

Beaver County Office on Aging COVID-19 Task Force Newsletter Volume 9, June 3, 2020

SNAP Participants Will Be Able to Purchase Groceries Online During COVID-19

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will allow Pennsylvania to join the pilot program that lets recipients of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as food stamps, purchase groceries online through participating retailers.

"Many people have been purchasing groceries online to facilitate social distancing, but SNAP recipients were not able to do so due to federal restrictions on SNAP and ecommerce. In most cases, SNAP recipients do not have flexibility to use online purchasing for grocery delivery or curbside pick-up, potentially putting health and safety at risk during this health crisis," said DHS Secretary Teresa Miller. "We are grateful that FNS has approved Pennsylvania to join this pilot program to allow us to expand flexibility to SNAP recipients looking to utilize online grocery purchasing to support social distancing and COVID-19 mitigation efforts."

Now that approval has been received, DHS is working with its EBT vendor and approved retailers to implement system changes necessary to implement online payment for PA's SNAP recipients. These system changes have an approximately two-week testing and validation implementation timeline that could not begin without FNS' approval, so DHS expects to have online grocery purchasing activated for SNAP recipients by the beginning of June.

Once active, only eligible food items normally paid for by SNAP will be able to be purchased online with SNAP benefits; delivery fees, driver tips, and other associated charges may not be paid for with SNAP benefits. Due to the expedited timeframe to implement, this initiative does not include the ability to transact Cash Assistance benefits using the EBT card. Therefore, individuals will need to use another method of payment to cover the non-allowable fees such as a pre-paid debit card. The pilot program currently includes three approved retailers: Amazon, Walmart, and ShopRite. Retailers that are interested in participating must contact FNS to review the requirements to be added to the program. Retailers that do not wish to join the pilot program can still offer delivery or pick-up flexibility options for SNAP recipients by using mobile EBT processing equipment that would allow customers to pay with SNAP when groceries are delivered or picked up. Farmers markets may be able to receive this processing equipment at no cost through a grant opportunity provided by DHS.

Pandemic Unemployment Assistance System Now Will Issue Paper Checks

The Department of Labor and Industry recently uncovered cases of attempted fraud in which scammers tried to use the personal information of victims to file for benefits and route payments into their own bank accounts. In response to these cases, claimants in the [Pandemic Unemployment Assistance](#) (PUA) system will now receive benefits via paper checks delivered through the U.S. Postal Service instead of receiving payments by direct deposit.

Anyone who receives a paper check in the mail who did not file for PUA benefits should return the uncashed check to:

Department of Treasury Comptroller's Office

Attn: Mark Accorsi

Room 113, Finance Building

Harrisburg, PA 17120

Promoting Financial Health and Resiliency for People with Disabilities and Their Families During the COVID-19 Pandemic

The novel coronavirus, or COVID-19 pandemic, has created uncertainty for Americans' physical, mental and financial health. During this time, we must be vigilant in promoting healthy habits and resiliency. The Center for Disability-Inclusive Community Development (CDICD), managed by National Disability Institute (NDI), has developed five strategies and resources to assist you in taking steps to maintain your financial health.

Assess Your Financial Health

Assessing your financial situation and creating a plan for your financial health is an important part of preparing for and managing through a crisis.

- Create or update a spending plan: catalog.fdic.gov/system/files/4_PG.pdf. Developing a spending plan assists in understanding your financial situation.
- Look closely at your expenses. Identify any items that can be eliminated during this crisis.
- Plan ahead and put together a weekly menu and food shopping list: nationaldisabilityinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/menu-planning-and-shopping-list-2020.pdf.
- Look at your bills and prioritize which to pay. Call about bills that cannot be prioritized and ask what your options are during this crisis: consumerfinance.gov/about-us/blog/protect-yourself-financially-from-impact-of-coronavirus/.

Phased Opening of State Park Swimming Beaches and Some Pools

The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) has announced a phased opening of all state park swimming beaches and some pools. Effective June 6, all 58 state park beaches will be open to swimming. State park pools will remain closed through at least June 12, with most in designated yellow and green counties reopening June 13. Capacity at beaches and pools will be limited to 50% of the normal facility capacity. Mitigation measures will be in place, including restricting visitor parking, controlling facility access, social distancing and the wearing of face masks when not in the water. For more information, visit

https://www.media.pa.gov/Pages/DCNR_details.aspx?newsid=655&utm_source=Listrak&utm_medium=Email&utm_term=https%3a%2f%2fwww.media.pa.gov%2fPages%2fDCNR_details.aspx%3fnewsid%3d655&utm_campaign=House+Passes+Resolution+to+Reopen+PA+Business

Beaver County Radio Has Multiple Church Services Available on Sundays

Beaver County Radio includes 1230 AM WBVP, 1460 AM WMBA, 99.3 FM and Beaver County Radio live stream has a large line up of church services on the air as churches are closed during the Coronavirus pandemic.

Sunday starts with Sounds of Faith, an inspirational segment of worship and praise music from 7 a.m. to 9 a.m. It is followed live Mass from St. Monica Catholic Church in Chippewa Township at 9 a.m. At 10 a.m., a recorded broadcast from First Presbyterian Church in Rochester, features Rev. Lee Bittner along with special music by Mike Neely. Pastor Jan Davis from Central United Methodist Church, Beaver Falls, will engage listeners with a recorded sermon. At noon, Senior Pastor Cliff Reynolds of Word Alive Church in Ellwood City, will have a recorded message. A live broadcast from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. will be aired from New Galilee Church of the Nazarene featuring Pastor Andy Russell speaking from the "drive in church" pulpit. You can pull up, park and tune the car radio to any of the Beaver County Radio stations to hear his Sunday message. Pastor Rod Smith from Mountain Ministries presents his recorded message, Good News from the Mountain, at 7 p.m. on Wednesdays.

Older Adult Protective Services

If you feel an older adult is being abused, neglected, or exploited, call Older Adult Protective Services at 724-775-1786. The hotline is open 24 hours a day.

Ombudsman Service is Available

The Beaver County Office on Aging Ombudsmen are working full time, at home, and are available to accept calls and handle any complaints or questions related to nursing facility and personal care home resident rights and problem resolution. We will return your call by the end of the next business day. Ombudsman calls are considered and treated with highest confidentiality.

To contact the Ombudsman program you may: email Ombudsman@BCOA.US; call the Ombudsman direct phone line 724-480-8589; or call the Office on Aging main phone 724-847-2262, identify your call as an Ombudsman issue, with no details, as these calls are highly confidential and leave your name and phone number only.
