

## **Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT)**

### **SY 22-23 and Summer 2023 P-EBT Information to NSLP Sponsors**

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), in partnership with the Illinois Department of Human Services (DHS), would like to share this information as we continue to provide supplemental food assistance, known as Pandemic Electronic Benefits (P-EBT), to eligible families during the Public Health Emergency (PHE). The School Year 2022-23 P-EBT plan for Illinois is pending U.S. Department of Agriculture approval, thus this is preliminary information. The Summer 2023 plan for Illinois was approved on April 21, 2023.

P-EBT benefits were first issued in the Spring of 2020 and continue through the most recent school year and summer 2023. PEBT is authorized by Section 4601 of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (P.L. 116-127) as amended by the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2021 and Other Extensions Act (P.L. 116-159), the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (P.L. 116-260), and the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (P.L. 117-2). The P-EBT program will end on May 11, 2023, per the end of the federal PHE. P-EBT funds will not be available beyond the end of federal fiscal year 2023. As a result, states must issue all P-EBT benefits by Sept. 30, 2023. This applies to all P-EBT benefits including School Year 2022-23 and Summer 2023.

The purpose of P-EBT is to provide food assistance to families with students who would have received free or reduced lunch while attending school but are not receiving these in school meals due to COVID-19 restrictions.

The federal regulations outlined for P-EBT eligibility for SY 22-23 are slightly different from prior P-EBT issuances per the USDA requirements. SY 22-23 P-EBT expands to allow eligible homeschooled students that are homeschooled because of COVID-19 but would have attended an eligible school if they meet all other P-EBT requirements. Such homeschooled eligible students must meet socioeconomic guidelines and submit documentation as such. DHS will handle the overall application process for homeschooled eligible students for Illinois.

The information in this communication to schools will focus on data submission requirements to significantly enhance the data validity for the P-EBT program. It is our hope that providing clear, concise data submission information, our Illinois schools will ensure accurate, timely data that ensures P-EBT for all eligible Illinois students.

#### **P-EBT SY 22-23 and Summer 2023 Plan Highlights**

- Eligible schools are National School Lunch Program/School Breakfast Program participating schools (claiming meals) in SY 22-23.
- Students MUST be enrolled, as their serving school for public schools in the Student Information System (SIS), in an eligible school or meet the specific homeschooling criteria as detailed by DHS.
- Students must be enrolled in a CEP approved school OR determined eligible based on

current school year eligibility determination to receive free/reduced meal benefits for 2022-23 and meet student attendance eligibility requirements. (Final deadline for SY 22-23 Household Eligibility Application is June 30, 2023)

- SY 22-23 P-EBT benefits is a daily amount of \$8.18 per eligible P-EBT school day. A P-EBT eligible school day is a school day in which the student did not have access to a reimbursable meal at school due to COVID-19. As most Illinois schools are and have been open for in person learning and school meals, we anticipate SY 22-23 P-EBT benefits will be less than in the prior school year.
- For P-EBT SY 22-23 issuance, for public school students, Student Information System data will be used to determine eligible students and school days. Once the SY 22-23 P-EBT plan for Illinois is approved, guidance will be shared as to eligible days.
- For P-EBT SY 22-23 issuance for non-public eligible school students, a file will be uploaded securely in WINS with COVID related absence days for eligible students.
- Summer 2023 P-EBT issuance will be \$120 per eligible student. This is a smaller amount than prior years, due to changes in the USDA program. To be eligible for Summer 2023 P-EBT, the student must be enrolled in an eligible school in May/June 2023 and meet socioeconomic requirements for free or reduced-price meals at non-CEP school or be enrolled in a CEP approved school. Data for public schools will be pulled from SIS, while non-public eligible schools will be asked to submit this data via WINS, like prior years.
- States may not issue summer 2023 P-EBT benefits to children who did not attend an NSLP participating school at the end of the school year immediately preceding the summer (i.e., at the end of SY 22-23).
- Data will be pulled from SIS and WINS the first week of June 2023 with FINAL data pulled July 15, 2023. After this date, all data corrections must be submitted directly to DHS.

To ensure that eligible schools are ready for this data collection, we are asking eligible schools to ensure that the following data is up to date:

- **Student Eligibility Status for Free and Reduced Priced Meals for SY 22-23**
  - For public schools, data from the Student Information System will be used. Now is the time to ensure that the FRL/Low Income indicator in the Student Information System (SIS) is updated for ALL eligible students in non-CEP schools. For CEP schools, all enrolled students are eligible to receive P-EBT benefits if the student meets the student attendance eligibility requirement.
  - For non-public schools, please ensure that you have accurate data for students eligible for free or reduced-price meals for SY 22-23.
- **Student Mailing Addresses**
  - To issue P-EBT benefits to all eligible students, ISBE will request a current student address for all eligible students. For CEP schools, this will be required for ALL enrolled students. For non-CEP schools, a mailing address is only required for those students marked as FRL/low income. Public schools will enter student



mailing addresses in the Student Information System. Non-public schools will share this data via a WINS upload specific to SY 22-23 and Summer 2023 P-EBT. A correct mailing address will reduce phone calls to your schools, to ISBE and DHS, and reduce delays in receipt of the P-EBT benefits for the families we support. This will expedite the delivery of benefits to eligible households.

Complete SY 22-23 and Summer 2023 P-EBT school guidance is available at <https://www.isbe.net/pebt>. Schools may send inquiries about P-EBT to ISBE at [pebt@isbe.net](mailto:pebt@isbe.net).

All household inquiries regarding P-EBT will be directed to Illinois Department of Human Services (DHS). Parents, guardians, and recipients may contact DHS at (833) 621-0737 or use the [DHS P-EBT General Inquiry Request form](#) for assistance. P-EBT specific information is found online at [Illinois Department of Human Services P-EBT](#).

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