COVID-19 Federal Response and Public Benefits
April 20, 2020
Federal Legislative Response

- **HR 6074** Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations (3/4)
- **HR 6201** Families First Coronavirus Response Act (3/18)
- **HR 748** Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act (3/27)
- Already discussing additional legislation to respond to growing economic crisis
Increased Federal Funds for Medicaid

• Temporary 6.2 percentage point increase in based federal Medicaid matching rate (FMAP) during public health emergency
  – Does not increase matching rate for expansion group
  – CHIP matching goes up by 4.35 percentage points
  – Conditional on “maintenance of effort” or MOE
MOE for Medicaid

- Disenrollment freeze as of March 18
  - Only exceptions are for voluntary request, known not to be a state resident (including death)
  - Includes children aging out of child group, pregnant women post 60 days postpartum
- No new restrictive eligibility enrollment standards, methodologies or procedures as of Jan 1.
- No new or increased premiums
- No cost-sharing for COVID-19 testing or treatment
SNAP Improvements

• Suspends implementation of three-month time limit for unemployed workers without children (ABAWDs)

• States can issue emergency supplemental benefits
  – FNS is currently approving for up to two months
  – Households can have their benefits “topped off” to the maximum benefit level
  – Nearly all states have adopted this
Increased Flexibility in SNAP

- Many offices are closed for in person visits
- FFCRA gave broad flexibility to modify enrollment, renewal requirements
  - Extend certification periods
  - Adapt telephonic signature requirements
  - Adjust interview, quality control requirements
  - Stay at home order can be treated as “collateral contact” for evidence of job loss
- But no Disaster SNAP, no waiver of student eligibility requirements
Child Nutrition Programs

• Allow online or phone applications for WIC
  – Participants can self-report information about health status
• “Grab and go” meal options for school meals and meals provided by child care programs
• Pandemic EBT allows states to put food assistance to replace school meals on SNAP EBT cards
Pandemic EBT

• For children who were getting free or reduced price lunch from schools that are closed.
  – Paid on EBT card that can used for food only
  – Estimated to average about $114/child/month
  – Likely to be paid on SNAP card, but not subject to SNAP immigrant restrictions, public charge.

• As of April 17, only 2 states have been approved for P-EBT
  – MI and RI
  – About 10 more have applied
CARES Act Economic Impact Rebate

- $1200 per qualifying adult
- $500 per child under 17
- Must have social security number to qualify
  - Whole household disqualified if one spouse only has ITIN, except for military spouses
- Ineligible if can be claimed as dependent by someone else
- Based on 2019 tax return if filed
  - Based on 2018 return if 2019 hasn’t been filed
The IRS is committed to helping you get your Economic Impact Payment as soon as possible. The payments, also referred to by some as stimulus payments, are automatic for most taxpayers. No further action is needed by taxpayers who filed tax returns in 2018 and 2019 and most seniors and retirees.

See if you are eligible for an Economic Impact Payment.

If you are eligible, use our guide to figure out which IRS tool you should use to get your payment.

**Filers: Get Your Payment**

Use the “Get My Payment” application to:

- Check your payment status
- Confirm your payment type: direct deposit or check
- Enter your bank account information for direct deposit if we don’t have your direct deposit information and we haven’t sent your payment yet

[Get My Payment]

**Update your bank account or mailing address**

- If we don’t have your direct deposit information from your 2018 or 2019 return – and we haven’t yet sent your payment – use the Get My Payment application to let us know where to send your direct deposit.
- **2019 Filers:** We will send your payment using the information you provided with your 2019 tax return. You will not be able to change it.
- **2018 Filers:** If you need to change your account information or mailing address, file your 2019 taxes electronically as soon as possible. That is the only way to let us know your new information.

**Non-Filers: Enter Your Payment Info Here**

If you don’t file taxes, use the “Non-Filers: Enter Your Payment Info Here” application to provide simple information so you can get your payment.

You should use this application if:

- You did not file a 2018 or 2019 federal income tax return because your gross income was under $12,200 ($24,400 for married couples). This includes people who had no income. Or
- You weren’t required to file a 2018 or 2019 federal income tax return for other reasons.

Do not use this application if you receive the benefits below. If you receive these benefits, we already have your information and you will receive $1,200.

- Social Security retirement, disability (SSDI), or survivor benefits
- Railroad Retirement and Survivor Benefits

**Special note:** People in these groups who have qualifying children under age 17 can use this application to claim the $500 payment per child.

[Non-Filers: Enter Payment Info Here]

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Note: We are currently unable to process individual paper tax returns due to the COVID-15 outbreak.
Interactions with Other Programs

• Social Security and SSI recipients will get automatically
  – Others must file taxes or fill out form.

• Like other tax refunds, not counted as income for means-tested benefits, and disregarded as an asset for 12 months. (26 U.S. Code § 6409)

• Can not be intercepted for past-due taxes, student loans, or UI overpayments, but can be intercepted for child support payments owed.
Some Relief for Immigrant Families, But Not Enough

• Funding for COVID-19 testing for uninsured, and increased funding for community health centers
• Cash assistance for immigrants with SSNs, including DACA and TPS holders
• Expanded nutrition assistance (Pandemic EBT, expanded WIC provisions, etc.)
• Expansion of unemployment insurance, including for independent contractors
Many Immigrant Families Left Out of Federal Response

• Bills did not lift the underlying restrictions in Medicaid and SNAP
  – As a result, many immigrants remain excluded from health care and SNAP, including DACA and TPS recipients, many green card holders (residing less than 5 years in the US), and undocumented immigrants
  – Serious implications for access to COVID-19 testing and treatment

• Confusion and fear over policies like public charge are likely to limit use of health services and benefits that families are eligible for (e.g. P-EBT)
Many Immigrant Families Left Out of Federal Response

- Workers must have SSN and be work authorized to collect economic impact payments or unemployment benefits (including PUA)
  - As a result 2 million U.S. citizen spouses and 4.1 million U.S. citizen children in mixed-status families will be denied critical economic assistance
  - A mixed-status family with 1 U.S. citizen spouse and 2 U.S. citizen children losing out on $2,200 in cash relief

Photo credit to the Washington Post

Protecting Immigrant Families reference guide
Thank you

Elizabeth Lower-Basch
Director, Income and Work Supports
elowerbasch@clasp.org

CLASP COVID-19 Response Page
https://www.clasp.org/clasp-responds-covid-19