



## How will my benefits change when Maine's Pandemic State of Emergency ends on June 30, 2021?

During the pandemic state of emergency there have been temporary changes to several benefit programs, some of which will end on June 30<sup>th</sup>. This guide includes information about what will change and what will not change.

For questions about your benefits please call Maine Equal Justice at (207) 626-7058, ext 205 or go to our website to send us an email:

<https://maineequaljustice.org/people/legal-assistance-contact/>.

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### Food Assistance (SNAP)

**Q:** My household has been receiving the maximum SNAP benefit during the pandemic but usually we get less. How much will we get after the Maine State of Emergency ends on June 30<sup>th</sup>?

The SNAP benefit you get in July 2021 will still be the maximum benefit for your household size. Starting in August you will get the amount you were approved for in your most recent recertification. This will likely be less than the amount you received in July.

Some states have chosen to continue this benefit beyond July. We do not know yet whether Maine will do this. For now it is best to assume that this will end after July. We will let you know as soon as we know more.

If your household size or income has changed since your most recent recertification, be sure to report those changes to DHHS.

**Q: My household usually receives the maximum SNAP benefit but during the pandemic we have been getting an extra 15%. How much will we get after the Maine State of Emergency ends on June 30th?**

You will continue to get the extra 15% boost in your maximum SNAP benefit in July, August, and September 2021, if there are no significant changes to your household size or income. This extra SNAP benefit will end after September 2021.

If your household size or income changes, be sure to report these changes to DHHS.

**Q: I get an extra Food Assistance benefit because I am working. Will this continue after the Maine State of Emergency ends on June 30th?**

The Worker Supplement Benefit (additional food assistance) for working families was increased from \$50/month to \$100/month during the pandemic. This extra benefit will continue at the \$100 level for July, August, and September 2021. Starting October 1, 2021, it will return to \$50/month.

**Q: I am a student eligible for work-study and I have been able to get SNAP benefits during the pandemic. Will this continue after the Maine State of Emergency ends on June 30th?**

Yes, SNAP benefits for work study students will continue to be approved while the federal Public Health Emergency is in effect and then will continue through the end of your certification period. The end of Maine's State of Emergency on June 30<sup>th</sup> will not affect this benefit.

**Q: I am getting SNAP benefits now, but before the pandemic I could only get SNAP for three months because I did not have a job (Able-Bodied Adult without Dependents). How will the end of Maine's State of Emergency affect my SNAP benefits?**

The end of Maine's State of Emergency will not affect your SNAP benefits, which will continue while the federal Public Health Emergency is in effect, and will also continue through September 2022 due to a Maine statewide waiver.

**Q: When I did my SNAP recertification last year, I did not have to contact DHHS to do an interview. Do I have to call DHHS and complete an interview as soon as the Maine State of Emergency ends on June 30, 2021?**

No. But you will have to complete an interview at your next recertification.

## Mainecare

**Q:** After I was approved for Mainecare my income increased and I know that I now have too much income to qualify. Because of the pandemic rules my Mainecare coverage is still in effect. Will I lose my Mainecare when the Maine State of Emergency ends on June 30<sup>th</sup>?

**A:** No. Your Mainecare coverage will continue while the federal Public Health Emergency is in effect. The federal government has indicated that they will provide advance notice before ending Medicaid coverage.

If you have too much income to qualify for Mainecare when the federal Public Health Emergency is lifted, and you lose your Mainecare you will have a Special Enrollment Period to apply for a Marketplace health insurance plan.

**Q:** Before the pandemic I paid a monthly premium for Mainecare coverage (Cub Care, Katie Beckett, Working Disabled). Will I have to start paying that again when the Maine State of Emergency ends on June 30<sup>th</sup>?

**A:** No. You will not have to start paying a monthly premium for these programs until the end of the federal Public Health Emergency.

**Q:** At my last Mainecare recertification I was not required to provide pay stubs and other documents that were required in the past. Will I have to provide these once the Maine State of Emergency ends on June 30<sup>th</sup>?

**A:** No. While the federal Public Health Emergency is in effect, people applying or recertifying for Mainecare can complete their application by attesting that the information they provided is correct (self-attestation). You will receive a letter from DHHS asking for required documents (for example, pay stubs), but you can start getting Mainecare before you provide them.

To keep your Mainecare after the federal Public Health Emergency ends, you will need to provide all the requested documents to DHHS.

## TANF

**Q:** I had used 60 months of TANF eligibility prior to the pandemic but I was able to start getting TANF benefits again during the pandemic. Will my TANF benefits end once the Maine State of Emergency ends on June 30<sup>th</sup>?

**A:** TANF extensions are approved in 3-month intervals. Check your correspondence from DHHS to find the end date for your current extension or

call DHHS at (855) 797-4357. Your TANF extension will end at that time unless you are eligible for another extension.

