

GENERAL

The Mississippi Elderly Simplified Application Project (ESAP) is a demonstration project designed to help simplify the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) application process for households consisting entirely of elderly (age 60 and older) persons. The goal of the project is to promote SNAP enrollment among eligible elderly citizens by providing a simpler method of applying for and maintaining eligibility for SNAP benefits.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

To be determined eligible for ESAP, the household must meet the following criteria:

- All household members are age 60 or over
- No receipt of earned income
- No receipt of SNAP benefits through the Mississippi Combined Application Project (MSCAP)

All households meeting ESAP eligibility are mandatory for ESAP and are ineligible for SNAP outside of the ESAP project.

APPLICATION PROCESSING

If a case is identified as ESAP eligible, the county should send the appropriate denial/closure notice. MAVERICS will automatically carc the case to ESAP/861. If the case is an initial application, it will be processed for the original application date. If the case was ongoing before closure, it will be processed for the following benefit month.

When a case is identified as ESAP mandatory prior to or during the interview process for application, reapplication, or recertification, the county worker will:

1. Distribute and explain the ESAP pamphlet,
2. Have the individual complete and sign the MDHS-EA-901 ESAP application,
3. Distribute and explain the MDHS-EA-901B ESAP Rights and Responsibilities,
4. Distribute and explain the MDHS-EA-905A ESAP Interim Reporting pamphlet,
5. Scan the application to the electronic ESAP inbox,
6. Scan any supporting documents to the case record in Interwoven/Worksite

When a case is identified as ESAP after the interview process, the worker should use the information on the completed MDHS-EA-900 to fill out the MDHS-EA-901 ESAP application.

The MDHS-EA-901 ESAP application should be scanned to the ESAP inbox for processing. Any supporting documents should be scanned to the case record in Interwoven/Worksite.

Note: In some instances, the county office may register a new application, determine the household to be eligible for ESAP, and proceed to deny the application and transfer the case to the ESAP Unit. Upon receipt, the ESAP Unit will place the case in “received” status for processing. During ESAP application processing, changes may be discovered or occur that cause the case to be ineligible for ESAP benefits. In such instances, the ESAP Unit will transfer the case back to the county of residence in “received” status and notify the county office to process the application.

ESAP households will self-declare information used to determine eligibility, such as shelter expenses. However, other than a Medicare premium, the household must provide verification of medical expenses in order to receive the corresponding deduction. Non-citizen status must be verified if questionable. Additionally, information that is not verified through federal computer matches such as SDX, Bendex, IEVS, etc., may require verification if considered questionable. ESAP households will not be required to complete an interview in order to have eligibility determined, but the applicant may have an interview granted if requested. Eligibility and benefit amounts will be determined using the same criteria as regular SNAP households (including expedited service).

REPORTING AND HANDLING CHANGES

ESAP households are considered to be Change Reporting households, meaning that certain changes must be reported to eligibility staff by the 10th of the month following the month of the change. Reportable changes include the following:

- Change in address and any resulting change in shelter and utility costs
- Persons moving in or out of the home
- Amount of legally obligated child support paid by the household, if any
- Changes of more than \$50 a month in the amount of unearned income from a public source (social security, SSI, Veterans benefits, unemployment benefits, etc.)
- Changes of more than \$100 a month in the amount of unearned income from a private source (retirement /pensions, child support, cash gift, etc.)
- If a household goes to work, the change should be reported within 10 days of receipt of the first paycheck
- Changes in recurring medical expenses

When an ESAP household incurs a one-time medical expense, the change may be reported by means of the MDHS-EA-905-ESAP Interim Report form provided to the household each year. This is the only time in which a non-recurring, one-time medical expense change may be acted on, regardless of when such change may have been reported. Changes in recurring medical expenses will be acted on upon report by the household. For all medical expenses, verification is required.

