



Iowa Department of Human Services

Terry E. Branstad
Governor

Kim Reynolds
Lt. Governor

Charles M. Palmer
Director

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DHS Has New Procedure for Replacing Food Assistance Cards Effort in Place to Combat Fraud

(Des Moines, Iowa) – The Iowa Department of Human Services on Thursday announced a new procedure for replacing multiple electronic benefit transfer (EBT) cards to limit the potential for fraudulent activity in the Food Assistance program.

Starting August 29, if a Food Assistance recipient orders four or more replacement cards within a one-year period, they will receive a notice regarding multiple card replacement. The notice says that, should they order additional cards, they will be required to call the DHS Call Center and explain the reasons for replacing their EBT card so frequently. It will also note that they could be subject to investigation.

“Most Food Assistance recipients are using their benefits responsibly to feed their families, however, some individuals work to defraud the system by selling their cards to get cash to buy items that aren’t approved for purchase under the program,” said Wendy Rickman, head of the DHS division which oversees Food Assistance. “This new procedure allows us to more closely monitor who’s ordering multiple cards so we can better combat fraudulent activity.”

More than 400,000 Iowans receive Food Assistance each month through the federally-funded Supplemental Nutrition and Assistance Program, or SNAP. Benefits depend on income, household size and expenses. People eligible for Food Assistance must be residents of Iowa who are U.S. citizens or legally qualified non-citizens such as refugees, and have household incomes that don’t exceed 160 percent of the federal poverty level, or about \$31,000 gross annual income for a family of three. The average Food Assistance recipient in Iowa is a 25-year-old white female, and the average benefit per recipient was \$1,413 annually in SFY2013.

This change in multiple card replacement procedure meets new federal regulations. Elderly and disabled populations will be exempted.

Find more details on Food Assistance at <http://dhs.iowa.gov/food-assistance>

For more information
Amy Lorentzen McCoy
amccoy@dhs.state.ia.us
515-281-4848