

## 05 EBT Benefit Issuance and Availability



Regular monthly NA benefits are available on different days of the month, depending on the Primary Informant's last name. Immediate access to benefits may be requested when benefits cannot be available to the participant by the timely approval date.

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### Policy

#### Issuance and Availability

Regular monthly NA benefits are available at staggered availability dates. Benefits are electronically transferred to an account accessed by the participant's EBT QUEST card. CA benefits are made available on the 1st of each month.

Benefits authorized after the normal monthly issuance run are available to the participant by 5:00 a.m. on the day following authorization of the benefits (Monday through Saturday).

Immediate access to benefits may be requested when benefits cannot be available to the participant by **any** of the following:

- Expedited NA benefits by the seventh [calendar day\(g\)](#)
- Non-expedited NA benefits by the 30th calendar day
- CA benefits by the 45th calendar day

Issuance of emergency benefits by customer service is required in certain situations. These situations include, and are not limited to, **any** of the following:

- Expedited NA benefits are approved on the seventh calendar day, beginning the date after receipt of the NA application.
- The participant has an urgent need and **any** of the following occurred:
  - The agency's action deauthorized the benefits.
  - The application was processed untimely.

#### EBT 10% Cash Assistance Out-of-State Usage

When more than 10% of a budgetary unit's CA benefit is used out-of-state, a review of the case is completed. CA usage includes all CA purchases and withdrawals made during the prior six months.

On the second calendar day of each month, a report is generated. The report identifies cases that have more than 10% out-of-state (OOS) CA benefit usage in the prior six months.

CA cases identified in the report are sent a notice. The notice informs the participant that they must contact FAA to review their OOS usage. When the participant does not respond to the notice the CA closure notice is sent. The closure notice informs the participant that their CA case has been closed for failure to contact the agency.

When the participant calls the HEAplus Help Desk at (855) 432-7587, the participant is required to authenticate themselves. Once the participant authenticates, the call is routed to Research & Analysis (R&A) to discuss the reason for the CA OOS usage.

When a participant is unable to authenticate themselves, the participant is routed to the HEAplus Helpdesk or the Customer Care Center depending on the option selected. When the participant's identity is authenticated, the call is transferred to R&A. When unable to authenticate identity, the participant is advised to go into an FAA office.

When the notice is mailed and the participant contacts FAA on or after the effective date of closure, the participant is advised of **all** of the following:

- The participant must reapply.
- The participant has the right to file an appeal.
- The participant must comply by providing their reason for the OOS spending before a CA eligibility determination is completed.

### **Arizona Residency Change**

When an EBT Primary Payee moves out of Arizona, they can use their EBT card all over the country at retailers and Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) displaying the QUEST symbol. All states use EBT, and all states have banks and merchants with the ability to access EBT accounts from other states, including Arizona.

When a cardholder requests to receive the remaining NA, CA, or ST benefits, advise them that they can access their NA benefits at most food retailers, and they can access their CA benefits at any bank, retailer, or ATM that displays the QUEST symbol.

When the cardholder does not remember their EBT Personal Identification Number (PIN) or does not have an EBT card, the cardholder must call the Fidelity Information Services (FIS) Automated Response Unit (ARU) to request a new PIN or replacement card. (See [EBT Customer Service 24-Hour Hotline](#))

The EBT card does not expire when a case is closed. The participant is entitled to use the funds remaining in the account after the case is closed.

Participants are encouraged to keep their EBT cards when their NA or CA case is closed. The same card can be used when the participant becomes eligible for benefits at a later date.

When the cardholder has not accessed their NA benefits for 274 calendar days and CA benefits for 180 calendar days, from the last date of benefit activity, the EBT benefits are expunged. The cardholder loses all rights to regain those EBT benefits.

### **EBT Account Adjustments**

An adjustment to an EBT account is completed to correct an auditable EBT transaction system error. Benefit adjustments are processed as a result of **any** of the following EBT account transaction system errors:

- Account debited for goods not purchased
- Account debited for an incorrect amount
- Account not debited for goods taken
- Incorrect ATM cash withdrawal amount

An EBT account adjustment may be requested by the participant or a retailer by contacting FIS ARU within **one** of the following time frames:

- A participant must contact FIS to request a credit adjustment within 90 calendar days of the date the EBT transaction occurred.
- A retailer must request a debit to the participant's EBT account within 15 calendar days of the date the EBT transaction occurred.

