

605-6 CATEGORICAL ELIGIBILITY

There are two different types of categorical eligibility, traditional categorical eligibility (CE), and broad based categorical eligibility (BBCE). CE describes SNAP households in which all members receive or are authorized to receive cash assistance funded by TANF (ATAP), TANF Post Employment, Tribal TANF, or SSI. BBCE describes SNAP households in which all members receive or are authorized to receive non-cash assistance. In Alaska, this is the Support For You and Your Family (X056) notice.

For both categorically eligible household types, all household members' resources, Social Security number, residency, and sponsored alien information are verified by another program and are not required to be verified again. All other eligibility factors must be verified by the SNAP and ALL eligibility factors must be verified for broad based categorically eligible households.

Categorical eligibility applies to the SNAP household, not to the individual. Household composition must be determined before determining categorical eligibility. Separate household status is not granted to an individual household member because of categorical eligibility.

1. TRADITIONAL CATEGORICAL ELIGIBILITY (CE):

Households in which all members are either eligible for or receive cash benefits from TANF, TANF Post Employment, Tribal TANF, or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) are categorically, or automatically, eligible for SNAP. These households, who have already gone through eligibility determination for those programs, bypass the income and resource tests and are deemed financially eligible. There is no asset/resource test for categorically eligible households.

Categorical eligibility includes:

1. Individuals authorized to receive TANF or SSI benefits but who have not yet received payment.
2. Individuals that have their TANF or SSI payments suspended or recouped.
3. Individuals entitled to TANF or SSI but who are not paid such benefits because the grant is less than a minimum benefit.
4. TANF households who are determined eligible for but choose not to receive a TANF grant.
5. Households entitled to TANF post-recipient case management services (refer to [ATAP MS 740](#)); occurs when there is an employed adult family member at time of TANF closure.

Note:

Categorical eligibility is limited to twelve months following the month the TANF case closed.

Categorically eligible households have their SNAP benefit allotment determined under the same rules as other households. A household's SNAP benefit amount is based on the maximum benefit and its net countable income after deductions for certain expenses.

While the household may be categorically eligible, its net income may be too high to actually receive a SNAP benefit.

Note:

Categorical eligibility cannot be extended to recipients of Adult Public Assistance who do not receive SSI or TANF.

2. BROAD BASED CATEGORICAL ELIGIBILITY (BBCE):

Households in which all members receive or are authorized to receive non-cash assistance have broad based categorical eligibility. In Alaska, the non-cash assistance is TANF Information printed on the application. All broad based categorically eligible households, including households with an elderly or disabled household member, must:

- pass a gross income test of 200% of the federal poverty level but are not required to pass a net income test.
- There is no asset/resource test for broad based categorically eligible households except as noted.

Broad based categorically eligible households have their SNAP benefit allotment determined under the same rules as other households. A household's SNAP benefit amount is based on the maximum benefit (determined by household size) and its net countable income after deductions for certain expenses. While the household may be broad based categorically eligible its net income may be too high to actually receive a SNAP benefit.

Note:

When a household with an elderly or disabled individual does not pass the 200% gross income test, eligibility is determined under regular program rules without a gross income test and with a resource limit of \$4,500.

605-6 A. CE and BBCE HOUSEHOLD DETERMINATION

1. CE and BBCE INELIGIBLE HOUSEHOLDS:

The following households are not CE or BBCE, even if they meet the requirements outlined in 605-6(1):

- a) The entire household is residing in an institution.

NOTE:

Residents of public institutions who apply jointly for SSI and SNAP benefits prior to release from the institution are considered categorically eligible once SSI eligibility is determined and the individual is released from the institution.

- b) The entire household is disqualified from SNAP.
- c) The PI is disqualified for failure to comply with the work requirements outlined in MS 602-1(F)(1).
- d) A member is disqualified for any of the following reasons:
 - i. Intentional program violation
 - ii. Fleeing felon or probation/parole violation.
 - iii. Convicted of receiving duplicate benefits.
 - iv. Convicted of trading benefits for weapons, ammunition, explosives, or drugs.
 - v. Convicted of buying or selling benefits of \$500 or more.
 - vi. Convicted on or after 08/22/96 of a federal or state felony for possession, use or distribution of illegal drugs.
 - vii. Convicted on or after 02/07/2014 of a federal or state felony for aggravated sexual abuse, murder, sexual exploitation and abuse of children, or sexual assault.

2. CE and BBCE WITH INELIGIBLE HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS:

Households with the following ineligible household members can still be CE or BBCE:

1. Ineligible student.
2. Ineligible aliens.
3. Ineligible able-bodied adults without dependents.
4. Ineligible due to failing or opting not to provide a social security number.
5. Ineligible due to work registration disqualification [If the only ineligible HH member is the PI, refer to 605-6(A)(3) above.]

