



Food and Nutrition
Service

1320 Braddock Place
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September 15, 2021

**SUBJECT: Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer Program (P-EBT)
Approval of the U.S. Virgin Islands' Plan for Summer 2021**

TO: Lizbeth Silbermann
Regional Administrator
Northeast 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 Virgin Islands' enclosed plan to issue P-EBT benefits to children in schools and child care for the 2021 covered summer period.

Summary of the U.S. Virgin Islands' Plan

The U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Human Services and the Virgin Islands Department of Education will issue P-EBT benefits through the U.S. Virgin Islands' Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) EBT card 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. Children in child care are eligible if they are enrolled in SNAP and their child care facility is closed or operating with reduced attendance or hours, or if they live in the area of a school that is closed or operating with reduced attendance or hours. The ARP deems all schools closed for the 2021 P-EBT covered summer period.

Children in Schools

The U.S. Virgin Islands 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, the U.S. Virgin Islands and its school districts will identify eligible children through direct certification during the same period.

In addition, the U.S. Virgin Islands will:

- issue the U.S. standard benefit of \$438 to all eligible children,
- tentatively issue a single benefit for the entire summer period in late September.

Children in Child Care

The U.S. Virgin Islands will identify all children under age 6 who are enrolled in SNAP as of the end of school year 2020-2021. The U.S. Virgin Islands will ensure that children who receive a benefit through P-EBT's child care component do not also receive a benefit through P-EBT's school component for the covered summer period.

In addition, the U.S. Virgin Islands will:

- issue P-EBT benefits for the full covered summer period to children whose SNAP enrollment begins or ends during that period,
- tentatively issue a single benefit for the entire summer period in October.

Finally, the U.S. Virgin Islands will identify risks for improper payments and ensure a high level of integrity.

Estimated Caseload and Value of P-EBT Benefits

The U.S. Virgin Islands estimates that it will issue \$5.8 million to approximately 13,000 school children, and \$1.9 million to approximately 4,400 SNAP-enrolled children in child care 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 the U.S. Virgin Islands. 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

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

Civil Rights

The U.S. Virgin Islands 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 U.S. Virgin Islands 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 the U.S. Virgin Islands' Administrative Grant level. However, the FNS-366(a), Program and Budget Summary, may be updated and revised as the U.S. Virgin Islands' operational plan evolves.

Reporting

The U.S. Virgin Islands 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 the U.S. Virgin Islands' commitment to meet the nutritional needs of children during a challenging time. If you have questions, please contact the FNS Northeast Regional Office.

Sincerely,

Cindy Long
Administrator