

Chapter 388-437 WAC
EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE FOR FOOD STAMPS

Last Update: 3/1/22

WAC

388-437-0001 388-437-0005 388-437-0015	Disaster food stamp program. Changes to food assistance in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Good cause extension of Social Security number (SSN) requirement for basic food applicants during COVID-19.
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WAC 388-437-0001 Disaster food stamp program. (1) In the event of a disaster, the department works with the United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) to change some requirements for the Washington Basic Food program and help ensure that people in a disaster area have access to food. This is known as the disaster food stamp program.

(2) If the President of the United States has declared a portion of the state as a federal disaster area, we ask FNS to allow use of the disaster food stamp program for the areas impacted by the disaster. Both of the following conditions must be met:

(a) People's normal access to buy food has been disrupted; and

(b) These commercial channels have since been restored with reasonable access and sufficient food supplies as determined by FNS.

(3) The department will implement any disaster food stamp program as approved by FNS.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 74.04.050, 74.04.055, 74.04.057, 74.08.090. WSR 05-23-028, § 388-437-0001, filed 11/8/05, effective 12/9/05; WSR 98-16-044, § 388-437-0001, filed 7/31/98, effective 9/1/98.]

WAC 388-437-0005 Changes to food assistance in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Starting March 2020, assistance units (AUs) eligible for either federal or state-funded food assistance, or both, will receive emergency allotments that bring the AU up to the maximum benefit for their household size.

(1) The amount is the maximum food assistance benefit allotment for your AU size under WAC 388-478-0060(1) less the amount received under WAC 388-450-0162 (4)(b).

(2) Beginning April 2021, AUs that receive less than \$95.00 in emergency allotments under WAC 388-437-0005(1) will receive a minimum emergency allotment of \$95.00.

(3) AUs receiving zero benefits due to income do not qualify for an emergency allotment unless the zero benefit is due to a prorated issuance in the first month of eligibility, as described in WAC 388-412-0015(4), with ongoing months above zero benefits.

(4) Emergency allotments will continue each month until:

(a) The secretary for health and human services rescinds the public health emergency declaration that was issued on January 27, 2020, under section 319 of the Public Health Service Act;

(b) The state-issued emergency or disaster declaration expires;
or

(c) The food and nutrition service directs otherwise.

(5) Emergency allotments for state-funded food assistance will continue each month, contingent on the availability of state funds.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 74.04.500, 74.04.510, 74.08A.120 and H.R. 6201, § 2302. WSR 22-06-084, § 388-437-0005, filed 3/1/22, effective

4/1/22. Statutory Authority: RCW 74.04.500, 74.04.510, 74.08A.120 and H.R. 6201. WSR 21-07-098, § 388-437-0005, filed 3/22/21, effective 4/22/21.]

WAC 388-437-0015 Good cause extension of Social Security number (SSN) requirement for basic food applicants during COVID-19. Applicants for food benefits must provide an SSN under WAC 388-476-0005(1) to qualify. Those who do not have an SSN must apply for one and provide it to DSHS when issued.

(1) For applicants with an initial application date of March 1, 2020, or later, who have established good cause for failure to provide an SSN, the good cause period is extended for three months, in addition to the application month and the following month under WAC 388-476-0005 (5)(a), for a total of up to five months.

(2) To continue receiving benefits beyond the five month good cause period, the applicant must show good cause for failure to apply for an SSN on a monthly basis in accordance with WAC 388-476-0005 (5)(b).

(3) Adjustments under subsection (1) of this section will continue each month until the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service no longer approves these adjustments.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 74.04.050, 74.04.055, 74.04.057, 74.04.510 and 74.08.090. WSR 21-16-083, § 388-437-0015, filed 8/2/21, effective 9/4/21.]