



Pandemic-EBT Benefits for Fall 2020

Overview

The Pandemic-EBT (P-EBT) program, a collaboration between the NC Department of Health and Human Services and the NC Department of Public Instruction, helps families purchase food for children whose access to free and reduced-priced meals at school has been impacted by COVID-19. The program provides a benefit on an EBT card that can be used to buy food at authorized retailers, including most major grocery stores. This document gives a brief overview of what the program is, and who is eligible, and how families will receive the benefit.

This brief extension of P-EBT benefits provides help buying food to the families of more than 600,000 children whose access to free and reduced-price school meals has been disrupted by COVID-19. DHHS provided P-EBT benefits to as many children as possible under USDA's new guidance and deadline and we wish we could have helped every family.

Eligibility for fall 2020 P-EBT

Under the new federal guidelines, families that received P-EBT benefits in the spring may not be eligible to receive the benefit this fall.

In the P-EBT program this fall, children are eligible if they had access to free or reduced-priced meals at school last year, their school district or charter school is eligible to provide free or reduced-priced meals at school this year, and their school district or charter school utilized virtual learning for all students for at least five consecutive school days between August 17th and September 30th.

This is different than the eligibility criteria for P-EBT benefits in the spring, which was available to all children who normally access free or reduced-priced meals, regardless of school circumstance. The new eligibility criteria are based on guidance from the US Department of Agriculture. To find out whether a school district or charter school is receiving fall P-EBT benefits, go to <https://files.nc.gov/covid/documents/info-for/human-services/p-ebt/NC-School-Districts-Charter-Schools-Eligible-P-EBT-Aug-Sept.pdf>.

Families do not need to apply for P-EBT

Families do not need to apply for P-EBT. Eligible families already receiving Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) benefits will receive an additional benefit on their existing EBT card. Families who received P-EBT in the spring and are eligible under the new criteria will receive additional benefit on their original P-EBT card. Eligible families who do not have an FNS or P-EBT card will be mailed a card. Families being mailed a new card will receive the card by mid-October.

Amount of benefit

The new daily rate for the 2020-2021 P-EBT allotment is \$5.86 per virtual day per student. No student may receive benefits for less than 5 consecutive days of virtual learning or school closure.

More information

More information about the P-EBT program can be found at www.ncdhhs.gov/PEBT.

Eligible families with questions about their P-EBT card can call the NC EBT Call Center at 1-866-719-0141.