FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Missouri Food Stamp Benefits increase and get extension

JEFFERSON CITY, MO – In response to the nutritional needs of low-income Missourians during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department of Social Services Family Support Division requested and has been approved for a waiver from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) to extend Food Stamp/SNAP certification periods by six months for those re-certifications coming due in March, April and May. This action prevents Food Stamp benefits from ending during the COVID-19 pandemic. DSS is also currently waiving all work requirements for able-bodied adults without dependents through the end the federal emergency COVID-19 declaration.

"For the health and well-being of low-income Missourians who rely on Food Stamp benefits, Missouri sought changes to the administration of the Food Stamp program in this state to meet the needs of our most vulnerable citizens," said **Governor Parson**. "No Missourian will have their Food Stamp benefits end for the present time, and they do not need to take any actions to ensure their benefits will continue."

As part of the Families First Act, Missouri will issue Pandemic Food Stamp/Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (P-SNAP) benefits. This means all households currently eligible for SNAP will receive the maximum amount for the household size. This P-SNAP benefit increase will automatically be added on the normal date the recipient receives their SNAP benefit for the month of April. This increase will affect 310,000 Missouri households (660,000 people). For example, for a household of three under P-SNAP, the maximum allotment is $509, and for a household of four, the amount is $646.

In addition to P-SNAP, families with children eligible for free or reduced-price lunch in all Missouri school districts that close at least five consecutive days will get a Pandemic EBT (Electronic Benefit Transfer) (P-EBT) card benefit for March, April and May. The amount is determined by the federal government and will be the value of the number of missed meals. This benefit will automatically be added to the Food Stamp/SNAP recipient's EBT card. About 50 percent of Missouri public school students or 400,000 children will get this benefit. DSS is working with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to identify and do outreach to families of children who do not get Food Stamp benefits but do get free or reduced-price lunch to enroll them in the P-EBT card program.

"Every Missourian must have access to food and the Department of Social Services has taken these actions so that low-income individuals and families have what they need to make it through this critical time," said **Jennifer Tidball, Acting Director, Department of Social Services**. "Our most vulnerable citizens in Missouri must have essential needs met to ensure they can cope with the impact of COVID-19."

Any low-income individual or family who are now in need of Food Stamp or other benefits should reach out to the Family Support Division for help. Missourians can apply for 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. Missourians can also apply for Family Medicaid over the phone by calling 1-855-373-9994 during business hours Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

This situation continues to evolve and the department will continue to evaluate ways to streamline access to essential services. For updated information on program accommodations and policy guidance visit **https://dss.mo.gov/covid-19 (https://dss.mo.gov/covid-19)**. MO HealthNet providers can find additional information online **https://dss.mo.gov/mhd/providers/pages/provtips.htm. (https://dss.mo.gov/mhd/providers/pages/provtips.htm)**

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