

## 2020.07.23 - TF. SNAP&TANF Mtg. Notes

Present: Ashley Black, JD Robinson, Caroline Bolas, Annie Speedie, Tamera White, Robert Durocher, Michelle Madaio, Lauren Young, Del. Charkoudian

Next Meeting: August 11, 2020, from 3-4 pm

### Workgroup Reports:

- All of the workgroups met within the past two weeks.
- Ashley made announcements pertaining to the first initiative:
  - This Subcommittee is looking to start a survey draft with the Unemployment Insurance Subcommittee. Members will coordinate with the UI group to meet this goal.
- The education subgroup reported some of their potential recommendations:
  - There are already many educational tools published, so this group should be about making those tools available to all.
  - DHS does not have a toll free number. Many other states have this feature and this should be a recommendation.
  - We can advocate for the use of mobile hotspots for those without internet access. However, folks need more than just the internet. They need access to materials that would be difficult to navigate through a smartphone.
  - DHS will often not allow third-parties to join the call even though there is no policy against it. This presents a major issue for those who speak a different language or those who need help understanding what the DHS worker is saying/asking.
  - Recommend to keep the 4-month benefits rather monthly benefits pre-COVID.
  - There should be more accountability. There should be a place that people can complain if things are taking longer than required by law.
- The policy advocate workgroup met and identified various issues:
  - Conduit, the EBT provider, has an extremely difficult process to replace a card. Sometimes the cards are not replaced for several days or more. There are also language barriers in the system, used to replace the cards.
  - Repeated issue with DHS not allowing third parties in on calls without a specific policy to do so. We should possibly submit a data request to see what the average wait time is. It seems to be higher for Spanish speakers.
  - Advocacy for additional grocery stores to accept EBT. We should see what DHS has already done regarding this issue and potentially reach out to stores or pressure DHS to address this issue.
  - Advocacy at the federal level to support waiver extensions.
- We lightly touched upon the issues that undocumented immigrants face. Here are some things to look into:
  - SNAP and public charge. What can we do to ease this burden or correct it?
  - The agencies are often scaring people. Departments are discouraging immigrants from applying for benefits by putting them through additional hoops that they normally would not have to go through. For example, asking for a social security number when one is not needed.
  - The esperanza center will be a place to start gathering information.