STATE OF NEW MEXICO
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$67 million in Pandemic EBT Cards to be issued this week

Supplements for school-age children receiving free or reduced-price lunches

SANTA FE – About 168,000 New Mexico families whose children receive free or reduced-price lunch at school will receive $67 million in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, or food stamps, this week, the Human Services Department announced today.

The benefits will be issued on Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer cards in the name of the oldest child in each household and mailed out this week.

More than 250,000 school-age children in New Mexico qualify for the P-EBT program, authorized by the federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act, which provides assistance to families with children who are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals.

The families of over 87,000 New Mexico school children have already received nearly $35 million in food benefits that were issued in May. The benefit is calculated monthly for each eligible student in the household equal to the daily reimbursement for free breakfast and lunch ($5.70), multiplied by the average number of days school was canceled in the month. It equates to a dollar amount of approximately $399 per student covering the period from March 16, to June 19, 2020.

The Human Services Department partnered with the New Mexico Public Education Department to validate the physical addresses school districts have on file to ensure the P-EBT cards get to the households where the children reside.

The Human Services Department has two hotlines for individuals to inquire about the status of their P-EBT benefits. The P-EBT Hotline is 505-660-4822, or they can call the Human Services Department Customer Service Center at 1-800-283-4465.

The P-EBT program provides a supplemental food-purchasing benefit to current Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program households and a new electronic benefit to other eligible households to offset the cost of meals that otherwise would have been available at school.

Under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, states may submit a plan to the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture for providing P-EBT benefits to SNAP and non-SNAP households with children who have temporarily lost access to free or reduced-price school meals due to pandemic-related school closures.

State agencies may operate P-EBT when a school is closed for at least five consecutive days during a public health emergency designation during which the school would otherwise be in session.

“The Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer program is an important way to ensure that children will get the nutrition they need, especially when schools are closed during the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Karmela Martinez, New Mexico Income Support Division director. “We have been working hard with the Public Education Department to get these benefits out to the right families as quickly as possible.”

The Human Services Department provides services and benefits to more than 1 million New Mexicans through several programs including: the Medicaid Program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Child Support Program, and several Behavioral Health Services.

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