### **EBT Account Adjustments - Processing**

EBT transaction system errors are processed by the Fidelity Information Services (FIS) EBT Adjustment Research Department (ARD). FIS must respond to an adjustment request within 15 calendar days of the receipt of a request.

When an EBT adjustment request is received, the ARD completes **all** of the following:

- Contacts the third-party processor (TPP) or financial institution that provided the groceries or cash and obtains proof of the transaction.
- Validates whether a system error occurred.
- Credits the participant's EBT account when the system error is confirmed.
- Sends an email to FAA EBT Support when a participant's request for a credit adjustment has been denied.

On the day FAA EBT Support learns of a credit denial but no later than the following [workday\(g\)](#), FAA EBT Support sends the participant the EBT Account Adjustment Credit notice informing the participant of **all** of the following:

- The request for an EBT account credit has been denied and the program.
- The name and address of the retailer where the transaction occurred.
- The date the transaction occurred.
- The credit amount requested by the participant.
- The PI or representative's right to file an appeal within 15 calendar days of the date of the notice.

Each workday FAA EBT Support retrieves EBT account adjustment reports from the FIS portal. On the day the report is retrieved, but no later than the following workday, FAA EBT Support sends the participant a notice. The notice informs the PI of **all** of the following:

- A system error occurred, and the EBT account is being debited.
- The name and address of the retailer where the transaction occurred.
- The date the transaction occurred.
- The amount of the transaction to be debited.
- The PI or representative's right to file an appeal within 15 calendar days from the date of the notice.

When an appeal is requested within 15 calendar days from the date of the notice, the Appeals Processing Unit (APU) notifies FAA EBT Support via email. FAA EBT Support in turn notifies FIS. FIS then places a hold on the debit pending the hearing decision.

When FIS is notified of the appeal and has already debited the account, FIS credits the amount back to the account pending the hearing decision.

When a participant does not request an appeal within the 15 calendar days or a hearing decision affirms a retailer's debit request, FIS attempts to debit the system error amount.

When insufficient benefits are remaining to cover the full amount, the debit adjustment is attempted to the household's next future month's benefits.

The adjustment amounts are equal to the amount of the original error transaction.

### **EBT Overpayment Claims**

Overpayment claims are written and forwarded to the Office of Accounts Receivable and Collections (OARC) per policy and procedures.

EBT Primary Payees can pay overpayment claim balances with their cash or NA benefits. Benefits from the cash EBT account can be used to pay NA, CA, or ST overpayments, but benefits from the NA EBT account can only be used to pay NA overpayments.

EBT benefits are considered available to the cardholder once they are transferred into the EBT account and cannot be returned to prevent an overpayment.

### **EBT Overpayment Claims - Recoupment**

The EBT Primary Payee may request recoupment for **any** of the following reasons, to complete **any** of the following appropriate EBT recoupment procedures:

- To pay an NA overpayment claim balance using cash benefits
- To pay an NA overpayment claim balance using Aged NA benefits ten calendar days after the notice is issued
- To pay an amount greater than what is currently being recouped from an existing overpayment claim
- To prevent an overpayment when the cardholder becomes ineligible in the current month after benefits have been transferred into the EBT account

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### **Procedures**

To review EBT run dates and available dates for a specific month, see the [AZTECS Monthly Production Schedule \(AMPS\)](#).

FAA responsibilities regarding establishing EBT accounts include, and are not limited to, **all** of the following:

- [Establishing the EBT Primary Payee](#)
- [Establishing or Changing an EBT Alternate Cardholder](#)
- [EBT Participant Education](#)

For policy and procedures regarding benefit issuance and availability, see **all** of the following:

- [EBT Arizona Residency Change](#)
- [EBT CA Expedited Benefits](#)
- [EBT Canceling Benefits](#)
- [EBT Emergency Benefits](#)
- [EBT NA Expedited Benefits](#)
- [EBT Inactive Accounts](#)
- [EBT Next Day Availability](#)
- [EBT Account Adjustments – Processing Procedures](#)

### **EBT Emergency Benefits**

When the issuance of emergency benefits is required, complete **all** of the following:

- Authorize benefits through the [current system month\(g\)](#).
- Review the reason for requesting immediate access to benefits with the Supervisor.
- Document the [case file\(g\)](#), indicating the reason for the emergency issuance. See [EBT NA Expedited Benefits](#) and [EBT CA Expedited Benefits](#) for AZTECS keying instructions.

