NCDHHS

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Families to Receive Enhanced Benefits to Ensure Food Access

Raleigh, N.C.

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To help families access food during the COVID-19 pandemic, the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services is temporarily increasing benefits for March 2020 and April 2020 to current Food and Nutrition Services (https://www.ncdhhs.gov/assistance/low-income-services/food-nutrition-services-food-stamps) (FNS) recipients in North Carolina. NCDHHS received federal authority to implement the program from the U.S. Department of Agriculture on March 27.

“People need to be able to feed their families while also practicing good social distancing and following the governor’s stay at home order. This will help families make fewer trips to the grocery store and help protect themselves and those in their communities from getting sick,” said NCDHHS Secretary Mandy Cohen, M.D.

All families that receive FNS will receive the maximum amount allowed for March 2020 and April 2020 for their household size. For example, a family of four would be eligible to receive a total of $646 for each of the two months regardless of their usual benefit amount. The increase is subject to the following guidelines:

- Households that have already received the maximum amount for their household size will not receive the temporary increase.
- The household size will not include ineligible or disqualified members.
- Households that were ineligible in either March 2020 or April 2020 will not receive a temporary increase for the month(s) they were ineligible.

Approximately 360,000 households will begin receiving the temporary increased benefit on their Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card on April 1 and April 22. They will be randomly generated and staggered every other workday until all eligible households have received their temporary increase.

Recipients will continue to receive their regular benefits and should be aware they will receive two separate payments for March and two for April.

To check availability of benefits families should:

- Call 1-888-622-7328.

- Visit www.ebtedge.com (https://www.ebtedge.com/gov/portal/PortalHome.do) . Click on More Information under EBT Cardholders.
- Download the ebtEDGE mobile app. The app is available as a free download on the Apple Store (https://apps.apple.com/us/app/ebtedge/id1398046228) and Google Play (https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.fis.ebtedge&hl=en_US) .

To help limit the spread of COVID-19, NCDHHS has also received approval to extend FNS certification periods so that beneficiaries don't have to visit county Social Services offices to qualify for continued services.

In addition, with many businesses closing to reduce the spread of COVID-19, work requirements for able-bodied adults without dependents are being temporarily and partially suspended. All eligible beneficiaries are being notified of this change.

Questions about the emergency supplements and the FNS program should be directed to the EBT Call Center at 1-866-719-0141.

Families and individuals who do not currently receive benefits can apply online with ePass (https://www.nc.gov/services/e-pass) .

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