July 22, 2020

Update on Pandemic Food Assistance Benefits Distribution

(Des Moines, IA) The Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS) announces a new date in the timeline for delivery of Pandemic Food Assistance Benefits cards. Eligible Iowa children and their families should now expect to receive the benefits cards no later than August 5, 2020, which is a change from the previously expected July 29, 2020, date.

The Families First CoronaVirus Act allowed states to issue Food Assistance benefits to households with children in Pre-K through grade12 who lost access to Free and Reduced Price School Meals due to pandemic-related school closures in Spring, 2020. In Iowa, benefits are being distributed in two ways. If an eligible child's household received Food Assistance benefits anytime in April, May, or June, their P-EBT benefits have already put on the household's EBT card. The remaining eligible children will receive their benefits cards in the mail.

$29,042,161 of the total of the $76,268,223 P-EBT food assistance benefits were distributed to 94,354 Iowa children via their current EBT cards on July 15, 2020. The remaining $47,226,062 in benefits will begin arriving in the mail this week.

"We are aware that Iowans are anticipating receiving the benefit cards and are working to ensure they arrive as soon as possible. Many states required an application process to receive P-EBT benefits, or issued only to families already receiving EBT. Since we decided against an application process and are and issuing benefits to all Free and Reduced Price School Meals recipients, the scale of our mailing is significantly larger, which has impacted the distribution timeline," said Janee Harvey, DHS Division Administrator of Adult, Child and Family Services. "We have confirmation that thousands of cards are being put in the mail each day beginning earlier this week, so they should arrive in mailboxes for families in Iowa very soon."

The mail vendor has confirmed that all cards will be in the mail by Saturday, July 25, 2020, ensuring that all eligible children will receive their cards by August 5, 2020. Cards will arrive in white envelopes addressed with the child's name from an Austin, TX return address. The cards inside will be white, with black font, with IOWA P-EBT printed at the top, and will bear the name of the eligible child. Families will need to follow the included instructions to activate the card.

A comprehensive FAQ document in English and Spanish, including eligibility information, and images of the card and envelope, are available on the DHS website here. We encourage the public to visit the website to find answers to all their P-EBT questions.

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Program Contact:
Tiffany Wickman
pebt@dhs.state.ia.us

Media contact:
Matt Highland
mhighla@dhs.state.ia.us
515-281-4848