

Government Shutdown Impact to FoodShare Information for Consortia, Member Services, Other As of January 15, 2019 11 a.m.

Background

As of 6 p.m. Tuesday, January 8, 2019, the federal Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has directed Wisconsin to issue FoodShare benefits for the month of February on or before January 20, 2019.

Scope of Impact

All FoodShare members (approximately 321,000 households in Wisconsin)

Note: The government shutdown does not affect health care programs like BadgerCare Plus, Medicaid, and SeniorCare at this time.

Information

- The Department of Health Services (DHS) continues to work with FNS to understand the impacts the partial government shutdown may have on FoodShare members and March benefits.
- February FoodShare benefits will be available on QUEST cards as early as January 20. It is important that IM workers who talk to FoodShare households about the early issuance of February benefits make households aware:
 - This is an early issuance of the normal February monthly benefit amount, not an extra benefit.
 - FoodShare benefits will NOT be put on QUEST cards in February.
 - Households should plan and budget their FoodShare accordingly.
- Cases will be processed as usual after January 18. DHS will continue to run daily batches and households may see their February benefits posted to their cards in January. DHS will provide more details as we receive them.
- DHS's understanding is that March FoodShare benefits have not been guaranteed. Therefore, notices issued on or after January 19, 2019 will show households that they will receive \$0 in FoodShare benefits for March and will contain a note about the \$0 being due to the government shutdown. The note will appear on all notices whether the applicant or member is enrolled in FoodShare or not.
 - The text on the notices reads: Note: If you have applied or are enrolled in FoodShare, your benefits may be impacted by the federal government shutdown. This means you may get a \$0.00 benefit in any month until the shutdown ends. You cannot ask for a fair hearing for this change.
- At this time, we expect that QUEST cards should work at authorized retailers through the government shutdown. DHS will communicate any change in this as soon as we are able.

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- The DHS press release will be released on Tuesday, January 15. It contains information about other FNS-funded programs administered by DHS such as Women, Infants and Children (WIC), the Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), and SNAP-Ed programs.
- All households that have an email address in CARES will receive an email alerting them that February FoodShare benefits will be issued as early as January 20. That email should go out on Wednesday, January 16.
- For individuals who are ABAWDs, the ABAWD work requirement will still be enforced in February despite early benefit issuance. Workers should continue to refer individuals to FSET as normal. The FSET program will continue operations as normal.
- DHS will be sending out more information and messaging as it becomes available. Up-to-date information will be available at: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/foodshare/index.htm>
- DHS intends to communicate known impacts as they become available through press releases, social media, [webpages](#), etc.