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To: School Business Administrators; Charter School Leads; Non-Public School Administrators; Food Service Directors of Schools Participating in the National School Lunch and/or School Breakfast Programs

From: Arleen Ramos-Szatmary, M.S. *Arleen Ramos-Szatmary*
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Subject: Summer EBT Process Information, Webinar Date, and Additional Information & Resources

The Division of Food and Nutrition is proud to announce the launch of the Summer EBT program link in the SNEARS web-based system. Similar to the Direct Certification process, individual student demographic information and meal eligibility data for **every enrolled student with access to meals**, is required to be uploaded via the Summer EBT School Reporting Template. Summer EBT student demographic and meal eligibility information will undergo a sequence of validation checks, before being transferred to the DHS EBT card vendor for proper Summer EBT benefit card issuance.

The link to upload the first Summer EBT School Reporting Template will be active in SNEARS beginning May 1, 2024.

In New Jersey, the covered Summer EBT operational period is defined as follows:

- First day of the summer operational period: June 15, 2024.
- Last day of the summer operational period: August 31, 2024.

These dates cover the majority of the summer break period for most children in New Jersey.

Below are the requirements for Summer EBT Reporting, for all School Food Authorities (SFAs) participating in the National School Lunch and/or School Breakfast Program for the 2023-2024 school year:

1. The Summer EBT School Reporting Template must include the district's entire student enrollment with access to meals. For the purpose of Summer EBT eligibility, **enrolled students means students who are enrolled in and attending schools participating in the NSLP and/or SBP and who have access to at least one meal service (breakfast or lunch) daily.**
2. The [Summer EBT School Reporting Template](#) must be uploaded into the SNEARS web-based system according to the prescribed time-sensitive schedule:
 - **Initial Summer EBT File Upload: May 1st – May 24, 2024.** Households with students identified as eligible for Summer EBT benefits in this initial bulk file upload are projected to receive their Summer EBT benefit card(s) in June.

- **Subsequent Summer EBT File Uploads: Occur Weekly Throughout the Summer.** SFAs must upload any new updates to student demographic information and/or meal eligibility data every week throughout the summer. Files can be uploaded any day of the week but must be received by COB on Friday. Households with students identified as newly eligible for Summer EBT benefits in these subsequent weekly file uploads will receive their Summer EBT benefit card(s) the following week.
- **Final Summer EBT File Upload: Friday, September 13, 2024.** The last day for SFAs to upload any new updates to student demographic information and/or meal eligibility data is by COB on Friday, September 13, 2024. Households with students identified as newly eligible for Summer EBT benefits in this final Summer EBT File Upload will receive their Summer EBT benefit card(s) before the end of September.

USDA Regulations at 7 CFR 292.15(c) stipulate that Summer EBT benefits must be issued and available for households to spend at least seven (7) calendar days, and not more than fourteen (14) calendar days, before the start of the summer operational period. Given that NJDA and DHS need time to validate and process individual student demographic and meal eligibility information from each participating school district, it is imperative that SFAs perform the initial Summer EBT file upload in SNEARS by the deadline of May 24, 2024, in order for the majority of Summer EBT benefits to be issued and available for households to spend before the start of the summer operational period.

SFAs that do not comply with Summer EBT Program requirements will be notified by email. Failure to upload Summer EBT student demographic and meal eligibility information by the deadlines indicated will result in the SFA receiving a designation of “not in good standing”, which will negatively impact future SFA child nutrition program grant funding opportunities.

Webinar Information:

The Division of Food and Nutrition will be conducting a live comprehensive webinar on the Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer Program (Summer EBT) on **Wednesday, April 17, 2024 at 11:00 AM EDT**. School officials and all school personnel responsible for student demographic and meal eligibility information are strongly encouraged to attend this training. Click on the following link to register:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/7254507789040426331>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar. The Summer EBT Webinar will be recorded and available to view in SNEARS, under the *Training* link, after the presentation.

Additional Summer EBT Information:

- Households must have the opportunity to establish eligibility for Summer EBT at any point between the start of the immediately preceding school year and the last day of the summer operational period, which will generally encompass more than an entire calendar year (e.g., **July 1, 2023 through August 31, 2024**). Therefore, SFAs must accept and process School Meals Applications and/or NJDOE Household Information Survey Forms (if operating CEP) throughout the year.

However, SFAs are permitted and encouraged to communicate to households that are not automatically eligible, and did not complete and return a School Meals Application or a NJDOE Household Information Survey Form (if operating CEP) in the beginning of the school year, to submit a School Meals Application or a Household Information Survey Form **no later than April 19, 2024**, in order for the SFA to determine federal summer EBT eligibility prior to the start of the summer operational period.

- Children who receive Summer EBT benefits can still participate in other summer meal programs.
- Receiving Summer EBT benefits will not affect children or families' immigration status.
- Dual participation in the Summer EBT program is prohibited. This means that children may not receive multiple benefit allotments from the same State, or from more than one State, each summer. (For example, a child who moves in the late spring may not receive a benefit from the State they left *and* from the State to which they moved.)
- Income eligibility for Summer EBT is based on the Federal NSLP/SBP Income Eligibility Guidelines. Therefore, only children in households at or below 185% of the Federal poverty threshold are eligible for Summer EBT. This means that students who qualify for free meals under the New Jersey Expanded Income Eligibility (NJEIE) category are **not** eligible for Summer EBT because they are considered "Federally Denied" (Paid) students.
- Summer EBT does not apply to Juvenile Detention Centers/Jails or schools operating Milk-Only Programs.

Summer EBT Resources: The following customizable flyers have been developed by NJDA to assist SFAs with Summer EBT messaging and outreach to families:

- NJDA Summer EBT Flyer for Regular Counting & Claiming Districts and Schools in [English](#) and [Spanish](#)
- NJDA Summer EBT Flyer for CEP Districts and Schools in [English](#) and [Spanish](#)

These flyers can be found in SNEARS Resources, under the category heading, **Summer EBT Program**. Additional sample letters to households and other Summer EBT program materials will be available in SNEARS Resources on or before March 22nd.

Thank you for your cooperation with this important process to identify students eligible to receive this valuable food security benefit to reduce childhood hunger when school is out for the summer.

Questions regarding the Summer EBT process for SFAs may be submitted to the dedicated Summer EBT School Resource Email at: DFNSummerEBT@ag.nj.gov or the School Nutrition Programs Unit at 609-984-0693. If you have computer-related issues during the Summer EBT file upload process, please contact the SNEARS IT Help Desk at 609-341-3817.