[date]

Dear Household,

The State of Vermont has just been approved to issue Pandemic- Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) cards for September 2020 - June 2021. P-EBT benefits are funds provided on an electronic benefit transfer card that a household may use to purchase food items at grocery stores, convenience stores, online retailers and farmers markets where 3SquaresVT (SNAP) benefits are accepted. For families receiving 3SquaresVT, P-EBT benefits will be added to existing EBT cards for students who qualify. For other families, you will receive a special P-EBT card from the Vermont Department for Children and Families for students who qualify.

P-EBT benefits are meant to replace the value of free school meals that students would have received had the child been at school. The benefits are not available for months when a student’s learning model was 100% “in-person” because the child had access to meals at school. Partial benefits will be provided for months when students attended school in a hybrid learning model. Accessing free meals to eat at home on remote learning days does not impact a student’s eligibility for P-EBT.

The State is still working to get systems in place to issue these benefits, so we do not expect P-EBT cards to be mailed out or benefits to be available until late March at the earliest. However, the benefits will be retroactive back to September. We will be working with the State to supply information about each student’s eligibility for these benefits.

[CEP or Provision 2 schools use the following language]: Because our school offers free meals to all students through the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)/Provision 2 [select one], all students are eligible for these benefits for months when students’ learning was remote or in a hybrid model. No benefits will be available for months when the learning model was entirely in-person.

[Schools who normally operate pricing programs use the following language]: In addition to learning model, eligibility for the benefit also depends on a child’s eligibility for free and reduced school meals. All children are able to receive free meals this year due to special COVID-19 waivers obtained by the State. However, to receive the P-EBT benefit, students must either have an approved free and reduced meal application on file or have been directly certified for free school meals. Students may be directly certified for free meals if the household received 3SquaresVT or Reach Up benefits or because the student is state-placed foster, migrant, homeless, runaway or participates in a Head Start program.

[ ] Your student(s), [list student name(s)] is/are already eligible for free and reduced meals based on information from last year or this year. You do not need to submit a new application for free and reduced school meals. If there are additional students living in your household, please let us know.

[ ] **ACTION NEEDED:** We do not have information on file for your student(s). Please complete and return the attached meal application if you would like to receive the P-EBT benefit. We will review the application to determine if you qualify. Please return the application as soon as possible so that we are able to apply benefits back to September 2020. Benefits will only be available going forward for applications received after April 1, 2021.

**ACTION NEEDED:** So that we may work with the State of Vermont to award benefits as quickly as possible, please look at the Head of Household, Date of Birth, and Mailing Address information that we have on file for your student (below) and confirm that this information is correct. If it is correct, no action is needed. If it is not correct, please contact [fill in appropriate contact information] no later than Feb. 15, 2021.

[List Head of Household, mailing address, and student date of birth on file in whatever format works best for your existing system]

Thank you for your assistance with this. Please see the attached list of frequently asked questions for additional information about P-EBT.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

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Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: https://www.usda.gov/oascr/how-to-file-a-program-discrimination-complaint, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

(1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights

1400 Independence Avenue, SW

Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

(2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or

(3) email: program.intake@usda.gov

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