

# The Virgin Islands Consortium

## D.H.S. Apologizes for P-EBT Distribution Delay, Says All Recipients Will Receive Benefits by First Week in September

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The Plaza Extra East Supermarket on St. Croix

The Department of Human Services announced Thursday that the distribution of Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT) will begin by the end of August, with all recipients receiving their benefits by the first week of September.

"The goal of D.H.S. is by the end of August to begin the rollout of P-EBT," said D.H.S. Director of Strategic Operations and Planning, Michelle Francis. "Because non-SNAP clients will have to have the cards mailed from the U.S., those will come the following

week."

In its Thursday release, D.H.S. apologized for the delay and said that it has been working "diligently to address a number of hurdles that presented themselves, including getting accurate mailing addresses from the Department of Education for thousands of students, and also working through the final detailed steps of the contracting process with our federal partners."

DHS said thousands of files for current SNAP and non-SNAP families with children who attended public and private schools (from schools that participated in the School Lunch Program) are being uploaded to the EBT Contractor system. The contractor will test the upload and, when that test is successful, "P-EBT cards for non-SNAP families will be prepared and mailed and P-EBT benefits will be placed on the existing EBT Cards of current SNAP recipients," D.H.S. said.

"As soon as DHS gets word that the vendor system test was successful and issuance is on its way, the Department will share the exact dates via press release, radio, social media and our website and will continue to announce information related to P-EBT through these channels," the department said. "Once P-EBT issuance begins, families will have access to a dedicated phone line and email address for issues related to the mailing."