**Department of Public Health & Social Services**

**Division of Public Welfare**

**Bureau of Economic Security (BES)**

**BES Administrator**

**Annie VT. Gozum-Soto**

**ISSUANCE UNIT**

**Joleen Almandres – Program Coordinator IV**

**Steven Medrano – Program Coordinator II**

**PROGRAM MANAGEMENT SECTION**

**Danilo L. Barrido – Program Coordinator IV**

**Christopher Surla – Program Coordinator II**

**Jane Diego – Program Coordinator I**

**CERTIFICATION UNIT**

**Maria Cindy Malanum – Social Services Supervisor I**

**Maria Teresa Gozum – Eligibility Specialist Supervisor**

**Thelma Pangelinan – Eligibility Specialist Supervisor**

**Norma Rojas – Eligibility Specialist Supervisor**

**FY 2018 BES Annual Report**

# BES administers several programs serving low-income individuals and families. The bureau’s primary function is to determine and certify eligibility of individuals and families who applied for public assistance program.

## Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

SNAP is a federal program that offers nutrition assistance to low income individuals and families and provides economic benefits to communities. While funding for the administration of SNAP is shared equally by the federal and local government, the SNAP benefits provided to recipients are 100% federally funded. It is the largest program in the domestic hunger safety net.

To reach and help struggling working families make ends meet, Guam expanded the SNAP in FY 2009 by increasing the income limit from 130% of federal poverty level to 165% and removed the resource limit. The asset cap was eliminated to protect people who lost their jobs in this unstable economy from having to spend down almost all of their savings to feed their families before they could be considered eligible for SNAP.

Additionally, Guam applied for a waiver to allow the Able-Bodied Without Dependents (ABAWD) population of Guam to participate under the SNAP program without having them meet the 20 hours per week work requirements due to lack of sufficient jobs on the island. The waiver will expire on September 30, 2019.

The use of SNAP benefit has some limitations/restrictions:

**Households CAN use SNAP benefits to buy:**

* Foods for the household to eat, such as: breads and cereals; fruits and vegetables; meats, fish and poultry; and dairy products.
* Seeds and plants which produce food for the household to eat.

**Households CANNOT use SNAP benefits to buy:**

* Beer, wine, liquor, cigarettes or tobacco
* Any nonfood items, such as: pet foods, soaps, paper products, household supplies
* Vitamins and medicines
* Food that will be eaten in the store
* Hot foods

## Cash Assistance Program (TANF, OAA, APTD, AB, GA)

Temporary Assistance for the Needy Families (TANF) is a 100% federally funded program that provides assistance to needy families with children and provides parents with job preparation, work placement assistance, and support services to enable them to leave the program and become self-sufficient. Old Age Assistance (OAA), Aid to the Permanently and Totally Disabled (APTD), and Aid to the Blind (AB) are 75% federally and 25 % locally funded program while General Assistance (GA) is 100% locally funded.

Families and individuals needing cash assistance will be assessed to identify financial needs. Benefits will be granted only after an applicant meets the financial and non-financial eligibility criteria.

Like SNAP, CAP has also restrictions. It prohibits assistance from being used in any electronic benefit transaction in any liquor store, any casino, or gaming establishments or any retail establishments which provides adult-oriented entertainment in which performers disrobe or perform in an unclothed state for entertainment.

1. **Medicaid and Medically Indigent Program –** provides medical assistance to low income families and individuals. Benefits administration of this program is under the Bureau of Health Care and Financing Administration (BHCFA).
2. **Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) grant**- supports working low income families by providing access to affordable, high quality early care, and afterschool programs. Benefits administration of this program is under the Bureau of Management Support (BMS).

