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ND Human Services to issue extra SNAP benefits for March and April

BISMARCK, N.D. – In response to the COVID-19 pandemic with funding from Congress included in the Families First Coronavirus Response Act and support from the federal U.S. Department of Agriculture – Food and Nutrition Services (FNS), the North Dakota Department of Human Services will be issuing extra Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits for March and April to some SNAP households in the state.

The extra benefits will ensure that all SNAP households receive the maximum SNAP benefit for March and April. The department will provide extra benefits only to those households that did not receive the maximum benefit amount in March and April due to earned income. SNAP benefits typically decrease as a household's income goes up, but the short-term policy change is intended to help address food insecurity during this unusual time.

"The coronavirus pandemic is affecting people's jobs and incomes. We are taking action to ensure that all SNAP households receive a maximum benefit for a household their size for both March and April," said Economic Assistance Division Director Michele Gee. "This temporary change will benefit about 14,500 SNAP households that had earned income and did not receive a maximum benefit."

She said, the extra SNAP benefits for March total $2.4 million and will be issued to qualifying SNAP households on April 9 and available on their EBT cards on April 10. The extra April benefits will be available on qualifying SNAP households' EBT cards on April 21.

The maximum benefit is $355 for a two-person household, and $509 for a three-person household. A brochure describing the program and listing all maximum SNAP benefit amounts by household size is available online at www.nd.gov/dhs/info/pubs/docs/dn-1375.pdf.

Gee encouraged North Dakotans who are having problems paying for food to apply for SNAP online at www.nd.gov/dhs/info/pubs/application.html or by contacting their local human service zone office, formerly known as a county social service office. Zone offices are temporarily restricting public access, she said, but are still providing services to North Dakotans by phone, email and fax. Contact information is online at www.nd.gov/dhs/locations/countysocialserv/index.html.

SNAP benefits are issued on electronic benefit cards called EBT cards and can only be used to purchase food items at grocery stores and other qualified USDA FNS retailers, including participating farmers markets.

In February 2020, the federally-funded program assisted about 22,910 low-income North Dakota households with their nutritional needs. On average, the monthly SNAP benefit per household was $242.

For more information about resources for individuals and families and the department's response to COVID-19, visit www.nd.gov/dhs/info/covid-19/index.html.

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