

House File 152 - Introduced

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A BILL FOR

1 An Act relating to the federal summer electronic benefits
2 transfer for children program, making an appropriation,
3 and including effective date and retroactive applicability
4 provisions.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

1 Section 1. FINDINGS. The general assembly finds all of the
2 following:

3 1. The Iowa general assembly, in conjunction with state
4 agencies, has a duty to ensure Iowa children have access to food
5 and essential nutrition regardless of income level.

6 2. Summer can be a time of increased hunger for children who
7 no longer have access to regular school lunches.

8 3. Iowa is currently experiencing a food insecurity crisis as
9 food banks and other charitable organizations continue to report
10 record high demand from Iowans in need.

11 4. There are an estimated two hundred forty thousand children
12 in Iowa who would be eligible to receive benefits under
13 the summer electronic benefits transfer (EBT) for children
14 program, as established as a permanent program under the federal
15 Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023, 42 U.S.C. §1762.

16 5. When Iowans are struggling financially, they are more
17 likely to buy less expensive foods, which are high in calories
18 and low in nutritional value.

19 6. Summer congregate and noncongregate meals are not always
20 easily accessible to families in need, particularly in rural
21 Iowa.

22 7. The summer EBT for children program offered by the federal
23 government would provide an estimated twenty-nine million dollars
24 to address the food insecurity crisis, which not only feeds
25 children but stimulates local economic activity.

26 8. Iowa ended fiscal year 2023-2024 with a general fund
27 balance of two billion fifty-three million dollars. Iowa
28 can afford to feed hungry children and cover the costs of
29 administering the summer EBT for children program.

30 Sec. 2. PARTICIPATION IN SUMMER ELECTRONIC BENEFITS TRANSFER
31 (EBT) FOR CHILDREN PROGRAM — APPROPRIATION.

32 1. The department of health and human services, in
33 coordination with the department of education, shall do all of
34 the following:

35 a. Immediately upon the effective date of this Act, submit a

1 letter of intent to the United States secretary of agriculture to
2 apply for and participate in the summer EBT for children program
3 offered by the United States department of agriculture food and
4 nutrition service during summer 2025.

5 b. Coordinate with the United States department of
6 agriculture food and nutrition service to develop a successful
7 management and administration plan for the summer EBT for
8 children program, and submit the plan to the United States
9 secretary of agriculture by February 15, 2025.

10 2. There is appropriated from the general fund of the state
11 to the department of health and human services for the fiscal
12 year beginning July 1, 2024, a sufficient amount to cover the
13 costs of administering the summer EBT for children program during
14 summer 2025. Moneys appropriated under this section that remain
15 unexpended or unencumbered at the close of the fiscal year shall
16 not revert but shall remain available for expenditure in the
17 succeeding fiscal year.

18 Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE. This Act, being deemed of immediate
19 importance, takes effect upon enactment.

20 Sec. 4. RETROACTIVE APPLICABILITY. This Act applies
21 retroactively to July 1, 2024.

22 EXPLANATION

23 The inclusion of this explanation does not constitute agreement with
24 the explanation's substance by the members of the general assembly.

25 This bill relates to the summer electronic benefits transfer
26 (EBT) for children program made permanent by federal law under
27 the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023, administered by the
28 United States department of agriculture (USDA) food and nutrition
29 service.

30 The bill includes findings relating to food insecurity in
31 the state including that it is estimated that approximately
32 240,000 children would be eligible to receive benefits under the
33 summer EBT for children program; that when Iowans are struggling
34 financially, they are more likely to buy less expensive foods,
35 high in calories and low in nutritional value; and that the

1 summer EBT for children program would provide an estimated \$29
2 million to address the food insecurity crisis which not only
3 feeds children but stimulates local economic activity.

4 The bill requires the department of health and human services
5 (HHS), in coordination with the department of education, to
6 immediately upon the effective date of the bill submit a letter
7 of intent to apply for and participate in the summer EBT program
8 for children during summer 2025, to coordinate with the USDA to
9 develop a successful management and administration plan for the
10 summer EBT program for children, and to submit the plan to the
11 USDA by February 15, 2025.

12 The bill appropriates from the general fund of the state to
13 HHS for fiscal year 2024-2025 a sufficient amount to cover the
14 costs of administering the summer EBT program for children during
15 summer 2025.

16 The bill takes effect upon enactment and is retroactively
17 applicable to July 1, 2024.

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