

## Government Shutdown and February Food Assistance

### **Due to the government shutdown, your February food benefits may be at risk.**

If your Food Assistance case is due for redetermination in January for February 2019 benefits:

- You must submit your redetermination no later than **Tuesday January 15th at noon** in order to receive benefits for February.
- You may submit your RRR via [PEAK](#), by fax at 303-271-4496 or 303-271-4040, or in-person at 900 Jefferson County Parkway, Suite 110.
- February benefits will issue to your card early on **January 20th**. Benefits not issued by after January 20th will not be issued until after the shutdown has been resolved.
- Due to the early release of February benefits please plan accordingly and wait until February 1st to begin spending your benefits. No additional benefits will be issued for February.
- Benefits after February are still to be determined.

## Answers to Frequently Asked Questions

Question:

What impact does the government shutdown have on my assistance benefits?

Answer:

- For Food Assistance, February benefits will be issued early.
  - A Food Assistance recipient may see February benefits available on their EBT card as early as January 16th.
  - These benefits are meant to last throughout the month of February.
  - There will be no additional benefits issued during the month of February.
- For cash assistance (such as Colorado Works, Old Age Pension and Aid to the Needy Disabled), there is no anticipated impact.
  - Benefits for these programs will be issued on their usual schedule.
- For medical assistance, there is no anticipated impact at this time.

Question:

What do I need to do as a current recipient of Food Assistance?

Answer:

- You need to take immediate action if you received a Food Assistance Redetermination (RRR) or Periodic Report Form (PRF) due in January, for February benefits.
  - **If you did receive an RRR or PRF, please ensure it is turned into the county department ASAP but no later than noon on January 15th so we can ensure you receive February benefits.**
  - We encourage you to complete this action in-person or through your [PEAK](#) account to ensure we receive it by that date.

- **RRR or PRF forms received after January 15th will receive benefits for February, as long as federal funding remains available.**
- If you currently receive Food Assistance but did not receive a Food Assistance RRR or PRF form that is due in January for February benefits, you will receive your February benefits as early as January 16th.

Question:

What should I do if the shutdown extends past February?

Answer:

- We strongly encourage you to try to stretch your benefits as long as possible. If the shutdown continues into March, we do not anticipate being able to issue benefits until the shutdown is lifted.
- SNAP Education classes may be available to you in your community.
  - Cooking Matters Colorado provides nutrition education classes that teach participants how to stretch tight food budgets.
  - Contact Cooking Matters Colorado at 303-892-8480 or visit their website <https://co.cookingmatters.org/sf/calendar> for more information.
- We encourage you to use community resources such as food banks, churches, or other non-profit/social service agencies to obtain additional food resources if needed.
- If you have a family with children under 18, you may also reach out to your county department to determine if you are eligible to receive a diversion payment through the Colorado Works program.
- If you are currently receiving Colorado Works, please talk to your county about other services that may be available through additional supportive services.

Question:

I need Food Assistance, can I still apply?

Answer:

- Yes, anyone can apply for Food Assistance at any time.
- Applications received between January 15th and January 30th will still be processed and benefits will be issued in the month of January for both January and February benefits.
- We will issue benefits for new Food Assistance applications received after January 30th through our normal process as long as limited reserve funding is still available.

Question:

Why did I get two payments for Food Assistance in January?

Answer:

- We will be issuing February benefits for households currently receiving Food Assistance in January, starting on the 16th.
- Those benefits are intended for use in February, not a bonus January payment.
- We do not know how long the partial federal government shutdown will last.
  - Because of that, we strongly encourage recipients to stretch their Food Assistance for as long as possible.
  - SNAP Education classes may be available to you in your community.
    - Cooking Matters Colorado provides nutrition education classes that teach participants how to stretch tight food budgets.
    - Contact Cooking Matters Colorado at 303-892-8480 or visit their website <https://co.cookingmatters.org/sf/calendar> for more information.

Question:

What if I am a furloughed government worker, am I eligible for any type of benefits?

Answer:

- We strongly encourage you to submit an application for assistance either in-person or via [PEAK](#) as soon as possible.
- Eligibility staff in your county will process your application and determine what assistance you may be eligible for based on your circumstances.