



California EBT Card Security and Technology Upgrade

Community Based Organizations

Informational Notice – Deployment Announcement Summer 2024

Electronic theft of food and cash benefits from California Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards has been steadily increasing. To mitigate this theft, the Office of Technology and Solutions Integration (OTSI), at the request of the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), engaged with California's EBT Vendor, Fidelity Information Services, Inc. (FIS) are pleased to announce that there will be an upgrade from the Magstripe EBT Card to a Chip/Europay, Mastercard, and Visa (EMV) and Tap Pay (Chip EMV/Tap) technology card coming Summer 2024.

The upgrade from the Magstripe EBT Card to a Chip EMV/Tap technology card will increase security and provide additional safeguards for EBT cardholders against electronic theft by making card transactions more secure. We want to ensure that EBT cardholders are well informed about how to use the new card and that counties are provided timely training to assist cardholders when needed.

New EBT Card:



The EBT Customer Service Helpline on the back of each card helps with all the features on your card including reporting your card lost, stolen, or damaged.

1-(877)-328-9677

- The embedded chip contains encrypted data which makes the card information difficult to duplicate.
- The addition of Tap technology gives cardholders the ability to make contactless payments using Near-Field Communication, a specialized type of radio-frequency identification technology.
 - Tap facilitates payments by sending a secure, single-use token to the payment point of Sale (POS) terminals.

Impact on Retailers and Financial Institutions: With the implementation of Chip EMV/Tap enabled EBT cards, requires Retailers and Financial Institutions who wish to continue redeeming EBT benefits, to update their ATM and POS devices. Chip EMV/Tap technology will go live statewide in Summer 2024, with mass card replacement occurring over the following few months.

During the initial migration of magnetic stripe-only to Chip EMV/Tap cards, some EBT retailers and financial institutions accepting CalFresh and/or CalWORKs benefits may not be able to accept Chip EMV/Tap features according to the terminal. Cardholders are encouraged to attempt to use the Chip EMV or Tap features first and if prompted, fallback to a magnetic stripe. We ask that we all provide encouragement to the retailers in each community to make the necessary terminal updates that will best serve their customers.

It is recommended that cardholders choose merchants who provide secure payment methods to safeguard their EBT benefits and take full advantage of the security features on their new card. Over the next few weeks, you will be receiving more information that may be used to educate our CA EBT Cardholders. We will also keep you informed of public information, links, and announcements as they are made available.