When the Supervisor approves the request, the worker completes and submits the EBT Emergency Benefits/Cancellation e-form through OnBase.

When OnBase is not accessible, complete the EBT Emergency Benefits/Cancellation (FAA-1003A) form. Send the form via email to **all** of the following:

- The EBT Emergency Benefits Unit at [FAACCEBTIssuanceCancel@azdes.gov](mailto:FAACCEBTIssuanceCancel@azdes.gov)
- The Local Office Manager (LOM) or designee

The EBT Emergency Benefits Unit makes benefits available on the day the request is received. (See [EBT Same Day Availability](#))

### **Cancel Arizona EBT Benefits**

Cancel Arizona EBT benefits when the EBT Primary Payee moves to and applies for benefits in another state before the date of availability of the Arizona EBT benefits.

Moving out of state is the only reason an EBT Primary Payee's benefits may be canceled. See [EBT Canceling Benefits](#) for keying instructions on canceling EBT benefits.

### Next-Day Availability

For current and past month benefits authorized after the normal monthly issuance run, AZTECS sets the Issuance Codes to **any** of the following:

- For NA, DA displays in the BENEFIT ISSUANCE field on FSAD.
- For CA, DA displays in the BEN ISSUANCE field on AFPD.

For a case to meet timely approval requirements, benefits must be authorized by the timely approval date. For more information on timely processing, see the [AZTECS Monthly Production Schedule \(AMPS\)](#).

### EBT Same Day Availability

The EBT Emergency Benefits Unit keys the request on the applicable issuance screens (FIWI, FSMI, STFW). Benefits are available for immediate access when processed through these screens. For same day availability, see [EBT Emergency Benefits](#), [EBT NA Expedited Benefits](#), and [EBT CA Expedited Benefits](#).

### EBT Inactive Account

When an EBT account has been inactive for 90 [calendar days\(g\)](#) or more, the account is considered aged.

When an EBT account is aged, AZTECS completes **any** of the following needed:

- For NA, issues an Aged Nutrition Assistance (X013) notice
- For CA, issues an Aged Cash Assistance Account (X073) notice

Once the EBT account is aged the only action required by the cardholder to keep the account active is to use the EBT card.

When the EBT Primary Payee has not accessed their NA benefits for 274 calendar days and CA benefits for 180 calendar days, from the last date of benefit activity, the EBT benefits are [expunged\(g\)](#). The EBT Primary Payee loses all rights to regain those EBT benefits.

When a program is denied or closed due to the death of the entire budgetary unit, the EBT account is deactivated, and benefits expunged.

### Cash Assistance Out-of-State Usage Procedures

On the second calendar day of each month, a report is generated to the Research and Analysis (R&A) Unit. The report identifies cases that have more than 10% out of state CA benefit usage in the prior six months.

AZTECS automatically sends the EBT Card Out of State Usage (X058) notice to CA cases identified in the report. The notice informs the participant that they must contact FAA to review their out-of-state (OOS) usage. When the participant does not respond to the X058 notice the CA Closure 10% EBT Out of State Closure (X048) notice is automatically sent. The X048 notice informs the participant that their CA case has been closed for failure to contact the agency.

The participant must comply by contacting the R&A Unit through the Customer Care Center phone number at (855) HEA-PLUS or (855) 432-7587 or in person at an FAA office when **any** of the following apply:

- The participant is responding to the X058 notice
- The participant is responding to the X048 notice and contact is made before the effective date of closure

When the participant contacts FAA in person, FAA staff must assist the participant in reaching the R&A Unit.

NOTE Do not give a participant the R&A phone number. The number to R&A is for internal use only.

