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Illinois Human Services Seeks to Educate SNAP Households to Prepare for USDA's Return of SNAP Benefits to Pre-Pandemic Levels

Illinois Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Program Serves More Than 2 Million Customers

CHICAGO-The Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) announced today that per the federal USDA Food and Nutrition Service, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits will return to pre-pandemic levels beginning in March 2023. These federal changes impact one million families and two million people in Illinois. Nearly half of the states across the country have already ended their SNAP emergency allotments ahead of the federal change, while Illinois will sustain benefits through February when the federal increases expire.

SNAP emergency allotments have been issued since the beginning of the Covid-19 public health emergency to address food insecurity challenges exacerbated by the pandemic. These increased benefits will end after February 2023 and return to pre-pandemic levels in March. With the end of emergency benefits, SNAP participants will see benefits reduced anywhere from \$95 to \$250 per person per month. The reduction in SNAP benefits is a result of a federal policy change, not because of changes in individual SNAP cases.

“We understand and recognize that many Illinois residents have counted on these additional emergency food benefits to secure healthy food for themselves and their families,” **said Grace B. Hou, Secretary, Illinois Department of Human Services.** “We are working with our food pantry partners across the state to meet residents’ needs during this adjustment period.”

Since April 2020, all Illinois SNAP households received both the regular monthly benefit and an emergency SNAP allotment. Beginning in March 1, 2023, each SNAP household will receive benefits based on the normal eligibility determination process that considers the household size, income, and deductions. Therefore, the decrease in the amount of the benefits will vary and depend on each household’s size and financial circumstances.

The amount of benefits customers will receive starting in March 2023 will be listed on a client notice letter sent out to all SNAP recipient households.

To prepare for this change, IDHS recommends SNAP customers visit www.abe.illinois.gov and update their account if there is a change in address, increase in housing costs, or decrease in income. This will ensure SNAP customers are receiving the maximum benefit for which they are eligible.

IDHS has also put together a resource page to help SNAP households with the transition. Customers will receive their regular normal SNAP benefits through their Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card beginning in March 2023 on their regularly scheduled issuance date.

For more information, please visit www.abe.illinois.gov/abe/access.

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