



Food and Nutrition
Service

1320 Braddock Place
Alexandria, VA
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August 16, 2021

**SUBJECT: Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer Program (P-EBT)
Approval of American Samoa's Plan for Summer 2021
(school-age children only)**

**TO: Jesus Mendoza
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 (the ARP, P.L. 117-2) extends P-EBT through the end of the public health emergency, a period that includes the summer of 2021. 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 the 2021 covered summer period.

Summary of American Samoa's Plan

The American Samoa Department of Human Services and the American Samoa Department of Education will issue P-EBT benefits through the American Samoa's Nutrition Assistance Program (NAP) 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 2021 P-EBT covered summer period.

Children in Schools

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 2020-2021.

In addition, American Samoa will:

- issue the U.S. standard benefit of \$438 to all eligible children,
- require households to complete an application in order to receive P-EBT,
- tentatively set an application submission deadline in October for eligible households to provide data necessary to issue P-EBT:
 - American Samoa will tentatively begin processing applications in September,
 - American Samoa will tentatively issue summer P-EBT benefits to all households in November.

Estimated Caseload and Value of P-EBT Benefits

American Samoa estimates that it will issue \$6.1 million to approximately 14,000 school children during the 2021 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 its 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, to include providing equal access to individuals with disabilities and individuals who are limited English proficient.

Administrative Funds

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

FNS appreciates American Samoa’s commitment to meet the nutritional needs of children during a challenging time. If you have questions, please contact the FNS Western Regional Office.

Sincerely,

Cindy Long
Deputy Administrator
Child Nutrition Programs