



An investment that works.

SNAP & Medicaid Changes

Likely to Affect Participant Workers at Employment Social Enterprises

Learn how ESEs can help workers navigate and mitigate the impact

What is changing?

SNAP payments are decreasing, and Medicaid is requiring re-verification of eligibility to maintain enrollment. These changes are likely to directly impact ESE participant workers.

- **SNAP:** Sometimes branded differently at the state level, the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is also referred to as food stamps. The program bolsters the grocery budget of millions of individuals and households nationwide. Because of steep increases in unemployment and general uncertainty during the pandemic, Congress had approved temporary increases to address food insecurity. But the passage of the 2023 Consolidated Appropriations Act ended the emergency allotments after February 2023.¹ At the time of this update, all states have ended temporary pandemic-related bonus payments (a.k.a. allotments). Millions of Americans have now seen a decrease in their federal food assistance. This decrease happened in parallel with rising food costs. The end of the bonus payments means a sizable reduction in food benefits for ESE participant workers in households receiving SNAP. *IMPORTANT NOTE: SNAP changes highlighted in this memo are not related to the new SNAP work requirement signed into law through the Fiscal Responsibility Act in June 2023.*
- **Medicaid:** Medicaid is a joint federal-state program that provides health insurance for people with limited income and resources. Like SNAP, Medicaid may also go by different names in different states. To increase access to healthcare during the pandemic, Medicaid recipients have not been required to reapply or confirm their continued eligibility in recent years. This temporary “continuous enrollment” provision is concluding, and states are required to re-verify that everyone enrolled in Medicaid still qualifies for the program. State timelines for implementation of this change vary (Table 1), but the process is expected to result in millions of recipients losing their Medicaid health insurance (a.k.a. being “dis-enrolled”). In fact, as of June 2023, at least 1,078,000 Medicaid enrollees have already been disenrolled.² This is a process change, not an eligibility change. However, workers whose income increased since enrollment may find themselves no longer eligible for Medicaid upon re-verification.

Who is affected by these changes and how?

All beneficiaries of SNAP and Medicaid are affected by these changes because the changes stem from federal policy. Research shows that emergency SNAP allotments helped keep 4.2 million people above

¹ <https://time.com/6258420/snap-benefits-post-pandemic-cuts/>

² <https://www.kff.org/medicaid/issue-brief/medicaid-enrollment-and-unwinding-tracker/#:~:text=At%20least%201%2C078%2C000%20Medicaid%20enrollees,provide%20data%20on%20renewed%20enrollees.>

the poverty line in the last quarter of 2023, mostly supporting Black and Latinx population.³ Timelines for when changes take effect differ across states and are summarized in Table 1. Low-income residents in most states will experience the double-punch of both SNAP pandemic bonuses and continuous enrollment in Medicaid concluding.

How will these changes impact ESE workers?

- **SNAP:** Benefit decreases vary dependent upon household composition, size, and income, but every household's SNAP benefits are decreasing. The average *per person* reduction is approximately \$90 per month. SNAP households with workers who earn above the poverty level will experience some of the greatest reductions. Depending on individual circumstances, SNAP beneficiaries earning between 100% and 130% of the Federal Poverty Level (roughly the equivalent of \$12/hour for 25-35 hours a week) are likely to see benefit cuts in the range of \$150 to \$300 per month.
- **Medicaid:** Recipients with limited English proficiency or disabilities and those who have relocated or have unstable housing are the most likely to not receive or not understand communications from their state's Medicaid-administering agency. As a result, they could fail to take the steps necessary to re-verify and lose Medicaid coverage. Additionally, individuals who have increased their income may no longer qualify for Medicaid. The number of Medicaid enrollees who will lose coverage is uncertain. KFF, formerly known as the Kaiser Family Foundation, estimates that between 5.3 and 14.2 million people nationwide will lose Medicaid coverage during the next 12 months.

Most states are initiating Medicaid re-verification requirements in April through July of this year (see Table 1) and the process will extend over months. Although the requirement to re-verify is universal, the impact on benefits receipt will depend upon the circumstances of the individual. Many current Medicaid enrollees will still be eligible but will need to provide updated documentation. A subset of enrollees who have increased their income may no longer qualify for Medicaid and need to seek coverage elsewhere.

