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Office of the Governor
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**USDA FNS OFFICIALLY APPROVES 2024 SUMMER ELECTRONIC BENEFITS
TRANSFER (S-EBT) PROGRAM FOR AMERICAN SAMOA WITH \$2.5 MILLION IN
CRITICAL NUTRITION BENEFITS FOR
14,464 ELIGIBLE STUDENTS AGES 5 YEARS AND OLDER**



Governor Lemanu P. S. Mauga is pleased to announce that the United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service (USDA FNS) officially approved American Samoa's 2024 Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer (S-EBT) Plan of Operations and Management (POM), developed through a collaboration between the Department of Human and Social Services (DHSS) and the Department of Education (DOE). As a result, \$2.5 million has been awarded to provide critical nutrition benefits this summer for an estimated 14,464 of American Samoa's children.

In making this announcement, Governor Lemanu said, "I appreciate USDA's approval of our application to allow American Samoa to join other states and territories in implementing this new program to help families with school-aged children purchase groceries during the summer when schools are out of session." The Governor continued, "I extend my appreciation to USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack and the FNS leadership for also approving our request for a waiver of the 50% Administrative Cost match and other flexibilities that allow us to roll out S-EBT for American Samoa's children."

The Summer EBT is a new permanent nationwide program that was authorized by the Consolidated Appropriations Act (the Act) of 2023, beginning in 2024. Like the previous Pandemic EBT Programs, awards are not automatically received. American Samoa had to complete an application process and gain approval. However, American Samoa's 2024 Summer EBT is different in some ways. For example:

- American Samoa initiated successful efforts that resulted in the mandatory federal match for 50% of the administrative costs for the 2024 S-EBT being waived for the Territories.

- A child who is between 5 – 18 years old and verified by DOE as being enrolled at any point in time in a public or private school in the 2024-2024 school year automatically qualifies to receive 2024 S-EBT benefits.
- Although the Act has established a \$40 per month benefit amount per child for 2024, the Act also provides USDA with the authority to adjust benefit levels for American Samoa, Alaska, Hawaii, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. For American Samoa, each eligible child qualifies for \$177 (calculated at \$59/ month for 3 months of the summer break), which is higher than the \$120 per child set for the U.S. mainland.
- The 2024 S-EBT benefits for American Samoa will be issued in the form of food coupons through the DHSS American Samoa Nutrition Assistance Program (ASNAP), printed specifically for the 2024 S-EBT and a new S-EBT identification card will be issued by the ASNAP office.
- Parents/ guardians are advised that although your child(ren) qualifies for 2024 S-EBT, you have the choice to opt out or decline these benefits by not picking them up or contacting the DHSS ASNAP office to have their name(s) removed from the list of qualified students.
- S-EBT 2024 will be issued one-time and released to the primary parent/ guardian based on the schedule that will soon be shared by the DHSS ASNAP.
- Only the individual who is listed as the primary parent/ guardian in DOE and private school student records for the child(ren) who qualifies for S-EBT 2024 may pick up the food coupons for their child(ren).

The DHSS ASNAP will issue more information and guidance for parents/ guardians for receiving 2024 S-EBT benefits to help your student(s) access the nutritious meals they need this summer.

In conclusion, Governor Lemanu extends his appreciation and fa'afetai tele lava to FNS Administrator Cynthia Long, FNS Western Regional Administrator Jesus Mendoza, and the entire FNS national and regional teams for their continued support of American Samoa's food assistance needs.

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