

Department of Social and Health Services  
Olympia, Washington  
**EAZ Manual**

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Category Emergency Food Supplements  
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**Summary**

Created new [EAZ Chapter: Emergency Food Supplements](#) to support new emergency WAC 388-437-0005 in regards to emergency supplements placed on EBT cards in the month of March and April 2020 in response to the Families First Coronavirus Response Act.

See below for new text:



**Emergency Food Supplements**

Created March 31, 2020

**Purpose:**

This section lists emergency rules related to food assistance programs in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- **WAC 388-437-0005** - Changes to food assistance in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
  - [Clarifying Information](#) and [Worker Responsibilities](#)

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Clarifying Information - **WAC 388-437-0005**

**Supplemental Issuance**

- Households on food assistance are eligible for a supplemental benefit amount to increase their benefits to the maximum allotment for their household size for the month of March and/or April. They are not eligible for this supplement if they already receive the maximum allotment.
  - This includes all approved applications regardless of their application date in March and April 2020 (i.e. prorated benefits).
  - These supplements are not subject to recoupment.

**Example:** Tomas applied for benefits on March 16<sup>th</sup> and completed an interview the same day. The worker processes and approves the case with prorated benefits in March of \$97 and full allotment of \$194 in April. Tomas receives combined issuance of \$291 on his EBT card the next day. After the system delivers the mass issuance, an additional \$97 emergency supplement will appear on Tomas's EBT to ensure he receives the maximum food amount of \$194 for March, but the system will not issue an emergency supplement for April as Tomas already qualifies for the maximum benefit of \$194.

- If the only reason the household is receiving less than the maximum is due to a recoupment, then the household is not eligible.
- Households eligible for the maximum allotment do not qualify for a supplement for March and April.

**Example:** Heather was approved in January for the maximum food allotment of \$194, but due to an overpayment, \$10 is recouped each month. Heather receives \$184 per month. She will not be eligible for an emergency supplement in March and April as she is eligible for the maximum allotment.

#### **Automatic Issuance:**

- The mass supplements for March will issue to all households at once and are available the following day.
  - Aces.Online Benefit Issuance history will show emergency supplements as *FS/EBT-Supplemental Issuance – 863* for the months of March and/or April after automatic mass supplements are completed.
  - The April supplement will be available on the normal availability date.
  - AU's that are closed with a paid thru date of 3/31/2020 will receive a supplement for March, but not automatically for April.
    - If the case is reinstated in April, review [Worker Responsibilities](#) below.
  - Notices will be suppressed.

**Example:** Jon and his partner were certified from November 30<sup>th</sup> to October 31<sup>st</sup> to receive \$200 per month in food assistance due to household income. Their issuance date is the 11<sup>th</sup> of each month. As the maximum allotment for a two-person household is \$355 per month, Jon and his partner will receive \$155 emergency supplement after the automatic issuance for March, and the full maximum allotment of \$355 on April 11<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Manual BEGS**

- Staff will need to issue a manual BEG if automatic issuance did not occur due to:
  - New applications approved after the mass supplements are issued
  - Currently pending applications, not finalized until after the mass supplements are issued

- Cases reinstated or reopened (for March or April) after the mass supplements are issued
- A new BEG type **Emergency Supplements – ES** was created to provide supplements manually for cases processed after automatic issuance.
  - Staff will continue to determine correct eligibility for the household and then issue a supplement for the difference.
  - This is important to track the funds for this program.
- Letters will not generate when the BEG **Emergency Supplements – ES** is released.
  - We do not require a notice for these emergency supplements for March and April.
- Confirm that the client has received the maximum allotment for their household size in March and/or April prior to confirming an Underpayment (UP) or Overpayment (OP) for any reason other than Emergency Supplement – ES.

**Example:** Pheobe applies for food assistance on April 5th after she lost her job a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The worker determines eligibility and approves the prorated benefit amount of \$168 from the date of application. Pheobe is owed a supplement of \$26 to give her the maximum \$194 standard for a one person household. The worker manually creates a BEG of \$26 for the month of April using the new BEG type ES – Emergency Supplement for the additional benefit amount.

**Example:** Joseph applies for benefits on March 16<sup>th</sup> and completes an interview on March 20<sup>th</sup>. The worker pends the application for verification of stop work. Joseph faxed the stop work verification and it is processed on April 5<sup>th</sup>, after the automatic mass supplemental issuance. The worker finalizes and approves the case with prorated benefits in March of \$97 and full allotment of \$194 in April. The worker creates a manual BEG type ES – Emergency Supplement for the month of March of \$97 to ensure Joseph receives the maximum food amount of \$194, but does not issue an emergency supplement for April as Joseph already qualifies for the maximum benefit of \$194.

**Example:** Anita and her spouse applied for benefits on March 27<sup>th</sup> and interviewed on the April 10<sup>th</sup>. The worker was able to verify Anita she is receiving Unemployment Compensation of \$400 per week. The worker processes and approves the case with \$0 benefits in March and the minimum allotment of \$16 in April. The worker creates manual BEGs and issues a full emergency supplement in March of \$355 and then \$339 to the household in April.

- Staff must determine if a manual BEG is needed if, after reinstatement, the client is not receiving the maximum allotment for their household size.

**Example:** Peter works and normally receives \$124 per month in food assistance. Peter forgot to complete his March MCR. He received a termination notice that his benefits are closed as of March 31<sup>st</sup>. Peter calls to complete his MCR on April 5<sup>th</sup> reporting no changes. Peter asks about an extra \$73 on his EBT card recently. The worker explains the extra allotment was disbursed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic as we are providing maximum allotments in March and April.

The worker reinstates Peter for April and he is still eligible for \$124 per month in food assistance. Since the system will not automatically provide him a supplement in April, the worker creates a BEG type Emergency Supplements – ES for April in the amount of \$73, available the following day. The regular \$124 will be available on his regular availability date.

Worker Responsibilities - [WAC 388-437-0005](#)

**Confirming automatic mass issuance:**

Staff receive questions about extra benefits placed on EBT cards for the months of March and/or April. Staff can confirm the automatic benefits by reviewing Benefit Issuance history in Aces.Online. The supplements for March and/or April will display as ***FS/EBT – Supplemental Issuance (863)***.

April benefits are available on food assistance households' regular availability date.

**Note:** If the household is a SNAP/FAP mixed household, each month will display a ***FS/EBT – Supplemental Issuance (863)*** for a SNAP supplement and a FAP supplement.

**Manual BEGs:**

Prior to creating a Manual BEG type **Emergency Supplement – ES**, staff should:

1. Review the Benefit Issuance history in Aces.Online to confirm an automatic issuance was not completed.
  - a. If a supplement was issued, it would display as ***FS/EBT – Supplemental Issuance (863)***.
2. Confirm eligibility and determine if the client is not already eligible for the maximum allotment for their household size.
  - a. Remember to review finalized cases for prorated benefits based on application date
3. Verify the maximum allotment that the household is entitled to receive.
4. Subtract the normal eligibility allotment from the maximum allotment for the household size.
5. Create and issue the manual BEG.
  - a. To create a manual BEG, see [Mainframe Processing - How do I manually create an overpayment or underpayment?](#)
  - b. A notice will not generate and is not required for the emergency supplements in March and April.

The benefits will be available on the client's EBT card the following day after the BEG is released.

**Note:** Do not use the Manual BEG type **Emergency Supplement – ES** outside of the months of March and April. We are not approving Emergency Supplements for the month of May.