



THE SUMMER EBT PROGRAM

Would Reduce Summer Hunger in the Virgin Islands

Beginning in summer 2024, the **Virgin Islands** can participate in the new nationwide Summer EBT Program. Families would receive approximately \$40¹ per month in federally funded grocery benefits on an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card to purchase food for each school-age child who is eligible for free or reduced-price school meals. By implementing the program, the **Virgin Islands** can help ensure that children have a hunger-free summer and return to school well-nourished and ready to learn.

A Snapshot of Summer EBT in the Virgin Islands²

- ▶ The **Virgin Islands** has approximately **12,000** children who would be eligible to receive the Summer EBT benefit in summer 2024. This would result in about **\$1,440,000** in benefits being distributed to struggling families this summer.
- ▶ According to an analysis carried out by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) looking at Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, every dollar spent on SNAP generates between \$1.50 and \$1.80 in local economic activity during an economic downturn. Based on the number of children eligible, the **Virgin Islands** could expect an economic impact of **\$2,160,000** to **\$2,592,000** from Summer EBT benefits in summer 2024.

DEADLINES

BY JANUARY 1, 2024: The Virgin Islands must notify USDA of their intention to run the Summer EBT Program. This notification is not binding, and if the Virgin Islands is unable to execute the program, there is no penalty.

BY FEBRUARY 15, 2024: The Virgin Islands must submit a management and administrative plan to USDA, which includes an outline of the roles and responsibilities of each state agency during implementation. More information on what must be in these plans can be found in USDA's initial Summer EBT guidance.

Summer Can Be the Hungriest Time for Children

When the school year ends, millions of children from households with low incomes lose access to the school meals they rely on. The Summer Nutrition Programs, also called summer meals, were designed to replace school meals lost during summer vacation. These meal programs play an important role in reducing childhood hunger during the summer, and often provide meals along with important educational and enrichment programming to keep children and teens well-nourished and engaged. Despite these benefits, summer meals reach only a fraction of the children who rely on free and reduced-price school meals during the school year. Summer EBT, which offers benefits to families to purchase food at retail locations, bridges that gap. Summer meals combined with Summer EBT is an effective recipe to meet children's nutritional needs during the summer.

¹ The benefit amount will be higher than \$40 per month in the Virgin Islands to account for the higher cost of food outside of the continental United States. That amount is not yet available, but the increased benefit level will also increase the total amount and the economic impact of Summer EBT.

² See Technical Notes for information on data sources and an explanation of how the estimates were derived.



APPROXIMATELY

12,000 CHILDREN

in the Virgin Islands would be eligible to receive Summer EBT benefits in summer 2024.