This fiscal year, the bureau (all three centers) has entertained and assisted 109, 982 applicants and recipients in various activities associated with their participation in SNAP and other public assistance programs administered by BES, as follows:

1. 18, 339 of change reports were processed
2. 7,059 new appointments were scheduled and completed for interview
3. 10,021 cases were re-opened
4. 28, 369 cases were renewed
5. 20,481 SNAP/Public Assistance inquiries were received and resolved
6. 24,052 Medicaid and Medically Indigent Program inquiries were received an resolved
7. 906 Child Care Development Fund inquiries were received and resolved
8. 745 other program inquiries received and resolved

Most importantly, the bureau has issued total public assistance benefits that had generated into Guam’s economy for the last five (5) years, as follows:

## SNAP Benefits Issued

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Fiscal Year** | **Benefits Issued** |
| 2014 | $113, 083,785 |
| 2015 | $111,880, 173 |
| 2016 | $106, 891, 601 |
| 2017 | $103, 627, 406 |
| 2018 | $106, 449, 157 |

## CAP Benefits Issued

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Fiscal Year** | **Benefits Issued** |
| 2014 | $4,592,197 |
| 2015 | $4,284,889 |
| 2016 | $3,832,908 |
| 2017 | $3,226,489 |
| 2018 | $3,150,312 |

## Program Participation by Number of Eligibles

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Program** | **FY2014** | **FY2015** | **FY2016** | **FY2017** | **FY2018** |
| SNAP (Food Stamps) | 53,739 | 52,617 | 55,716 | 45,260 | 53,951 |
| TANF (CAP) | 9,745 | 8,549 | 4,555 | 1,430 | 2,551 |
| Medicaid | 44,528 | 44,033 | 43710 | 33,255 | 43,758 |
| MIP | 12,471 | 12,033 | 11,766 | 14,709 | 11,039 |
| AB, OAA, APTD (CAP) | 940 | 993 | 659 | 580 | 746 |
| GA | 1,686 | 1,473 | 1,418 | 601 | 1,484 |

## Program Participation by Number of Households (Cases)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Program** | **FY2014** | **FY2015** | **FY2016** | **FY2017** | **FY2018** |
| SNAP (Food Stamps) | 17,330 | 16,796 | 18,400 | 15,227 | 18,543 |
| TANF (CAP | 2,341 | 3,144 | 1,781 | 658 | 1,060 |
| Medicaid | 17,161 | 16,719 | 17,045 | 13,041 | 18,175 |
| MIP | 6,447 | 6,213 | 6,052 | 3,988 | 5,907 |
| AB, OAA, APTD (CAP) | 912 | 955 | 633 | 560 | 715 |
| GA | 1,535 | 1,353 | 1,325 | 570 | 1,391 |

**BES Intake and Certification Section**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Category** | Clients Seen/Interviewed FY2017 | Clients Seen/Interviewed FY 2018 | Percentage (Decrease/Increase**)** |
| New | 3,445 | 3,280 | -5% |
| Reopen | 4,098 | 4,121 | 1% |
| Renewal | 14,881 | 14,565 | -2% |
| Expedited | 1,778 | 1,442 | -19% |
| Others | 96,661 | 77,890 | -19% |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Category | Total Applications Processed  FY 2017 | Total Applications Processed  FY 2018 | Percentage (Decrease/Increase) |
| New | 6,397 | 7,059 | 10% |
| Reopen | 10,172 | 10,021 | -1% |
| Renewal | 29,131 | 28,369 | -3% |
| Change Report | 20,551 | 18,339 | -11% |

**SNAP Participants by Ethnicity**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Ethnicity | FY 2017 | FY 2018 | Percentage (Decrease/Increase) |
| Chamorro | 24,172 | 23,403 | -3% |
| FAS Citizens | 8,097 | 8,880 | 10% |
| Filipino | 7,001 | 6,714 | -4% |
| Other | 1,329 | 1,253 | -6% |

**SNAP Participants by Gender**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Gender | FY 2017 | FY 2018 | Percentage (Decrease/Increase) |
| Male | 19,188 | 19,079 | -1% |
| Female | 21,411 | 21,171 | -1% |

**CAP Participants by Ethnicity**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Ethnicity | FY 2017 | FY 2018 | Percentage (Decrease/Increase) |
| Chamorro | 1,372 | 1,172 | -15% |
| FAS Citizens | 618 | 685 | 11% |
| Filipino | 322 | 298 | -7% |
| Other | 157 | 134 | -15% |

**CAP Participants by Gender**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Gender | FY 2017 | FY 2018 | Percentage ((Decrease/Increase) |
| Male | 1,236 | 1,164 | -6% |
| Female | 1,233 | 1,125 | -9% |

