

UPDATES

COVID-19 Protections & Benefits

- **Stimulus Payments: \$600, January 2021**

Some people will receive an “Economic Impact Payment” prepaid card in lieu of an automatic deposit. It will come in a white envelope with the U.S. Treasury seal. Tell them not to throw the card away. Lost cards can be replaced by calling 800-240-8100. **\$600/individual, \$1,200/couple, \$600 for each dependent child**
Stimulus payment is taxable income.

- **SNAP: All households will continue to receive maximum benefit for household size.**

1-\$234; 2-\$430; 3-\$616; 4-\$782; 5-\$929; 6-\$1,114; 7-\$1,232; 8-\$1,408; each additional person - \$176. College students may now access SNAP benefits.

- **SNAP: 15% Increase**

Increase will be seen on January 20, 2021. The increase goes from January to June 2021. Two examples: a single adult previously receiving the maximum benefit amount of \$204 will receive an additional \$20, for a new maximum benefit of \$234; and a family of four previously receiving the maximum benefit amount of \$680 will receive an additional \$102 for a new maximum benefit amount of \$782. If a household was granted benefits on or after January 9, 2021, it already has received the 15% increase a part of its regular SNAP benefits.

- **SNAP: Online purchasing**

Online food purchasing now available at ALDI, Amazon Walmart and ShopRite through Instacart. Client must create a profile on Instacart: www.instacart.com (<http://www.instacart.com/>), then enter EBT food card information as a form of payment. (cannot use cash assistance benefits on cards for online shopping)
Instacart will waive delivery and/or pickup fees on up to the first three EBT SNAP orders for 90 days for ALDI beginning December 16, 2020.

- **SNAP: Automatic renewals from December 2020-June 2021**

No periodic reviews, but annual certifications may occur during this timeframe. ABAWD work requirements suspended also for duration of public health emergency.

- **Unemployment Benefits**

State unemployment benefits are counted as income for purposes of calculating SNAP benefits and determining eligibility (other types of benefits are not).

Unemployment benefits are taxable income.

- **Unemployment-extension of related benefits**

Federal Pandemic Unemployment Benefits (FPUC) starts/ed on December 27, 2020 and extends through March 14, 2021. People can get FPUC if they get any unemployment benefits under regular unemployment, Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA), Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) or Shared Work. The benefit is \$300/week for 11 weeks, for those receiving benefits, at least through March 14, 2010.

(PUA) – for those not covered under “regular” benefits

(PEUC) for those who exhaust “regular” benefits.

- **Unemployment – additional benefits automatic or have to apply?**

The benefits will be automatically calculated but this may take some time for the CT Department of Labor to implement.

- **Unemployment – contacting CT Dept. of Labor**

These are the telephone numbers we have been given:

(860) 263-6974

(860) 263-6975

(203) 455-2653

(203) 455-2650

There is also a chat function on the Dept. of Labor website.

- **Housing – Eviction Moratorium**

Eviction Moratorium: The Federal moratorium through the Center for Disease Control (CDC) is scheduled to end on January 31, 2021. Gov. Lamont signed an emergency order extending the moratorium in Connecticut until February 9, 2021. This eviction protection extends to nonpayment cases, with exceptions.

The moratorium is not automatic. Every adult member in the household needs to sign a declaration form concerning their income, ability to pay rent, efforts to obtain rental assistance and harm if evicted. This document must be signed and given to the landlord.

- **Housing – There is no rent paying moratorium**

- **Housing – Homeless Prevention Program (HPP)**

Have the client contact 2-1-1 for more information. These monies are for arrearages.

- **Housing – Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA)**

For partial payment of arrearages and/or up to three months prospective payments at a time. This program is just rolling out.

- **Utilities - Energy and Conservation Assistance, Arrearage Forgiveness and Repayment Plans**

Energy Assistance – through DSS and CAP agencies;

Shut-Off Protections still available: Financial Hardship Protection, Medical Hardship Protection; (see below for financial hardship protection info.)

Arrearage forgiveness programs: MPP, MaPP, New Start;

Repayment programs: COVID-19; & “reasonable” repayment agreements;

Weatherization programs: WAP & HES-IE weatherization programs

“Hardship” utility customers¹ are those receiving the following public assistance:

- Aid to the blind;
- Aid to families with dependent children;
- Old age assistance;
- Aid to the disabled;
- Medicaid;
- Supplemental security income (SSI); or
- General assistance; RCSA §§16-3-100(b)(3)(N)

¹ “Hardship” or “hardship case” criteria is also defined as “a person whose sole source of financial support is derived from social security, veterans’ administration or unemployment compensation benefits; a person who is head of the household and unemployed, and whose household income is less than three hundred percent of the poverty level determined by the federal government; a person or any resident of the person’s home who is seriously ill, as certified by a registered physician or has a life threatening situation; a person whose income falls below one hundred twenty five per cent of the poverty level as determined by the federal government; and, a person whose circumstances threaten the deprivation of the necessities of life for himself or herself or dependent children of his or her household if payment of a delinquent utility bill is required. RCSA §§16-3-100(b)(3)(N)