



General Information System (GIS) Message

Section 1

Transmittal:	24DC075 Upstate and New York City
Date:	November 1, 2024
To:	Subscribers
Suggested Distribution:	Commissioners, HRA Centers, Temporary Assistance Directors, MA Directors, SNAP Directors, EBT Coordinators
From:	Valerie Figueroa, Deputy Commissioner Employment and Income Support Programs
Subject:	Update on Common Benefit Identification Card (CBIC) Card Freeze Feature
Effective Date:	Immediately
Contact Information:	otda.sm.cees.ebt@otda.ny.gov
Attachments:	Attachment 1 – Pub-5261 EBT-Card Freeze Flyer (English and Spanish)

Section 2

The purpose of this GIS message is to provide an updated EBT Card Freeze Flyer to social services districts (districts) with instructions on how households can freeze their Common Benefit Identification Card (CBIC), commonly referred to as the Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card.

Households now have the ability to freeze their EBT card, which prevents their Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance (TA) cash benefits, Summer EBT (SEBT) or Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) benefits issued as cash, from being accessed. Cardholders must then unfreeze the card to make a purchase using their SNAP, SEBT, or cash benefits. This feature is intended to be used as a tool to help prevent theft of benefits through skimming or other fraudulent methods. Freezing and unfreezing the EBT card has no impact on Medicaid or other benefit issuances, including restricted payments directly to a landlord, utility, or other vendor. The card freeze feature became immediately available to all cardholders with the conversion to our new EBT vendor on May 19, 2024. In addition to the freeze and unfreeze feature, households may also choose to block online or out-of-state transactions. Cardholders will need to remember to unblock these transactions should they wish to place an online order or order from a company out-of-state.

The freeze feature cannot prevent card information from being skimmed if a household's card is used on a compromised device. However, if a card remains frozen or out-of-state and online transactions are blocked, remote fraudulent use of stolen information would be greatly restricted, limiting vulnerability to theft to only the time during which a household's card is unfrozen or unblocked for purchasing.

All of these features can be accessed by visiting www.ebtEDGE.com or by downloading the ebtEDGE mobile app on the Apple or Google Play Stores.