
Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT)

Background

Section 825 of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) mandates that all state agencies implement Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) for Food Stamps no later than October 1, 2002. Santa Clara County has chosen to also distribute cash benefits through EBT.

Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) is the automated delivery, redemption, and reconciliation of the Food Stamp and cash benefit programs. It provides clients electronic access to food stamp and cash benefits through the use of EBT cards at point-of-sale (POS) devices and automated teller machines (ATMs), wherever a “QUEST” logo is displayed. The EBT system will replace the current paper-based food coupon and warrant benefit issuance methods.

Changes

Santa Clara County is scheduled to implement EBT in November 2002. In November, cash aid clients will no longer receive a check in the mail. They will take their EBT card to an ATM or POS device to get their cash. Clients will not obtain their Food Stamps at CET offices. They will use their EBT card at (participating) grocery stores to pay for their Food Stamp purchases.

EBT Poster

Posters are to be displayed in lobbies of all district offices, informing clients that EBT is coming soon.

EBT Flyer

Flyers will be available in district office lobbies for clients. The flyers mirror the posters displayed in the lobbies.
EBT Stuffer

A stuffer will be mailed to all Food Stamp only cases and with all July 2002 warrants introducing clients to EBT. The stuffer explains that EBT will soon replace the current paper-based food coupon and warrant benefit issuance method.

EBT Client Survey

In order to better serve our clients and to make the transition to EBT as convenient as possible, Citicorp is in the process of determining where to place ATM machines and POS devices. A client survey has been developed which asks clients where they would like to have the ATM and POS devices placed. The survey was mailed to clients on April 22, 2002. A copy of the survey is attached for reference purposes.

Implementation

When asked, EWs are to explain to clients that EBT will soon replace our current paper-based issuance methods for cash aid and Food Stamps, and EBT is scheduled to be implemented in November 2002.

If clients inquire about the survey, EWs should encourage clients to complete the survey, as this is the most effective way to determine where ATM and POS devices are needed.

This BASIC information regarding Electronic Benefit Transfer is being provided to staff:

- For reference purposes only, and
- To provide limited explanations to our clients.

Complete information and instructions will be issued to staff prior to implementation.

EBT Overview Training

Citicorp, in collaboration with Staff Development, will conduct a MANDATORY EBT Overview Training for all staff in June 2002. The dates and times will be announced prior to the training.

Other Programs

EBT will affect all cash aid and Food Stamp programs. EBT will NOT affect Medi-Cal and Foster Care programs.

Clerical

Office Management Coordinators (OMCs) must ensure that the:

- EBT poster is displayed in their lobby upon receipt. Posters will be distributed to District Offices at the end of April.
- EBT flyers are available in their lobbies for clients. Flyers will be distributed to District Offices in the beginning of May.
Note: Common Place Handbook, Section 43, “Mandated Posters and Brochures for District Office Lobbies” will be released in the near future, reflecting these changes.

NELLIE JORGE, DIRECTOR
Department of Employment and Benefit Services

Contact Person(s): Tomás Dolcini, Program Coordinator, (408) 491-6700.