



Office of the Secretary  
Washington, DC 20250

November 15, 2024

THE HONORABLE [GOVERNOR]  
*Governor*  
*State*

Dear Governor,

Safeguarding Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits against fraud is essential to protecting the integrity of this key program and to delivering critical benefits. To that end, I am pleased to share with you a major development in the modernization of SNAP electronic benefit transfer (EBT) technology and for preventing benefit theft. In late August, revised technical standards were officially ratified and published, providing the opportunity for States to implement SNAP EBT cards with chip technology.

This advancement makes it possible to align SNAP EBT technology with credit and debit industry standards. This means that SNAP cardholders can and should be afforded the same preventative protections that other cardholders are afforded under credit and debit industry standards. The industry shift toward chip cards has proven an effective method to safeguard card usage from theft and fraud. Therefore, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) strongly urges all States to adopt the new EBT standards, and to work with your EBT processor and SNAP retailers in your State to transition to SNAP chip cards as soon as feasible.

USDA recognizes that implementing these changes is a complex process and is ready to provide technical assistance in support of this effort. USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) can help States navigate the transition by providing guidance on key considerations such as card replacement strategies, business and functional design requirements, implementation planning, system testing, and education campaigns. As a reminder, costs to transition to chip cards for SNAP EBT are a State administrative expense that is reimbursed by the Federal government at 50 percent.

FNS recently sent a letter to your SNAP agency department head sharing this important information. I encourage you to discuss your State's plans for moving forward with SNAP EBT chip cards with your SNAP agency senior leadership team in the near future. Thank you for helping us move SNAP EBT technology forward to ensure that benefits are protected in your State and that low-income people can continue to stretch their food budgets and put healthy food on the table.

Sincerely,

/s/

THOMAS J. VILSACK  
*Secretary*