



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Ministry of Social Development and Family Services



MEDIA RELEASE

Friday April 3, 2020

Priority: HIGH

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT MINISTRY STARTS THE DISTRIBUTION OF FOOD CARDS

On March 23rd, 2020, the first batch of Food Support Cards were issued to the Members of Parliament (MP) for distribution to families of children who are registered for the nation's School Feeding Programme of the Ministry of Education and who are not clients of the Ministry's Food Support Programme.

In the initial phase, each MP was given 50 cards to distribute to families who meet the criteria. On March 25th another batch of cards was issued and effective April 2, 2020, Members of Parliament or their representatives received an additional batch of 100 cards each. To date, the majority of MPs have collected and distributed cards to their constituents, however, cards for the Constituencies of San Juan/Barataria and Princes Town were not collected. This particular measure amounts to \$ \$12,357,810 for food cards distributed via the Members of Parliament offices; and another \$17,144,100 which relates to the topping up for existing food support clients of the Ministry, whose economic circumstances would be exacerbated by the pandemic.

The process for collection and distribution involves the submission of names of the students on the School Feeding Register by the Ministry of Education; followed by verification by the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services to ensure that enlisted households are not already in receipt of Food Support. Once verified, the lists are sent to the MP's offices where eligible recipients are called and informed of their collection dates and time. Each recipient is required to sign the declaration form for the card, which is valued at \$510 per household. Each Member of Parliament was also provided with clear guidelines on the procedure for distributing the cards. Persons are asked to not dispose their cards, since there will be a top-up for the next two months. In this regard, the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services is pleased to advise that the original 50 cards distributed to households in each constituency have already been topped up to the amount of \$1,020.00. The cards which are being distributed at present have also been topped up for the next three months in the sum of \$1,530.00 each.

It should also be noted that if a child's name or school does not appear on the listing, this information should be referred to the MP's office, following which a revision will be done by the Ministry of Education. Once the person's name appears on the School Feeding Register, they are to collect the card only from the constituency in which they reside; and NOT the constituency of the school.

The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services continues to work with the Ministry of Education and all other stakeholders to address issues which arise with regard to the delivery of the cards and encourages full cooperation from the public for the successful implementation of this measure. For all enquiries related to Food Support for those on the School Feeding programme, please call toll free 800 – 1673, 800 – 6742 or call 623 – 2608; ext. 1120 – 1132.