C Elderly Simplified Application Project (ESAP)

A streamlined Nutrition Assistance application, verification, and approval process for the elderly.

Policy

The Nutrition Assistance (NA) Elderly Simplified Application Project (ESAP) is a demonstration project approved by the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). The goal is to increase NA participation among the elderly population by streamlining *all* of the following processes:

- Application

- Interview

- Verification

All participants of the ESAP budgetary unit must meet *all* of the following:

- 60 years old or older

- No earned or self-employment income

    NOTE In-kind income is not considered income for ESAP. (See In-kind Income for the definition of in-kind income.)

ESAP participants must meet the same eligibility requirements as NA participants who are elderly or have a disability. (See Elderly or Have a Disability - NA Special Considerations for additional information.)

In addition to special considerations for elderly participants, ESAP eligible budgetary units receive *all* of the following considerations:

- A 36-month approval period

- A Mid Approval Contact (MAC) is not required

- A renewal interview is not required unless *one* of the following occurs:

    Requested by the participant, see Interview Requirements when the participant requests special accommodations

    Prior to denying a renewal application

    When information provided by the participant or authorized representative is questionable(g) or incomplete

- Assigned to Simplified Reporting (See Simplified Reporting for the types of changes that must be reported)

- Simpler and shorter ESAP Application (FAA-1821A)

- Designated ESAP telephone and FAX numbers for the interview and verification (See FAA Site Code 705C for contact information)

ESAP participants are not eligible for benefits when disqualified for, including and not limited to, *any* of the following:

- They are a fleeing felon

- They have a disqualifying drug conviction

- They have an intentional program violation

For a full list of disqualification reasons, see Disqualified Participants.

ESAP Application

All official application forms submitted are screened for ESAP eligibility. (See Application Requirements for a list of acceptable applications). The ESAP Nutrition Assistance Application (FAA-1821A) form is used for ESAP and is only used when applying for NA. The Application for Benefits (FAA-0001A) or the HEAplus online application is completed, when *one* of the following applies:

- The NA participant is applying for other programs

- The NA participant is not eligible for ESAP

When an NA participant submits an identifiable ESAP application and is not eligible for ESAP, the ESAP application is used to preserve the application date.

All ESAP new applications(g) are screened for potential eligibility for NA expedited services. (See Requirements for NA Expedited Services (NAX) for NA expedite criteria). To comply with NA expedite time frames, a notice is sent when authorizing expedited benefits with postponed verification. (For policy and procedures regarding NA expedited services with postponed verification, see NA Expedite Applications With Postponed Verification.)

ESAP Interview Process – New Application

An interview is required for all ESAP new applications. When an ESAP participant is not interviewed on the same day, an appointment notice is sent. A notice of missed interview is sent when the participant fails to complete an interview by the deadline provided by the appointment notice.

ESAP participants who do not complete an interview by the deadline provided in the appointment notice are responsible to contact FAA as soon as possible to complete their interview.

When an interview is not completed by the timely denial date, the application is denied. A new application is not required when an interview is completed by the 30th calendar day after the application is denied. The benefits are prorated from the date of the interview.

ESAP Renewal Process

The ESAP Notice of Expiration (NOE) is sent to the ESAP budgetary unit when it is time to reapply. (See NA Notice of Expiration for when the NOE is mailed). The ESAP Notice of Expiration includes the ESAP renewal application. The ESAP participant is required to complete and return the ESAP renewal application or any official application to FAA to continue receiving benefits.

A renewal interview is not required unless the participant requests to be interviewed or prior to denying a renewal application.

When a renewal application is received, FAA staff reviews the application, case information, and system interface, and completes *one* of the following:

- Authorizes the benefits when the budgetary unit is eligible, and no discrepancies are found between the application, casefile(g), and system interface.

- Sends the ESAP appointment notice when the information provided in the application, obtained from the casefile or system interface is questionable or discrepant. The participant is allowed ten calendar days to contact FAA to complete the interview.

- The renewal application is denied when the participant fails to contact FAA before the timely denial date. A new renewal application may not be needed when an interview is completed within the appropriate timeframes. (See The Renewal Process (Renewals) for additional information regarding timely or untimely renewal application)

ESAP Changes/Conversions

Changes in circumstances may be reported by the budgetary unit, through systems reports or reported by a third-party. For polices on changes, see When to Effect Changes). (See NA Notice of Expiration for the NOE mail date.)

