



June 29, 2020

PANDEMIC EBT FAQs

Frequently Asked Questions

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 7th **OR** on their normal monthly SNAP issuance date, whichever is later. For example, if your SNAP benefits are issued on the 3rd of the month you will receive your SNAP allotment on July 3rd and your P-EBT benefit on July 7th. If your normal SNAP issuance date is the 14th you will receive your regular SNAP allotment

and your P-EBT benefit on July 14th. 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 20th and July 24th. 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 13th, 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 13th (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 25th.

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 15th, please email 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>.