News Release

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Oregon to provide over 351,000 children with benefits to replace the meals they get at school

(Salem, Ore.) – The Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) announced today that Oregon families with children who are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals will get cash benefits for the meals they would have received at school even if they have been accessing meals from schools during the closure.

The USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) authorized DHS to provide Oregon P-EBT Pandemic School Meal Replacement Benefits to more than 351,000 students receiving free or reduced-price school meals in Oregon, including almost 147,000 students already receiving Nutrition Assistance. Households will receive benefits equivalent to one free lunch and one free breakfast for each eligible child – $5.70 per normal school day for the months of March, April, May and June.

“Together, DHS and ODE are working to ensure no child in Oregon goes hungry during the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Dan Haun, DHS Self-Sufficiency Programs Director. “This resource is the result of our strong collaboration and will provide additional support for child nutrition and expand families’ options for healthy food.”

“The approval of this program highlights the tremendous partnership between ODE and DHS and our shared desire to strengthen our communities,” said Dustin Melton, Director of ODE’s Child Nutrition Programs. “The P-EBT program will support student’s nutritional needs during a time of crisis and uncertainty.”

Eligible Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) households will have their March, April and May benefits automatically deposited to their existing Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) accounts in late May. Students who get free or reduced-price school meals

but do not receive SNAP benefits will automatically receive an Oregon Trail Card in the mail.

Families who have experienced significant income loss may have become eligible for free or reduced-price school meals, and there is still time to apply. Apply online at https://www.ode.state.or.us/apps/FRLApp/Default or contact your local school.

Benefits will be retroactive to March 16, 2020 for students who received free and reduced-price meals when schools closed. For newly eligible free or reduced-price meals or SNAP households, benefits will start at the beginning of the month they become eligible. Eligible families will receive the following for each child:

- $69 for March
- $126 in April
- $120 in May
- $69 in June

Additional options to strengthen food security among Oregonians, include the ability for households to:

- use their EBT card to include online food purchases through Amazon and Walmart (delivery fees not included).
- take advantage of the double up food bucks program, which matches every $1 of EBT funds spent – up to $10 – on fresh fruit and vegetables at participating local farmers markets.

DHS will continue to work with federal partners to provide greater assistance to Oregonians in need. To apply for Nutrition Assistance, visit needfood.oregon.gov or call 2-1-1.

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