605-6 B. VERIFICATION

For CE/BBCE households, all household members' resources, Social Security number, residency, and sponsored alien information are verified by another program and are not required to be verified again. All other eligibility factors must be verified by the SNAP and ALL eligibility factors must be verified for BBCE households per verification policy.

605-6 C. CE JOINT APPLICATION PROCESSING: ATAP and SNAP

When a joint Alaska Temporary Assistance and SNAP application is filed, the caseworker must determine SNAP eligibility within 30 days.

1. If the household is determined **eligible** for SNAP prior to the Alaska Temporary Assistance eligibility determination, process the case as a regular SNAP case.
2. If the applicant household is found ineligible for SNAP prior to the 30th day and ATAP eligibility is not yet determined, delay issuing the denial letter until the 30th day or when ATAP

eligibility is determined, whichever is sooner. The application denial is delayed because the household may be CE for SNAP if the ATAP is approved.

3. If the ATAP eligibility is still pending on the 30th day and the household is ineligible for SNAP, deny the SNAP application.

4. If a household is ineligible for SNAP, but the joint application is later approved for ATAP and the household meets CE criteria:

- a. Determine SNAP eligibility and allotment based on information from the original joint application.
- b. Do not conduct an additional interview unless contact is necessary to resolve any changes in circumstances.
- c. If information on the original joint application has changed significantly, have the applicant initial and date the changes and re-sign and date the application.
- d. Prorate initial month benefits from the ATAP benefit start date or the original SNAP application date, whichever is later.

Note:

*This joint processing policy does **not** apply to situations where an application form is copied and shared with a Native Family Assistance Program. In these situations, the applications for SNAP and Native Family Assistance are processed separately, not jointly.*

605-6 D. BENEFIT CALCULATION AND ZERO BENEFITS ELIGIBILITY

1. Disregard gross and net income limits for CE households.
2. Disregard net income limits for BBCE households.
2. Follow the normal procedures for allotment calculation and benefit level. See [MS 603-3A](#).
3. Issue no benefits to CE/BBCE households with three or more persons when benefit levels calculate to less than \$1. Monitor changes reported by the household until circumstances change and SNAP benefits are recalculated and payable. Inform the household of the special status of **program eligible** but not **benefit eligible**.

605-6 E. CATEGORICALLY ELIGIBLE STATUS

In addition to evaluation at application and recertification, CE and BBCE status must be evaluated when any of the following changes occur:

1. TANF, TANF Post Employment, Tribal TANF or SSI benefits are terminated.
2. A household member is disqualified from TANF or Tribal TANF.

3. A new member is added or removed.
4. When an individual in a SNAP household reports they have received lottery and/or gambling winnings equal to or greater than the amount listed in [MS 602-2\(2\)](#), we must close or deny the SNAP case and the household will not be considered CE or BBCE.

Note:

Households who had their SNAP case closed due to substantial lottery or gaming winnings will remain ineligible until they meet the assets and income eligibility requirements. The household must then reapply and be determined eligible under regular SNAP rules.

Regular SNAP rules require these households to pass the asset, gross and net income tests for the applicable SPECAT or non-SPECAT household limits.

5. When a BBCE household reports their income exceeds 200% FPL for their household size.

605-6 F. CATEGORICAL ELIGIBILITY CASE PROCESSING

1. All SNAP factors of eligibility determinations, benefit determinations, and household notification are to be applied after the categorical eligibility factors for the case have been waived. For instance, a BBCE household member who commits an intentional program violation will be disqualified and must serve the appropriate disqualification period. The household would then lose its BBCE status under 605-6(A)(1).
3. Since all members of the SNAP household must be recipients of TANF and/or SSI for the household to be CE, household composition must be checked at each recertification. CE status ends when a household member is no longer a TANF or SSI recipient. See MS 605-6(1) for the definition of TANF and SSI recipients.
4. If a person were to be disqualified from SSI for reasons equivalent to intentional program violation, CE status would end for that household.

Example 1:

Bobbie and Casey, ages 63 and 60 respectively, apply for SNAP. Their gross monthly income is \$1550 and their countable resources are \$3200. The two person SNAP household of is eligible for SNAP under BBCE criteria. Their income is below 200 percent of the FPL and there is no resource limit for the household.

Example 2:

A SNAP family of four applies for SNAP. The household is comprised of a 70 year old head of household (PI), PI's son, the son's spouse and child. The household's total monthly gross income of \$2460 is from the SSI and wages. Countable resources are

\$5000. The SNAP household of 4 is eligible for SNAP under BBCE. Their income is below 200 percent of FPL and there is no resource limit for the household.

Example 3:

Jose and Isabel apply for SNAP for themselves and their child. During the interview the caseworker discovers that Jose is still within the 12- month period of ineligibility for an intentional program violation (IPV). The family is ineligible for SNAP under BBCE criteria due to the IPV. Isabel and her child may receive SNAP if the households income is below 130 percent of FPL and resources do not exceed the limits outlined in [MS 602-2](#).