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PRESS RELEASE

VI Department of Human Services Summer P-EBT Plan Approved

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U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS - The Virgin Islands Department of Human Services (DHS) today announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) approved the Virgin Islands Plan to issue Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT) to children of current Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) households and non-SNAP households for the 2021 Summer Months. This fourth round of P-EBT financial assistance covers children who attended school in the following learning mode: virtual, hybrid or in person learning, who participated in the National School Lunch Program for SY 2020-2021 as well as who attended school in the last month of school (May 2021). In addition, Summer P-EBT covers children under age 6 who are receiving SNAP benefits.

Commissioner Kimberley Causey-Gomez stated, "DHS, with the full support of Governor Albert Bryan, Jr. is committed to applying for all federal cash assistance and food benefit programs that will assist all eligible families to ensure they maintain their quality of life. Food insecurity is hurtful to children's health and well-being, and I am grateful that our Summer P-EBT was approved by the federal Food and Nutrition Services. I am extremely thankful for our dedicated Division of Family Assistance team and our GVI partners."

Who is eligible for Round 4 of Summer P-EBT, and how will it be issued?

1. School-Age Children

- a. All students (K through Grade 12) currently enrolled in USVI public schools and private schools that participate in the National School Lunch Program.
- b. For eligible children who currently receive SNAP, their benefits will be loaded on the household's existing EBT card.
- c. For eligible children who do not receive SNAP but were issued a card for P-EBT 1, 2, and 3, the fourth round will be automatically loaded to those cards.

2. Children in Childcare

- a. Current eligible SNAP families with children under six (6) years of age.
- b. SNAP families do not need to contact local SNAP offices to receive these benefits as they will automatically be added to their households existing EBT card.
- c. A one-time payment of \$438.00 will be applied to children in this category in the month of October 2021.

For New, Eligible Non-SNAP Children:

1. Cards will be mailed to the addresses provided by parents and guardians. Families are asked to contact their schools if they think their recorded information may be incorrect.
 - A. The card will be issued in the student's name. Households with more than one eligible student will receive multiple cards.
 - B. Instructions will be provided on how to set-up and utilize the card to access their benefits.
2. There is no application process. The Virgin Islands Department of Education and eligible private schools provided DHS the names of students enrolled for the 2020-2021 school year.
3. PEBT benefits can be used to purchase food items at the stores of authorized SNAP retailers.
4. PEBT benefits are not transferrable! You must destroy the card if you do not want the benefits.

How much will you receive?

A standard one-time benefit of \$438.00 per child will be issued.

What is P-EBT?

P-EBT, an abbreviation for Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer, is an additional benefit that basically provides food assistance via an Electronic Benefit Card that can be used in participating grocery stores and convenience stores for food items. Unlike SNAP, which is renewable based on eligibility, P-EBT is a one-time benefit issuance.

P-EBT was originally funded by the federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act which is now amended to be covered under the American Rescue Plan Act. P-EBT Summer Benefits are available for all Virgin Islands SNAP and non-SNAP households with children who were enrolled in locally registered public and private schools which participated in the National School Lunch Program in School Year 2020-

2021, grades (K – 12) who temporarily lost access to free school meals due to pandemic-related public and private school closures and for children under 6 who receive SNAP benefits.

For more information about P-EBT, visit the DHS website at www.dhs.gov.vi or families may call the P-EBT Customer Service number (340) 772-7120 or email pebt@dhs.vi.gov with the subject P-EBT.

The Department of Human Services (VIDHS) exists to provide social services to members in our community with diverse needs. In times of national uncertainty and hardship we act as a safety-net and exist to inspire hope and empower change through non-judgmental, quality delivery of needed services and resources. Please visit the Department of Human Services website, www.dhs.gov.vi for more information.

For more information on COVID-19, please visit our website, covid19usvi.com, or text COVID19USVI to 888777. To report a suspected COVID-19 case, call (340) 712-6299 or (340) 776-1519.

For more information, please visit the Department of Human Services website, www.dhs.gov.vi or on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/usvidhs>) at US Virgin Islands Department of Human Services.

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