



June 30, 2020

## **PANDEMIC EBT FAQs**

### *Frequently Asked Questions*

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#### **1. What is Pandemic EBT (P-EBT)?**

P-EBT is a **one-time** benefit to help supplement family food costs resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and prolonged school closures.

#### **2. Who is eligible for P-EBT?**

K-12 students who are enrolled in a free or reduced-price school meals program under the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) or are enrolled in a school that has opted to participate in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) are eligible to receive P-EBT. The P-EBT card and food benefit cannot be transferred to anyone else or used by someone outside your household.

#### **3. How do I know if my child attends a CEP school?**

South Carolina has 521 CEP schools. A [listing of the CEP schools](#), as well as public and private schools that participate in the National School Lunch Program is available on the DSS website.

#### **4. My household has never filled out a meal application because all meals are free at my child's school. Will my child(ren) be eligible for a P-EBT benefit?**

Yes. If your child(ren) attends a Community Eligible Provision (CEP) school where all students receive free or reduced-price meals, they will be eligible for P-EBT.

#### **5. Do I or my child have to be a citizen to be eligible for P-EBT?**

No. These benefits are for all children who receive free or reduced-price school meals.

#### **6. If my household already receives SNAP, how and when will the P-EBT benefit be issued?**

Current SNAP households whose child(ren) was enrolled in a free or reduced-price meals program as of March 13, 2020 will receive their P-EBT benefit on their regular EBT card on July 7<sup>th</sup> **OR** on their normal monthly SNAP issuance date, whichever is later. For example, if your SNAP benefits are issued on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of the month you will receive your SNAP allotment on July 3<sup>rd</sup> and your P-EBT benefit on July 7<sup>th</sup>. If your normal SNAP issuance date is the 14<sup>th</sup> you will receive your regular SNAP allotment

and your P-EBT benefit on July 14<sup>th</sup>. No further action is required on your part to receive your P-EBT benefits.

**7. If I am not a current SNAP recipient, how and when will I receive a P-EBT benefit?**

For households not participating in SNAP whose child(ren) were enrolled in a free or reduced-price (FRP) meals program or attending a CEP school as of March 13, 2020, a P-EBT card will be mailed to the address on file with your child's school district between July 20<sup>th</sup> and July 24<sup>th</sup>. No further action is required on your part to receive your P-EBT benefit.

**8. What P-EBT benefit amount will I receive?**

The benefit amount for each child is based on a daily rate of \$5.70, multiplied by the average number of days school was canceled. For South Carolina, this equates to 58 days (March 16 – June 3). At \$5.70 per day, each child who was enrolled in a FRP meals program in March will receive \$330.

**9. What if my child was enrolled in a CEP school after March 13<sup>th</sup>, or became eligible for FRP meals after schools were closed? Do we still get a P-EBT benefit?**

Students who became eligible for P-EBT after March 13<sup>th</sup> (either by being enrolled in a CEP school or being approved for free or reduced-price meals) are categorized as "newly eligible students" and will receive a pro-rated P-EBT benefit based on their date of eligibility. For example, a student who qualified for free or reduced-price meals in April 2020 will receive a P-EBT benefit of \$262, while a student who qualified in May will receive \$136.

Students who qualified before the end of March but after schools were closed are considered "newly eligible" but will still receive a \$330 P-EBT benefit. DSS is working with school districts and the South Carolina Department of Education to gather the data on "newly eligible students". P-EBT benefits will be issued to newly-eligible students after July 25<sup>th</sup>.

**10. What if an eligible P-EBT household is not a SNAP recipient and does not want to participate in the P-EBT program?**

If an eligible household receives a P-EBT card and does not want to participate in the program, the household should destroy the P-EBT card. The P-EBT card and food benefit cannot be transferred to anyone else or used by someone outside your household.

**11. If I have more than one child, will I get a different card for each child?**

If you have more than one child approved for P-EBT, and you are not a current SNAP recipient, you will receive a P-EBT card for each eligible child. If you are a current SNAP recipient, each child's P-EBT benefit will be added to your current SNAP EBT card.

**12. What can be purchased with the P-EBT benefit?**

Purchasing rules are the same for SNAP and P-EBT. The P-EBT benefit can be used to purchase food for a household, such as:

- fresh, frozen, canned, or dried fruits and vegetables
- meat, poultry, fish, dairy products, eggs
- cereal, bread, pasta, rice
- any ingredients you use for cooking
- baby formula
- diabetic foods
- snack foods and non-alcoholic beverages
- seeds and plants for growing food at home

**P-EBT benefits CANNOT be used to buy:**

- beer, wine, liquor, cigarettes, or tobacco
- vitamins, medicines, and supplements
- prepared foods, hot foods
- non-food items (pet foods, cleaning supplies, paper products, hygiene items, or cosmetics)

**13. What should I do if I am eligible, but do not receive my P-EBT benefit?**

Please allow the state to fully issue all P-EBT benefits by August 15th, before inquiring about your benefit status. If you have not received your benefit by August 15<sup>th</sup>, please email [PEBTBenefits@dss.sc.gov](mailto:PEBTBenefits@dss.sc.gov).

**Please do not call your local DSS county office with questions about P-EBT.**

**14. What if a child/children resides in multiple residences?**

If you currently receive SNAP and have a child who qualifies for P-EBT, the P-EBT benefit will be added to your regular EBT card. If you are not receiving SNAP but you have a child who is eligible for free or reduced-price meals, the P-EBT benefit will be mailed to the address on file with the school district. P-EBT cards will be issued in the name of the qualifying child.

**15. What retailers accept P-EBT?**

P-EBT benefits can be used to purchase food items at retailers displaying a SNAP logo/signage. Find the closest retailer where you can use your benefits at:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/retailer-locator>



**16. When will my P-EBT benefit expire?**

P-EBT benefits expire one year (365 days) after issuance.

**17. How do I request a replacement card?**

To check your balance or report your P-EBT card lost, stolen, or damaged, call 1-800-554-5268.

**18. Do I have to use all my P-EBT benefit when I get them?**

No. The benefit will carry over from month to month. Benefits not used within 365 days of issuance will be automatically removed from the card.

**19. Do P-EBT benefits replace summer feeding programs or other community feeding programs for children and families?**

No. The P-EBT benefit is provided in addition to other meal programs; it does not replace them.

**20. I am a grocery retailer interested in becoming an approved SNAP/P-EBT merchant. What do I need to do?**

Grocery retailers/food stores in SC who are interested in accepting SNAP/EBT must contact the USDA for approval. Visit online at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/apply-to-accept>.