative measure identified to prevent the spread of this communicable disease. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is recommending that individuals maintain at least a "2- week supply of prescription and over the counter medications, *food* (emphasis added) and other essentials." (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/community-mitigation-strategy.pdf>)

Given that many SNAP recipients are particularly vulnerable to the coronavirus based on age and disability, SNAP participants would be severely disadvantaged should they be required to quarantine due to exposure. Additionally, the efforts at delaying and preventing community spread would be greatly enhanced if SNAP recipients are provided with a stocked food supply in order to practice social distancing. For these reasons, New Mexico is seeking approval to provide a special supplemental SNAP issuance to all active households. This special supplemental issuance would be a one-time benefit equivalent a full one month's worth of the maximum monthly benefit amount based on the household size.

Provision of a special supplemental issuance will permit New Mexico SNAP households with the resources necessary to purchase an adequate supply as recommended by the CDC, and would be an effective mitigations strategy in prevention of, or limiting, the continued spread of COVID-19.

7. **JUSTIFICATION FOR REQUEST:** This request is justified pursuant to 7 CFR 272.3(c) (1) (ii) which permits FNS to authorize waivers that result in a more effective and efficient administration of the program.

- 8. ANTICIPATED IMPACT ON HOUSEHOLDS AND STATE AGENCY OPERATIONS:** New Mexico believes that this waiver will improve the public health response to the spread of the COVID-19. This will also reduce the number of staff and SNAP recipients potentially exposed to COVID-19 minimizing its spread as well as a possible workforce shortage in the State Agency. In addition, supplemental benefits may allow individuals to spread their shopping trips out over an extended period of time minimizing contact with others.
- 9. CASELOAD INFORMATION, INCLUDING PERCENT, CHARACTERISTICS, AND QUALITY CONTROL ERROR RATE FOR AFFECTION PORTION:** As of February 2020, the NM SNAP caseload included 444,727 people in 218,839 SNAP households. Of these numbers, 49,077 individuals were aged 60+ elderly and an additional 183,486 were children.
- 10. ANTICIPATED IMPLEMENTATION DATE AND TIME PERIOD FOR WHICH WAIVER IS NEEDED:** Supplemental issuances will be issued as soon as is technically feasible after the approval of this waiver.
- 11. PROPOSED QUALITY CONTROL REVIEW PROCEDURES:** The COVID Supplemental SNAP issuance will not be included the monthly benefit amount when a case is selected for an active review. The benefit amount to be reviewed will be limited to the regular monthly allotment for cases selected for QC review. Cases will be reviewed using standard review procedures in the FNS Handbook 310.
- 12. SIGNATURE AND TITLE OF REQUESTING OFFICIAL:**



Karmela Martinez, Director of Income Support Division

- 13. DATE OF REQUEST:** April 7, 2020
- 14. REGIONAL OFFICE CONTACT PERSON (TO BE COMPLETED BY FNS REGIONAL OFFICE)**