Why does REDF believe these changes are especially important for ESEs to pay attention to?

- **SNAP:** Among those expected to be most affected by the SNAP and Medicaid changes are benefit recipients who are working but earning modest incomes, potentially including your ESE's participant workers and alumni. SNAP benefits decrease as household income approaches 130% of Federal Poverty Level (approximately \$19,000 or 30 hours a week at \$12/hour for an individual). Working households on SNAP often receive very low benefits under regular SNAP rules, but the pandemic bonuses significantly and temporarily increased what they received each month. These working households may now experience reductions of \$250 a month or more.
- **Medicaid:** ESEs aim to help workers grow their incomes; these are ESE success stories. But when it comes time to re-verify eligibility for Medicaid, some current participant workers or alumni will no longer qualify for the program. ESEs can help them look elsewhere for affordable health insurance.

³ <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/effect-reevaluated-thrifty-food-plan-and-emergency-allotments-supplemental>

What can our ESE do to support the stability of ESE workers and alumni?

➤ General Tips

- Notify your ESE workers in a way that does not cause more stress. Invite workers in for lunch and share updates or integrate updates and troubleshooting into regularly scheduled one-on-ones.
- Learn more about the specifics in your state, share information and invite dialogue with workers and alumni about the implications and impact.
- Review information previously collected or pull a report from your data system about benefits receipt to identify those individuals most likely to be affected so that employee success staff can engage them directly in conversation.

➤ Specific tips related to SNAP

- Increasing the frequency with which you inquire specifically about food security. For example, bring up the topic of the rising costs of food and ask questions like:
 - Have you noticed a change in your ability to afford the types or amount of food you like to eat?
 - Has your family changed your shopping or dining habits recently?
 - Have there been times in recent months when you were worried that your food would run out before you had money to buy more?
 - Do you ever eat less than you felt you should because there was not enough money for food?
- Learn more about the [specifics in your state](#).
- The lack of food can be traumatic for your workers. Stay attuned to behavioral and mood changes as well as disciplinary challenges among ESE workers that may reflect hunger or food access issues.
- Keep an emergency supply of food on hand for those in crisis.
- Support affected individuals in accessing [food banks, pantries, and meal programs](#).
- Seek to incorporate snacks and meals into programming or make them available on the worksite whenever financially feasible.
- Food related funding for your organization may be available through your local [Emergency Food and Shelter Program board](#).
- Encourage and support those who are pregnant, parents or grandparents of children under the age of five to apply for food assistance through the WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) program. Households can receive both WIC and SNAP simultaneously. A WIC pre-screening tool taking approximately 15 minutes to complete is available [here](#) and can be used by workers to assess their likelihood of eligibility.
- Provide the tools and language to your ESE workers to advocate for themselves when speaking to SNAP administrators. Remind ESE workers that it is important to notify SNAP administrators if they experience decreased income or increased expenses since their last recertification. Sharing these changes can result in increased benefits. Policies vary, but most states deduct expenses such as rent, utilities, childcare, child support, and medical costs for elderly or disabled household members from income for purposes of calculating eligibility and benefit levels.⁴

⁴ <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/recipient/eligibility>

➤ **Specific tips related to Medicaid**

- An ESE's goal should be helping workers maintain continuous and affordable health insurance coverage, regardless of the source of that coverage. Towards that end, ESEs should assist workers in preventing any disruptions to Medicaid coverage for administrative reasons, like lack of response or documentation.
- Inform participant workers and alumni that Medicaid will be requiring everyone to reverify their eligibility in the coming months.
- Share any additional information learned about the timeline or process in your state.
 - This [spreadsheet](#) has links to relevant documents for each state.
 - This [website](#) has flyers for each state.
- Assist ESE workers and alumni – especially those who are not very tech savvy – in updating their information with your Medicaid administering agency. In many states, individuals can create an account on the state Medicaid website where they can verify contact and other information, and update communication preferences. This can also usually be accomplished via calling the Medicaid agency, but extremely long hold times are likely at this time.
- Encourage participants and alumni to be on the lookout for, and responsive to, any communication from your state's Medicaid program. Assist with translation or interpretation, as necessary.
- Identify and partner organizations in your community that can assist workers in navigating Medicaid renewal. Resources can be found at [Localhelp.healthcare.gov](https://www.localhelp.healthcare.gov). ESEs are encouraged to filter “type of local help” by “Assisters.” Unlike the agents and brokers listed, Assisters are required to provide fair, impartial, and accurate information.