When the X048 notice is mailed and the participant contacts FAA on or after the effective date of closure, advise the participant of **all** of the following:

- The participant must reapply
- The participant has the right to file an appeal
- The participant must comply by providing their reason for the OOS spending before a CA eligibility determination is completed

### **EBT Account Adjustments – Processing Procedures**

EBT transaction system errors are processed by the Fidelity Information Services (FIS) EBT Adjustment Research Department (ARD). FIS must respond to an adjustment request within 15 calendar days of the receipt of a request.

When an EBT adjustment request is received, the ARD completes **all** of the following:

- Contacts the third-party processor (TPP) or financial institution that provided the groceries or cash and obtains proof of the transaction.
- Validates whether a system error occurred.
- Credits the participant's EBT account when the system error is confirmed.
- Sends an email to FAA EBT Support at [FAAEBTSupport@azdes.gov](mailto:FAAEBTSupport@azdes.gov) when a participant's request for a credit adjustment has been denied.

On the day FAA EBT Support learns of a credit denial but no later than the following [workday\(g\)](#), FAA EBT Support sends the EBT Account Adjustment Credit (A087/F034) notice.

Each workday FAA EBT Support retrieves EBT account adjustment reports from the FIS portal. The EB 220-1 lists all EBT account adjustments that have been credited or debited. The EB 230-1 lists retailer-initiated requests for a debit to a participant's EBT account.

On the day, the EB 230-1 report is retrieved but no later than the following workday, FAA EBT Support sends the EBT Account Adjustment Debit (A086/F031) notice.

When an appeal is requested within 15 calendar days from the date of the notice, the Appeals Processing Unit (APU) notifies FAA EBT Support via email at [FAAEBTsupport@azdes.gov](mailto:FAAEBTsupport@azdes.gov). FAA EBT Support in turn notifies FIS. FIS then places a hold on the debit pending the hearing decision.

When a cardholder requests recoupment, see [EBT Recoupment](#).

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## AZTECS Procedures

EBT accounts are established on EBT PAYEE MAINTENANCE (EBPM), which is part of the AZTECS Roadmap screens.

Quick Access Menu:

- [EBT NA Expedited Benefits](#)
- [EBT CA Expedited Benefits](#)
- [EBT Canceling Benefits](#)
- [EBT Out of State Usage - Reapplication After Closure](#)
- [EBT Out of State Usage - Research and Analysis](#)

### EBT NA Expedited Benefits

Emergency NA benefits are authorized by the EBT Emergency Benefits Unit on FSMI.

Authorization of the emergency benefits display in AZTECS with **any** of the following:

- On FSIH, the amount of the emergency NA benefit displays. The Authorization Number displays in the DOC NUMBER field. The date of transmission displays in the MAIL DATE and STATUS DATE fields. EMEREBT displays in the DOC STAT field. E displays in the DEL MTD field.
- On FSBH, PX displays in the ISS IND field.

When the transmission is unsuccessful, an edit message displays on FSMI. Review the error and correct it.

For procedures to notify the EBT Emergency Benefits Unit of the need to authorize expedited NA benefits, see [EBT Emergency Benefits](#).

### EBT CA Expedited Benefits

Emergency CA benefits are authorized by the EBT Emergency Benefits Unit on FIWI.

When the transmission is successful, benefits are available immediately.

Authorization of the emergency benefits displays in AZTECS with **any** of the following:

- On AFIH, the emergency CA benefit displays. The Authorization Number displays in the WARRANT NUMBER field. The date of transmission displays in the MAIL DATE and STATUS DATE fields. EMEREBT displays in the DOC STATUS field.
- On AFBH, PX displays in the ISS IND field.



When the transmission is unsuccessful, an edit message displays on FIWI. Review the error and correct it.

For procedures on notifying the EBT Emergency Benefits Unit of the need to authorize expedited CA benefits, see [EBT Emergency Benefits](#).

