Feds Approve NJ Human Services Plan to Provide Nearly 600,000 Children with Extra Food Assistance Benefits

Amid COVID-19, Plan Will Provide $248M in Special Food Assistance to Children Who Normally Receive Free or Reduced-Price School Meals

May 11, 2020

(TRENTON) – Human Services Commissioner Carole Johnson today announced the federal government has approved the Department's plan to provide $248 million in special food assistance benefits to nearly 600,000 New Jersey children who normally receive free or reduced-price school meals as part of the response to COVID-19 school closures.

"We are doing everything we can to ensure people throughout New Jersey have access to food assistance during this difficult time, especiall children," Commissioner Johnson said. "Children should never go hungry, and approval of our plan is another step forward in our fight agains hunger amid COVID-19."

Under the plan approved by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, New Jersey special Pandemic-EBT benefits will be provided to recipients of the state's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and non-SNAP households with children who normally receive free or reduced-price school meals.

With federal approval, the Department will begin implementing the plan. The plan will provide each eligible student with $416.10 to help with nutritional support during the time that schools have been closed during the pandemic. No application is necessary to receive this benefit. Human Services is working with schools to identify students who were receiving free or reduced school meals. Eligible students already participating in SNAP will receive the Pandemic-EBT on their household's existing Families First card. All other Pandemic-EBT eligible households will be mailed a P-EBT card. Human Services expects these benefits to be issued no later than June.

"No child should go hungry, and this program will help ensure New Jersey children will get the nutrition they need," Human Services Deputy Commissioner Elisa Neira said. "We've been working hard to boost access to food assistance during this difficult time. This is a crucial step toward meeting that goal."

NJ SNAP provides money directly to individuals and families who need help affording groceries. Funds are directly loaded onto an electronic benefits card each month, and SNAP is accepted at most grocery stores and bodegas.

Besides receiving approval of the Pandemic-EBT plan, Human Services has:

- Distributed an extra $106 million in additional benefits to SNAP recipients since the start of the emergency.
- Ensured that everyone whose benefits were up for renewal in March and April, or are due in May or June were extended for six months. This means nobody's SNAP benefits will be ended during these extensions for not completing the renewal.
- Made it easier to apply for SNAP during this emergency by waiving the normally required interview and the hard copy signature on applications, so as to reduce the need for face-to-face interactions.

"We continue to urge residents to visit njhelps.org to learn more and apply for food assistance and other benefits," said Human Services Assistant Commissioner Natasha Johnson, who directs the Division of Family Development that oversees NJ SNAP. "We also continue to appreciate the dedicated staff at the County Boards of Social Services who are essential to getting these critical services to New Jersey families."

Programs

Health Care Services
Disability Programs
Family Programs
Welfare Services
Mental Health
Addiction Services
Aging Services

Divisions

Catastrophic Illness in Children Relief Fund (CICRF)
Commission for the Blind & Visually Impaired (CBVI)
Division of Aging Services (DoAS)
Division of the Deaf & Hard of Hearing (DDHH)
Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)
Division of Disability Services (DDS)
Division of Family Development (DFD)
Division of Medical Assistance & Health Services (DMAHS)
Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS)
Office of Legal and Regulatory Affairs
Office for Prevention of Developmental Disabilities
Office of Program Integrity & Accountability
Office of Contract Policy and Management

Notices

News

Press Releases
Publications

Get Involved

Public Advisory Board, Commissions & Councils
Employment at DHS
Human Services Police
DHS Nurses

Contact Us

Contact DHS
Send a message
Hotlines and Helplines

Free Naloxone Giveaway

COVID19 Housing Assistance

Statewide

Governor Phil Murphy
Lt. Governor Sheila Oliver
NJ Home
Services A to Z
Departments/Agencies
FAQs
Contact Us
Privacy Notice

Legal Statement & Disclaimers
Accessibility Statement

Copyright © State of New Jersey, 1996-2020
Department of Human Services
222 South Warren Street
PO Box 700
Trenton, NJ 08625-0700