

1037

ELECTRONIC BENEFIT TRANSFER (EBT) SYSTEM

1037.05

DELIVERY OF SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP) BENEFITS

REV:01/2002

Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) is an electronic system which allows recipients to authorize transfer of their SNAP benefits from an EBT account to a retailer account to pay for food products. EBT SNAP 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 SNAP benefits are processed within the normal timeframes.

Recipients access their SNAP 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 SNAP benefits are accessed at POS terminals and no limit is placed on the number of POS transactions in a month.

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

Disputes regarding recipients' EBT SNAP 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 and cardholders can view their SNAP benefit balance and prior transactions online at www.ebtedge.com.

1037.05.05

Replacement of EBT SNAP Benefits

REV:01/2002

EBT SNAP benefits which are accessed through the use of a 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 SNAP Benefits

REV:01/2002

The Department has received a waiver from the Food and Nutrition Service to convert EBT SNAP 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 SNAP benefits are accessible in all states in the United States. 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 SNAP households access their EBT SNAP benefits by using a plastic RI EBT card along with a personal identification number (PIN). Recipients who receive both RI Works (RIW) cash benefits and SNAP 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 SNAP/RIW 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 SNAP offices.

1037.10.05 Lost, Stolen, or Damaged EBT Cards

REV:11/2012

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.

No fee is charged for the replacement of any lost, stolen, or damaged RI EBT card. Cardholders may request a new card by completing a DHS EBT-10 form or contacting a DHS field office. The EBT-10 form can be obtained at any DHS field office or on the DHS web site (www.dhs.ri.gov). Arrival of the card should be within three to five business days.

In certain circumstances, an EBT card may be provided at the local SNAP office. The Social Worker or the Eligibility Technician is responsible for determining the instances when it is necessary to provide an EBT card at the office.

Circumstances that are beyond a household member's control and necessitate an in-office issuance of an EBT card include:

- o a catastrophe caused by fire, flood, or a severe weather condition.
- o lost or stolen mail confirmed by the Postal Service;
- o unanticipated household emergency or theft;

- o domestic violence situation
- o homelessness

Cardholders who request four (4) or more replacement EBT cards within a twelve (12) month period may be referred to the Fraud Unit for investigation of misuse or abuse of the EBT card. Documented violations may result in one or more of the following actions:

- o Disqualification from the program;
- o Recovery through recoupment/restitution (See Sections 1022 and 1024 for policy relating to establishing and collecting claims against households); and/or
- o Referral for criminal prosecution

In all cases, the agency shall act to protect households containing homeless persons, elderly or disabled members, victims of crimes, and other vulnerable persons who may lose electronic benefits transfer cards but are not committing fraud.

1037.10.10 EBT Cards for Authorized Representatives

REV:01/2002

An authorized representative is a person given permission by the recipient to conduct SNAP transactions on behalf of the SNAP 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 SNAP head of household and the authorized representative. If the same individual is acting as both an authorized payee for the family's RIW cash benefits and as an authorized representative for the household's SNAP 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 by calling the Rhode Island Customer Service Line at 1-888-979-9939. 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 SNAP BENEFIT ACCOUNTS

REV:10/2008

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