



USDA FNS OFFICIALLY APPROVES 2025 SUMMER ELECTRONIC BENEFITS TRANSFER (S-EBT) PROGRAM FOR AMERICAN SAMOA WITH \$2.5 MILLION IN CRITICAL NUTRITION BENEFITS FOR AN ESTIMATED 14,464 ELIGIBLE STUDENTS AGES 3 YEARS AND OLDER



Governor Pulaali'i Nikolao Pula today announced that the United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service (USDA FNS) has approved American Samoa's 2025 Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer (S-EBT) Plan of Operations and Management (POM), to provide families with a one-time issuance of \$177 in S-EBT benefits for each eligible school-aged child to buy food at authorized retailers during the summer when the schools are out of session. The S- EBT POM was developed through a collaboration between the Department of Human and Social Services (DHSS) and the Department of Education (DOE). As a result, over \$2.5 million has been awarded to provide critical nutrition benefits this summer for an estimated 14,464 of American Samoa's children.

In making this announcement, Governor Pulaali'i said, "I am grateful to USDA Secretary Brooke L. Rollins and the FNS leadership for approving American Samoa's Summer EBT for 2025". He continued, "This is the second time that our Territory has received Summer EBT funds to assist qualifying families with improving food and nutrition security during summer break when students lose access to free meals at school."

The Summer EBT is a permanent nationwide program that was authorized by the Consolidated Appropriations Act (the Act) of 2023, beginning in 2024. Like the previous Summer EBT and Pandemic EBT Programs, awards are not automatically received. American Samoa must complete an application process and secure approval. Below are other notable facts about American Samoa's 2025 Summer EBT:

- A child who is between 3-18 years old and verified by DOE as being enrolled at any point in time in a public or private school in the 2024-2025 school year automatically qualifies to receive 2025 S-EBT benefits.
- Although the Act has established a \$40 per month benefit amount per child for 2024, the Act also provides USDA with the authority to adjust benefit levels for American Samoa, Alaska, Hawaii, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. For American Samoa, each eligible child qualifies for \$177 (calculated at \$59/ month for 3 months of the summer break), which is higher than the \$120 per child set for the U.S. mainland. The same benefit level will be issued to each American Samoa school-aged child again this summer.
- The 2025 S-EBT benefits for American Samoa will be issued in the form of food coupons through the DHSS American Samoa Nutrition Assistance Program (ASNAP), printed specifically for the 2025 S-EBT and a new S-EBT identification card will be issued by the ASNAP office to parents/ guardians who will be applying for the first time.

Parents/ guardians who applied and received S-EBT for their students in 2024 may use the same S-EBT identification cards that were issued to them last year.

- Parents/guardians are advised that although your child(ren) qualifies for 2025 S-EBT, you do not have to participate. You have the option of declining these benefits or opt-out by not picking them up or you can call the DHSS ASNAP office at 633-7720 to have their name(s) removed from the list of qualified students.
- S-EBT 2025 will be issued one-time and released to the primary parent/guardian based on the schedule that will be shared by the DHSS ASNAP when ready.
- Only the individual who is listed as the primary parent/guardian in DOE and private school student records for the child(ren) who qualifies for S-EBT 2025 may pick up the food coupons for their child(ren).

The DHSS ASNAP will issue more information and guidance for parents/guardians for receiving 2025 S-EBT benefits to help their student(s) access the nutritious meals they need this summer.

In conclusion, Governor Pula extends his heartfelt fa'afetai tele to the USDA FNS teams at the national and regional levels for their continued support of American Samoa's food assistance needs.