Changes in budgetary unit composition, age (turning 60), earned income, or self-employment income may result in *one* of the following conversions:

- From regular NA to ESAP. When the budgetary unit is now eligible for the considerations offered by ESAP, *all* of the following applies to the budgetary unit:

   The budgetary unit retains its approval period

   No longer required to complete the MAC

- From ESAP to regular NA. When the budgetary unit is no longer eligible for ESAP considerations, *all* of the following applies to the budgetary unit:

   Retains the 36-month approval period

   Requires completion of the Mid Approval Contact (MAC) (For additional information, see NA 36-Month Approval Period MAC Requirement.)

ESAP Categorical Eligibility

When an ESAP budgetary unit is NA categorically eligible, all participants who are included and eligible to receive NA are categorically eligible. ESAP categorical eligibility includes *any* of the following household types:

- ESAP Basic Categorical Eligibility (ESB) (See Basic Categorical Eligibility on how basic categorical eligibility is determined)

- ESAP Expanded Categorical Eligibility (ESE) (See Expanded Categorical Eligibility on how expanded categorical eligibility is determined)

- ESAP Regular (ESA)

  NOTE NA Categorical Eligibility (Basic or Expanded) does not exist when a participant is disqualified for participation.

Procedures

Identifying ESAP Cases

When NA benefits are authorized, an ESAP case displays *all* of the following:

- An ES in the FS TYPE field on CAP2

- An ESB, ESE, or ESA in the HOUSEHOLD TYP field on FSBH

ESAP Notices

The following notices are used for the ESAP Project:

- ESAP Appointment Notice (F046 or X906)

- ESAP Approval Notice (F125)

- ESAP Conversion to NA (F712)

- ESAP Mass Conversion Notice (X038)

- ESAP More Information is Needed (F013)

- ESAP NOE with Renewal Application (X091)

- ESAP Renewal Approval (F126)

- NA Conversion to ESAP (F711)

NOTE   When the required notice is not listed above, send the regular NA notice. For notice listing, see Notice List-Overview.

ESAP Interview

New Application - An interview is required for all ESAP new applications(g). When an ESAP participant is not interviewed on the same day, AZTECS sends the ESAP Appointment Notice (X096) through the TIPS transfer(g) process and assigns the case to 705C. AZTECS sends the NA-Did Not Complete Interview Process (X017) notice when an interview is not completed by the deadline provided in the X096 notice. The new application is denied when an interview is not completed by the timely denial date. The benefit is prorated to the date of the interview, when the interview is completed in the second 30 calendar days.

Renewal Application - A renewal interview is not required, unless the information provided on the application or from a system interface is questionable, incomplete, or discrepant, or may result in ineligibility. A renewal application cannot be denied without first attempting to conduct an interview.

Renewal Application Processing

A renewal application is required to continue receiving NA benefits. An ESAP participant may submit any of the following applications:

- The ESAP NOE with Renewal Application (X091)

- The Application for Benefits (FAA-0001A)

- HEAplus online application

When completing a renewal of benefits determination, complete *all* of the following:

- Review the renewal application.

- Review the casefile.

- Update AZTECS, when needed.

- Review system interface.

When there are no discrepancies noted between the application, casefile, and system interface, and the budgetary unit is eligible, complete *all* of the following:

- Authorize the NA renewal benefits.

- Send the ESAP Renewal Approval (F126) notice.

- Assign or ensure the case is in the 705C caseload.

An interview is required when the information provided on the ESAP renewal application or information obtained from the system interface is questionable, incomplete, or before denying the renewal. Complete *all* of the following to schedule an interview:

- Remove the Y in the COMPLETED field on INDA.

- Update INDA with the date the interview must be completed.

  NOTE An interview must be completed within ten calendar days from the day after FAA receives the application. When the tenth calendar day falls on a weekend, or observed holiday, the interview is completed by the workday before the weekend or holiday.

- Send the ESAP Appointment Notice (F046).

- Document the reason why a renewal interview is needed.

- Assign or ensure the case is in caseload 705C.

ESAP Changes/Conversions

Changes in budgetary unit's composition, earned income, self-employment income, or age (turning 60) may result in *one* of the following conversions:

- From regular NA to ESAP. When this occurs, complete *all* of the following:

  Redetermine benefits

  Send the appropriate change notice allowing for NOAA(g)

  Send the NA Conversion to ESAP (F711) notice

  Assign the case to 705C

- From ESAP to regular NA. When this occurs, complete *all* of the following:

  Redetermine benefits

  Send the appropriate change notice allowing for NOAA

  Send the ESAP Conversion to NA (F712) notice

  When the change causing the conversion is processed before the 17th month of the 36-month approval period, add a free form alert for the first workday of the 17th month. Type ESAP TO REGULAR MAC SEND F027 as the reason for the alert. (See Adding Free From Alerts for instructions.)

