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NCDHHS

More than 800,000 Children Impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic to Receive Additional Help Buying Food

Raleigh, N.C.

May 13, 2020

Starting today, families impacted by school closings due to COVID-19 are beginning to receive additional food benefits as part of the new Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) program (https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/information/human-services/pandemic-electronic-benefit-transfer-p-ebt-program) announced by the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services and the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

The program provides a food benefit on an EBT card to North Carolina families whose children have access to free and reduced lunch at school. Families will receive about $370 in P-EBT benefits per child, provided over two installments. Families can use the P-EBT benefit to purchase food items at EBT authorized retailers, including most major grocery stores.

"With school buildings closed, we need to make sure that children who get most of their meals at school have enough to eat," said NCDHHS Secretary Mandy Cohen, M.D. "This program provides families with extra help buying groceries and putting food on the table."

Families will not need to apply for the P-EBT program. Yesterday, most P-EBT eligible families already receiving Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) benefits received additional funds on their existing EBT card. Some FNS families will instead receive the benefit on a new EBT card. P-EBT eligible families not already enrolled in FNS will be mailed a new EBT card in mid- to late May. Families who receive a new EBT card will receive a letter from NCDHHS in the mail explaining how to activate and use their card.

The new P-EBT program is in addition to other services families may be participating in. As announced previously, all families that receive Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) have received the maximum amount allowed for March and April 2020 for their household size and will receive the maximum amount for May as well.

P-EBT benefits are entirely federally funded. North Carolina was the fourth state to receive federal approval to provide P-EBT benefits. More information about the P-EBT program can be found at www.ncdhhs.gov/PEBT (https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/information/human-services/pandemic-electronic-benefit-transfer-p-ebt-program).

For the latest information on COVID-19, visit nc.gov/covid19 (https://www.nc.gov/covid19) .

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