



COVID-19 EDITION

# PUBLIC BENEFITS

NASSAU AND SUFFOLK COUNTIES

Last updated July 6, 2020. The situation is changing rapidly.  
Please check our website for the latest updates.



## Is DSS open? Do I have to go in person?

DSS is still required to provide service during regular office hours, but most DSS business can now be done remotely. The in-person interview requirement is waived in most situations. We recommend that whenever you have business with DSS, you submit all requests or information in writing and keep a copy of your letter along with proof of sending. You can still request to meet in person. Your local DSS office also may have set up a drop-box for applications.



## I am worried that my Medicaid benefits may be terminated.

No one who had Medicaid as of March 19 will lose coverage during the COVID-19 pandemic. If your Medicaid authorization ends March 31, 2020 or later, it will automatically be extended by 12-months.



## I had a Temporary Assistance or SNAP recertification scheduled for March. What is going to happen?

If DSS processed your application by about March 23, 2020, then your Temporary Assistance/ Medicaid or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits may be adjusted as a result of that recertification. This could mean that your benefits will be terminated if DSS believes that you are no longer eligible. You should receive notice about this in the mail along with an explanation about how to request a fair hearing if you disagree.

If DSS did not process your recertification paperwork by late March (about March 23), then you should have been automatically extended for six months. If your recertification was scheduled between March 23 and May 31, 2020. Unfortunately, you may not receive any notice about this. Instead, you will receive recertification paperwork in the mail when it is time for you to recertify.

**If you are not sure about your recertification status, contact your caseworker and ask for an update and confirmation of your new recertification deadline.**



## I have a Temporary Assistance or SNAP recertification coming up in April or May. What should I expect?

Temporary Assistance (TA)/Medicaid (MA) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) cases with certification periods expiring in April or May 2020 will be automatically extended for three months. You likely will not receive any written notice about the extension. Instead, you will receive recertification paperwork in the mail when it is time to recertify. Contact your caseworker and ask for an update and confirmation that your recertification deadline was extended.

If you only receive Medicaid, then your Medicaid benefits should be extended by 12 months.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, those enrolled in SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) who are not yet receiving the maximum benefit will receive an additional payment to bring them up to this amount for the months of **March through** June. The supplemental benefits for June will be delivered by July 4 directly to eligible recipients' existing EBT accounts.

*We make every effort to keep referral information, legal educational materials, and related forms up-to-date. However, the situation is rapidly evolving, and we do not maintain materials on external sites. We cannot guarantee the accuracy of this information, nor are we responsible for any legal advice, information or assistance that you may obtain from external sources. They are provided for general information only.*



### **I can't meet DSS requirements because of coronavirus. Will I be sanctioned?**

Coronavirus has caused businesses and childcare providers to close and made transportation more difficult.

Drug and alcohol treatment centers may also be closed or only providing phone-based services. If these problems or directly health-related problems have made it difficult for you to meet DSS requirements, let your local DSS office know. Make sure to send in a written explanation with as much detail as possible and keep proof of sending. The state has asked local DSS offices to grant "good cause" waivers when problems related to coronavirus make it difficult for you to meet normal DSS requirements.



### **I have a fair hearing scheduled or want to request a fair hearing. What should I expect?**

If you cannot appear at the hearing because of coronavirus, no negative action will be taken. Instead, the Office of Administrative Hearings will adjourn the hearing. If you are receiving aid continuing, you will still receive it until the outcome of the hearing.

If you have an upcoming hearing or need to request a hearing, OTDA will reach out to offer the option of a telephone hearing. OTDA is in the process of adjourning and rescheduling thousands of fair hearings. You should receive a new date by mail or email. To request a hearing online go to [otda.ny.gov/hearings/request](https://otda.ny.gov/hearings/request). If you want the hearing held a specific way (telephone or in person) note that on the form and also explicitly request Aid to Continue.

If you are facing an urgent need for assistance (emergency SNAP, Temporary Housing Assistance, or utility shutoff), please call Nassau Suffolk Law Services at (631) 232-2400 (Western Suffolk), (631) 369-1112 (Eastern Suffolk) or (516) 292-8100 (Nassau).



### **I can't complete my SNAP or TA work requirement because of coronavirus. What should I do?**

**SNAP:** The Able-Bodied Adult Without Dependents work requirement has been waived for SNAP until the month following the end of the public health emergency until further notice. This includes people who previously lost SNAP benefits because they did not comply with work requirements. [Click here to learn more.](#)

**Temporary Assistance (TA):** The TA work requirement waiver originally set to expire May 15, 2020 has been extended until further notice. You may also be able to count remote-learning programs until further notice. You should report to your local DSS office that you are not able to complete your work or training program, or that you are participating in an online program because of coronavirus. Make sure to send in a written explanation with as much detail as possible and always keep proof of sending. [Click here to learn more.](#)



### **Are the stimulus payments counted as income for SSI or other public benefits?**

Updated information regarding how payments are counted for public benefits [can be found here.](#)



### **Where can I go to learn more about programs to help people through the public health emergency?**

- 211 Long Island: [Click here for website](#)
- Paul, Weiss: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Relief Center](#)
- Nutrition Resources: [Click here to view](#)
- LWWTf: [New York State Public Benefits](#)

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