Gov. Pritzker Announces Measures to Continue Supporting Working Families, People Experiencing Homelessness and Child Care Providers

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CHICAGO – Building on measures to address challenges facing Illinois working families during the COVID-19 pandemic, Governor Pritzker announced increases in SNAP benefits, funding to support people experiencing homelessness, and a stipend to child care providers who have provided child care to essential workers during this crisis.

“Today, I want to provide you an update on what my team and I have been doing to ease the burden of this moment on our most vulnerable residents, our families and our children,**”** said Governor Pritzker. “It is especially important now that we are doing all that we can to help all our residents through this crisis - we want every eligible person to be able to access our services as easily as possible”.

EXPANDING SNAP BENEFITS

Through the passage of the Family First Prevention Services Act and the state of Illinois' requests for special waivers from the United States Department of Agriculture, the Illinois Department of Human Services is increasing monthly benefit amounts, expanding SNAP access, and expediting process and flexibility. For many people, this will mean almost doubling their existing benefits.

This expansion will result in almost $80 million more for Illinois families.

"Thanks to the strong, kind, and clear leadership from Governor Pritzker – we are working to ensure that Illinois' human service network is able to be sustained through this crisis and beyond," said Illinois Department of Human Services Secretary Grace Hou. "We at IDHS want all eligible people to receive these life-altering and life-sustaining benefits, and I want the public to know these temporary benefit increases are designed to help more families withstand the extraordinary pressures many are facing during this emergency."

SNAP feeds nearly 900,000 Illinois households, feeding over 1.7 million people across Illinois and contributes to the local economy.? Those eligible for SNAP include low-income seniors, people with disabilities, and working families.?

While many IDHS offices remain open, people are highly encouraged to stay at home and to sign up for SNAP and other benefits by visiting DHS.illinois.gov/helpishere.

INCREASING SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Last week, the Illinois Department of Human Services announced a 5% increase to initiatives supporting people experiencing homelessness. An additional $6 million in new funding has been allocated to support the 19 Continuums of Care across the state and an additional $2 million will support housing and other services for people experiencing homelessness. Through the expansion of these services, DHS will ensure decisions are made at the local level allowing flexibility to better serve impacted people.

DHS is building on the existing infrastructure of shelters and partner programs throughout the state to meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness during this crisis. DHS currently funds homeless shelters, homeless prevention and permanent supportive housing.

SUPPORTING CHILD CARE

For child care providers who have been licensed to operate during this pandemic, stipends will be provided to help them address their added costs. Licensed homes will receive $750. Centers with one to two classrooms open will receive $2,000, centers with three or more classrooms open will receive $3,000. Applications for the stipend will be available on Monday to providers through their local Child Care Resource & Referral agency.

Child Care Resource & Referral agencies continue to be available to provide support to providers and answer their questions as they work to keep children safe and meet families' needs.

Illinois continues to assist essential workers, especially health care workers in finding childcare. A website with resources has been created for communities detailing how they can help ensure essential workers have access to the child care they need.

For more information, visit: https://emergencycare.inccrra.org/.