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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Second Round of Pandemic EBT Benefits Coming to Eligible Alabama Children

MONTGOMERY – The Alabama Department of Human Resources has received federal approval to distribute a second round of Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) benefits to eligible families.

P-EBT benefits will start rolling out in late spring or early summer to qualifying households with children in grades K-12 (including pre-K students in public and some private schools) and to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients with children under 6 years old. The U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service approved the plan on April 13.

Eligible pre-K-12 students are those who lost access to free or reduced price meals under the National School Lunch Act during the 2020-21 school year because their schools were closed or operating with virtual or hybrid learning models due to COVID-19. No application is required. The Alabama State Department of Education is providing the names of eligible children to DHR.

Alabama DHR Commissioner Nancy Buckner said, “This program helped put food on the table for almost half a million Alabama children in 2020, at a time when many children faced a growing risk of hunger. We are grateful to the USDA Food and Nutrition Service for providing us with additional resources to build upon last year’s overwhelming success. Together with our partners at USDA-FNS and the Department of Education, we remain committed to ensuring that no child goes hungry as a result of this pandemic.”

The P-EBT program allows children to receive benefits equal to the National School Lunch Program reimbursement rate, which is \$6.82 per day for each eligible child. Amounts for K-12 students, some pre-K students and SNAP recipients under 6 will be calculated retroactively. Benefits for children attending schools will be calculated for August 2020-May 2021, and amounts for SNAP recipients under 6 who are not attending school will be calculated for October 2020-May 2021.

Eligible households will receive EBT cards in the mail that can be used to purchase SNAP-eligible food items at stores that accept the EBT cards. The benefits are available for 365 days from the issue date and are non-transferable. Children may continue to access meals from local school districts while receiving P-EBT benefits. To gain P-EBT eligibility, households that experienced decreased income may apply for free or reduced price meals at the schools their children attend.

DHR distributed over \$144 million in benefits to more than 460,000 children in Alabama during the first round of P-EBT this past year. Those benefits covered meals missed during the 2019-20 school year due to school closures.

More information about P-EBT benefits will be posted to dhr.alabama.gov in the coming weeks.

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