

1037

ELECTRONIC BENEFIT TRANSFER (EBT) SYSTEM

1037.05

DELIVERY OF FOOD STAMP BENEFITS

REV:01/2002

Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) is an electronic system which allows recipients to authorize transfer of their food stamp benefits from an EBT account to a retailer account to pay for food products. EBT Food stamp benefits are credited to the recipient's account by 5:00 a.m. on the day of issuance.

Benefits are issued on the first of each month and are accessible beginning at 5:00 a.m. on that date with no weekend or holiday delays. Expedited Food Stamp benefits are processed within the normal timeframes.

Recipients access their food stamp benefits by using a plastic Rhode Island EBT card and their personal identification number (PIN) at point of sale (POS) terminals which display the QUEST logo. Electronically, the processor verifies the PIN and the account balance and sends an authorization or denial back to the retailer. If approved, the recipient's account is then debited for the amount of the purchase. No fee is charged when Food Stamp benefits are accessed at POS terminals and no limit is placed on the number of POS transactions in a month.

The amount of Food Stamp benefits for which a household is eligible is calculated pursuant to policies set forth in Food Stamp Manual Sections 1000 through 1083. Disputes regarding the amount of Food Stamp benefits for which a household is eligible are handled pursuant to policies in DHS Manual Section 0110.

Disputes regarding recipients' EBT Food Stamp account balances are handled by the Rhode Island Customer Service Line at 1-888-979-9939. The Help Line is open twenty-four (24) hours a day, seven (7) days a week.

1037.05.05

Replacement of EBT Food Stamp Benefits

REV:01/2002

EBT Food Stamp benefits which are accessed through the use of an RI EBT card and personal identification number (PIN) are not replaced. It is the responsibility of the recipient or authorized representative to keep the RI EBT card and PIN safe from unauthorized use and to immediately report lost or stolen cards to the Rhode Island Customer Service Line at 1-888-979-9939. Their customer service representative changes the status of the card from "valid" to "lost" or "stolen" thereby protecting any unused benefits. (See Section 1037.10.05: Lost, Stolen, or Damaged EBT Cards.)

1037.05.10

Conversion of EBT Food Stamp Benefits

REV:01/2002

The Department has received a waiver from the Food and Nutrition Service to convert EBT Food Stamp benefits to cash when a recipient moves out of Rhode Island to a state which has not implemented an EBT system or to an EBT state where the RI EBT card is not valid. EBT Food Stamp benefits are accessible

in all states of the Northeast Coalition (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont). Conversion to a cash authorization is performed through the InRHODES link with the E-FUNDS EDGE EBT system and is completed within three (3) days of the request.

1037.10 ELECTRONIC BENEFIT TRANSFER (EBT) CARDS

REV:06/1998

Eligible Food Stamp households access their EBT Food Stamp benefits by using a plastic RI EBT card along with a personal identification number (PIN). Recipients who receive both Family Independence Program (FIP) cash benefits and Food Stamp benefits receive one(1) RI EBT card to access both benefits. However, the benefits are maintained in separate EBT accounts.

An EBT card is issued to the applicant in the Food Stamp/FIP case. In two-parent families, a card is issued to one parent and another card may be issued to the other parent as an authorized representative. (See Section 1037.10.10, EBT Cards for Authorized Representatives.)

RI EBT cards are issued in all Food Stamp offices and FIP district offices using special card embossing and PIN selection machines. The EBT-10 form, Request for RI EBT Card, is used for card and PIN issuance. No separate identification card is issued.

1037.10.05 Lost, Stolen, or Damaged EBT Cards

REV:01/2002

Cardholders must report lost, stolen, or damaged RI EBT cards to the Rhode Island Customer Service Line at 1-888-979-9939. The Customer Service Representative invalidates the card thereby protecting the unused benefit amounts. If someone uses the card before its status has been changed, the benefits can not be replaced.

Replacement RI EBT cards are issued in all Food Stamp offices and FIP district offices. Cards are replaced immediately (there is no waiting period for card replacement). No fee is charged for the replacement of any lost, stolen, or damaged RI EBT card.

1037.10.10 EBT Cards for Authorized Representatives

REV:01/2002

An authorized representative is a person given permission by the recipient to conduct Food Stamp transactions on behalf of the Food Stamp household. In households with an authorized representative, the recipient receives an EBT card and the authorized representative is issued a separate EBT card and personal identification number (PIN). A request for an RI EBT card for an authorized representative is made on form EBT-12, Request for Authorized Representative-Authorized Payee, and is signed by both the Food Stamp head of household and the authorized representative. Form EBT-10, Request for RI EBT Card, is used to issue the card. If the same individual is acting as both an authorized payee for the family's FIP cash benefits and as an authorized representative for the household's Food Stamp benefits, only one(1) EBT card is issued.

Recipients may cancel their authorized representative/authorized payee at any time by calling the Rhode Island Customer Service Line at 1-888-979-9939. Customer Service immediately cancels the authorized representative's/authorized payee's access to the household's benefits. However, recipients retain uninterrupted access to their benefits.

1037.15 PERSONAL IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (PIN)

REV:01/2002

In order to use an RI EBT card, the cardholder must also use a secret four(4) digit number known as a personal identification number or PIN. The cardholder selects a PIN in the local office via special PIN encoding machines. For replacement RI EBT cards, the recipient may use the same PIN or select a new number.

Authorized representatives must have their own RI EBT card and their own PIN. (See Section 1037.10.10, EBT Cards for Authorized Representatives.)

When using an RI EBT card, the cardholder is allowed four(4) attempts to enter the correct PIN. On the fifth try, the cardholder is locked out of the EBT system until the next day.

However, the card is not confiscated. Cardholders must call the Rhode Island Customer Service Line at 1-888-979-9939 for assistance.

1037.20 INACTIVE EBT FOOD STAMP BENEFIT ACCOUNTS

REV: 10/2008

When EBT Food Stamp benefits have not been accessed for one (1) year the EBT Food Stamp benefits are permanently purged from the EBT system. Prior notice is provided the household of an intended action to permanently purge EBT Food Stamp benefits.