Food Stamp Case Numbers

STATE AGENCY DIRECTORS -
(Child Nutrition Program)

Colorado ED, Colorado DPHE,
Iowa, Kansas, Missouri ED,
Missouri DH, Montana OPI,
Montana DPHHS, Nebraska,
North Dakota, South Dakota,
Utah and Wyoming

A question was ask recently as to whether food stamp
electronic benefit transfer (EBT) numbers can be used to
replace food stamp case numbers in determining categorical
eligibility for free meals under the Child Nutrition
Programs. Using the EBT card number in place of a food
stamp case number would not be an accurate representation of
a householder's eligibility for benefits.

The EBT number (which also may be called a primary account
number or PAN) is never the household's case number. That
number is assigned by the company that provides the cards
and is used to tie the household into its food stamp balance
using a personal identification number (PIN). There is also
no expiration date on the EBT card because food stamps never expire.

A non-household member could have access to the EBT card or
know the EBT number/PAN but not be eligible for food stamps.
For example a person could be the authorized representative
for an elderly neighbor but not be eligible for food stamps
themselves. Also once benefits are issued to a food stamp
household, they can remain active on the card even after the
household is no longer eligible to receive food stamps.
Therefore, categorical eligibility for benefits under the Child Nutrition Programs **cannot** be based on an EBT card EBT number/PAN. The household must provide a case number which can be checked to determine if they are currently eligible.

STELLA NASH
Acting Regional Director
Child Nutrition Programs