|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **DAVID Y. IGE**GOVERNOR | **STATE OF HAWAII****DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**P. O. Box 339Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339 | **PANKAJ BHANOT**DIRECTOR**CATHY BETTS**DEPUTY DIRECTOR |

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

June 22, 2020

**Hawaiʻi to Provide Cash Assistance for Children Who Receive Free or Reduced-Cost School Meals**

Honolulu, Hawaiʻi - The Hawaiʻi Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Hawaiʻi Child Nutrition Programs under the Hawaiʻi Department of Education announced today that families with children who are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals will receive temporary cash assistance for food, due to the impact of school closures during the COVID-19 public health crisis.

**What is P-EBT?**

The Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) program is part of a food assistance plan approved by the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, and authorized by the Families First Coronavirus Response Act.

This temporary assistance program will provide Hawaiʻi P-EBT Pandemic School Meals Replacement Benefits to more than 93,000 students receiving free or reduced-price school meals in Hawaiʻi, including almost 48,000 students already receiving SNAP benefits.

“The P-EBT program provides resources that give families healthy food options for children during this public health and economic crisis,” said DHS director, Pankaj Bhanot. “Together, in collaboration with the Department of Education, we are able to share this vital and timely information about the P-EBT program with Hawaiʻi families, statewide.”

**How Does this Work?**

There are two ways the P-EBT will be distributed:

1. Eligible Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) households will have their March, April, and May P-EBT benefits automatically deposited to their existing Kokua EBT card. The P-EBT benefits can be used the same way as their Kokua EBT card and can also be used in the *Da Bux* program.

1. Students who receive free or reduced-price school meals but do not receive SNAP benefits will automatically receive a Hawaiʻi P-EBT card in the mail. The Hawaiʻi P-EBT card will be issued under the name of the oldest student in the household. Benefits for all eligible school-aged children in the home will be loaded onto this one Hawaiʻi EBT card.

**Do I need to apply for P-EBT?**

No, households do not have to apply for P-EBT. A notification letter will be sent to eligible students’ homes. If you believe there are eligible students in your household but you do not receive the P-EBT by July, 20, 2020, email hi.pebt@dhs.hawaii.gov.

**How Much Will Families Receive?**

Eligible families can receive up to the following amount for each child enrolled in school:

* $80 for March
* $147 for April
* $133 for May

Combined: $360 per child. Please note that this Pandemic EBT payment is a one-time supplement.

The amount received will be based on the month the eligible student was enrolled for free or reduced-price meals. If enrollment began prior to or during the month or March, then the eligible student receives all three months. If enrollment began in April, the student will receive benefits for April and May. If enrollment began in May, the eligible student receives May P-EBT only.

To learn more about applying for free or reduced-price meals, go to the link for more information. <http://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/TeachingAndLearning/HealthAndNutrition/StudentHealthResources/Pages/FreeReducedLunch.aspx>

The P-EBT benefits for each eligible child will be loaded on the Hawaiʻi P-EBT card by mid-July.

DHS will continue to work with federal partners to provide assistance to Hawaiʻi’s families in need. To apply for SNAP and Financial assistance, visit humanservices.hawaii.gov.

###

**Media Contact:**
Amanda Stevens, Public Information Officer

Department of Human Services
Email: astevens@dhs.hawaii.gov
Phone: (808) 586-4892

USDA Nondiscrimination Statement: In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the Agency (state or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.  Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDA-OASCR%20P-Complaint-Form-0508-0002-508-11-28-17Fax2Mail.pdf), (AD-3027) found online at: [How to File a Complaint](https://www.usda.gov/oascr/how-to-file-a-program-discrimination-complaint), and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

1. mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
2. fax: (202) 690-7442; or
3. email: program.intake@usda.gov.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.