For Immediate Release
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USVI Department of Human Services Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (PEBT) Distribution Begins

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS— The Department of Human Services (DHS) today announced the distribution of food assistance to over 13,000 children (from schools that participated in the School Lunch Program) totaling over $4.9 million additional dollars to the Territory via an Electronic Benefit Transfer System (EBT). **After much anticipation, Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) benefits began to roll out on August 25,2020.** This benefit is intended to help families supplement the nutritional needs of their children due to pandemic school closure.

The first students to receive benefits are those whose families are already SNAP recipients. Existing SNAP clients should all see their P-EBT benefits applied to their existing card balances by August 31, 2020. Physical cards must be mailed to new families. Therefore, those families should receive their cards in the mail within the next two (2) weeks. Cards are being mailed to the addresses provided to the schools.

PEBT it is not Disaster SNAP (DSNAP). The territory has not received federal approval to implement a DSNAP.

Who will receive P-EBT, how will they receive it, and how should it be used?

1. Each student enrolled in USVI public schools and private schools that participate in the School Lunch program will receive a one-time benefit of $379.00 issued onto an EBT Card.

2. There was no application process. The Virgin Islands Department of Education and eligible Private Schools provided DHS the names of students enrolled during the 2019 – 2020 school year.

3. The card will be issued in the student's name. Households with more than one eligible student will receive multiple cards.

4. Eligible students who do not currently receive SNAP will receive their P-EBT card by mail at the address provided to DHS by their schools.

5. Eligible students who currently receive SNAP will have their benefits loaded on the household's existing EBT card.

6. P-EBT users will be provided with instructions on how to set-up and utilize the card to access their benefits.

7. P-EBT benefits can be used to purchase food items at the stores of authorized SNAP retailers. A specific flyer with more details on eligible food items will be sent electronically, posted on the DHS social media pages and website and also in stores.

8. P-EBT benefits are not transferable! You must destroy the card if you do not want the benefits.

For more information about P-EBT, visit the DHS website at www.dhs.gov.vi or families may call the P-EBT Customer Service number (340)772-7120 or email pebt@dhs.vi.gov with the subject P-EBT.

In addition to all public schools, the following private schools were eligible for P-EBT assistance:

- Christian Academy-St. Croix
- Church of God School-St. Croix
- Free Will Baptist Elementary-St. Croix
- Free Will Baptist High-St. Croix
- Reading Rainbow School-St. Croix
- St. Joseph's Catholic School – St. Croix
- St. Mary's Catholic School – St. Croix
- St. Patrick's Catholic School -St. Croix
- St. John Christian School – St. John
- All Saints Cathedral School -St. Thomas
- Bethel Baptist Day School -St. Thomas
- Calvary Christian Academy-St. Thomas
- Faith Alive Christian Academy-St. Thomas
- Moravian School -St. Thomas
- Nisky Moravian School -St. Thomas
- New Testament Academy-St. Thomas
- Saints Peter & Paul Catholic School -St. Thomas
- Tutu Church of God Holiness School -St. Thomas
- Wesleyan Academy -St. Thomas

For more information, please visit the Department of Human Services website, www.dhs.gov.vi or on Facebook (https://www.facebook.com/usvidhs) at US Virgin Islands Department of Human Services.

The Department of Human Services (VIDHS) exists to provide social services to members in our community with diverse needs. In times of national uncertainty and hardship we act as a safety-net and exist to inspire hope and empower change through non-judgmental, quality delivery of

needed services and resources. Please visit the Department of Human Services website, www.dhs.gov.vi for more information.

For more information on COVID-19, please visit our website, covid19usvi.com, or text COVID19USVI to 888777. To report a suspected COVID-19 case, call (340) 712-6299 or (340) 776-1519.

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