

Students and parents: Please read the following message from the State of Connecticut:

From The office of Governor Lamont:

With in-person classes at all preK-12 public school facilities in Connecticut canceled for the remainder of the 2019-2020 academic year, Governor Lamont announced on May 6 that **the state has received federal approval to provide \$95.5 million in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits to children eligible for the free and reduced-price meals program.** The new federal authorization boosts the Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) program in Connecticut by \$26.2 million over the original amount that was geared toward a May 20 school reopening.

Authorized by the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, **the Pandemic EBT program is expected to bring food benefits to about 270,000 Connecticut children who are not able to receive meals at school.** All families in the 181 school districts in Connecticut participating in the federal free or reduced-price meals program are eligible to participate. This number is comprised of 162 public, charter, and magnet schools, 11 private schools, and eight residential child care institutions.

Through the Pandemic EBT program, the Department of Social Services (DSS) estimates that it will issue approximately \$46.3 million in additional food benefits to about 70,000 SNAP-eligible households and \$52.2 million in food benefits to about 80,800 households not currently enrolled in SNAP. DSS is partnering with the Connecticut State Department of Education (SDE) on the plan approved by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service.

Specifically:

- DSS estimates that Pandemic EBT SNAP benefits will be deposited in the EBT accounts of about 70,000 households currently enrolled SNAP on or about Sunday, May 24. An additional 800 households enrolled in the Temporary Family Assistance Program--but not currently enrolled in SNAP--will also receive Pandemic EBT SNAP benefits in their EBT accounts at that time.
- DSS will mail EBT debit cards to about 80,000 households not currently enrolled in SNAP and will deposit Pandemic EBT SNAP benefits into their new EBT accounts at dates to be announced in June. These are households that do not currently have EBT cards because they are not enrolled in SNAP or cash assistance.

Again, the Pandemic EBT SNAP benefits are being provided on behalf of children who normally receive free- and reduced-price meals in school.

Benefits can be used any location that accepts SNAP/EBT cards. This includes farmers' markets and direct market farms, where authorized to accept SNAP benefits. Pandemic EBT participants will also have online access to eligible food purchases through delivery or curbside pickup, when implemented in the overall SNAP program.

Families do not need to apply for Pandemic EBT benefits, as children are automatically eligible because school is not in session. The planned one-time benefit is \$364.80 per child enrolled in the free and reduced-price meals program.

DSS and SDE is collaborating to inform families about the Pandemic EBT benefits and how they can be used. This will include postings on agency websites, news and social media announcements, and notification to community and school partners through emails and participation in statewide conference calls. SDE will send email blasts to school districts with pertinent information for families of children receiving free or reduced-priced meals. Additionally, for eligible households not currently participating in SNAP, DSS will provide a mailer with information about P-EBT and SNAP benefits to be included with their EBT card.