**EBT CARD ISSUANCE**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **FY2018 EBT CARD ISSUANCE** | | | | |
| **DESCRIPTION** | **CENTRAL** | **NORTHERN** | **SOUTHERN** | **TOTAL** |
| **\*\* Overall totals** | **7,334** | **1,668** | **200** | **9,202** |
| DAMAGED - BROKEN | 14 | 131 | 37 | 182 |
| DAMAGED - WON'T SWIPE | 1,135 | 287 | 11 | 1,433 |
| LOST | 4,264 | 782 | 96 | 5,142 |
| NEW CASE NUMBER | 1,785 | 448 | 55 | 2,288 |
| STOLEN - NO POLICE REPORT | 128 | 16 | 1 | 145 |
| STOLEN - POLICE REPORT FILED | 8 | 4 | - | 12 |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **FY2017 EBT CARD ISSUANCE** | | | | |
| **DESCRIPTION** | **CENTRAL** | **NORTHERN** | **SOUTHERN** | **TOTAL** |
| **\*\* Overall totals** | **7,858** | **-** | **-** | **7,858** |
| DAMAGED - BROKEN | 8 |  |  | 8 |
| DAMAGED - WON'T SWIPE | 1,359 | - | - | 1,359 |
| LOST | 4,366 | - | - | 4,366 |
| NEW CASE NUMBER | 1,949 | - | - | 1,949 |
| STOLEN - NO POLICE REPORT | 176 | - | - | 176 |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **DESCRIPTION** | **FY2017** | **FY2018** | **% Change** |
| **\*\* Overall totals** | **7,858** | **9,202** | **17%** |
| DAMAGED - BROKEN | 8 | 182 | **2175%** |
| DAMAGED - WON'T SWIPE | 1,359 | 1,433 | **5%** |
| LOST | 4,366 | 5,142 | **18%** |
| NEW CASE NUMBER | 1,949 | 2,288 | **17%** |
| STOLEN - NO POLICE REPORT | 176 | 145 | **-18%** |
| STOLEN - POLICE REPORT FILED | - | 12 |  |

**Highlights for Fiscal Year 2018:**

1. The Bureau of Economic Security (BES) was awarded $223,382 for the FY2018 SNAP-Ed Program. This is an increase of $51,558 or 30% in program funding as $171,824 was awarded in FY2017. Through a Memorandum of Understanding, the University of Guam/ College of Natural and Applied Science (UOG/CNAS) received 96%, or $213,382, of the FY2018 funding to continue implementing evidence-based programs to help educate and promote healthy eating and physical activity to SNAP recipients and potential SNAP clients. In FY2018, funds were used to expand the Program’s four (4) project areas. A comparison of FY2017and FY2018 project accomplishments is as follows:

* Project 1: Plan, Save, Shop and Cook (Direct Nutrition Education for Adults)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **FY 2017** | **FY2018** | **Percentage of Change** |
| 45 adult participants  (18+ years) completed, in partnership with community programs | 122 adult participants  (18+ years) completed, in partnership with community programs. | 171% |

* Project 2: Eat Smart, Live Strong (Direct Nutrition Education for Older Adults)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **FY 2017** | **FY2018** | **Percentage of Change** |
| 68 adult participants (18+years) completed, in partnership with community programs. | 80 adult participants (18+years) completed, in partnership with community programs. | 17.64% |

* Project 3: Food Friends Mighty Moves (Direct Nutrition Education for Early Childhood)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **FY 2017** | **FY2018** | **Percentage of Change** |
| 235 Total Participants  66 youth (<5 years) participants in School Year 2016-2017, and  169 youth (<5) participants in School Year 2017-2018, in partnership with GDOE  Pre-K Program, Pre-K Gate Program and the Guam Head Start Program. | 592 Total Participants  235 youth (<5 years) participants in School Year 2017-2018, and  357 youth (<5) participants in School Year 2018-2019, in partnership with GDOE  Pre-K Program, Pre-K Gate Program and the Guam Head Start Program. | 151.9%  327.27%  111.24% |

