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DHS Secretary: Pennsylvanians Can Access Federal Stimulus Money Without Jeopardizing Benefits



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Harrisburg, PA – Department of Human Services (DHS) Secretary Teresa Miller today reminded Pennsylvanians who receive assistance in the form of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), or Medical Assistance that the CARES Act Economic Impact Payments **do not** affect their benefits.

“We know that many people may be struggling due to lost jobs or reduced hours because of the COVID-19 pandemic, and we know that every bit of assistance can help someone make ends meet. The federal Economic Impact Payments are meant to pay bills and cover expenses to get through these tough,” said Secretary Miller. “Nobody should forego collecting the CARES Act Economic Impact Payments that they are entitled to because they are concerned about losing their benefits. These payments will not affect your benefit amount or eligibility, so I encourage anyone who has not yet applied to receive their stimulus payment to do so.”

As part of the CARES Act, the United States Department of Treasury issued funds known as Recovery Rebates or as Economic Impact Payments (EIPs) to most Americans beginning April 10, 2020. Recipients may be eligible for a payment of up to \$1,200 for individuals and \$2,400 for married couples filing jointly, in addition to \$500 per qualifying child. Current recipients of assistance in the form of TANF, SNAP, or Medical Assistance can still access the federal stimulus money, and this payment does not count as income or assets in determining eligibility for benefits.

According to the Campaign for Working Families and the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, somewhere between 350,000-450,000 Pennsylvanians may have missed their payment. If a mom and two kids are eligible, they could get \$2200. This is worth more than five months of TANF cash benefits (at \$403/month).

The deadline to request EIP is October 15, 2020. Those who do not file taxes at all, or who file taxes and receive your tax refund via check, may need to provide information to the IRS to claim an EIP. Instructions on claiming an EIP and more information can be [found here](#) or by calling 800-919-9835. The Campaign for Working Families is offering assistance to people who need help filing for their EIP at www.cwfphilly.org/stimulus.

Those who file taxes and receive tax refunds via direct deposit will have had their EIP automatically deposited into their account and there is nothing further to do.

Pennsylvanians who have experienced a change in income or job loss, regardless of its relation to the COVID-19 pandemic, can apply for benefits like TANF, SNAP, or Medical Assistance online at any time at www.compass.state.pa.us. Those who prefer to submit paper documentation can print from the website or request an application by phone at 1-800-692-7462 and mail it to their local [County Assistance Office](#) (CAO) or place it in a CAO's secure drop box, if available. While CAOs remain closed, work processing applications, determining eligibility, and issuing benefits continues. Applications are processed within six days on average for SNAP and 11 days on average for Medicaid. Once a benefit is approved, it can be immediately accessed.

For more information on public assistance programs available through DHS, visit www.dhs.pa.gov.

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