



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF  
SOCIAL SERVICES

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**USDA Plan Provides for the Early Release of February Benefits for SNAP Recipients**

**Richmond, VA (January 14, 2019)** - Virginia's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients will receive their February food benefits early due to the federal government shutdown. This change will affect all SNAP recipients in Virginia scheduled to receive benefits during the first week of February, regardless of case number or usual issuance date. The early issuance will occur on January 17, 2019.

"Families having access to food and children going to school without being hungry is a basic and critical need that transcends politics," said [Virginia Department of Social Services](#) (VDSS) Commissioner Duke Storen. "The SNAP program ensures food security for many of our nation's most vulnerable citizens and we are pleased to be able to provide benefits to our clients for the month of February."

Individuals who have already been determined eligible for benefits do not have to take any action, as February's benefits will automatically be loaded to their SNAP Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards. Individuals who have filed new applications for benefits or are in the process of renewing their benefits are encouraged to submit all documents to their local department of social services as soon as possible.

"This early issuance of food benefits is still intended to sustain households throughout the month of February," said VDSS Director of Benefit Programs Toni Blue Washington. "SNAP recipients are encouraged to proactively plan their food shopping for the month of February using these early funds."

The status of future benefits beginning in March is unknown at this time, pending decisions by the United States Congress and the President. EBT cards remain active and unaffected by these changes.

SNAP recipients are encouraged to contact the Enterprise Customer Service Center at 1-855-635-4370 or their local department of social services with any questions related to their benefits. For additional resources, recipients may call 2-1-1 or visit [www.211virginia.org](http://www.211virginia.org). A trained professional will suggest sources of help using one of the largest databases of health and human services in their community and statewide.

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