

***What are 3SquaresVT Emergency Maximum Allotments?***

Emergency maximum allotments are extra SNAP (3SquaresVT) benefits authorized by the federal government through the Families First Coronavirus Response Act to help households through the pandemic. Emergency maximum allotment benefits are supplemental benefits to bring households up to the maximum benefit allowed for their household size based on federal law. To date, since March 2020, Vermont has issued over \$175 million in emergency maximum allotments (approximately \$6.5 million each month currently).

***Why and when are they ending?***

The federal 2023 Consolidated Appropriations Act ends emergency maximum allotments with the February 2023 benefit month. In Vermont, we pay emergency maximum allotments mid-month, following each benefit month. The last emergency maximum allotment benefit for February 2023 will be paid on March 15, 2023. Beginning in April, households will not receive any extra mid-month payments. They will only receive their regular 1<sup>st</sup> of the month 3SquaresVT benefit payment.

***How much are households losing in addition to their regular payment because of this change in federal law?***

Emergency maximum allotment benefit amounts range from the minimum amount of \$95/household to over \$2,000 each month. Because 3SquaresVT benefits are calculated based on a federal formula that factors in income and deductions, the impact of the loss varies greatly depending on individual household circumstances. The average loss per person is \$93/month. From the December payment, the following data is available:

- 29,667 out of 41,314 households (72%) received the minimum \$95 emergency maximum allotment payment. These households will see a \$95 reduction beginning in April.
- 11,647 (28%) out of 41,314 households received anywhere from \$96 to \$2,055 (one HH of 11 people received \$2055). Please see the following average emergency maximum allotment payments for this group of 11,647 households:
  - Average for HH size of 1 = \$176
  - Average for HH of 2 = \$292
  - Average for HH of 4 = \$443
  - Average for HH of 5 = \$528
  - Average for HH of 7 = \$641

These households will lose this amount going forward starting in April.

***What is Economic Services Division doing to communicate this change?***

In order to implement this change in federal law, DCF's Economic Services Division is:

- Issuing a mass mailing to customers in January informing them of this change and providing information about how to contact the Economic Services Division if any household has a change in circumstances that could increase their regular monthly 3SquaresVT benefit amount (such as decrease in income or increase in out of pocket expenses like medical expenses or childcare), as well as information about other food resources that may be available and other ESD programs that could help to cover household expenses
- Issuing a press release explaining these changes
- Recording a message on our 1-800 call center phone line explaining this change
- Informing community partners of the change to help with messaging and support of 3SquaresVT households