Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 19, 2020

USDA approves Missouri's waiver request maximizing July Food Stamp benefits

JEFFERSON CITY, MO — The Department of Social Services has received approval from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) to extend Pandemic Food Stamp/Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (P-SNAP) benefits through the month of July. This means Food Stamp/SNAP households will once more automatically get the **maximum Food Stamp/SNAP benefit amount for their household size (https://dssmanuals.mo.gov/food-stamps/1115-099-00/)** loaded onto their Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card. P-SNAP, part of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, enables Missouri SNAP households to receive the maximum Food Stamp/SNAP benefit amount for their household size during a state of emergency. As of April 30, 2020, 360,937 Missouri households or 752,315 individuals receive Food Stamp/SNAP benefits.

"We are grateful the USDA approved the department's waiver request to extend P-SNAP benefits for Missourians through the month of July," said **Jennifer Tidball, Acting Director, Department of Social Services**. "This will have a positive impact on families as they move forward through Phase 2 of the Show Me Strong Recovery Plan returning to work and getting back on their feet. However, Missourians who receive SNAP benefits need to be prepared for the eventual return to normal benefit amounts for their household size, which for many will mean a decrease in their benefits."

Low-income Missouri families are encouraged to apply for the Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT), a one-time food assistance benefit of up to $302 per each student. The P-EBT benefit helps low-income families of students who qualify for free or reduced-price meals with the cost of the meals they provided for their children while they attended school at home during the months of March, April, and May. The application deadline is extended to July 7 since only about 60 percent of households that could be eligible have applied for the P-EBT benefit. Families may **download the application online (https://www.emergencymealsurvey.com/MO)** or call 855-FSD-INFO to get an application by mail.

During Governor Parson's Tuesday press conference this week, Acting Director Tidball noted the USDA Food and Nutrition Service resumed the requirement for Missourians to complete the periodic recertification process to verify the household still qualifies for Food Stamp/SNAP benefits. The DSS Family Support Division has begun sending letters to over 16,000 households due for recertification in the month of July. Households that receive that letter must complete and return the application form on time to ensure eligible household receives Food Stamp/SNAP benefits without interruption.

Missourians who have questions can use the **DSS Virtual Assistant (https://info.mo.gov/dss/chatbot/)** to get immediate answers to basic questions that are not specific to an individual's case 24 hours a day or can call 855-FSD-INFO or 855-373-4636 Monday through Friday, 6:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.

The **Missouri Services Navigator (https://mo.servicesnavigator.org/s4s/WhereILive/Council?pageId=1&lockla=true)** has information on over 2,800 programs and services available in the state. Missourians in need of information on Food Stamp, Medicaid, Child Care Subsidy, LIHEAP, or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families benefit programs can visit **dss.mo.gov (https://dss.mo.gov/)**. Missourians can also apply for those services 24/7 online by visiting **MyDSS.mo.gov (https://mydss.mo.gov/)**, or sending completed applications and verification documents by email to **FSD.Documents@dss.mo.gov (mailto:FSD.Documents@dss.mo.gov)**, or by fax to 573-526-9400.

The Department of Social Services is committed to the "**Show Me Strong" Recovery Plan (https://showmestrong.mo.gov/)** and serving the needs of Missouri citizens during COVID-19 pandemic. Information regarding the department's response to the pandemic is available online **https://dss.mo.gov/covid-19 (https://dss.mo.gov/covid-19)**.

The mission of the Department of Social Services is to empower Missourians to live safe, healthy, and productive lives. Visit **dss.mo.gov (https://dss.mo.gov/)** to learn more about the Department of Social Services and follow us on **Facebook (https://www.facebook.com/MOSocialServices/)** and **Twitter (https://twitter.com/DSS_Missouri)**.

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