



STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION

Pandemic EBT Frequently Asked Questions

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

P-EBT is a benefit to help supplement family food costs resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and prolonged school schedule changes.

2. Who is eligible for P-EBT?

PK-12 students who are enrolled in a school that participates in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and are approved free or reduced lunch or are enrolled in a school that participates in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) are potentially eligible for P-EBT. For students to be paid P-EBT benefits, the school schedule must be altered by 5 days and students must attend school virtually 100% or on a hybrid schedule. Students will receive P-EBT for days of virtual attendance after the 5-day threshold is met. The P-EBT card benefit cannot be transferred to anyone else or used by someone outside your household.

3. My children are receiving free meals at school this year, will my child(ren) be eligible for a P-EBT benefit?

All students are being fed meals free for the 2020-21 school year. Only students that are approved for free or reduced lunch or enrolled in a CEP school will qualify for P-EBT, and only for the days the students are served educationally 50% of the day or more through virtual learning. All NSLP schools and districts are still accepting free and reduced meal applications. Students newly approved for free or reduced meals will receive P-EBT benefits from the date the application is approved and moving forward.

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

No. These benefits are for all children that are approved for free or reduced-price school meals and meet the criteria for virtual learning, as described in question 3.

5. If my household already receives Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), how and when will the P-EBT benefit be issued?

All P-EBT benefits will be mailed out on new SNAP cards. The first payment should arrive by May.

6. What should I do if I feel my child should have received P-EBT benefits but did not?

If a student do not receive P-EBT benefits and you feel they should have, please contact the nutrition program staff at his/her school or school district to determine his/her free or reduced status. If your student is identified as free or reduced, then the school or school district should update the status of the student in PowerSchool. Any changes to free or reduced status, will be reported to DSS for allocation of P-EBT payments in the next available reporting period. Please make sure all issues involving eligibility for P-EBT are addressed prior to June 10, 2021. After June 10, processing fixes to eligibility issues will require a more complicated manual process on the part of parents/guardians and district staff.

7. What do I do if I feel my child was not paid for enough virtual days on their P-EBT card?

If you feel your child(ren) were not paid for all virtual attendance for the school of enrollment, please reach out to the school of enrollment and ask the school staff to review your student's virtual presence values in PowerSchool. Any adjustments made to virtual attendance will be reported to DSS for payment adjustments in the next available allocation of P-EBT payments. Please make sure all issues involving missing virtual attendance for P-EBT are addressed prior to June 10, 2021.

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

For all eligible child(ren), a P-EBT card will be mailed to the address on file with your child's school district. The first P-EBT payment will be mailed out in late April 2021. Please allow a minimum of 14 business days for card delivery. No further action is required on your part to receive your P-EBT benefit.

9. What do I do if the address on file for my child(ren) is incorrect?

DSS has an address portal available for checking and updating addresses. The address portal website is, <https://benefitsportal.dss.sc.gov/#/pebt/addressverification>. DSS strongly encourages all households to validate their address prior to March 19, 2021. Addresses can only be changed by the legal guardian of the child(ren). The parent/legal guardian must enter last name, DOB, Student Number, School District, and the School Name to review or change the address on file. All address issues will be handled through DSS. This will not update the address of the student at the school district or on existing SNAP cards.

10. What P-EBT benefit amount will I receive?

The benefit amount for each child that qualifies for P-EBT, is based on a daily rate of \$6.82, for the number of days the student attended school virtually. The first payment of P-EBT benefits for the 2020-2021 school year issued in late April-May 2021. This will cover the months of September- December 2020.

11. 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.

12. 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 you will receive a P-EBT card for each eligible child.

13. 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 cosmetic)

14. What if a child/children reside(s) in multiple residences?

If you have [a] child(ren) who is/are 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>