Three-Month Time Limit

Who: SNAP recipients 18-49 years old, without children or a disability. About 12,000 Mainers may receive a letter from DHHS explaining this change.

What: Beginning October 1st, SNAP recipients who do not qualify for an exemption are eligible for only three months of SNAP. Those who receive the letter and qualify for an exemption MUST call DHHS to report the exemption. Exemptions include:

- medically certified as physically or mentally unfit to work
  - The person does not need to be receiving SSI/SSDI, and does not have to meet the SSI disability standard. If the disability is not evident, medical certification is required. A statement from a doctor, nurse, nurse practitioner, social worker or other medical personnel is sufficient.

- living with a child under age 18, even if that child is not hers/his and is not receiving SNAP

- caring for an incapacitated person who cannot provide for her/his own care (applies even if the incapacitated person does not live in the same household as the individual providing care)

- pregnant

- regular participant in a substance abuse treatment program

- a student, regardless of age, who is enrolled at least half time in any recognized school, training program, or institution of higher education

- receiving or applying for Unemployment Insurance benefit

- working at least 20 hours a week

- participating in an approved employment or training program for at least 20 hours a week

- participating in volunteering, community service, or General Assistance Workfare for the required number of hours. A person must submit monthly employment or volunteer verification to DHHS.
  - required hours means the number of hours that result from dividing the SNAP benefit amount by the State minimum wage ($7.50)
  - DHHS refers SNAP recipients to www.volunteermaine.org for volunteer opportunities
  - Employment verification includes a pay stub or a letter from the employer
  - Volunteer, community service and General Assistance Workfare verification includes confirmation of hours and signature of an authorized staff person on the agency’s letterhead.

SNAP recipients who do not qualify for an exemption are eligible for SNAP for three months without employment or volunteer verification. After three months, a person will be ineligible for SNAP for three years unless they re-qualify. To re-qualify a person must be eligible for the exemptions or have either:

- worked or participated in an employment or training program for 80 hours in a 30-day period
- participated in volunteer, community service, or workfare position for 24 hours in a 30-day period

A person who has lost their job or position after reaching the hourly requirement will remain eligible for SNAP for three consecutive months whether or not working or volunteering.

What we are doing:  
- We submitted questions to DHHS for clarification on a number of issues.
- We organized for the public hearing against this cut
- We are engaging all gubernatorial candidates to advocate for renewal of a waiver of the employment or volunteer requirement for areas of high unemployment, for which the entire state qualifies.

What you should do:  
If you or a client has received this notification:
- Call DHHS at 1-800-442-6003 (the office is open 7am to 5pm)
- Press 1 for eligibility questions regarding Food Supplement Benefits, and
- Report any exemption for which you or the client qualifies.

If you or a client does not qualify for an exemption, submit employment or volunteer verification monthly to DHHS to maintain SNAP benefits.

www.preblestreet.org | info@preblestreet.org
Heat and Eat

Who: Anyone who has received at least in $1 annual LIHEAP benefit in the past 5 years and/or who lives in subsidized housing and pays part of his/her rent or utilities. About 6,000 Mainers may receive a letter from Maine Housing Authority explaining a potential reduction in benefits.

What: Those who are affected may see a reduction in SNAP benefits at their annual SNAP recertification, without a clear explanation that this is the reason for the reduction. In the past, applicants had to be found eligible for a LIHEAP benefit in any amount to get a boost in their SNAP benefits. Currently, applicants will have to apply and interview for a LIHEAP benefit, receive a $21 LIHEAP benefit check from Maine Housing, and report the check to DHHS to prove eligibility in order to maintain the boost to SNAP.

What we are doing: We’ve been advocating for solutions to expedite eligibility determination and prevent any temporary reduction in SNAP.

What you should do: If you or your clients live in subsidized housing and pay part of your rent or utilities, have received the notification, or have had an unanticipated reduction in SNAP benefits:

In Cumberland County

- Fax the applicant’s name and phone number to The Opportunity Alliance (TOA) at 207-200-2606. Indicate your request for an expedited LIHEAP determination. Faxing rather than calling will expedite the process.
- TOA will call to verify the information, and will mail an application
  - The application will require the following information: name, phone number, Social Security # for everyone in the household, photo identification of the primary applicant, and proof of subsidy (lease or recertification letter). There is no need to provide proof of income.
  - Send copies of all these items with the application to TOA.

Outside Cumberland County

- Call your local CAP agency and ask for an expedited LIHEAP eligibility determination
- If you don’t know how to contact your CAP agency, call 211 Maine

When the application has been processed and a LIHEAP benefit of at least $21 received:

- Call DHHS at 1-800-442-6003 (the office is open 7am to 5pm)
- Press 1 for eligibility questions regarding Food Supplement Benefits, and
- Report the LIHEAP eligibility in order to maintain the boost to SNAP.

Resource Numbers:

Preble Street Maine Hunger Initiative: 207-775-0026
Maine Equal Justice Partners: 207-626-7058
DHHS- 1-800-442-6003: Press 1 for eligibility questions regarding Food Supplement Benefits
CAP Agencies: Call 211 for the location and contact information
The Opportunity Alliance LIHEAP Fuel Assistance Office: 207-553-5900 (Fax 207-200-2606)
Volunteer Opportunities: www.volunteermaine.org