Talk to your Fedcap worker about whether there are any other extensions for which you might be eligible. Reasons for TANF extensions beyond 60 months can include:

- Domestic violence,
- Your own disability or that of a family member who needs your care,
- Education and training,
- Job loss,
- Pregnancy,
- Emergency situations,
- Income eligible for TANF despite working 35 hours/week.

For more information, consult Maine Equal Justice's TANF/ASPIRE Guide here: [https://maineequaljustice.org/site/assets/files/1746/doc\\_2\\_2\\_tanf\\_aspire\\_program\\_guide.pdf](https://maineequaljustice.org/site/assets/files/1746/doc_2_2_tanf_aspire_program_guide.pdf)

**Q: I reached 60 months of TANF eligibility during the pandemic, but my benefits were extended because of the pandemic. Will my TANF benefits end once the Maine State of Emergency ends on June 30<sup>th</sup>?**

**A:** TANF extensions are approved in 3-month intervals. Check your correspondence from DHHS to find the end date for your current extension or call DHHS at (855) 797-4357. Your TANF extension will end at that time unless you are eligible for another extension.

Talk to your Fedcap worker about whether there are any other extensions for which you might be eligible (see above).

**Q: I know that during the pandemic, DHHS was not imposing sanctions on TANF families. Will I be sanctioned for non-participation as soon as the Maine State of Emergency ends on June 30<sup>th</sup>.**

**A:** You will not be sanctioned for non-participation before June 30<sup>th</sup>, but it is a good idea to review your Family Contract Amendment (FCA) to see if you will be able to complete the participation requirements. If your FCA will not work for you, you can ask your Fedcap worker for changes, accommodations or supports.

If you do not have a current Family Contract Amendment you should contact your Fedcap worker as soon as possible to create one.

Q: I was approved for TANF during the pandemic, and I did not have to do an in-person interview or ASPIRE orientation. Will I have to attend an interview or orientation as soon as the Maine State of Emergency ends on June 30<sup>th</sup>?

A: No. For now, DHHS will continue to waive in-person interviews and orientation.

## General Assistance

Q: I rely on General Assistance for help paying for my housing and other basic needs. I have only had to apply for assistance every two months during the pandemic. Will this change when the Maine State of Emergency ends on June 30<sup>th</sup>?

A: Yes. After the Maine State of Emergency ends, you will have to reapply for General Assistance every 30 days.

Q: I have been receiving General Assistance, but I have not had to participate in Workfare activities. Will I have to participate in workfare when the state of emergency ends?

A: After the Maine State of Emergency ends, Workfare requirements will be reinstated. You do not have to participate in Workfare if you are disabled, if you don't have the transportation or child care services necessary for you to work, if the amount of work that exceeds the value of the net general assistance that you would otherwise get, or if you're able to show other good reason why you should not have to do Workfare.

## Child Care Subsidy

Q: I qualify for a Child Care Subsidy and the parent fees have been discontinued during the pandemic. Will I have to start paying parent fees again after the Maine State of Emergency ends on June 30<sup>th</sup>?

A: No. Parent fees for Child Care Subsidy are discontinued until September 30, 2024. This change is not related to state or federal public health emergencies.

## Unemployment

Q: I get weekly Unemployment benefits plus an additional \$300/week of federal Unemployment Compensation because of the pandemic. The extra

\$300/week does not “count” as income for SNAP and Mainecare. It does count for TANF. Will the extra \$300/week in unemployment benefits stop when the Maine State of Emergency ends on June 30<sup>th</sup>?

A: No, federal pandemic unemployment programs, including the additional \$300/week of Pandemic Unemployment Compensation, will continue until at least September 4, 2021.

Q. Will the unemployment “waiting week” be reinstated when the Maine state of emergency ends? Will I have to wait a week when I sign up for a new unemployment benefit year before I can get my benefits? The waiting week was suspended during the state of emergency so that people could begin getting unemployment benefits right away.

A. Yes, the waiting week will be reinstated beginning July 30, 2021. Beginning then, when unemployed workers sign up for unemployment insurance, they will not get benefits for the first week of their unemployment.

## Eviction

Q: During the pandemic landlords had to provide a 45-day notice to tenants without a lease agreement (“at-will”). Will this change when the Maine State of Emergency ends on June 30<sup>th</sup>?

A: Yes. Starting July 1, 2021 landlords are required to provide a 30-day notice to “at-will” tenants, unless the notice is for non-payment of rent or dangerous/damaging behavior. Landlords can give “at-will” tenants 7 day notices for non-payment or dangerous/damaging behavior, like causing damage to a building or doing something dangerous that is disturbing other tenants.

Q: Will the federal moratorium on evictions stop my landlord from evicting me?