If workers are terminated from Medicaid coverage,

- But believe that they are still eligible and the termination was made in error, ESEs should encourage them:
 - To contact their [state Medicaid office](#) (it may require long wait times on the phone) and request a “fair hearing process” to appeal the decision.
 - Connect with a local [“Assister”](#) agency that may be able to assist them with their appeal.
- Because their income is too high, ESEs should:
 - Remind them that their children may still qualify for public health insurance coverage and help them confirm their children's status.
 - Make sure they understand that they should proactively seek out new insurance through their employer or the healthcare marketplaces prior to an illness or injury.
 - Support them in preparing questions to ask their employer or a spouse's employer about eligibility for and cost of employer-provided insurance coverage (note: those terminated from Medicaid should qualify for a “Special Enrollment Period” and not have to wait until a new open enrollment period to enroll in employer-subsidized coverage)
 - Adults under the age of 26 may be able to secure coverage under their parent's health insurance plan, if that plan is private. ESEs may need to coach young adults in how to enter into a formal arrangement with their parent(s) regarding who will pay for that coverage and support the young person in budgeting for those costs.
 - Connect them with a local [“Assister”](#) agency to help them identify health insurance options through government marketplaces/exchanges.

What else should our ESE be thinking about or doing given that we are an employer?

Some ESEs intentionally keep ESE workers at part-time hours to prolong their eligibility for public benefits like SNAP or Medicaid. These changes mean that, even at part-time hours, fewer workers will likely qualify for these benefit programs, or the dollar value of their benefits will be much lower. Considering these changes, your ESE may wish to reassess whether ESE workers are better off working just part-time and receiving benefits than working additional hours and earning more.

The policy of continuous Medicaid coverage throughout the pandemic may have caused some employers of low-income workers to become overly dependent on their workers being able to sustain public health insurance. Especially if you offer longer-term transitional employment or permanent employment, your enterprise may wish to revisit its own benefit policies and explore whether it may be feasible to extend coverage to more of your workers.

TABLE 1: Summary of SNAP Bonus Payment Expirations or Medicaid Reverifications by Date

	SNAP Bonuses Ended Spring 2023	SNAP Bonuses Ended Previously	Medicaid Reverification Resumes in April or May 2023	Medicaid Reverification Resumes in June or July 2023	Medicaid Reverification Resumes in October 2023
Alabama	X			X	
Alaska		X		X	
Arizona		X	X		
Arkansas		X	X		
California	X			X	
Colorado	X			X	
Connecticut	X		X		
Delaware	X			X	
District of Columbia	X		X		
Florida		X	X		
Georgia		X		X	
Hawaii	X			X	
Idaho		X	X		
Illinois	X			X	
Iowa		X	X		
Indiana		X	X		
Kansas	X		X		
Kentucky		X		X	
Louisiana	X			X	
Maine	X			X	
Maryland	X			X	
Massachusetts	X			X	
Michigan	X			X	
Minnesota	X			X	
Mississippi		X		X	
Missouri		X		X	
Montana		X		X	
Nebraska		X	X		
New Hampshire	X		X		
New Jersey	X			X	
New Mexico	X		X		
Nevada	X			X	

	SNAP Bonuses Ended Spring 2023	SNAP Bonuses Ended Previously	Medicaid Reverification Resumes in April or May 2023	Medicaid Reverification Resumes in June or July 2023	Medicaid Reverification Resumes in October 2023
North Carolina	X				
North Dakota		X		X	
Ohio	X		X		
Oklahoma	X		X		
Oregon	X				X
Pennsylvania	X		X		
Rhode Island	X			X	
South Carolina		X		X	
South Dakota		X	X		
Tennessee		X		X	
Texas	X			X	
Utah	X		X		
Vermont	X			X	
Virginia	X		X		
Washington	X			X	
West Virginia	X		X		
Wisconsin	X			X	
Wyoming		X	X		