



Modernizing Eligibility System for Client and Worker Ease

The Arkansas Department of Human Services (DHS) is launching the Arkansas Integrated Eligibility System (ARIES) in December as a way to streamline and modernize the technologies used to serve Arkansans applying and receiving benefits for: Health Care, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), or the Transitional Employment Assistance (TEA) program.

1. What is ARIES?

ARIES is an integrated eligibility system designed to make applying for assistance less complicated and streamline work for DHS staff. Teams with representatives across multiple DHS divisions have been working diligently since April 2019 to design, develop, and implement the new system, which will:

- Be more family-focused, so that clients don't have to put in separate applications for each program or for each family member
- Adapt to any smart device, making it easier for clients who don't have desktop computers to apply using other technologies
- Offer a new worker portal that makes it easier for employees to assist clients and automatically accepts information a client enters online

2. What new functions will be available for clients?

Clients who get Health Care, SNAP, or TEA benefits will see a redesigned www.Access.Arkansas.gov that will feature 24/7 client access, unlike what is available today. Clients also will for the first time be able to go online to:

- Apply for multiple programs for the entire family in one application
- Manage the family's personal information
- Report changes
- Renew benefits
- Upload documents
- View their past letters from DHS
- Check the status of applications or renewals

3. When will ARIES be implemented?

ARIES will be implemented carefully in different counties through a pilot and then rolling releases based on location and program type. The goal is to ensure the system functions as expected before using it with all clients.

Phases	Date Implemented	Counties Affected
Pilot Release 1	Begins December 7, 2020	Carroll, Independence, Lafayette, Pope, Hot Spring

Release 1 Wave 1 (Health Care only)	Begins March 8, 2020	Arkansas, Ashley, Bradley, Fulton, Garland, Calhoun, Grant, Chicot, Greene, Clark, Clay, Hempstead, Cleveland, Columbia, Craighead, Howard, Crittenden, Izard, Monroe, Montgomery, Miller, Little River, Mississippi, Cross, Dallas, Desha, Jackson, Jefferson, Drew, Lawrence, Lee, Lincoln, Nevada, Ouachita, Phillips, Pike, Poinsett, Randolph, Saline, Sevier, Sharp, St. Francis, Union
Release 1 Wave 2 (Health Care only)	Begins April 12, 2020	Baxter, Benton, Boone, Cleburne, Conway, Crawford, Faulkner, Franklin, Johnson, Logan, Lonoke, Madison, Marion, Newton, Perry, Polk, Prairie, Pulaski East, Pulaski Jacksonville, Pulaski North, Pulaski South, Pulaski Southwest, Scott, Searcy, Sebastian, Stone, Van Buren, Washington, White, Woodruff, Yell
Pilot Release 2 (SNAP & TEA)	Summer 2021	Carroll, Independence, Lafayette, Pope, Hot Spring
Release 2 Wave 1 (SNAP & TEA)	Fall 2021	Arkansas, Ashley, Bradley, Fulton, Garland, Calhoun, Grant, Chicot, Greene, Clark, Clay, Hempstead, Cleveland, Columbia, Craighead, Howard, Crittenden, Izard, Monroe, Montgomery, Miller, Little River, Mississippi, Cross, Dallas, Desha, Jackson, Jefferson, Drew, Lawrence, Lee, Lincoln, Nevada, Ouachita, Phillips, Pike, Poinsett, Randolph, Saline, Sevier, Sharp, St. Francis, Union
Release 2 Wave 1 (SNAP & TEA)	Winter 2021	Baxter, Benton, Boone, Cleburne, Conway, Crawford, Faulkner, Franklin, Johnson, Logan, Lonoke, Madison, Marion, Newton, Perry, Polk, Prairie, Pulaski East, Pulaski Jacksonville, Pulaski North, Pulaski South, Pulaski Southwest, Scott, Searcy, Sebastian, Stone, Van Buren, Washington, White, Woodruff, Yell

4. What is DHS doing to make sure the implementation goes well?

DHS has several strategies to implement ARIES in a way that will help the new system to be successful long-term, including

- Broad and robust internal training and communication efforts to ensure staff understand what the new system can do and know how to use it. These efforts are monitored and analyzed for lessons learned and potential changes.
- Simplified language on a fifth to seventh grade reading level used for both Access Arkansas and the new letters that the system will send clients
- Designing the system with helpful guidance for clients throughout the online application, clear direction, and a help section that includes “how-to” videos and answers to frequently asked questions
- A rollout strategy (shown above) to carefully implement the system through a series of releases that allows time for feedback and changes
- Ongoing testing, that began in January 2020, to ensure system is ready
- Holding focus groups that allow real clients to review our notices and the application and give us real feedback we can implement
- Resources for those who cannot or will not use the online system:
 - A redesigned paper application
 - Ways to get help: DHS helpline, calling a county office, visiting a county office
 - All notices mailed unless the client opts for paperless
 - Information and forms can be mailed, faxed, or delivered to a county office. The notice lists the ways a client can return information.