### EBT Canceling Benefits

To cancel EBT benefits, **all** of the following must be completed:

- The Supervisor completes the EBT Emergency Benefits/Cancellation of Benefits Request Form (FAA-1003A).
- The Supervisor sends the FAA-1003A via email to the EBT Emergency Benefits Unit at [FAACCEBTIssuanceCancel@azdes.gov](mailto:FAACCEBTIssuanceCancel@azdes.gov).
- The EBT Emergency Benefits Unit cancels the EBT benefits on RERB by keying CA in the ACTION field, and EB in the REASON field.
- Benefits can only be canceled after the issuance run date and before the date the benefits become available. When the date of availability has passed, the following edit message displays:  
\*SEVERE\* CAN NOT CANCEL, DATE OF AVAILABILITY PAST
- When the transmission is successful, AZTECS indicates the document status as canceled on the applicable issuance history screens.

### EBT Out of State Usage - Reapplication After Closure

A participant may reapply on or after the effective date of their CA closure. When the closure is due to failure to comply with the EBT card out-of-state usage requirements, complete **all** of the following during the interview:

- Review the EBT Transaction History on EBTH.
- Complete the EBT Card Out of State CA Usage Questionnaire (FAA-1596A) form.
- Discuss and document the FAA-1596A with the reason for the participant spending their benefits out of state.
- Document the [case file\(g\)](#) with a summary of the discussion.
- Upload or scan the completed form to [OnBase\(g\)](#) as Document Type Group <All> and Document Type, FAA1596A FORFF EBT CARD OUT OF STATE USAGE QUESTIONNAIRE.
- Send the completed questionnaire via email to the Research and Analysis (R&A) Unit. (See [FAARAMGT@azdes.gov](mailto:FAARAMGT@azdes.gov))
- Complete the CA approval when **all** of the following apply:
  - Eligibility factors have been met and verified
  - An NQ or RQ code is keyed in the EBT OUT OF STATE RESULT field on INDA

## EBT Out of State Usage - Research and Analysis

The Research and Analysis (R&A) Unit ensures compliance with the CA EBT Out of State Usage process.

When a participant contacts R&A in response to the EBT Card Out of State Usage (X058) notice, R&A completes **all** of the following:

- Reviews the EBT Transaction History.
- Completes the EBT Card Out of State CA Usage Questionnaire (FAA-1596A) form.
- Discusses and documents the FAA-1596A with the reason for the participant spending their benefits out of state.
- Documents the case file with a summary of the discussion.
- Uploads or scans the completed form to [OnBase\(g\)](#) as Document Type Group <All> and Document Type, FAA1596A FORFF EBT CARD OUT OF STATE USAGE QUESTIONNAIRE.

When a participant contacts R&A in response to the CA Closure-10% EBT Out of State Closure (X048) notice, before the effective date of closure, R&A completes **all** of the following:

- Discusses the reason for the CA 10% OOS usage and complete the EBT Card Out of State CA Usage Questionnaire (FAA-1596A) form.
- Reverts the program to open.
- Depending on the explanation provided by the participant, key the EBT OUT OF STATE RESULT field on INDA with **one** of the following codes:
  - NQ – The participant is a resident of Arizona.
  - RQ - Residency cannot be established or is questionable. R&A completes an online OIG Investigation Referral. (See [OSI – Investigation Referral](#))
- Uploads or scans the completed form to OnBase as Document Type Group <All> and Document Type, FAA-1596A FORFF EBT CARD OUT OF STATE USAGE QUESTIONNAIRE.
- Documents the case file with a summary of actions taken.

When the Office of Inspector General (OIG) investigation is completed and the report confirms that the participant is a resident of Arizona, R&A completes **all** of the following:

- Keys VN in the EBT OUT OF STATE RESULT field on INDA.
- Documents CADO with the results of the investigation.
- Uploads the Investigation Report to OnBase.

When the OIG investigation confirms that the participant is not a resident of Arizona, R&A completes **all** of the following:

- Updates the address in AZTECS. (See [Change of Address – Out of State](#))
- Closes all active programs.
- Documents the case file with the summary of closure actions.

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**Legal Authorities**

- 7 CFR 274.6(a)
- 7 CFR 274.6(a)(2)
- 7 CFR 274.6(a)(6)(ii)
- 7 CFR 274.6(a)(7)(i)
- 7 CFR 274.6(b)

[Prior Policy](#)

*last revised 06/24/2024*

ARCHIVED (Valid until 08/05/24)