



Food and Nutrition
Service

1320 Braddock Place
Alexandria, VA
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June 26, 2023

**SUBJECT: Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer Program (P-EBT)
Approval of American Samoa's State Plan for Summer 2023**

TO: Jesus Mendoza, Jr.
Regional Administrator
Western Regional Office

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (P.L. 116-127; the Act), as amended, authorized a temporary assistance program for households with children without access to meals in school and to certain SNAP-enrolled children in child care during the public health emergency originally declared in January 2020. The March 11, 2021 American Rescue Plan Act (ARP, P.L. 117-2) extended P-EBT through the end of the federal COVID public health emergency (PHE) and, for school children, the summer following the end of the PHE.

Pursuant to the authority granted under Section 1101 of the Act, FNS approves American Samoa's enclosed plan to issue P-EBT benefits to children in schools for summer 2023.

Summary of American Samoa's Plan

The American Samoa Department of Health and Human Services, American Samoa Department of Education, and American Samoa Nutrition Assistance Program will issue P-EBT benefits through its Nutrition Assistance Program (NAP) food coupon system to households with eligible children. In general, school children are eligible for benefits if they would have received free or reduced price meals at their schools through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) if not for the closure or reduced attendance or hours of their schools. The ARP deems all schools closed for the 2023 P-EBT covered summer period.

American Samoa and its school districts will identify the children who were eligible to receive free or reduced price NSLP meals as of the end of school year 2022-2023. American Samoa will offer households who become income-eligible for free or reduced price meals the ability to establish their eligibility through the end of school year 2022-2023. In addition, American Samoa and its school districts will identify eligible children through direct certification during the same period.

In addition, American Samoa will:

- issue the U.S. standard benefit of \$139 to all eligible school children,
- set a registration deadline of September 15, 2023, by which households will need to register in order for the eligible child to receive Summer 2023 P-EBT benefits,
 - American Samoa will communicate this information to families in their Summer P-EBT public information campaign,

- tentatively issue a single benefit for the entire summer period starting Tuesday, August 15 through Friday, September 29, 2023.

Finally, American Samoa will identify risks for improper payments and ensure a high level of integrity.

Estimated Caseload and Value of P-EBT Benefits

American Samoa estimates that it will issue \$2.0 million to approximately 14,000 school children during the 2023 covered summer period.

Release of Information

Pursuant to Section 1101(e) of the Act, the Secretary hereby authorizes the release of the information necessary to carry out P-EBT in American Samoa. Section 1101(e) of the Act states, “Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of Agriculture may authorize state educational agencies and school food authorities administering a school lunch program under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1751 et seq.) to release to appropriate officials administering the supplemental nutrition assistance program such information as may be necessary to carry out this section.”

Plan Timetable and Revisions

American Samoa will distribute benefits to households consistent with the timeframes identified in the state plan. Should American Samoa encounter challenges or delays that significantly impair its ability to implement the approved P-EBT plan or require substantive changes, American Samoa must notify the FNS Regional Office as soon as possible. The FNS Regional Office will work with American Samoa to identify reasonable solutions and review revised plans for approval or further revision.

Civil Rights

American Samoa will continue to comply with civil rights requirements by not discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity. American Samoa will also provide meaningful access to its programs and activities for individuals who are limited English proficient, and provide equal access to individuals with disabilities.

Administrative Funds

The American Samoa Department of Health and Human Services will participate in a P-EBT Administrative Budget Planning process using the FNS-366(a) Program and Budget Summary. When the FNS-366(a) is finalized, that will determine the American Samoa’s Administrative Grant level. However, the FNS-366(a), Program and Budget Summary, may be updated and revised as American Samoa’s operational plan evolves.

Reporting

The American Samoa Department of Health and Human Services will complete the FNS-292B, the FNS-46, the FNS-388, and the FNS-778 reports in accordance with existing requirements.

FNS values American Samoa's partnership in the administration of Pandemic EBT. FNS stands ready to provide additional support as needed. If you have questions, please contact the FNS Western Regional Office.

Sincerely,

Cindy Long
Administrator