

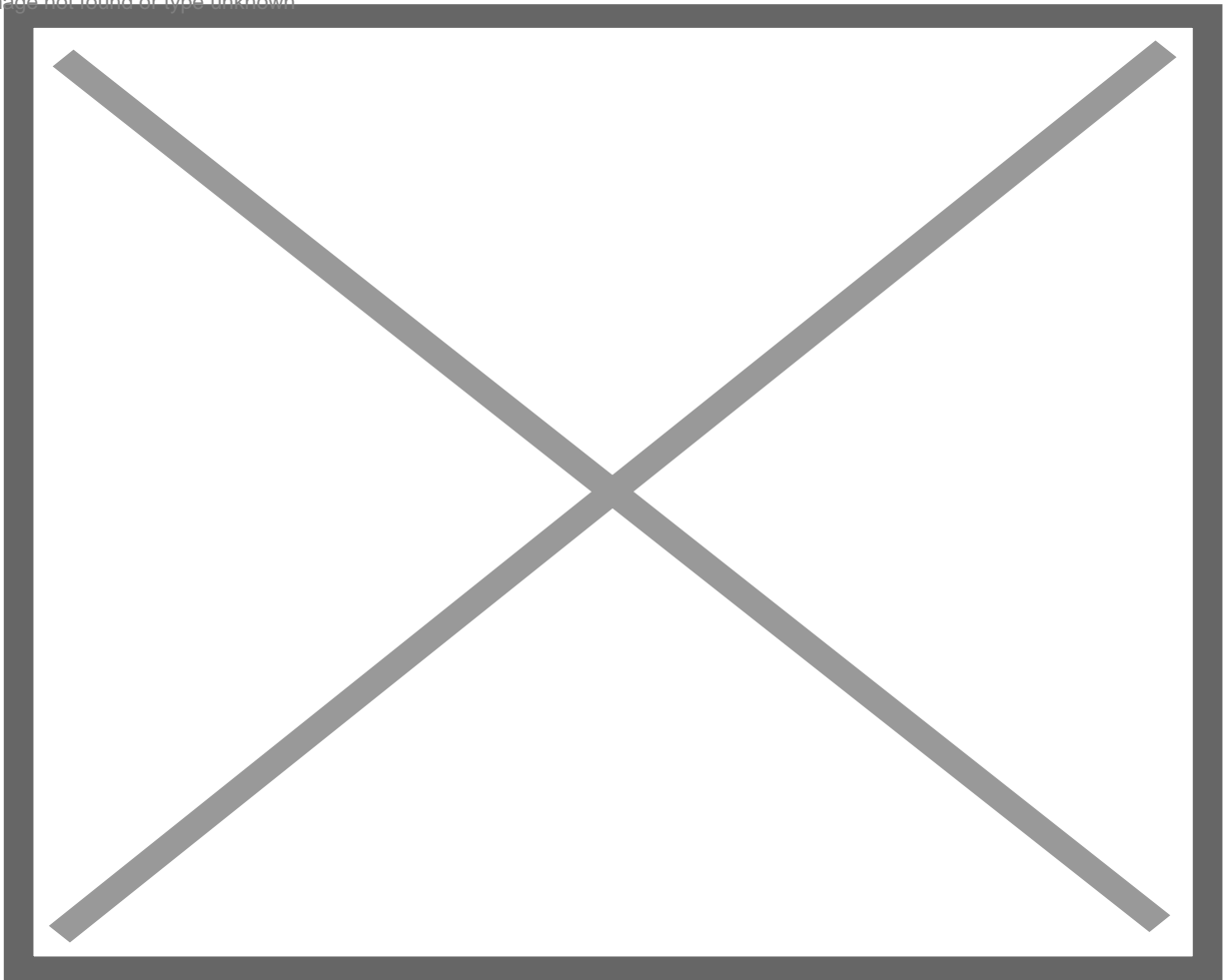
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Food Stamp, Cash Assistance Recipients to Get Automatic 6-Month Extension, Increase in Maximum Allotment

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The V.I. Department of Human Services (DHS) said Tuesday it was alerted that the USVI has received a temporary increase to the maximum Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, also called food stamps) allotments due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

According to the release, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, signed by President Donald Trump on Sunday, increases food stamp benefits by raising maximum allotments to 115 percent of the June 2020 value of the Thrifty Food Plan (TFP). The legislation requires that the increased maximum allotments take effect beginning on January 1, 2021 and remain for each subsequent month through June 30, 2021.

For current USVI SNAP recipients, the temporary increased maximum allotments beginning on January 1, 2021 through June 30, 2021 are as follows:

Maximum SNAP Allotments for U.S. Virgin Islands	
Household Size:	Increased Allotment
1	\$301
2	\$553
3	\$792
4	\$1,005
5	\$1,194
6	\$1,433
7	\$1,584
8	\$1,810
<i>Each additional person</i>	\$226

Automatic 6-Month Extension of the Certification Period

DHS also notified current food stamp and Cash Assistance (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), Aid to the Aged, Blind and Disabled (AABD) Households that are due to re-certify (over the next six months, including December 2020), that their certification period has been extended for six months: January 1 to June 30, 2021.

"That means on January 1, 2021 SNAP and/or CASH benefits will be automatically uploaded to their cards," D.H.S. said.

All current SNAP or CASH recipients are asked to disregard any Notice of Expiration you may have received in the mail for an appointment this month, said Human Services. "Clients do not need to call or visit the SNAP Offices. However, all clients should look out for a letter in the mail informing them of their next recertification appointment," stated the release.

The SNAP offices can be reached at: (340) 772-7100 in the St. Croix district or (340) 774-2399 in the St. Thomas/St. John district.

Updated Contact Information Critical

Though this automatic six-month extension has been granted, if the SNAP offices do not have your current and accurate mailing and phone contact information, you may experience a disruption in benefits, D.H.S warned.

To ensure that there is no disruption in the receipt of your benefits, note the following:

1. The DHS SNAP offices are receiving a high volume of “undeliverable” mail packets. Please contact the Certification offices at the phone numbers or emails below to ensure that they have the correct (per the post office) mailing address and phone number. DHS has no way of contacting clients without accurate and working phone numbers, mailing addresses and email addresses.
2. Email or call the Certification offices and provide the name of the head of household or case number and a working phone number so that we may contact you if you have been unable to reach a staff person.