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## **Waivers and Variances of Reach First, Reach Up, Postsecondary Education, and Reach Ahead Program Rules under Act 91 – An act relating to Vermont’s response to COVID-19**

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Act 91 authorizes the Agency of Human Services (AHS) to waive or permit variances of AHS rules to support children and families who receive benefits and services through the Department for Children and Families (DCF) during a declared state of emergency in Vermont as a result of COVID-19.

The table below lists the rules that have been waived or varied for the Reach First, Reach Up, Postsecondary Education, and Reach Ahead Program Rules under Act 91. The DCF Economic Services Division (ESD) will provide at least 10 days advance notice to affected program participants before reducing or terminating benefits resulting from reinstatement of the rules.

<b>Rule Number</b>	<b>Description of Waiver or Variance</b>
2211.3 - Verification	(1) ESD will accept self-reported income if verification is unavailable. (2) ESD will allow applicants to self-report application for Unemployment Insurance. (3) Interim reports to verify income for cases in March, April, and May were extended for six months. (4) ESD will not terminate a family’s benefits if they do not return verification that an 18-year child in the household is still in school.
2213.1 - Reviews	Reviews of eligibility for cases in March, April, and May were extended for six months.
2230.2 – Temporary Absence from the Home	Temporary absence cases that were scheduled to end in March, April, and May were extended until the end of June.
2235.2 – Cooperation with Child Support	Sanctions for noncooperation with the Office of Child Support have been suspended through the end of June.

2238.1 – Termination after 60 Months	ESD will not terminate a family’s benefits for non-compliance with the work requirement.
2238.2 – Reapplication after 60 Months	ESD will waive the two-week period of compliance.
2240 – Formation of the Assistance Group	ESD will automatically determine all pregnancies to be high risk.
2322.1 – Application Phase	The initial FDP requirement is waived.
2333 – FDP Reviews and Modifications	(1) ESD will waive all in-person meeting requirements. (2) Case reviews have been suspended.
2363 – Deferment or Modification of the Work Requirement	All Reach Up participants have automatically been determined “unable-to-work” and deferred from the work requirement.
2374 - Conciliation	ESD has lifted the one conciliation per year limit.
2375.2 – Sanction Amounts	ESD restored families’ benefits to their pre-sanction amount. Sanctions will be imposed if the family does not engage with the services component after conciliation.
2480 – Annual Review	Reviews of eligibility for cases in March, April, and May were extended for six months.
2502.2 – Ongoing Eligibility	Interim reports to verify income for cases in March, April, and May were extended for six months.