USDA
United States Department of Agriculture

Food and Nutrition Service

1320 Braddock Place
Alexandria, VA
22314

April 23, 2020

SUBJECT: Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer Program (P-EBT)
Approval of California State Plan

TO: Jesus Mendoza
Regional Administrator
Western Regional Office

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (P.L. 116-127) (FFCRA or the Act) authorized a temporary assistance program for households with children affected by school closures during the public health emergency that was declared on January 27, 2020. On March 20, 2020 the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) announced and began accepting State plans for the Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT) program. Pursuant to the authority granted under Section 1101 of the Act, FNS approves California's enclosed plan to operate P-EBT.

Summary of State Plan

The California Department of Social Services and the California Department of Education will issue P-EBT benefits to current Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) households and non-SNAP households, which include children eligible for free and reduced price school meals, through the State's SNAP EBT card system. The State will use procedures described in its approved plan to identify eligible children in both SNAP and non-SNAP households. As detailed in its approved plan, the State will use existing case information to issue benefits to current SNAP households and the State will obtain all necessary data to issue EBT cards to eligible non-SNAP households.

The State will issue benefits only to households of children whose schools were closed for at least 5 consecutive days during the emergency designation and who would have received free or reduced price meals under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act if not for the school closures. The State will conduct a public information campaign to alert those receiving benefits regarding the purposes of P-EBT and how P-EBT benefits and EBT cards are to be used, as described in the plan. The State must also provide information to non-SNAP households about what to do if they do not wish to receive or use P-EBT benefits. In addition, the State will identify risks for improper payments and ensure a high level of integrity.

Estimated Caseload and Value of P-EBT Benefits

The State will calculate monthly benefits for each eligible child in the household equal to the daily reimbursement for free breakfast and lunch ($5.70), multiplied by the average number of days school was canceled in the month.

The State estimates that it will issue $1.4 billion to 3,823,197 children for school closures extending from March 16, 2020 through June 12, 2020 a total of 64 days.

USDA is an Equal Opportunity Provider, Employer and Lender

The State agency must notify the FNS Regional Office immediately should difficulties arise with card stock volume or production.

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

Civil Rights
California will continue to comply with civil rights requirements, to include providing equal access to individuals with disabilities and individuals who are limited English proficient.

Reporting
The California Department of Social Services will complete the FNS-292B form on a bi-weekly basis, in accordance with existing requirements. The California Department of Social Services will also complete all other normally recurring SNAP reporting, including the FNS-46 and FNS-388 reports, on a timely basis and in accordance with existing requirements.

The California Department of Social Services will submit monthly reports to FNS with the following information for P-EBT benefits issued in that month:

- Number of children receiving P-EBT benefits, separately identifying the numbers in SNAP and non-SNAP households.
- Number of households receiving P-EBT benefits (as described in your state plan), separately identifying SNAP and non-SNAP households.
- Total dollar value of P-EBT benefits issued, separately identifying the values issued to SNAP and non-SNAP households.
- Average P-EBT issuance amount per household, separately identifying the average for SNAP and non-SNAP households.

FNS appreciates California'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,

CYNTHIA LONG Digitally signed by CYNTHIA LONG
Date: 2020.04.24 12:40:20 -04'00'

Cindy Long
Acting Associate Administrator
Regional Operations and Support