



Food Assistance Program and Upcoming Changes

**House Families, Children and
Seniors Committee**

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Program Overview

- Food Assistance provides nutrition benefits to supplement the food budget of needy families.
- Accepted at 9,700 unique locations.

What Does Federal Policy Allow to be Purchased Using Food Assistance Benefits?



- Fruits and vegetables.
- Meat, poultry, and fish.
- Dairy products.
- Breads and cereals.
- Other foods such as snack foods and non-alcoholic beverages.
- Seeds and plants, which produce food for the household to eat.

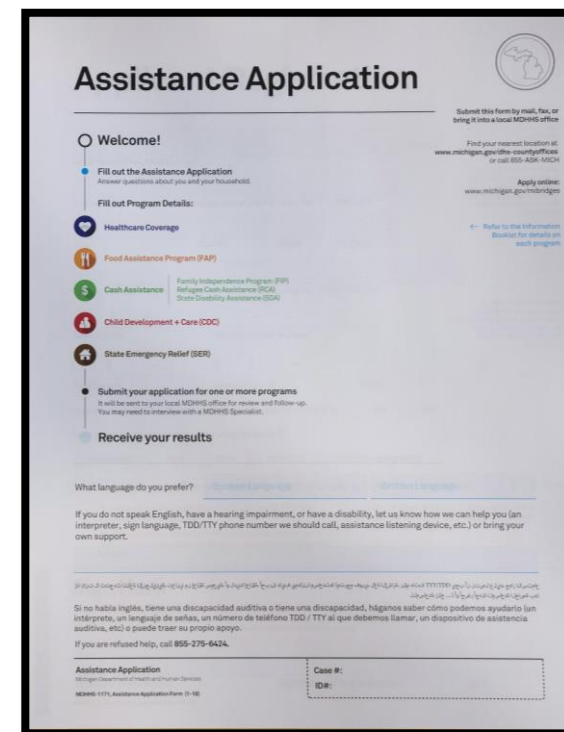
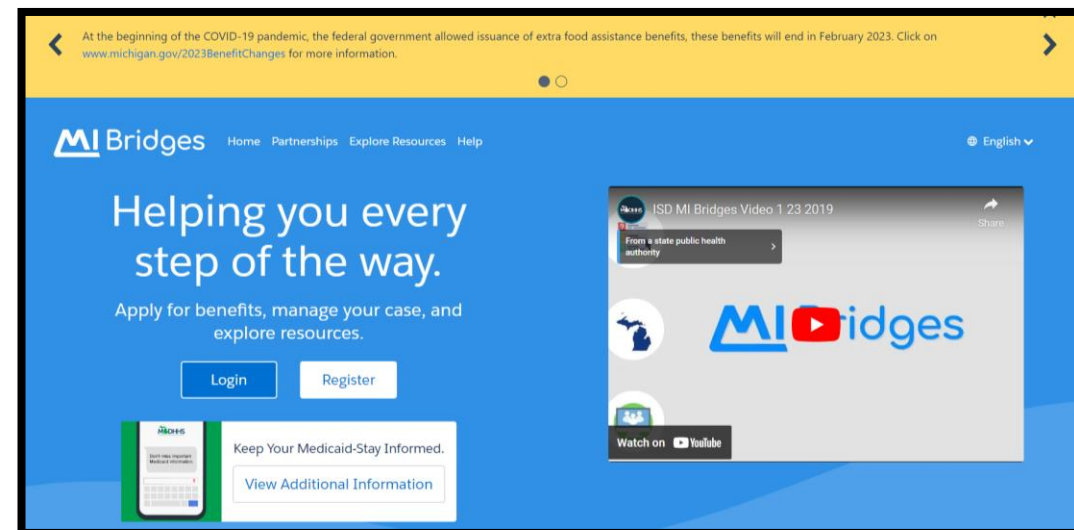


- Beer, wine, liquor, cigarettes, or tobacco.
- Vitamins, medicines, and supplements.
- Live animals.
- Foods that are hot at the point of sale.
- Any items such as:
 - Pet foods
 - Cleaning supplies, paper products, and other household supplies
 - Hygiene items, cosmetics

Applying for Food Assistance

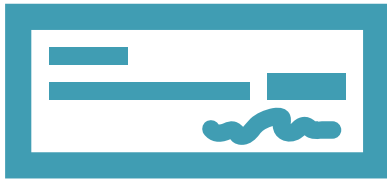
Individuals and families can apply online using MI Bridges or with a paper application.

- Community Partners
 - Provide access to MI Bridges.
 - Assist residents with MI Bridge and paper applications.
- Paper Applications
 - Can be picked up at a local office.
 - Can be mailed to resident with a return envelope by calling MDHHS.



Food Assistance Eligibility

Income



- Wages and self-employment income.
- Rental income.
- Social Security benefits.
- Veteran benefits.

