PRESS RELEASES

State applies for federal restaurant assistance through EBT program

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N.M. seeking to help restaurants increase revenue during pandemic

SANTA FE –The New Mexico Human Services Department has applied for federal approval to implement the Restaurant Meals Plan (RMP) as a means of continuing state assistance to businesses that have been impacted by the economic crisis sparked by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Restaurant Meals Plan is an addition to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and would grant New Mexico families and individuals who qualify for SNAP greater access to meals by allowing them to purchase prepared meals from participating New Mexico restaurants.

This may include products sold in deli sections at participating grocery stores.

The RMP program would typically be available to individuals or households that qualify for SNAP and meet one or more of the following conditions:

Disabled: the person is receiving Social Security benefits; Railroad Retirement benefits Annuities; or other disability payments.
Elderly: the person is 60 years of age or older.
Homeless: the person does not have a fixed or regular nighttime residence.

“This program would benefit New Mexico’s population of elderly and persons with disabilities who may have difficulty preparing meals for themselves. It would also provide homeless individuals and families the opportunity to purchase meals if they do not have the means to store and cook food,” said Human Services Secretary David Scrase.

“The state continues to actively pursue ways to help support our local businesses and restaurants during the public health emergency,” said Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham. “In addition to the tens of millions in CARES Act grants the state is making available to small businesses across the state via our local government partners, and in addition to the state relief loan programs that have been activated, this plan would boost the customer base for restaurants amid a trying time. We will continue to find mechanisms to boost businesses across our state that are hurting as a result of the pandemic.”

SNAP recipients that meet the outlined conditions, may use their EBT card to purchase meals from restaurants that participate in the program. Restaurants interested in participating in RMP must submit an application for approval; if and when the program is approved, HSD will disseminate information about how and where to apply through the state Income Support Division.

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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