NJ Human Services Announces $44.8 Million More in Additional Food Assistance

Many NJ SNAP Recipients Will Receive Enhanced Benefits;

November Payments Will Bring Supplemental Food Assistance Payments to Nearly $346M Since March

Oct. 28, 2020

(TRENTON) – Many New Jerseyans who receive food assistance through the state's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (NJ SNAP) will receive additional benefits in November to help address critical food needs related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

An additional estimated $44.8 million will be provided to about 253,000 New Jersey households for November.

SNAP supplemental payments were included in the federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act. Once paid in November, Human Services will have provided nearly $346 million in total additional NJ SNAP benefits since March to New Jerseyans to help purchase groceries. The payments are contingent upon month-to-month United States Department of Agriculture approval.

"We are providing as much food assistance as possible to eligible New Jersey households," Human Services Commissioner Carole Johnson said. "Our state's Congressional delegation has worked hard protecting residents as we respond to this pandemic, and these additional food assistance benefits make a difference in the lives of many New Jerseyans."

The supplemental benefits will be directly loaded to NJ SNAP recipients' Families First EBT cards as part of their regular monthly payment.

NJ SNAP provides food assistance to families with low incomes to help them buy groceries through a benefit card accepted in most food retail stores and farmer's markets. Families can now also use their cards at select online grocery retailers to help maintain social distancing during the pandemic.

The program serves about 769,000 New Jerseyans in about 395,000 households, with the monthly SNAP benefit based on household size and income.

"Food assistance remains as important as ever to families and individuals amid the ongoing economic difficulties and the health crisis," Human Services Deputy Commissioner Elisa Neira said. "This will help keep families healthy and secure."

"We encourage residents who need food assistance to visit and apply for SNAP online at www.NJHelps.org," said Assistant Commissioner Natasha Johnson, who directs Human Services' Division of Family Development and oversees the SNAP program. "I also thank the county Boards of Social Services staff who continue working tirelessly to get vital assistance to households."

Human Services has also taken the following steps to help New Jerseyans access affordable food during the emergency:

- Provided $279 million in special food assistance benefits to New Jersey children who otherwise would have received free or reduced-price school meals if not for COVID-19 school closures.
- Launched online grocery ordering for SNAP recipients through Amazon, Walmart, ShopRite and The Fresh Grocer.
- Ensured that everyone whose benefits were up for renewal since March were extended for six months, and this will continue through October.
- Made it easier to apply for SNAP by waiving the normally required interview and the hard copy signature on applications to reduce the need for face-to-face interactions.
- Through a new online tool, available on NJOneApp, made it possible for SNAP applicants to upload the documentation needed for applications electronically instead of mailing or dropping off documents to the county enrollment offices.
- Updated our online system to make it easier for SNAP applicants to track their application.
- Developed a guide to educate immigrant families on what benefits are impacted by the federal public charge rule to combat misinformation.
- Presented in various virtual forums to update service providers on these critical changes to help get the word out to families in need of food assistance.

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Department of Human Services
222 South Warren Street
PO Box 700
Trenton, NJ 08625-0700