

EES Policy No. 21-01-01	RE: Temporary 15% Increase in Maximum Food Assistance Allotments due to COVID- 19; Student Eligibility and Unemployment Income
Policy Memo	Contact Persons: Janelle Harper
From: Sandra Kimmons	
Date: January 15, 2021 Revised 03-22-21	
Primary DCF Areas Affected: Food Assistance	Where Posted on Web: http://content.dcf.ks.gov/ees/KEESM/Policy_Memo/policy_memo_list.htm

Food Assistance 15% Temporary Increase

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, signed by President Trump on December 27, 2020, increases Food Assistance benefits by raising maximum allotments by 15% temporarily. The increased allotment for all Food Assistance households is for January 2021 through September 2021. These changes will be processed in KEES. This batch will run before negative action. January regular benefits are available as usual 1st-10th. On January 21st the January 15% increase will be issued as a supplemental and available to clients. Emergency allotment for December that issues in January will stagger starting January 22nd-31st. There will be three Food Assistance issuances in January.

February through September benefits will be available during the regular scheduled issuance dates and will include the 15% increase. An NOA will not be sent to the household for this change. The agency will have a Public Service Announcement through talking points, social media, DCF public website and press release. However, the agency will send an NOA in September 2021 to inform the household of the benefits returning to the normal amount.

In the Appendix the F-2 is revised to reflect the temporary maximum Food Assistance benefit. The F-3 Food Assistance Program Benefit Tables and the ES 1510.1 are updated to reflect this temporary change.

NOTE: This change does not impact gross or net income limits, expenses or deductions for Food Assistance. Emergency Allotments are approved by USDA FNS on a month by month basis. The 15% increase cannot be calculated in FA overpayments.

The following chart shows the temporary maximum benefits for January 2021-September 2021

Household Size	January 2021 – September 2021 Maximum Benefits
1	\$234
2	\$430
3	\$616
4	\$782
5	\$929
6	\$1114
7	\$1232
8	\$1408
Each additional person	+ \$176

The minimum allotment is \$19 for household size 1-2.

15% cannot be calculated in an overpayment.

Student Eligibility

The Act temporarily expands student eligibility criteria to include students enrolled at least half-time in an institution of higher education. Students who meet one of the two criteria listed below may receive Food Assistance if they meet all other eligibility criteria.

1. Are enrolled in an institution of higher education; **and**
2. Are eligible to participate in State or federally financed work student during the regular school year, as determined by the institution of high education, **or**
3. Have an expected family contribution (EFC) of \$0 in the current academic year.

The eligibility exemption is for students who are eligible to participate in work study during the regular school year, without the requirement that they actually participate or anticipating to participate.

Verification of eligibility to participate in a work study program may be found on the financial aid aware letter provided by the students institution of higher education. If the student does not have access to the financial aid award letter, a written statement from the institution of higher education may be requested as verification that the student is eligible to participate in a work study program.

Family Contribution for any student means the amount which the student and the student's family may be reasonably expected to contribute toward the student's postsecondary education for the current academic year. Current academic year is defined by the institution of higher education, in which the individual is enrolled.

Verification of an Expected Family Contribution (EFC) of \$0 may be found on a financial aid award letter or Student Aid Report (SAR). If the student has misplaced or does not

have access to the financial aid aware letter the student may request that the institution of higher education provide a letter in writing to the agency verifying an EFC of \$0.

NOTE: The SAR does not display a dollar sign in front of the EFC figure. When a student's EFC is \$0, the SAR will show a string of zeros.

Additionally, all students the receive the maximum Pell Grant have an EFC of \$0. Verification of the maximum Pell Grant amount may be found on the financial aid aware letter and may be used as verification that a student has an EFC of \$0. However, not all students with an EFC of \$0 receive a Pell Grant.

This temporary student eligibility exemption is for initial applications for Food Assistance until 30 days after the COVID-19 public health emergency is lifted. The exemption must also be in effect until the first Review of the household beginning no earlier than 30 days after the COVID-19 public health emergency is lifted. What this means is that the agency must evaluate initial applications using the new, temporary exemptions until 30 days after the COVID-19 public health emergency is lifted. At that point, the agency would return to certifying initial applications based on normal student eligibility requirements.

For changes reported at IR or Review, any of which occur no earlier than 30 days after the public health emergency is lifted, the agency will continue to apply the new, temporary exemptions. The agency must determine at IR or Review if current ineligible students meet one of these two new temporary exemptions.

Unemployment Income

The Act excludes Federal pandemic unemployment income authorized under the CARES Act, section 2104 from income and resources for purposes of determining Food Assistance eligibility. Please note, this exclusion **only** applies to the Federal pandemic unemployment compensation payments (FPUC). In KEES please use the Income Type of "Gate Money" with a description in the description box of "Pandemic Unemployment". These payments are exempt as income and a resource in the month of receipt and the following 9 months.

For questions please contact Janelle Harper or Shannon Connell.