



Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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January 27, 2021

TO: Representative Evan Goyke
Room 112 North, State Capitol

FROM: Alexandra Bentzen, Fiscal Analyst

SUBJECT: Impact of Ending the State Public Health Emergency on Emergency FoodShare Allotments

This memorandum is in response to your request regarding the potential impact on emergency allotments for FoodShare recipients, as a result of ending the current state public health emergency as declared by Governor Tony Evers on January 19, 2021.

The federal supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP or FoodShare in Wisconsin) provides low-income households and individuals with benefits to purchase approved foods from approved vendors. Typically, FoodShare benefits are based on a sliding scale. To calculate the benefit amount, a county income maintenance agency will look at the number of people in the applicant's home, as well as household income minus any income credits and other credits. At the end of the calculation, the income maintenance worker will subtract 30% of the net adjusted income from the maximum benefit amount to determine the household's monthly benefit amount.

Section 2302(a)(1) of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act of 2020, allows states to request COVID-19 emergency allotments “for households participating in the supplemental nutrition assistance program... to address temporary food needs.” The United States Department of Agriculture has granted waivers to a number of states, including Wisconsin, allowing for the issuance of emergency allotments based on a public health emergency declaration by the Secretary of Health and Human Services under section 319 of the Public Health Service Act related to an outbreak of COVID-19 when a state has also issued an emergency or disaster declaration.

Emergency allotments are supplements that bring a household up to the maximum benefit amount based on the household size. A household's emergency allotment cannot increase the current monthly household SNAP benefit allotment beyond “the applicable maximum monthly allotment for the household size.” Accordingly, SNAP households that already receive the maximum monthly allotment for their household size are not eligible for emergency allotment benefits.

For January, 2021, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services estimates that 242,507 households will receive emergency allotment benefits, totaling \$49,338,946. As with regular FoodShare benefits, the emergency allotment benefits are entirely federally funded. Without a state emergency or disaster declaration FoodShare recipients are not eligible for these additional benefits.

I hope this information is helpful. Please let me know if I can be of further assistance.

AB/bh