Maryland Secures Additional $118,000,000 in Federal Funding for its Pandemic Benefits Program and Launches Webpage to Support Eligible Families

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Over $167 Million in P-EBT Benefits will serve over 451,000 Maryland Children thanks to the Department of Human Services and State Department of Education's joint request to the USDA

BALTIMORE, MD — The Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS) in conjunction with the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) recently secured approximately $118,000,000 in additional Pandemic-EBT funding from the Food and Nutrition Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). DHS estimates that over 451,000 vulnerable children in Maryland will benefit from the P-EBT program for a combined value of over $167,000,000 in estimated benefits.

Pandemic-EBT benefits are designed to help families in Maryland whose children are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals purchase food while schools are closed. Eligible families are receiving up to $370.50 per child.

To help Marylanders identify whether they qualify and learn how they will receive benefits, the Departments launched a comprehensive **Pandemic-EBT webpage** to provide families with detailed information about the program and guide them through the eligibility and funding process. Everything from when families should expect to receive benefits, to how to activate a Pandemic-EBT card and a list of Frequently Asked Questions, the webpage provides all the information an eligible family would need. The site also directs residents to a dedicated Pandemic-EBT Hotline, offers links to apply for SNAP benefits and the Free And Reduced-Price Meals (FARM) program, and lists locations across the state that are offering free "grab & go meals" for youth.

"The work doesn't stop once we secure the initial funding to operate a program," said Lourdes R. Padilla, Secretary of the Maryland Department of Human Services. "We continuously look for ways to maximize the benefits being provided to Marylanders and opportunities to support them throughout the process."

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Initially, **it was projected** that 427,000 vulnerable children in Maryland would benefit from the Pandemic-EBT program for a combined value of over $49 million in estimated benefits. Since that time, the Maryland Department of Human Services and the Maryland State Department of Education worked to identify approximately 23,000 additional eligible families and successfully secured over $118 million in additional federal program funding from the USDA. As a result, over 450,000 Maryland children will benefit from a combined value of over $167,000,000 in Pandemic-EBT benefits.

“In addition to the meals served across Maryland at Summer Meal sites, these additional P-EBT benefits will dramatically support the nutritional wellbeing of children in Maryland,” said Dr. Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D., State Superintendent of Schools. “We appreciate the partnership of local school systems, which provided student data, to expand the coverage to more eligible families in this critical federal-state-local partnership.”

State officials also advise recipients to remain vigilant of Coronavirus-related scams. Nationally, there are reports that since P-EBT cards began arriving in the mail, some recipients have received calls from people posing as social service representatives seeking personal information. The USDA, which oversees the program, issued a national fraud alert warning SNAP recipients about potential scams. “Please be aware that unscrupulous individuals may use COVID-19 as an opportunity to create a scam in order to steal your personal information,” USDA stated.

Here in Maryland, residents should refer to the **Pandemic-EBT webpage** and call the Pandemic-EBT Hotline if they have questions or concerns. “DHS is not calling Maryland residents about the Pandemic-EBT Program and asking for personally identifiable information, such as bank information or a social security number,” said Netsanet Kibret, Executive Director of the Family Investment Administration for the Maryland Department of Human Services. “Never give personal information to unconfirmed sources and call our Department or your child’s school if you are unsure as to whether a request for information is legitimate.”

Detailed information about Maryland’s Pandemic EBT Program can be found at **https://dhs.maryland.gov/p-ebt/**

*The Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS) is the state’s primary social service provider, annually reaching more than one million people. Through its 24 local departments of social services, the agency pursues opportunities to assist people in economic need, provide preventive services, and protect vulnerable children and adults in each of Maryland’s 23 counties and Baltimore City. Additional information may be found at **dhs.maryland.gov**.*

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