

		PROCESS UPDATE NOTIFICATION			
		DATE OF NOTICE	March 25, 2020	IMPLEMENTATION DATE	March 26, 2020
SUBJECT	Families First Emergency Cash Assistance Program – COVID-19				
ID#	23.03-20.02	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> practice		AUTHORITY	1240-01-45
		<input type="checkbox"/> system			
RESPONSIBLE DIVISION/UNIT/POSITION(s)			Family Assistance Staff		

Purpose:

The Tennessee Department of Human Services (TDHS) will operate an Emergency Cash Assistance (ECA) program for families affected by Coronavirus disease (COVID-19). This ECA COVID-19 will offer short term benefits, **not to exceed two (2) months**, to families in Tennessee who meet the eligibility requirements.

The ECA- COVID-19 program application period will be open from March 26, 2020 through May 29, 2020. The department will reevaluate the need for this program at the end of this time period, pending availability of funds, as determined by the TDHS.

ECA COVID-19 Eligibility Requirements:

To be eligible for the ECA- COVID-19 program, the following criteria must be met:

- Families must include a dependent child under the age of eighteen (18) or a pregnant woman (regardless of trimester);
- The applicant must be a resident of TN;
- The applicant and household members must have valid social security numbers;
- The applicant’s resources must not exceed \$2000;
- The applicant must have been employed as of March 11, 2020, and must have experienced a temporary reduction in hours or income by at least 50% or be temporarily unemployed due to reasons related to COVID-19; and (If two-parent household applies at least one parent must meet the reduction/unemployment requirement.)
- The applicant’s gross monthly and/or unearned income (unemployment and/or other unearned income) must not exceed 85% of the State’s Median Income. See the chart below:

HH Size	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Gross Monthly Income	\$2,696	\$3,526	\$4,356	\$5,185	\$6,015	\$6,845	\$7,001	\$7,156

Note: Add \$156 for each person over 8.

ECA-COVID-19 Interview process and Acceptable Verifications:

- **No phone or face-to-face interview will be completed. Customers must attach income and resource verifications to the application for a review and approval.**
- **If the customer is known to ACCENT, the worker should ensure the information listed in the system is consistent with the information on the application. If unknown to ACCENT, the worker may use other resources available to TDHS such as Clearinghouse, SOLQ, or the Work Number to assist with validation. The customer’s signed declaration should be used if no other way is available to validate household members.**
- **Verification of income includes check stubs, a statement from employer, and unemployment compensation approval notice. Check stubs and/or a statement from the employer must be for 4 weeks with at least two weeks showing income prior to the loss or reduction due to COVID 19.**
- **Self-Employment income must be verified by providing self-employment license, most recent tax return filed, and/or verification of reduction or loss in income.**
- **Verification of resources include but are not limited to bank statements (checking/savings account).**

ECA-COVID-19 benefits amounts:

The ECA program provides cash payments to be spent as needed by families significantly impacted by the COVID-19 virus. Eligible households will receive two monthly payments in the following amounts based on household size:

- 1 – 2 persons: \$500
- 3 – 4 persons: \$750
- 5 + persons: \$1000

Households will be sent an EBT card within 5-7 days of approval via mail.

Procedures for ECA-COVID 19:

1. The Customer will complete the ECA application online at <https://tdhs.service-now.com/> and attach their income and resource verifications to the application.

Note: The system will not allow the submission of an application without an attachment. If the customer does not provide reliable verifications, the application must be denied. Reliable verifications include; statement from employer indicating loss of employment or at least 50% reduction of hours or pay due to COVID-19, bank statements for savings and/or checking accounts to verify available resources, and unemployment income verification. Income verifications must be for four weeks with at least two weeks showing income prior to loss or reduction due to COVID-19.

2. Once the application has been submitted by the customer, it will move to the “submitted application” queue.
3. The worker must click on the next application in the queue and assign the application to themselves.

4. The worker should review ACCENT for all applications to determine if the applicant is a current SNAP/TANF recipient.

Note: If customer is known to ACCENT, the worker should ensure information listed in the system is consistent with the information on application. If unknown to ACCENT, the worker may use other resources available to TDHS such as Clearinghouse, SOLQ, or the Work Number to assist with validation. Customer's signed declaration should be used if no other way is available to validate household members.

5. The worker should confirm that the application contains at least one child under the age of eighteen (18) or a pregnant woman.
6. The worker must confirm the verification submitted by the customer shows them being employed as of March 11, 2020 and has experienced a temporary reduction in hours or income by at least 50% or temporarily unemployed due to reasons related to COVID-19.
7. If customer reports having resources (checking and/or savings account), the worker must confirm the verification submitted shows the household has no more than \$2000 in resources.
8. The worker must review the income chart to determine if income is below the gross amount for the household size. Unearned income such as unemployment compensation must be included in eligibility determination.
9. All applications with required verifications must be processed within two days.
10. The worker will email the decision notice to the customer.

Additional Information:

1. Current receipt of other TDHS benefits, such as SNAP and Families First (FF), does not prevent a family from receiving ECA.
2. Customers can apply for both ECA-COVID after having received ECA-Tornado, if they meet both eligibility requirements.
3. Current FF and SNAP customers will receive their ECA benefits on their existing EBT card.
4. The worker **must** indicate if the customer receives either FF, SNAP, or both. The customer's RID number in ACCENT must be entered in the designated box for all customers who have an active FF and/or SNAP case.
5. Mailing addresses must be confirmed to ensure newly approved customers receive their EBT card via mail within 5-7 days of approval.

If you have any questions, please contact the Families First FamiliesFirst.DHS@tn.gov.