§ 21-a. Electronic benefit transfer system. Any electronic benefit transfer system shall be implemented by the department on a statewide basis and shall be administered pursuant to the provisions of this section. For purposes of such electronic benefit transfer system, the term "electronic benefit transfer" includes the use of a credit or debit card service, automated teller machine, point-of-sale terminal, or access to an online system for the withdrawal of funds or the processing of a payment for merchandise or a service.

1. (a) Any contract entered into on behalf of local social services districts for electronic benefit transfer services shall ensure that there are a sufficient number of access points in each local social services district to ensure an adequate distribution of such services. Upon implementation of an electronic benefit transfer system in a local social services district or in any political or other geographic subdivision of such district, the department shall publish a list identifying the number and location of access points within such district or subdivision, and shall seek and accept public comment on the adequacy of recipient access to electronic benefit transfer services within such district or subdivision. The department shall seek to maximize recipient access to electronic benefit transfer services by working with the contractor to establish access points at a broad range of businesses and community facilities including, but not limited to, community centers, senior citizen centers, educational and job skills training sites, and local housing authorities.

(b) Any electronic benefit transfer services for supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP) benefits shall ensure that two electronic benefit transfer credit or debit cards are issued for use by any recipient household having more than one parent or guardian residing in the household on a full-time basis, provided that at least two parents or guardians residing in the household, or a combination thereof, qualify for benefits pursuant to this chapter. No card shall be issued to any person under the age of eighteen unless such person is a parent or guardian of a minor child. The issuance of a second card shall be consistent with federal requirements and is subject to the request and approval by the head of household and shall not entitle the recipients to any additional benefits. Benefit recipients shall not be

required to accept or utilize both cards. The department shall notify existing and future benefit recipients of the availability of multiple cards.

(c) Any interactive voice response system associated with an electronic benefit transfer system which benefit recipients may call for support or assistance shall include an option for benefit recipients to cancel such benefit recipient's electronic benefit transfer card permanently or lock or unlock such benefit recipient's electronic benefit transfer card.

2. The department or the designated agent thereof shall utilize appropriate materials and training to provide each recipient with adequate instruction on the use of the electronic benefit transfer system, which shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

(a) the types of transactions and services provided by means of an electronic benefit transfer system, and any limitations thereon;

(b) the rights, responsibilities and liabilities applicable to recipients that receive benefits by means of an electronic benefit transfer system;

(c) the procedure for reporting the loss or theft of a system access device, or any unauthorized transaction;

(d) the process for the replacement of a lost or stolen system access device, and the procedure to access benefits, if needed, until such time as such device can be replaced; and

(e) the procedure by which participants can access information about their benefit account or accounts including, but not limited to, a toll-free telephone number which would provide recipients with account balances and transaction history.