



AUGUST 2021

NJ Human Services Begins Delivering \$272M in Special Food Assistance Benefits for School Children



P-EBT Food Assistance for Children

Human Services is delivering extra food assistance benefits to school children who would have received free or reduced-price in-school meals if not for virtual learning due to COVID-19.

The first round of benefits in extra food assistance began being delivered in July to 142,000 children whose households are already enrolled in the state's Supplemental Assistance Nutrition Program ([SNAP](#)).

New electronic benefit cards with the extra food assistance benefits are being sent to 236,000 children whose families are not enrolled in SNAP.

“We remain committed to supporting families by providing additional food security to eligible children,” Acting Commissioner Sarah Adelman said. “Throughout the pandemic, these additional food security benefits have been critical for so many children who lost the nutritional support usually provided by the free and reduced meals program while in school. We will continue to look for all opportunities to provide food assistance to families and children.”

“Ensuring children have nutritional support is a priority, especially considering the difficulties faced by many children during the pandemic,” Deputy Commissioner Elisa Neira said. “These additional benefits will help support healthy families and children, and continue our efforts to provide as much food assistance we possibly can to New Jersey households.”

The benefits are part of the federal Pandemic-Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT) program.

Visit [here](#) for more information on the P-EBT program.

[Read more](#)

SNAP Online Grocery Shopping Now Available at Five Super Foodtown Stores

NJ SNAP recipients can use their EBT card for online grocery shopping

Use your Families First EBT card to use NJSNAP to order groceries online from participating retailers. For a list of participating retailers, visit www.nj.gov/humanservices/njsnap/benefits/.



New Jerseyans enrolled in the state’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) are now able to use their benefits to order groceries online from five Super Foodtown grocery stores in Monmouth County.

“We are thrilled to provide New Jersey families enrolled in SNAP with more options to grocery shop online,” Acting Commissioner Adelman said. “People prefer to shop online for a variety of reasons. Individuals who receive SNAP benefits should enjoy the same convenience of grocery shopping online, and now they have more stores to choose from.”

“We are excited to see the list of supermarkets providing online access to SNAP families expand. By adding more stores, NJ is increasing access to healthy foods for families that find it easier to shop online,” Deputy Commissioner Neira said.

NJ SNAP recipients will be able to use their benefits card to order groceries from Super Foodtown stores in Port Monmouth, Red Bank, Ocean, Atlantic Highlands and Sea Girt. Online shopping is also available through Amazon and participating Walmarts, ShopRites, The Fresh Grocers and ALDIs using Instacart.

“This helps make shopping for groceries more convenient for those who may have difficulty getting to the grocery store, and gives families in these communities more options as to where to shop for food,” said Human Services Assistant Commissioner Natasha Johnson, who directs the Division of Family Development that oversees NJ SNAP.

[Read more](#)

Human Services Delivers Extra August Food Assistance Benefits to 439,000 Households



The 439,000 New Jersey households who receive food assistance through the state’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (NJ SNAP) received \$77.8 million in total extra benefits in August. Human Services has been providing NJ SNAP households with maximum benefits since March 2020 when the pandemic began.

Under a change implemented in April by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), New Jersey households that had already been receiving the maximum available SNAP benefit are now also eligible for the temporary

extra assistance. A 15 percent increase in SNAP benefits also remains in effect through September.

Human Services has now distributed \$924 million in supplemental monthly SNAP payments to households since March 2020.

[Learn more about NJSNAP](#)

Disability Pride Month 2021

July is Disability Pride Month, an annual observance promoting visibility and awareness of the positive pride felt by individuals with disabilities.

July 26th also marked the 31st anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

To commemorate the occasions, watch Governor Murphy, Acting Commissioner Adelman, Department of Children and Families Commissioner Christine Norbut Beyer, individuals with disabilities and the director of Human Services' divisions that serve individuals with disabilities in the video below:



Human Services Partners with Rutgers and Hudson Pride Center to Improve Access to Homeless Services for LGBTQI+ Community



Deputy Commissioner Neira talks to NJSpotlight News about how Human Services is partnering with Rutgers and Hudson Pride to improve access to homeless services for the LGBTQI+ community.

Human Services recently launched an anti-discrimination training program to educate social service providers in the state on the unique needs of the LGBTQI+ community. The program aims to help address any potential barriers that may discourage or deter LGBTQI+ individuals facing homelessness from seeking vital homelessness prevention services and supports.

