

Fast Facts on Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) for the 2021-2022 School Year

What is P-EBT?

- P-EBT is a grocery benefit for students in low-income families who receive free or reduced-price school meals, but aren't able to access the school meal program due to the pandemic.
- Benefits are issued on debit-like cards, and benefit amounts are calculated based on the cost of missed school meals for the number of days when schools are closed or operating virtually.
- Congress first approved P-EBT in the spring of 2020 in response to school closures related to the COVID-19 pandemic. At the end of September 2020, the program was extended through the 2020-2021 school year and expanded to allow benefits to be issued when schools are operating at reduced capacity or reduced days or hours, not just when schools are closed. Eligibility was also expanded to some children ages 0-6 in families enrolled in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). In March 2020, Congress extended P-EBT through the end of the public health emergency, including summer breaks.

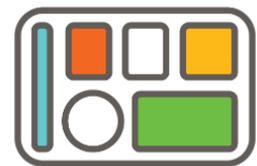


What's New for P-EBT in the 2021-2022 School Year?

- The daily benefit amount is now \$7.10 per day – the cost of a school breakfast, lunch, and snack. The maximum benefit amount is about **\$35 per week per eligible child.**

Who is Eligible for P-EBT?

- Students may be eligible for P-EBT if they meet all of these conditions:
 1. The student's school participates in the federal National School Lunch Program, and
 2. The student's school is closed or operating at reduced hours or reduced attendance due to the pandemic for at least five consecutive days in the 2021-2022 school year, and
 3. The student would have received free or reduced-price school meals at school if not for the pandemic. (Note: This includes all students attending schools that serve free meals to all students using the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), Provision 2, or Provision 3.)
- Young children may be eligible for P-EBT if they meet all of these conditions:
 1. The child is under age 6, and
 2. The child's household is enrolled in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and
 3. The child's home address is in the area of a school or child care facility, or the child is enrolled at a child care facility, that is closed or operating with reduced hours or attendance due to the pandemic.
- Please note that states must create an implementation plan and receive federal approval before P-EBT benefits can be distributed. The state plan will determine how the program is administered, including who receives benefits, when benefits are available, and how benefits are provided. To see the list of states with approved plans to distribute P-EBT benefits, [click here](#) or visit www.fns.usda.gov/snap/state-guidance-coronavirus-pandemic-ebt-pebt.



→ For additional food resources, visit nokidhungry.org/help or nokidhungry.org/ayuda.

Important Changes to Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) for the 2021-2022 School Year

The Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT) program provides grocery benefits for families to purchase food when school schedules are impacted due to the pandemic. There are six phases of P-EBT implementation:

1. Spring 2020 for school-age students
2. School year 2020-2021 for school-age students
3. School year 2020-2021 for children ages 0-6
4. Summer 2021 for both school-age students and children under 6
5. **School year 2021-2022 for both school-age students and children under 6**
6. Summer 2022 for both school-age students and children under 6

USDA recommends that all states submit an application to issue P-EBT benefits in the 2021-2022 school year, even if they are not currently needed, so that the plan is ready to go should conditions change.

If schools are closed or operating on a reduced schedule and issue P-EBT benefits during the 2021-2022 school year, students may be eligible for summer 2022 P-EBT benefits. However, the state must first have an approved plan for the 2021-2022 school year before summer 2022 benefits can be issued.

The daily P-EBT benefit amount is \$7.10 per eligible child for the 2021-2022 school year.

Schools operating under the Seamless Summer Option (SSO) this school year can serve meals at no charge to all students and are **not** required to collect school meal benefit applications from all students.

- In these cases, states can use school meal benefit applications from the most recent previous year on file (2020-2021 or 2019-2020 school year) to determine P-EBT eligibility in the 2021-2022 school year.
- However, unless the school is approved to offer P-EBT to all students by participating in CEP, Provision 2 or Provision 3, the school must make applications available so that students who are newly eligible can qualify for P-EBT benefits. This includes kindergarteners and transfer students.

If a school or district **is** collecting meal benefit application forms for all students this year (2021-2022 school year), they must use this year's forms to determine P-EBT eligibility for all students.

In addition to the eligibility criteria detailed on the first page, [USDA guidance](#) for this school year notes that:

- “[E]ven if just a few students in a school are approved for virtual or hybrid learning, USDA recognizes that the school may be viewed as operating at ‘reduced attendance’.”
- Students are eligible for P-EBT benefits even if they *choose* the virtual learning option.
- State plans do not need to require the collection of individual schedules from every student, or even from every school. State plans can use the “best feasibly available data” and do not need to require schools to collect “more precise data” if that is “not administratively feasible.”
 - However, states are encouraged to figure out ways to issue benefits to students who may be affected by a class- or grade-level quarantine or who choose virtual learning, even if these are not the predominate schedule models.
- State plans for children under the age of six may again rely on schedule data from schools in the area of the child’s residence, but states are encouraged to define the area more narrowly and align benefit levels with the predominant schedule model or averages.