When an ESAP household reports a change to the local county office in person, the change should be taken according to SNAP policy. The change information should then be scanned to the ESAP Inbox for handling. When an ESAP household reports a change by telephone, refer the household to the ESAP Unit at 1 800 948 4060.

OTHER CHANGES

If a client reports a change during the certification period which would result in ESAP eligibility, the 901 ESAP should be mailed to the client along with a request for information. If the application is returned, the county should follow standard procedures in transferring the case to the ESAP Unit. If the 901 ESAP is not returned, since the client would be a mandatory ESAP, the case should be closed for failure to return information.

REPLACEMENT OF BENEFITS

Requests for replacement of benefits due to a household disaster for ESAP cases will be handled by the ESAP Unit. If a disaster replacement is requested at the county level, the CSR will complete the MDHS-EA-508, Household Statement of Loss Due to Household Disaster, and scan the form to the ESAP Unit for processing. If the client makes a request for a disaster replacement to the ESAP Unit, the ESAP worker will complete the MDHS-EA-508 and mail to the client for signature. When the form is returned, the replacement will be processed.

CERTIFICATION PERIODS

ESAP households will not be given a fixed certification period. However, such households will be required to return an interim report provided each year for reporting changes. Failure of the household to return a completed interim report yearly will cause the ESAP case to close. Refer to discussion of interim reports later in this chapter.

TRANSFERS

When transferring a case to the ESAP Unit, the case must be registered, closed or denied, and handled as a reapplication to be processed from the original application date. Case transfers between the local county office and the ESAP Unit (County 861) will occur according to the following guidelines:

From County Office to ESAP

If a household reports a change which would cause their regular SNAP case to become an ESAP case, the case must be transferred to the ESAP Unit. The county worker should:

1. Distribute and explain the ESAP pamphlet,
2. Have the individual complete and sign the MDHS-EA-901 ESAP application,
If the household is not available to complete the ESAP application, the worker should:
Use the information on the completed MDHS-EA-900 to complete the ESAP application
3. Distribute and explain the MDHS-EA-901B ESAP Rights and Responsibilities,
4. Distribute and explain the MDHS-EA-905A ESAP Interim Reporting pamphlet,
5. Scan the ESAP application to the electronic ESAP inbox,
6. Scan any supporting documents to the case record in Interwoven/Worksite
7. Ensure the case is current, correct and all pending actions, such as IEVS, claims, etc. have been handled
8. Close the case via the F923 (MAVS will automatically carc to 861)

From ESAP to County Office

If a household in ESAP reports a change which results in ineligibility for ESAP, but potential eligibility remains for regular SNAP benefits, the individual will be referred to the local county office and the ESAP Unit worker will prepare the case for transfer by:

1. Ensuring the case is current, correct and all pending actions, such as IEVS, claims, etc. have been handled.
2. Documenting and closing the case, notifying the individual of ESAP closure and possible eligibility for regular SNAP benefits in the county. The notice will tell the individual to contact the local DHS office if they wish to apply.

INTERIM REPORTS – ESAP

ESAP households will be subject to the same requirement as regular SNAP households to report changes through an Interim Report (IR). ESAP households will be required to submit completed interim reports on an annual basis. IR's will be mailed on the 22nd day of the 11th month of eligibility. The IR will be used for reporting changes in income, household size, and medical expenses. Reported changes in medical expenses will require verification. When interim reports are processed, households will be subject to a resource test if the household fails the gross income test but passes the net income test.

WTPQ

The Wire Third Party Query Process (WTPQ) in MAVERICS will verify Social Security and SSI information on ESAP household members once a year. MAVERICS will automatically generate the query process for these households on the 20th of the month prior to the due month of the ESAP interim report. For example, the WTPQ process will occur September 20 for ESAP households whose interim report is due October 5.

ESAP INQUIRIES

Any inquiry concerning the ESAP Program may be referred to the ESAP Unit as 1-800-948-4060. When an ESAP client calls the county office with questions about their case, refer them to the ESAP Unit.