



Food and Nutrition
Service

1320 Braddock Place
Alexandria, VA
22314

June 9, 2020

**SUBJECT: Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer Program (P-EBT)
Approval of U.S. Virgin Islands Territory Plan**

**TO: Kurt Messner
Regional Administrator
Northeast 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 U.S. Virgin Islands' enclosed plan to operate P-EBT.

Summary of Territory Plan

The U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Human Services and the U.S. Virgin Islands 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 Territory's SNAP EBT card system. The Territory 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 Territory will use existing case information to issue benefits to current SNAP households and the Territory will obtain all necessary data to issue EBT cards to eligible non-SNAP households.

The Territory 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 Territory 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 Territory 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 Territory will identify risks for improper payments and ensure a high level of integrity.

Estimated Caseload and Value of P-EBT Benefits

The Territory will calculate monthly benefits for each eligible child in the household equal to the daily reimbursement for free breakfast and lunch (\$6.66), multiplied by the average number of days school was canceled in the month.

The Territory estimates that it will issue \$2.0 million to 2,923 SNAP households and \$3.6 million to 4,762 non-SNAP households for school closures extending from March 18, 2020 through June 4, 2020, a total of 57 days.

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

Civil Rights

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.

Reporting

The U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Human Services will complete the FNS-292B form on a bi-weekly basis, in accordance with existing requirements. The U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Human 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 U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Human 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 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 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
Acting Associate Administrator
Regional Operations and Support