The Division of Family Development is partnering with the Rutgers University-School of Social Work – Institute for Families (IFF) and Hudson Pride Center (HPC) to create and deliver the training to social service agencies, including homeless shelters and county boards of social services. The training is part of a larger initiative by the Murphy administration to improve access to services for LGBTQI+ New Jerseyans.

“We are proud of this partnership and know that it will result in meaningful improvements in the way services are delivered to LGBTQI+ New Jerseyans facing homelessness,” Acting Commissioner Adelman said. “The Murphy administration has been focused on improving the quality of life of LGBTQI+ individuals and with this initiative we hope to create more welcoming and inclusive spaces for those seeking shelter and support.”

“It is important that LGBTQI+ individuals facing homelessness feel supported when they go to a shelter or any state agency for help,” Deputy Commissioner Neira said. “Providing staff with the knowledge and proper tools to effectively communicate with members of the LGBTQI+ community can help build trust, and ensure individuals who seek assistance will find an environment that is helpful, considerate and respectful.”

[Read more](#)

National Health Center Week



Acting Commissioner Adelman joined the New Jersey Primary Care Association, Alliance Community Healthcare and others on August 9 to celebrate National Health Center Week in Jersey City.

“At New Jersey Department of Human Services and across Governor Phil Murphy’s Administration, we value our state’s community health centers that are beacons of service and care in communities throughout New Jersey,” Acting Commissioner Adelman said. “We especially value their dedication during this pandemic. They’ve been on the front lines caring for and providing COVID vaccinations to residents, while deploying innovative strategies to make sure our residents continued to access preventative and primary health care. We’re grateful for the contributions of our community health centers and celebrate them not just today, but every day.”

Human Services Announces Partnership with Community Health Law Project to Increase Access to Legal Services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Individuals with Lower Incomes



Human Services has partnered with the Community Health Law Project to increase access to legal services for deaf and hard of hearing individuals with lower incomes.

The partnership is a collaboration between Human Services' Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing ([DDHH](#)) and Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services ([DMHAS](#)). Through the partnership, eligible deaf and hard of hearing individuals can receive legal assistance and supports with matters related to their public assistance, health insurance, social security benefits, landlord-tenant disputes, foreclosure defense, family law issues, consumer protection and debt collection and more. In addition, CHLP is able to meet communication access needs including ASL interpreting and captioning.

The partnership stems from funding investments in the Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing included in the state budget recently signed by Governor Murphy.

“The Murphy Administration is committed to creating a stronger and fairer New Jersey, and this partnership helps turn this commitment into reality for deaf and hard of hearing individuals,” Acting Commissioner Adelman said. “This is about increasing access to legal services for deaf and hard of hearing New Jerseyans and ensuring their communication needs are supported when seeking legal representation and support.”

“This new partnership will improve outcomes for individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing in need of legal services,” Deputy Commissioner Neira said. “And we know that not only includes being able to access an

attorney but also being supported with their specific communication needs which plays a key role in creating better outcomes for the individual.”

“We are very excited to be taking this step toward ensuring the important legal needs of deaf and hard of hearing individuals with lower incomes are being addressed,” Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Executive Director Elizabeth Hill said. “It is critical that those in need have access to the same services as their peers that permit them to live full and fair lives.”

“We look forward to this new partnership positively benefiting deaf and hard of hearing New Jerseyans with lower incomes,” Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services Assistant Commissioner Valerie Mielke said. “This is an exciting opportunity and we look forward to being a part of providing essential legal services to those who qualify.”

[Read more](#)

NJ Human Services Announces Wireless Devices Pilot Program for Eligible Deaf and Hard of Hearing Individuals



Human Services has launched a pilot program offering wireless devices to eligible deaf and hard of hearing New Jersey residents.

This program is being administered by Human Services' Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing ([DDHH](#)) and will supply a limited number of wireless devices to eligible deaf and hard of hearing residents so they are able to access critical information, services and supports being delivered virtually through online platforms. This includes telehealth services, emergency information, telecommunications, and other vital communication needs.

For eligible applicants, devices are free of charge. The supply of devices is limited and subject to availability and funding.

Devices currently available are two tablets, the Apple iPad and Samsung Galaxy S6 Lite, and two smartphones, the Apple iPhone XR and Google Pixel 4a.

“As more communications and services have transitioned to virtual platforms, digital access has become even more crucial for the deaf and hard of hearing community,” Acting Commissioner Adelman said.

