FSSA News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 19, 2020

Additional assistance arriving soon for Hoosier families whose children receive free and reduced-cost meals at school, via the "Pandemic EBT" program

INDIANAPOLIS – The Indiana Family and Social Services Administration announced today that families whose children receive free or reduced-cost meals at school will receive "Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer" benefits beginning this week. These benefits are intended to reimburse the families of about 600,000 Hoosier children for the cost of meals that their children were unable to receive due to COVID-19-related school closures.

Families who do not currently receive SNAP will receive an electronic benefits transfer card in the mail by the end of May, along with instructions on how to activate and use their card. Families do not have to apply for Pandemic EBT, also called "P-EBT." The P-EBT card works like a bank debit card and can be used at any store in the United States that accepts SNAP, but cannot be used for cash withdrawals at ATM machines. FSSA worked with the Indiana Department of Education to identify these families based upon their child already receiving free and reduced-cost meals at school.

Families who already receive SNAP benefits will have the additional benefits applied to their SNAP accounts on their Hoosier Works EBT card by the end of May.

For P-EBT, each household will receive an amount equal to the value of the daily allotment for breakfast and lunch multiplied by the average number of school days missed since school was cancelled. Families will receive this amount for each eligible child in the household for the number of days the child was eligible for free and reduced lunch. The value of the school meals per day is equal to the federal reimbursement rate for breakfast and lunch at the free rate, which is $5.70, as specified by the United States Department of Agriculture.

The Indiana Department of Education calculated an average of 56 missed days of school through the end of the school year (including spring break) for Indiana students, counting all weekdays from March 13, 2020, through May 29, 2020. The first date was the day following Governor Eric Holcomb's executive order closing schools for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year. The second date represents the average last day of school for schools in this school year.

###

Media contact:
Joint Information Center

jic@jic.in.gov