

Frequently Asked Questions for the Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) Food Benefits

Answers to many commonly asked questions about the P-EBT food benefits:

What are P-EBT food benefits?

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act of 2020 authorized the payment of P-EBT food benefits to households with children who would have received free or reduced-price school meals under the National School Lunch Act, if not for a school closure. These temporary food benefits are to help cover the cost of meals children would otherwise would have received at school.

Do my child/children qualify for P-EBT food benefits?

If your child/children receive free or reduced-price school lunches, then they are eligible to receive P-EBT food benefits for the days their school was closed due to COVID-19. This includes all children attending Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) schools where all children receive free or reduced-price school lunches.

Do my foster child/children qualify for P-EBT food benefits if they were receiving free and/or reduced-price meals?

All children receiving free or reduced-price school **lunches** are eligible to receive P-EBT food benefits for the days their school was closed due to COVID-19.

Do I need to apply for P-EBT food benefits for my child/children?

No, you do not need to apply for P-EBT benefits.

If your family receives Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and/or Temporary Assistance (TA) benefits **and** you have school-age children (ages 5-18), you will automatically receive P-EBT food benefits for each eligible school-age child in your household. The benefits will automatically be issued to your family's current EBT card.

If you have children who receive free or reduced-price school lunch, but your family does **not** receive SNAP or TA benefits, you still will automatically get P-EBT food benefits for each school-age child in your household. More information about how children who do not live in households that get SNAP or TA benefits will be mailed to you. Begin checking your mail for this P-EBT notice beginning in mid-June.

How much will my child/children receive in P-EBT food benefits?

The maximum monthly amounts you may receive for each eligible child in your household are:

March	\$68.00
April	\$125.00
May	\$119.00
June	\$108.00

So, \$420 is the **maximum** amount of P-EBT benefits that one child could receive for the entire March through June period.

How will I get P-EBT food benefits for my qualified child/children?

The P-EBT food benefits will be loaded onto an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card:

- If your family already receives SNAP and/ or TA benefits, the P-EBT food benefits for each eligible child will be issued directly to the household's existing EBT card. P-EBT food benefits will be added to your SNAP balance. You can check your family's SNAP/P-EBT food benefits balance by visiting www.connectebt.com or by calling **1-888-328-6399**.
- If your family does not receive SNAP or TA benefits but does receive Medicaid, the P-EBT food benefits may be issued to your Medicaid Common Benefit Identification Card (CBIC) or to the CBIC of the oldest child in your household who has been certified for free or reduced-price school lunches. You will receive more information about this in the mail. The notice will tell you how to set up a PIN for the card so that you can use the P-EBT food benefits. To report damaged, lost, or stolen EBT cards, and to request a replacement card, please call **1-888-328-6399**.
- If your family does not receive SNAP or TA benefits and if you do not already have an active EBT Card, one will be mailed to you so you may access your child/children's P-EBT food benefits. A card will be issued and mailed in each school-aged child's name, not a parent's or guardian's name.

When will my qualified child/children receive the P-EBT food benefits?

P-EBT food benefits will first be made available for eligible children living in households that receive SNAP or TA. They will be issued in two separate payments, to the household's current EBT card:

- **First Payment:** The combined food benefit amount (\$193) for March and April will be available to households that receive SNAP or TA by early June.
- **Second Payment:** The combined benefit amount for May and June (\$227) will be available to households that receive SNAP or TA by the end of June.

For families who do not receive SNAP or TA benefits, P-EBT food benefits will be issued over an extended period beginning in late June and concluding in early August.

Will the P-EBT food benefit program continue through the summer?

Currently, P-EBT food benefits will only be issued for those months—March through June—for which schools were closed due to COVID-19 during the 2019-20 school year.

How do I use an EBT card?

An EBT card looks and is used like a bank debit card to buy food at authorized retail food stores. For more information on how to use an EBT card visit: <http://otda.ny.gov/workingfamilies/ebt/>.

To find authorized retail food stores near you, the SNAP Retailer Locator can be found at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/retailer-locator>.

What can I purchase with my child/children's P-EBT food benefits?

P-EBT food benefits can be used to purchase food at authorized retail food stores. A detailed list of food items that may be purchased with the benefits can be found at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/eligible-food-items/>.

Will I need to pay back my child/children's P-EBT food benefits?

No. Families who receive P-EBT food benefits will not have to pay back the benefits.

Do I have to use my child/children’s P-EBT food benefits right away?

No. P-EBT food benefits will remain available and accessible on your EBT card for up to one year from the date they are issued. You can check your family’s P-EBT food benefits balance by visiting www.connectebt.com or by calling 1-888-328-6399.

Will receiving P-EBT food benefits impact my family’s ‘public charge’ status?

Receiving P-EBT food benefits will not affect the ‘public charge’ status for non-citizen households.

My child’s school district provides “grab-and-go” meals for curbside pick-up or delivery. Will the P-EBT food benefit program change that?

No. P-EBT food benefits will not affect the school’s curbside meal pick-up or delivery program. And your household’s participation in that program does not affect eligibility for P-EBT benefits.

My family receives SNAP benefits and received SNAP Emergency Allotment supplements for March, April, and/or May. Will this have any effect on if or when my qualified child/children will receive the P-EBT food benefits?

P-EBT benefits are NOT SNAP benefits. Therefore, eligibility for or receipt of P-EBT food benefits is not affected by your receipt of the SNAP Emergency Allotment supplements.

Should I contact my local department of social services if I have any questions about P-EBT food benefits?

No. P-EBT food benefits are being issued by the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance. They are **not** SNAP benefits, and your local department of social services has no information about your eligibility for these benefits, and no information about when you will receive these benefits if you are eligible. If you have any questions about P-EBT benefits, please send an email to this address: otda.sm.eisp.PEBT@otda.ny.gov