* Project 4: 5-2-1 Almost None (Social Marketing Campaign in Four Villages)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **FY 2017** | **FY2018** | **Percentage of Change** |
| * Pledge activities in 5 SNAP-authorized partner stores. * 28 cooking demonstrations and taste-testing presentations   with approximately 563 residents reached. | * Pledge activities in 5 existing, and 2 new SNAP-authorized partner stores. * 24 cooking demonstrations and taste-testing presentations \*   with approximately 575 residents reached. | * 40% * -14.28%   2.13% |

*\*UOG accomplished the target goal of 24 demonstrations in FY2018.*

FY18 Funding was also used to conduct a needs assessment through a SNAP-Ed Evaluator to identify community needs that SNAP-Ed is able to address currently, and can use to help guide future SNAP-Ed Projects. The need assessments was held via community meetings and focus groups amongst three (3) key stakeholder sections – Parents, Community Partners and Community Leaders; and across three (3) island regions: North, Central, and South.

1. For the first time, BES was awarded the amount of $272,727 under the SNAP Integrity and Education Grant. The funds awarded will be utilized to develop brochures, pamphlets and other materials to expand outreaches efforts to educate recipients of the SNAP rules and regulations and the consequences of committing fraud. FNS gave BES the extension to use the funds up to September 2019.
2. Not like before where Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Cards are issued only at the Central Public Health in Mangilao, issuance of these cards is now available at all three centers. This innovation had created easy convenience to all our clients in the island.
3. BES and GHURA have agreed that, to alleviate the problems associated with request of information from BES, that (1) there will be no more faxing requests for information from GHURA (only clients will request the information from DPHSS) (2) GHURA will provide clients with the Family Summary Report (instead of lease agreement, etc.) (3) GHURA will provide DPHSS the names of household members, information as to rentals and income.
4. The USDA’s Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has approved four (4) waivers to assist Guam in providing an effective implementation of the SNAP. These are:
5. To reinstate the eligibility of households who have been recently become ineligible for SNAP benefits due to the household’s failure to provide required information or verification. Waiver was approved for two years effective 10/01/2017 to 09/30/2019.
6. Combined notice on Periodic Change Report (PCR). If a household fails to submit a PCR, a second notice is sent to the household. The second notice includes the termination of recipients from the SNAP for failure to submit the PCR. Because of the waiver, Guam can now combine the notice of the requirement of a PCR and the termination notice into one PCR notice.
7. Shortening of SNAP certification periods to align with other programs.
8. Mass replacement of 60% of food losses due to Typhoon Manghkut.
9. The Social Security Agency (SSA) conducted a site visit to Guam in July 2018. The purpose of the visit was to ensure that the information provided by SSA to DPHSS is protected and that there is a proactive effort to ensure that all staff are trained in security awareness of SSA data. All findings as a result of the visit were addressed and are now closed. Additionally, the Exchange Agreement Modifications between SSA and DPHSS were revised and approved.
10. From April 17 to April 20, 2018, FNS conducted a State Agency Management Evaluation (SAME). SAME is a yearly assessment of a State Agency’s administration of SNAP. On that same period, the Bureau of Management Support (BMS) conducted an internal Management Evaluation Review (MER). All findings from SAME and MER were addressed by developing corrective action plan for each finding. Findings such as, lack of a complaint log was addressed by creating a complaint log. Food Stamp Rights and Justice for All posters were distributed and posted to all SNAP centers. Program forms were translated into different dialects. Vaults/safes were purchased to ensure EBT cards are safely stored. Finally, trainings were conducted in protecting Personal Identifiable Information as well as the HIPAA training.

