DHHS Reaches Milestone With $1 Billion of Food for More Than 1 Million Children

By Administrator
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As of April 27, 2021, the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services in partnership with the NC Department of Public Instruction has provided more than $1 billion of groceries to more than a million children impacted by school closings during the pandemic. North Carolina was one of the first four states to receive federal approval of the Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) program when it launched. “North Carolina recognized from the start that school closings had the potential to create a child hunger crisis,” said NCDHHS Chief Deputy Secretary for Opportunity and Well-Being Susan Gale Perry. “We moved as fast as possible so children who normally received their meals at school would still have regular, nutritious meals.”

North Carolina has consistently been one of the fastest states to issue P-EBT benefits for eligible children and began issuing P-EBT to students within three weeks of its plan being accepted. It is one of 35 states approved to provide P-EBT to eligible children and students through the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year.

The P-EBT program was launched at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic to help families purchase food for children whose access to free and reduced-price meals at school has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. P-EBT benefits are entirely federally funded and the program is authorized by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The program provides a benefit on an EBT card that can be used to buy food at authorized food and grocery retailers, including most major grocery stores.

More information about the P-EBT program can be found at www.ncdhhs.gov/PEBT. For the latest information on COVID-19, visit nc.gov/covid19.