  NOTE Do not set the alert when the change causing the conversion is processed during or after the 17th month. (See How to Determine the 17th Month (pdf 99 kb))

  Assign the case to the appropriate site code

AZTECS ESAP Determination

AZTECS determines ESAP eligibility by *any* of the following:

- Caseload

- Food Stamp Allotment Determination (FSAD). When an NA case is keyed, AZTECS completes *all* of the following:

  Reviews the date of birth and participation codes of all persons in the case

  Reviews the earned and self-employment screens

AZTECS determines whether the NA case meets ESAP eligibility when *all* of the following are met:

- All persons in the case, regardless of the participation codes, are age 60 or older

- No income is keyed on EAIN except for in-kind income

- No income is keyed on SEEI

For AZTECS to make a correct determination, delete any optional or non-participants from the case. Do not use the participation code of OU to remove these participants. (See FUNCTION 5. DELETE CLIENT FROM PROGRAM for instructions on how to delete a person from a program).

NOTE   Do not delete an ineligible student. Use the participation code of OU to remove these participants.

When an NA case meets ESAP eligibility, *all* of the following occurs when the case is processed through FSAD:

- A 36-month approval period is assigned

- The budgetary unit is assigned to simplified reporting

Specialized ESAP Unit

FAA Site Code 705C is designated as the ESAP Unit. Assigning all ESAP cases to 705C is important to ensure case maintenance is assigned to the correct workload. Case maintenance includes *all* of the following:

- Working ACTS Alerts

- Processing renewal applications

- Processing changes

ESAP Eligibility is Discovered During an Interview

When ESAP eligibility is discovered during the interview, complete the interview. Educate the participant about ESAP and the considerations offered by the project. Complete *one* of the following:

- When additional verification is needed, send the ESAP More Information (F013) notice allowing 10 calendar days for the participant to provide the information. Assign the case to Site Code 705C.

- When no additional verification is required and the budgetary unit is eligible, complete *all* of the following:

  Authorize the NA benefits.

  Send either the ESAP Approval Notice (F125) or the ESAP Renewal Approval (F126) notice.

  Assign the case to Site Code 705C.

- When the budgetary unit is not eligible, complete *all* of the following:

  Deny the application using the appropriate Denial Closure Reason Code.

  Send the appropriate denial notice.

  Assign the case to the appropriate site code.

Verification

System interface and the case file(g) must be reviewed before verification is requested. No additional verification is needed when AZTECS interface or HEAplus hubs have identified the participant has already verified the eligibility factor.

When system interface is unable to verify eligibility factor, the ESAP Demonstration Project allows the use of participant statement verification unless the statement is unclear, questionable, or discrepant. Documentation must support the use of a participant's statement.

Verification required is determined by the eligibility factor or expense being verified. For the ESAP Demonstration Project, participant statement verification can be used as the primary source of verification for *any* of the following:

- Identity
- Income
- Shelter expenses
- Telephone expense
- Utility expenses

AZTECS Keying Procedures

When it is determined that the case is an ESAP eligible, assign the case to site code 705C by keying 705 in the SITE CODE field on CARC. When it is determined that the case is not ESAP eligible key on CARC the site code that serves the participant's residential ZIP Code.

When a renewal interview is needed, send the ESAP Appointment (F046) Notice and complete *all* of the following:

- Change the INDA INTERVIEW DATE to the last day of the date indicated in the F046 Notice
- Remove the Y in the COMPLETED field

When an ESAP participant is working in exchange for room, board or other needs, complete *all* of the following:

- Key Y in the WS field to access EAIC
- Type the name of the person on the EMPLOYER field the participant is performing the in-kind work for
- Key IK in the INC TYPE field

- Key the frequency in the FREQ field

- Key the date the participant is paid in the DATE PAID field

- Key the number of hours the participant spends performing the in-kind work in the HOURS field

- Key the value of the in-kind work in the GROSS AMOUNT field

- Press ENTER. AZTECS automatically fills the HR. RATE field

HEAplus Procedures

All paper applications received are data entered into HEAplus to allow for automatic interface with the federal and state hubs.

Legal Authorities

ESAP Demonstration Project Waiver

7 CFR 273.10

7 CFR 273.10(a)(1)(ii)(A)-(B)

7 CFR 273.10(a)(1)(iii)(A)-(C)

7 CFR 273.10(a)(2)

7 CFR 273.11(c)

7 CFR 273.12(a)(5)(i)

7 CFR 274.3(c)(3)

Prior Policy

last revised 09/05/2023