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Gov. Wolf: Emergency SNAP Benefit Distribution to Begin Today, Local Feeding Programs Available

Harrisburg, PA – Governor Tom Wolf today announced that the Department of Human Services (DHS) will begin an emergency Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefit issuance today in line with the federal government’s interpretation of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act. Payments include a supplemental increase for both March and April and will continue to be issued for current SNAP households through April 29. DHS is also advising Pennsylvanians in need of food assistance of local supports that can help meet essential needs during the public health crisis.

“This pandemic is creating economic strains for many Pennsylvanians, and we are doing all we can to help the 1.8 million Pennsylvanians who use SNAP to keep food on the table have a little flexibility to make additional grocery purchases and reduce trips to the grocery store,” Gov. Wolf said. “I hope it will help ease circumstances for Pennsylvanians during this difficult economic period.”

DHS received approval from the US Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) to issue emergency payments that will allow DHS to increase a household’s currently monthly payment up to the [maximum benefit amount](#) for each household size. DHS had requested authorization to issue an additional benefit equal to a household’s monthly payment to all SNAP households and was denied.

These emergency payments are for March and April and will be distributed as a one-time issuance distributed on a staggered schedule beginning April 16 and continuing through April 29. This payment is in addition to a household’s normal April benefit issuance that’s made in the first half of the month. These payments will be placed directly onto a recipient’s EBT card. Supplemental payments are in addition to the normal May payment beginning May 1.

DHS has also activated the administration’s Feeding Task Force, which brings together state agencies, charitable food networks, and other local partners to determine where food needs are, how many meals are needed, how food is getting to people, and how

supplies and donations can be allocated to meet feeding needs across Pennsylvania. The task force, in partnership with the governor's office, developed a [food access survey](#) to determine areas where individuals or families may have trouble accessing food and to identify areas of high need. If individuals identify in the survey they need food and agree to be contacted, they will receive an email with information on available resources.

The task force has delivered more than 143,616 individual shelf-stable meals to charitable food networks and feeding programs, including home-delivered meal programs for seniors and food pantries around Pennsylvania thus far since it was activated. In total, the task force expects to coordinate delivery of more than 758,000 shelf-stable meals.

Individuals and families in need of assistance should contact their local food bank through [Feeding PA](#) or [Hunger-Free PA](#) to find a food pantry or other distribution site in their community. The United Way of Pennsylvania and the 211 program can also connect people and families to [local resources](#) that can help during the public health crisis.

The Feeding Task Force is also partnering with the Salvation Army and Operation BBQ Relief to distribute 180,000 meals a week for four weeks. Operation BBQ Relief harnesses the power of shuttered restaurants, available restaurant workers, and available commercial-sized food product to produce family style meals to support people in need. People in need will be able to go to any of the 44 local Salvation Army Corps Centers on the distribution day to receive the food. People needing assistance should contact their local Salvation Army Corps Center for information on upcoming distributions.

“As we navigate this challenging and scary time, the partnerships that support the Feeding Task Force represent the best of all of us – people helping people,” said DHS Sec. Teresa Miller said. “This is difficult for everyone, and I hope that those who need assistance will reach out to their local food bank or pantry. Help, support, and resources are available, and although we are focused on staying home, no one is truly alone in this.”

DHS is continuing to process applications and benefit renewals for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) throughout the public health crisis. Emergency SNAP applications can be expedited and issued in five days. Pennsylvanians can apply for SNAP online at <https://www.compass.state.pa.us/compass.web/Public/CMPHome>.

Visit pa.gov for a [“Responding to COVID-19” guide](#) or the Pennsylvania Department of Health's dedicated [Coronavirus webpage](#) for the most up-to-date information regarding COVID-19.

Guidance to DHS providers related to COVID-19 is available [here](#).