DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

News stories

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Deadline to apply for food benefits extended

Eligible families have until July 31 to request additional food benefits

June 30, 2020

Families still have time to apply for additional food assistance benefits to help feed their children this summer when they are not receiving school lunches. Due to a deadline extension up to 150,000 families have until July 31 to apply for Pandemic-Electronic Benefit Transfer, also referred to as P-EBT. The benefits are issued by the Minnesota Department of Human Services in a lump sum of $325 per child to purchase food within a year of the date issued. More than 200,000 families have already applied for or received P-EBT.

Minnesota has also extended P-EBT to provide an additional food benefit through the summer. With Summer P-EBT, each eligible child will receive an additional $100 food benefit. Eligibility follows P-EBT guidelines. Those who have applied will receive the benefit automatically; those who have not can apply for P-EBT online. The department will issue the summer program funds in August.

DHS and the state Department of Education are urging families with school children who received the federal free and reduced-price meal program to apply for P-EBT online at www.mn.p-ebt.org (http://www.mn.p-ebt.org/). Qualifying families with children receiving free or reduced-price meals, who were already on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or Minnesota Family Investment Program received these benefits automatically on their existing EBT cards in late May. Families can check their EBT card balance at ebtedge.com. (https://www.ebtedge.com/gov/portal/PortalHome.do) Families who were receiving free or reduced meals for the 2019-2020 school year but who were not also receiving SNAP or MFIP benefits need to sign up for a benefits card, known as a P-EBT card, to receive P-EBT and Summer P-EBT funds.

Also new for July, children enrolled in a school district pre-K program who received federal free and reduced-price meals will be eligible to receive P-EBT benefits by applying online at ww.mn.p-ebt.org.

Individuals in need of translation assistance can call the DHS P-EBT hotline at either 651-431-4050 or 800-657-3698, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Information also can be found online in P-EBT frequently asked questions (https://mn.gov/dhs/p-ebt/) and in a series of fliers in Somali, Russian, Spanish and Hmong posted online. The application is available in these languages as well.

In addition to using EBT cards at traditional grocery retailers, people who use SNAP can use their EBT cards to purchase groceries online. While Walmart and Amazon are the only online retailers approved by the U.S. Department of Agriculture for SNAP purchases available in Minnesota at this time, DHS is encouraging other retailers to seek approval from the USDA so that SNAP recipients have more options to buy food safely.

Families in need of additional assistance accessing healthy foods are urged to contact their county or tribal human services office or the Minnesota Food Helpline at 888-711-1151 or www.hungersolutions.org (http://www.hungersolutions.org/).

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