Asset Limits



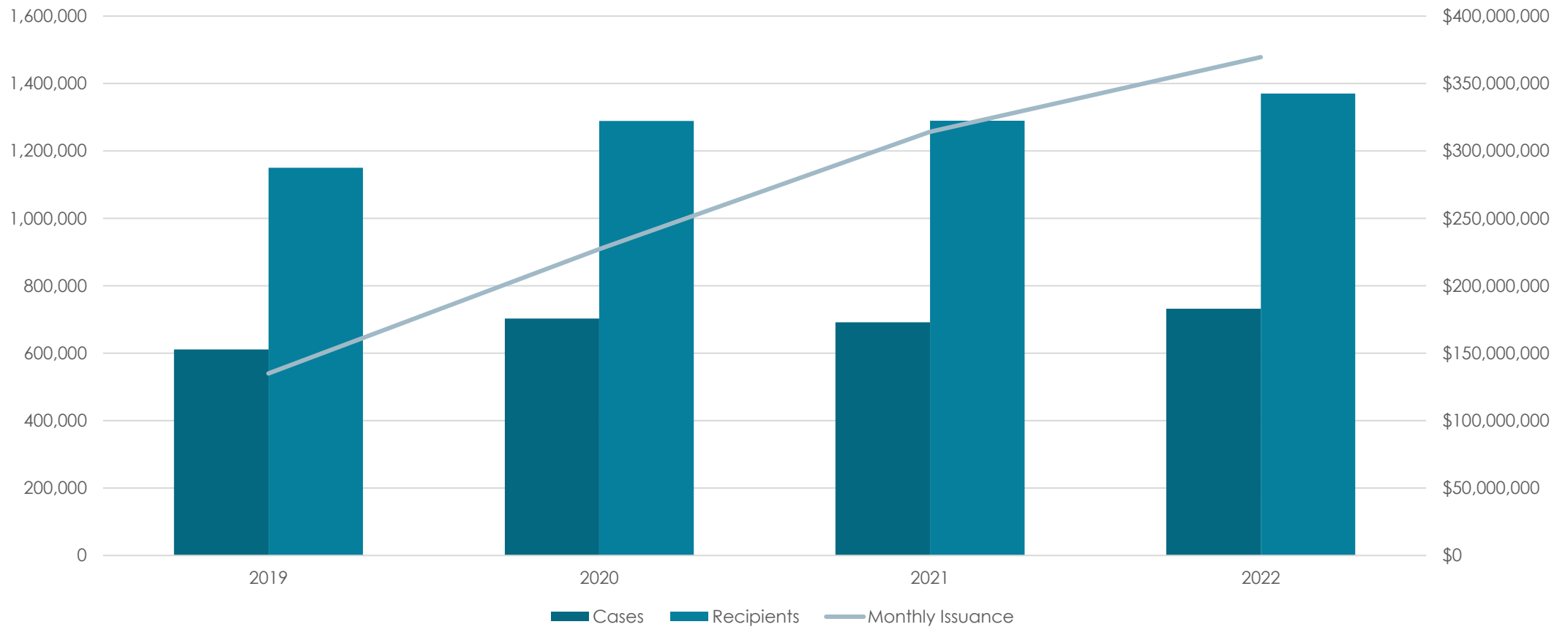
- Cash on hand.
- Checking and savings accounts.
- Investments and some trusts.
- Property or real estate.

Expenses



- Shelter.
- Child support payments.
- Dependent care expenses.
- Medical expenses.

Food Assistance Program Data



COVID-19 Emergency Allotments

- **As a result of federal action**, COVID-19 Emergency Allotments will no longer be issued effective March 2023.
- Cases will return to **pre-pandemic benefit amounts** and continue to receive their approved benefit amount based on eligibility factors.
- Cases will no longer receive the additional amount that brings them up to the maximum benefit per month for their group size.
- Cases eligible for the maximum benefit will no longer receive the \$95 Emergency Allotment payment.



Example: Impact to Individuals & Families

- George is a retired individual who lives alone.
- Budgeting his retirement income and household expenses to determine eligibility:
 - He received \$281 in monthly food assistance with COVID-19 Emergency Allotments.
 - When the extra benefits end, he will receive \$112 monthly.

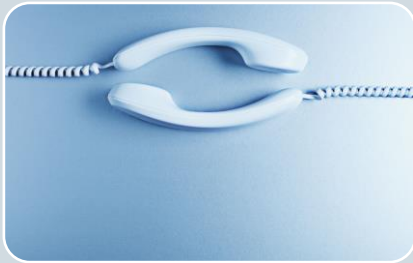
- Mary is a single mother with three kids.
- Budgeting income from her job and household expenses to determine eligibility:
 - Her family received \$939 in monthly food assistance with COVID-19 Emergency Allotments.
 - When the extra benefits end, they will receive \$415 monthly.

Economic Impact

- Every \$1 in food assistance benefits generates \$1.79 in economic activity.
- Emergency Allotments account for an average of \$196 per month per food assistance group.



Resources MDHHS is Sharing with Residents



Informing residents to use 2-1-1 to find resources in their community.



Providing residents information to connect with local food banks.



Explaining Double Up Food Bucks to stretch their food assistance dollars.



Encouraging residents to apply for Free and Reduced Lunch through their child's school.



Connecting families with young children to apply for WIC.

How MDHHS is Communicating This Change?



Local office staff are using talking points and FAQs to talk about the change at every touchpoint with a resident.



Incoming phone lines have automated messages about the ending of COVID-19 Emergency Allotments.



MI Bridges announcement on the landing page.



Flyers for local offices and community partners.



Text messaging campaign to those receiving food assistance.



Tool kit and resources are online [2023 Benefit Changes](#).



Social media campaign.



[Press release](#).

Questions?

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