Delaware Social Services Approved for Pandemic EBT to Feed Children During COVID-19 Emergency

NEW CASTLE (May 5, 2020) – On May 1, the Division of Social Services was approved by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to operate Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT), a new program authorized by the Families First Coronavirus Response Act that provides assistance to families with children who are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals.

The P-EBT program provides a supplemental food-purchasing benefit to current Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) households and a new EBT benefit to other eligible households to offset the cost of meals that would have otherwise been available at school.

Under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, states may submit a plan to the Secretary of Agriculture for providing P-EBT benefits to SNAP and non-SNAP households with children who have temporarily lost access to free or reduced-price school meals due to pandemic-related school closures. State agencies may operate P-EBT when a school is closed for at least five consecutive days during a public health emergency designation during which the school would otherwise be in session.

Gov. John Carney declared a State of Emergency on March 13, all Delaware schools were closed as of March 16, and Gov. Carney announced April 24 that schools would remain closed through the end of the school year. This closure will result in an average total of 65 canceled school days.

For the 2019-2020 school year, Delaware has approximately 100,000 children eligible for free or reduced-priced school meals who are now eligible to receive P-EBT benefits. The P-EBT benefits will be issued as a supplement to SNAP households on their existing EBT cards and to non-SNAP households on a new EBT card along with details on how to use the card. Households that are not receiving SNAP will automatically receive one P-EBT card in the mail for all eligible children in their household.

“The Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer program is an important way for the Department of Health and Social Services to ensure that children will get the nutrition they need, especially with schools closed for the remainder of the school year,” said DHSS Secretary Dr. Kara Odom Walker, a practicing family physician. “We are grateful for the approval of Delaware’s program by the USDA.”

Delaware will follow the P-EBT benefit guidance provided by the USDA’s Food and Nutrition Service. The P-EBT benefit amount is equal to the federal reimbursement rate for breakfast and lunch at the rate of $5.70 per child, per canceled school day. Eligible households will receive P-EBT benefits as follows:

P-EBT Issuance Month	SNAP Households	Non-SNAP Households
March & April 2020	Amount: $193.80 per child Issuance Date: week of May 11	Amount: $193.80 per child Issuance Date: mid-May

May 2020	Amount: $119.70 per child	Amount: $119.70 per child
June 2020	Amount: $57.00 per child	Amount: $57.00 per child

The implementation of P-EBT in Delaware helps to keep families healthy and children fed during this national emergency. Households will receive written notification regarding P-EBT benefits.