1. Ten (10) Eligibility Specialists under Limited Term Appointment and two Clerks were recruited to assist the processing of applications for public assistance benefits and program operation.
2. Policy Clarifications:
3. Provided clarification that two full check stubs are not required for SNAP certification. Only the income received during the past 30 days shall be used as an indicator of the income except if the income fluctuates to the extent that the 30-day period alone cannot provide an accurate indication of anticipated income. The ES in this case may use a longer period of past time to calculate the required income for certification purposes.
4. Provided clarification that if a SNAP household is living with other adult individuals who are not the landlord and not currently receiving SNAP benefits, BES is not required to request a statement of living arrangement from those individuals. Any statement under the penalty of perjury from the household will suffice according to FNS.
5. Policy Clarification on asylees was finalized as BES Policy Clarification #18-01, the Post GI Bill as BES Policy Clarification # 18-02 and the Residency Requirement as BES Policy Clarification #18-03.
6. Researched the issue on General Assistance (GA). Since GA is a legislative creation it can be abolished through legislation.
7. Researched and determined that the EBT retailer cannot set a minimum purchase utilizing an EBT card.
8. Sought FNS clarification regarding the case termination due to refusal to cooperate with QC. If the client complies in the month that the case was/is set to terminate, then BES can continue to provide benefits in order to avoid termination. If the client does not comply until after termination date, a new application will be required.
9. School verification is not needed when applying for Medicaid.
10. For purposes of determining applicant’s identity, any document that can be reasonably establish identity has to be accepted (i.e., adoption papers, hospital or clinic records Church or Baptismal records, etc.). There is no requirement for a specific document such as birth certificate that shall be imposed to individuals applying for public assistance.
11. A 16-year old and below applicant is not required to go to school when they apply for Medicaid.
12. Payments received by foster parents for foster care are “unearned income” and therefore, countable as income when applying for SNAP.
13. Disqualification as a result of voluntarily quitting a job begins on the month following the issuance of the notice of adverse action.
14. An LPR is qualified for Medicaid provided that he/she has meet the 5-year waiting period (though, there are exceptions to the 5-year waiting period).
15. Calculation of quarterly commission of applicants. Since commissions are considered earned income, the same should be averaged to come up with the monthly income.
16. Medicaid does not cover inmates to include DYA kids.
17. Wages derived from SCSEP are exempt from SNAP eligibility determination but not with Medicaid.
18. Severely delayed application. According to FNS Administrative Notice # 17-14 retroactive payments for severely delayed applications due to agency’s fault is only up to twelve months.
19. Secured clarification from U.S. Probation Office that an individual who is accused of a drug felony and pleads guilty is a convicted felon.

**CHALLENGES:**

1. The reduction of BES’ budget due to the passing of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act in order to help meet the estimated shortfall of $44.7M has adversely affected the recruitment of budgeted vacancies.
2. BES anticipates losing some ES under LTA when their term of employment expires. If some LTAs are out, this will result to increase of pending applications to be processed and untimely and inaccurate processing. Ultimate result is a high error rate.
3. The process of recruitment remains a challenge. It has always been long and arduous.
4. BES will follow-up on the status of Bill # 207-34. Now, that Senator Rodriguez is out of office, BES will find a new legislator to initiate the continuance and the passage of said bill. This bill is to classify the ES position as Welfare Program Specialists and upgrade the salaries.
5. BES will continue to pursue other opportunities for federal funding aimed at improving SNAP operation.

**The Bureau’s goals and plans for FY 2019 are:**

1. Improve timely processing of application for public assistance programs.

* Continue to monitor workers to ensure all applications are completely processed.
* Continue to monitor front desk staff to ensure clients are seen and interviewed timely.
* Continue to assign an ES and monitor the processing of change reports in an effort to reduce the backlog on change reports.
* Continue to assess the feasibility of the implementation of Business Processing Re-engineering (BPR).

1. To reduce program error rate.

* Continue to seek policy clarification with FNS and inform staff of new and/or updated policies.
* Continue to stress the importance of ES’ Supervisors’ review of completed cases and monitoring its completion. Review will be focused on ES who is consistently cited by Quality Control Section.
* Continue to conduct 100% review of the negative cases to avoid citation of invalid findings.
* Continue to conduct month end trainings.

1. To improve customer service.

* Continue to provide staff with available customer service training i.e., DOA sponsored trainings, etc.
* Continue to monitor the complaint log.
* Continue to analyze common complaints and reasons on clients encounter and ensure that ES, ESS, and SSS I addressed these complaints as quickly as possible.

1. To pursue the recruitment of additional ES

* To prepare the recruitment packet without delay.
* To prepare justification for the recruitment.
* To follow-up the recruitment with BBMR and DOA.