“We are dedicated to providing key supports to individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing and we know that this pilot program will put needed devices in the hands of vulnerable individuals who may lack access to technology,” Deputy Commissioner Neira said.

“We are excited to receive this additional funding to strengthen accessibility to programs, services, and information for individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing,” Executive Director Hill said. “I look forward to seeing the impact the wireless device pilot program will have on individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing by empowering them to advocate for themselves and make informed choices.”

[Read more](#)

Human Services Distributes More than 24,000 Life-Saving Naloxone Doses to Law Enforcement Agencies Across New Jersey



Human Services in cooperation with the Attorney General’s Office distributed more than 24,000 doses of the opioid overdose antidote naloxone to 271 law enforcement agencies across New Jersey.

In total, 12,153 two-dose naloxone kits were given to law enforcement agencies at no-cost to them. The distribution builds on the Murphy Administration's effort to make naloxone accessible. As part of that effort, Human Services has given 64,000 free doses to residents at pharmacies and previously distributed 70,000 free doses to police, EMS, homeless shelters, libraries and re-entry organizations.

“Quite simply, naloxone saves lives,” Acting Commissioner Adelman said. “We are building on our efforts to get this life-saving antidote into as many hands as possible to save lives and connect individuals to recovery support. Giving first responders a tool they need to save lives is yet another step in our work to combat this epidemic.”

“Naloxone is a first line of defense against an opioid overdose,” Assistant Commissioner Mielke said. “As such, we want to ensure that the opioid overdose reversal medication naloxone is readily available to as many people as possible. Our goal is to save lives.”

[Read more](#)

[NJ Human Services Awards Teens for Creativity Celebrating the Support of Family and Loved Ones During the Pandemic](#)



Human Services is honoring 12 New Jersey high school and middle school students for their winning entries in the 2021 New Jersey Child Support Teen Media Contest, which celebrated the support of family, friends and loved ones during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Students across New Jersey were asked to submit artistic visual and written portrayals celebrating how the teens, their family, and loved ones supported each other through the changes of the previous year, from remote schooling to finding new ways for families to stay connected during the pandemic. Teens enter the annual contest individually or through their school, and winners' works are featured in Human Services' Child Support calendar published each year. Winners are chosen based upon their interpretation of the year's theme.

"The last year and a half have been incredibly difficult for many families. It is wonderful to see young people have the opportunity to share their stories and experiences through art, and contemplate the importance of strong family bonds especially during challenging times," Acting Commissioner Adelman. "I congratulate the winners and all who participated, and encourage everyone to see the works created by these young talented artists."

"It is exciting to see the creativity of these students, but also to understand their perspective on the pandemic

and how they managed through it with the support of their families and loved ones. Having a strong support system is vital for young people, and I am glad they were able to reflect on that while creating their pieces," Deputy Commissioner Neira said.

"This contest is one of the ways that we bring attention to New Jersey's Child Support program," Assistant Commissioner Johnson said. "By giving young people a family-related contest theme in the context of the very unusual, uniquely home-focused world we have lived in for the last year, we are encouraging them to think about their support system and the important role their parents and loved ones play in their lives."

[Read more](#)

SPOTLIGHTS ON NJ HUMAN SERVICES PROGRAMS

PLANFIRST

Plan First provides coverage for services such as:

- Comprehensive family planning services for women and men including all FDA-approved contraceptive methods, pregnancy testing, family planning counseling, and screenings for sexually transmitted diseases;
- Over-the-counter birth control methods such as condoms;
- Long-acting reversible contraception;
- Family planning-related laboratory testing, including STD/HIV screenings, and PAP smears;
- Vasectomies for men 21 years of age or older; and
- HPV immunizations.

Visit www.njfamilycare.org or call 1-800-701-0710 to apply.



The Plan First Program is administered by NJ FamilyCare. Plan First is a limited benefit program, which provides family planning services only. The program is designed to provide a full range of family planning services to men and women who do not have access through insurance.

Visit [here](#) to learn more.



Assistive Support Programs for Independence, Renewal and Education (ASPIRE) programs are peer support programs geared towards those individuals that are blind and visually impaired who are 55 and older. The focus of each group is dependent upon the desires of the participants.

Many groups address adjustment to vision loss and community intergration. have speakers, educational resources and encourage social activities. The ASPIRE network has peer led support groups throughout all 21 counties within New Jersey.

Visit [here](#) to learn more.

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