



Department of Human Resources
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FIA INFORMATION MEMO

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**TO: DIRECTORS, LOCAL DEPARTMENTS OF SOCIAL SERVICES
DEPUTY/ASSISTANT DIRECTORS FOR FAMILY INVESTMENT
FAMILY INVESTMENT SUPERVISORS AND ELIGIBILITY STAFF**

FROM: KEVIN M. MCGUIRE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**RE: FOOD STAMP BENEFITS WHEN THE HOUSEHOLD MOVES TO
PUERTO RICO**

PROGRAM AFFECTED: FOOD STAMP PROGRAM

ORIGINATING OFFICE: OFFICE OF POLICY, RESEARCH AND SYSTEMS

Federal food stamp regulations require State EBT systems to be interoperable. Food stamp households in one State or territory can use their EBT cards to redeem food stamp benefits in another State or territory.

Puerto Rico, however, administers its own food stamp program and does not fall under these regulations. Puerto Rico sets its own eligibility criteria for recipients and retailers. The Food Stamp Act requires that households redeem their food stamp benefits only at FNS authorized retailer locations. Since the Commonwealth authorizes the retailers in Puerto Rico, rather than FNS, states cannot allow FSP households to redeem their food stamp benefits in Puerto Rico.

When a food stamp household moves to Puerto Rico, local departments cannot convert the remaining food stamp benefits on the household's EBT card to paper coupons. If the household does not spend the remaining benefits before moving, those benefits will be stale-dated and then expunged.

Note: Households can use their EBT cards in all other states or territories with some limitations in four states. Ohio and Wyoming use a "smart card" system and Illinois uses a different EBT gateway. Delaware has not fully implemented EBT. However, according to the Food and Nutrition Service most large chain stores in these states can accept Maryland's EBT card.

INQUIRIES

Please direct any question to Kay Finegan at 410-767-7939 or Marilyn Lorenzo at 410-767-7333.

cc: DHR Executive Staff
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