

Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer Program Answers to Frequently Asked Questions (For Families)

What is P-EBT?

The federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act of 2020 provides temporary benefits, referred to as Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT), to families of school-aged children who would receive free or reduced-priced meals if school was in session. The school must participate in the National School Lunch Program in order for children to be eligible for free or reduced-price meals and the student must have attended the school as of March 13, 2020.

Families that already have an EBT card for purposes of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) will not be issued a new card. The existing card will be loaded with the additional benefit. Families that qualify for free or reduced-price meals and do not have an existing EBT card will receive a P-EBT card in the mail (one per family, when possible).

How much money will each student receive?

Households will receive \$5.70 per child per day of eligibility, up to a maximum of 65 days. Students who were free or reduced-price eligible as of March 16, 2020, will receive full benefits (\$370.00). The benefit for students who became eligible after March 16, 2020, will be calculated as follows:

- Students who became eligible between March 17 and March 31, 2020, will receive the benefit for March 16 through June 12 (65 days)
- Students who became eligible between April 1 and April 30 will receive the benefit for April 1 through June 12 (53 days)
- Students who become eligible between May 1 and May 31 will receive the benefit for May 1 through June 12 (31 days)
- Students who become eligible between June 1 and June 12 will receive the benefit for June 1 through June 12 (10 days)

When will benefits be issued?

Benefits will be issued in three phases beginning in mid-May. All benefits will be issued by the end of June.

Will P-EBT cards be sent to all families who are eligible for free and reduced-price meals?

P-EBT is for all families with school-aged children that are eligible for free and reduced-price meals. The student must have attended a school that participates in the National School Lunch Program and must have attended the participating school as of March 16, 2020.

If a student's family already receives benefits through SNAP or TANF and currently has an EBT card, they will not be issued a new card. The existing card will be loaded with the additional

benefit. Families that qualify for free or reduced-price meals and do not have an existing EBT card will receive a P-EBT card in the mail (one per family, when possible).

Which students/households are eligible for P-EBT?

Any household with a student who is eligible for free or reduced-price meals and enrolled in a school that participates in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) can receive the P-EBT. This population includes:

- Students who attend a school where all students are offered free meals, regardless of income. These schools are known as Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) schools.
- Students of migrant households: Receiving or using P-EBT benefits does not impact the student's or any household member's immigration status or any current or future application for permanent residency.
- Households that recently lost income due to job loss or fewer hours and are newly eligible for free or reduced-price school meals. Families must complete the household application for free or reduced-price meals and receive approval from the school's determining official. Households can apply by contacting their students school of attendance or the [COMPASS website](#).

Where can families apply for SNAP, TANF, Medical Assistance benefits?

Families can apply for, and access, benefits at the [COMPASS website](#). COMPASS is an online tool for Pennsylvanians to apply for many health and human service programs and manage benefit information.

Some schools participate in the CEP, where all students are eligible for free meals. Are all students attending CEP schools eligible for P-EBT benefits?

Yes, all students enrolled in a CEP school will receive P-EBT benefits. CEP participation is not necessarily district wide, so one child may attend a CEP school and qualify for the benefit while their sibling may attend a non-CEP school in that same district and would not necessarily qualify for the benefit (unless they are eligible due to income, receiving SNAP, TANF, or Medical Assistance with qualifying income).

Are homeschooled or cyber students eligible for the P-EBT?

No. A student must be enrolled in a school that participates in the NSLP and meet eligibility requirements for free or reduced-price school meals to receive P-EBT.

Can schools continue to provide meals through the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and Seamless Summer Option (SSO) once P-EBT benefits are issued?

Yes, schools can continue to operate other Federal nutrition programs while participating in P-EBT. The law does not prohibit children from participating in more than one nutrition program.

Will receiving P-EBT benefits affect a family's ability to receive other benefits?

No.



Will receiving P-EBT affect a student's ability to receive free meals provided by the school?

No. P-EBT is in addition to the meals being provided, not in place of those meals.

If a family does not want to receive P-EBT, what should they do?

Families that do not wish to take advantage of P-EBT should shred their card. This benefit is non-transferrable. It is unlawful for recipients to use this benefit to buy food for others or to give their card to someone else. However, a family can use the benefits for their own eligible food purchases and, if they are able to, donate their own cash to an organization or a needy family.

Are schools required to share P-EBT information with families?

No, schools are not required to communicate P-EBT information to families. DHS will be mailing information to identified P-EBT eligible families.

Where can families be directed with questions?

Families with questions should go to the [DHS website](#) with any questions.