SNAP BPRO Committee meeting 06-8-2021 notes

The SNAP BPRO Committee met virtually on Tuesday, June 8, 2021. Michele Thomas, SNAP Program Manager, and her staff presented information to the committee. There were 100 members present for the meeting.

The following information was shared with the committee by Michele and her team:

* SNAP Calc will be updated soon, look for a Broadcast to be released when it is updated
* SNAP Transmittal effective July 1, 2021 – this includes BBCE (Broad Based Categorical Eligibility)
* BBCE – the information provided on the application and renewal documents concerning Domestic Violence meets the non-cash TANF criteria. A one page document will be available to mail to households who submit an application without the information on it.
* BBCE income limits are 200% of the FPL, no resource test. VaCMS will roll updates, workers will see the BBCE yes/no in the wrap-up screens. There are a few exceptions that a household would not be eligible for BBCE, Part II G3. A FAQ is coming out soon to assist with the policy change.
* Restaurant Meals Program is still moving forward – this is slow moving and hopeful will be in place by the end of 2021
* Elderly Simplified Application Project – on hold, but working on the policy and how this project will be funded. These changes would include a three year certification period, no IR, and be for an elderly household that has no earned income. This project requires the state to provide proof there will be no fiscal impact on the state. There are a lot of the behind the scenes work that is completed at the state level (looking at utility standards deduction, and other deductions used in the SNAP formula to ensure no fiscal impact). Michele and her team will continue to work on this, however this maybe down the road a good bit before it happens if it can happen.
* SNAP Emergency Allotment benefits – the state is required to submit a request every month, there a several things that need to be in place (state in PHE, federal PHE, documentation to support the need for citizens) for the emergency allotment to be approved by USDA.
* SNAP interviews continued to be waived through June 30, 2021. The SNAP team is looking to see if policy can be changed to waive interviews. USDA reached out to the state of Virginia, as a state we are processing timely while waiving interviews. Currently the June 30, 2021 is the last day to waive interviews.
* Quality Control Reviews resume July 1, 2021. State error rates thru July 2020 – payment error rate 11.56%, CAPER 38.13%. Wages/salaries continue to be the highest error, deductions are next.
* QC did not transit to FNS due to the PHE.
* SNAP had an excellent participation rate for the trainings rolled out virtually at the beginning of 2021. SNAP is offering six virtually workshops this summer (changes, income calculations earned and unearned, medical deductions and shelter deductions)
* Michele also has on her radar to work on increasing the allotment for elderly and disabled households, the concern is there with the emergency allotments ending and their benefits decreasing to the minimum $19. Michele will let the committee know if she needs our help as we are very supportive of this.

The next SNAP BPRO virtual meeting is scheduled for September 8, 2021 at 10am. Michele and SNAP state team I am grateful for all the information you shared with the membership. Please let me know of any topics or training ideas for our next meeting. Reminder July 2021 starts are new BPRO year, please renew your membership.