March 27, 2020

DHS Takes Multiple Steps to Ensure Food Security, Including New Online Options Through Amazon and Walmart

(Des Moines, Iowa) – The Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS) is deploying a comprehensive approach to address food insecurity due to the COVID-19 pandemic. DHS submitted federal waivers to Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) to ensure continued and expanded access to food. Food Assistance will continue for all current recipients. Benefits will increase for current and new recipients.

Families First Coronavirus Response Act
This federal legislation allows for:

- Increased benefits for current and newly eligible applicants
  - DHS will increase April and May Food Assistance benefits to the maximum allowable amount per household.
  - If a household is not already receiving the maximum amount for April and May, those additional benefits will be added to their EBT card with their normal monthly benefits.
- Adjustment of Food Assistance eligibility requirements and benefits to address the loss of school lunch
  - DHS is working collaboratively with the Department of Education to research opportunities related to increased food insecurity for Iowa families who rely on school lunch programs.

Household Size	Max Allotment
1	$194
2	$355
3	$509
4	$646
5	$768
6	$921
7	$1018
8	$1164
9	$1310
10	$1456
11	$1602
12	$1748
13	$1894
14	$2040
15	$2186
16	$2332

DHS will share additional information as these efforts mature.

Food Assistance Auto-Recertification
Food Assistance households who would normally have a recertification due in March, April, or May, have had their cases recertified for six months. A Notice of Decision will not be sent to households regarding this extension.

Suspension of Food Assistance Work Requirements
The new legislation allows states to suspend Food Assistance work requirements, except in limited circumstances. Food Assistance recipients will **not** have benefits terminated for failure to comply with work requirements.

New Online Options to Purchase Food
Amazon and Walmart now offer online options for Iowans using their Food Assistance EBT card to purchase food. This service is available statewide. Amazon will deliver to all Iowa ZIP codes. Walmart

provides this service for all store locations that offer online grocery. DHS is exploring additional opportunities to expand this program to include other retailers.

Visit the retailers' websites to order groceries or get more information:

- Amazon Information
- Amazon FAQ
- Walmart: Walmart website for specific stores will state: ***NEW – This location offers delivery!*** Or call or (800) 924-9206.

Food Assistance recipients will be able to use their benefits to purchase eligible food items, but will **not** be able to use benefits to pay for service or delivery charges. For more information, please visit https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/online-purchasing-pilot.

Emergency Food Assistance
DHS requested an addendum to the state plan for The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), which increases access to food distribution to address food insecurity related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Iowans who are in need of emergency assistance due to an income change are now eligible for TEFAP. Iowans who are in need of food should contact their local food bank to find TEFAP providers in their area.

Home-Delivered Meals
On March 18, 2020, DHS requested federal waivers to expand home-delivered meals to certain Medicaid recipients. This will provide home-delivered meals for Iowa Medicaid members who are home-bound and for home- and community-based service (HCBS) waiver members if their waiver does not have meals as an allowable service. We've also expanded homemaker services which allow someone to come into the home to prepare meals for HCBS waiver members.

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