

June 28, 2023

Governor Kim Reynolds  
Office of the Governor  
State Capitol  
1007 East Grand Avenue  
Des Moines, IA 50319

Lt. Governor Adam Gregg  
Office of the Governor  
State Capitol  
1007 East Grand Avenue  
Des Moines, IA 50319

Director Kelly Garcia  
Iowa Department of Health and  
Human Services  
Hoover State Office Building  
1305 E Walnut Street  
Des Moines, IA 50319

**Re: Advocates urge Iowa HHS to submit a plan for P-EBT summer benefits**

Dear Governor Reynolds, Lt. Governor Gregg, and Director Garcia,

We, the undersigned, urge the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services to submit a plan to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to provide summer nutrition benefits to children in Iowa through the Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) program.

Summer 2023 P-EBT benefits would provide an estimated \$28.9 million in nutrition benefits to 241,000 children in the state of Iowa, according to the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC). This would amount to an estimated \$120 in benefits per child who is eligible to receive free or reduced-price school meals in the state.

The number of Iowans currently receiving nutrition benefits through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is approaching a 15-year low (the lowest enrollment since July 2008). With recent policy changes to SNAP at the state and federal level creating additional barriers to access SNAP, we anticipate this downward trend to continue.

Meanwhile, food banks, food pantries, and other anti-hunger organizations continue to assist record-breaking levels of Iowans facing hunger and food insecurity. The emergency feeding system is stretched thin.

Action by Congress in December 2022 created a permanent, nationwide Summer EBT program that will begin in 2024. If Iowa does not submit a P-EBT plan to USDA by July 14, however, our state will miss out on summer nutrition benefits in 2023. Iowa is currently one of 10 states that has not yet submitted a summer P-EBT plan to USDA.

Summer P-EBT benefits would bring an estimated economic impact of over \$43 million to the state of Iowa. These funds will not only feed hungry children, but provide an economic boon to Iowa's farmers, grocery stores, and local communities.

This is federal money to feed children in Iowa that is being left on the table. We urge the Department to reconsider their decision not to submit a plan to USDA for summer P-EBT.

Sincerely,

*(41 signatories)*

Amani Community Services  
Bidwell Riverside Center/Hawthorn Hill  
Common Good Iowa  
Community Action Agency of Siouxland  
Community Action of Eastern Iowa  
Community Action of Southeast Iowa  
Coralville Community Food Pantry  
Crisis Intervention Service  
Des Moines Area Religious Council  
Domestic Violence Intervention Program  
Friends of the Family  
Food Bank of Iowa  
HACAP  
Homeward Iowa  
IMPACT Community Action Partnership  
Iowa ACEs 360  
Iowa Affiliate of the American College of Nurse Midwives  
Iowa Association of Rural Health Clinics  
Iowa Catholic Conference  
Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement  
Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence  
Iowa Community Action Association  
Iowa Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO  
Iowa State Education Association  
Iowa Hunger Coalition  
Latinas Unidas por un Nuevo Amanecer (L.U.N.A.)  
MATURA Action Corporation  
Mid-Iowa Community Action  
New Opportunities  
North Iowa Community Action Organization  
Northeast Iowa Community Action Corporation  
Operation Threshold  
Prevent Child Abuse Iowa  
Sieda Community Action  
South Central Iowa Community Action Program, Inc.  
USCRI Des Moines  
United Way of Central Iowa  
Upper Des Moines Opportunity, Inc. (UDMO)  
Urbandale Food Pantry  
West Central Community Action  
West Des Moines Human Services