A: The federal moratorium has been extended until July 31, 2021. This means if you complete the proper declaration your landlord should not evict you due to non-payment of rent. For more information on how to take advantage of this protection go to the Pine Tree Legal website: <https://www.ptla.org/covid-19-rights-maine-renters-cdc-eviction-ban-faq>.

Q: Can I be evicted for non-payment of rent when the Maine State of Emergency ends on June 30<sup>th</sup>?

A: Maybe. The federal moratorium for some evictions remains in effect until July 31, 2021. The moratorium only affects tenants facing non-payment evictions who have had a financial hardship, like a loss of income or increased medical expenses, since COVID started. Whether or not you have a lease, landlords can serve tenants with a notice for non-payment of rent and bring them to court when it expires. However, if the tenant qualifies and completes the proper declaration for the federal moratorium, the tenant should not be evicted. Contact Pine Tree Legal Assistance if you have gotten a notice to quit: <https://www.ptla.org/contact-us>.

**Q: What can I do if I can not afford to pay my rent?**

A: If you cannot pay your rent and your income or expenses have been affected by COVID, apply for rental assistance here: <https://www.mainehousing.org/programs-services/rental/rentaldetail/covid-19-rental-relief-program>

**Q: Do I have to move at the end of the Notice to Quit?**A: No. You can only be forced to move from your rental unit after your landlord takes you to court and the judge orders you to move. For more information on the eviction process go to Pine Tree Legal's website: [https://www.ptla.org/self-help/2652?f%5B0%5D=main\\_legal\\_topic%3A2730](https://www.ptla.org/self-help/2652?f%5B0%5D=main_legal_topic%3A2730).

### Program Overview: Changes, Rules and Timing

What were the biggest changes during the Maine State of Emergency?	Usual Program Rules	What is the timing?
<b>Food Assistance (SNAP)</b>		
Households that qualify get maximum benefit	Benefit amount determined by household size and income	Households will get the maximum benefits in July and their regular benefit starting in August
Very low and no income household who already qualify for the maximum benefits get an extra 15%	Benefit amount determined by household size and income	Households that already qualify for maximum benefits and have been getting an extra amount will continue to get this in July, August, and Sept.

What were the biggest changes during the Maine State of Emergency?	Usual Program Rules	What is the timing?
<b>Mainecare</b>		
Pandemic changes to Mainecare include no terminations, even if a member is over-income, and no premiums for programs like CHIP.	Eligibility determined by household size and income; some programs require premium payments.	Pandemic changes will continue until the end of the <b>Federal</b> Public Health Emergency.
<b>TANF</b> See Maine Equal Justice's Guide for more information: <a href="#">Click here</a>		
No "sanctions" approved	You can be "sanctioned (have your benefits reduced), if you do not participate as stated in your Family Contract. You cannot be sanctioned if you have "good cause" for not participating.	July 1st, but your Fedcap worker should be willing to work with you to create a Family Contract that works for you.
Pandemic extensions approved for families who have already had 60 months of benefits	TANF participants who have used 60 months can apply for other extensions. See above for more information.	July 1st
<b>Child Care Subsidy</b>		
No parent fees during the pandemic	Parent fees will continue to be waived through Sept. 2024.	October 1, 2024
<b>General Assistance</b>		
Many people who qualify for GA can reapply every 60 days	People must reapply for GA every 30 days	July 1, 2020
Every GA application is treated as an emergency	People who rely on GA for basic expenses like rent must save and bring in receipts for any purchases when they reapply	July 1, 2021
Workfare requirement is suspended	Able bodied people who get GA can be required to do volunteer work (workfare)	July 1, 2021

What were the biggest changes during the Maine State of Emergency?	Usual Program Rules	What is the timing?
<b>Unemployment</b>		
People who qualify for Unemployment benefits receive an extra \$300/week which does not “count” as income for other benefits.	The extra \$300/week will continue through September 4, 2021. It will not “count” as income for other benefits.`	September 4, 2021
No “waiting week”	New claimants and claimants opening a new benefit year will not be paid benefits for the first week of eligibility	July 30, 2021
<b>Eviction</b>		
Landlords must provide a 45-day notice for no-cause eviction	Landlords must provide a 30-day notice for no-cause eviction	July 1, 2021
Landlords must provide a 30-day notice for eviction for non-payment of rent	Landlords must provide a 7-day notice for eviction for non-payment of rent.	July 1, 2021
If you cannot pay your rent and your income or expenses have been affected by COVID, apply for rental assistance right away.	Apply here: <a href="https://www.mainehousing.org/programs-services/rental/rentaldetail/covid-19-rental-relief-program">https://www.mainehousing.org/programs-services/rental/rentaldetail/covid-19-rental-relief-program</a>	Apply for help right away