

**DC**DEPARTMENT of
HUMAN SERVICES

UPDATES AND FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ) ABOUT THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA (DC) PANDEMIC ELECTRONIC BENEFITS TRANSFER (P-EBT) PROGRAM

This FAQ contains the most current information on DC's P-EBT program. It will be updated as needed. If you have additional questions, please visit dhs.dc.gov/p-ebt or contact the Call Center at 877 4DC-PEBT (877-432-7328) or TTY: 711, Monday–Friday, 7:30 am – 4:45 pm (EST).



Update: On February 2, 2021, the federal government issued guidance on the amended Families First Coronavirus Response Act of 2020 (which authorized the P-EBT program in March 2020) to allow USDA to approve State plans to continue issuing P-EBT benefits under qualifying conditions. The District's Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) and the Department of Human Services (DHS) submitted the State's Plan and received approval on March 23, 2021. This approval will allow the District to continue the P-EBT program from October 2020 to June 2021, including children too young for school, beginning in May 2021. (September 2020 benefits were issued in spring or summer 2021.) The following Questions and Answers explain the current program.

1. WHAT ARE P-EBT BENEFITS?

- P-EBT is a temporary federal food benefit for families who have one or more children who receive free or reduced-price school meals under the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) at their school and are attending a qualifying virtual or hybrid school because of COVID-19 federal emergency.

2. WHO WILL RECEIVE P-EBT BENEFITS?

- Children who were certified through submission of a household's application processed by the child's school for free and reduced price-meals for School Year (SY) 2020-2021.
- Children enrolled in a Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) school or a school operating under Provisions 2 or 3.
- Eligible children in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) households for the 2020-2021 school year.
- The funds are non-transferable.



3. IF CHILDREN ARE ELIGIBLE, HOW MUCH MONEY WILL THEY GET?

- P-EBT is intended to cover breakfast, lunch, and a snack for eligible children who would have received them at their school, for five days a week. The benefit for the 2020-2021 school year is valued at either \$122.76 per month for a full virtual month of enrollment or \$73.66 per month for a full hybrid month of enrollment.

- For benefits from October 1, 2020 to January 31, 2021, all eligible students will receive \$122.76 per month.
- From February 1, 2021 onward, student benefits will depend on the child's school status. Students will receive \$122.76 for each eligible month at a fully virtual school or \$73.66 per month at a hybrid school.
- After February 1, 2021, when operating status is dependent on school-level decisions and is not a District-wide status, schools will be considered "fully virtual" if fewer than 50% of the school days available to all enrolled students are attended virtually. Once 50% or more of school days available to all enrolled students are attended in-person, the school will be deemed to be in "hybrid" status and all students attending that school will receive the hybrid benefit rate.

4. HOW DO DISTRICT FAMILIES NOT CURRENTLY CERTIFIED FOR FREE OR REDUCED-PRICE MEALS APPLY?

- Families of children who attend a DCPS CEP school are automatically eligible for free and reduced-priced meals. A list of DCPS CEP schools can be found at dcps.dc.gov/page/community-eligibility-provision-cep-schools.
- Families whose child attends a DCPS school that administers the federal free and reduced-price meals program (FARM) can find more information at dcps.dc.gov/publication/free-and-reduced-priced-meals-farm-application.
- Families who are unsure if their school participates in the federal FARM program should contact their child's school to find out if they can apply for FARM. This includes public and charter schools.

5. HOW DO HOUSEHOLDS THAT ALREADY RECEIVE SNAP OR TANF ACCESS P-EBT BENEFITS?

- For eligible children in households receiving SNAP or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), P-EBT benefits will be automatically loaded onto the household's existing EBT card. No action is needed from SNAP or TANF customers.



6. HOW DO HOUSEHOLDS WHO DO NOT RECEIVE SNAP OR TANF ACCESS P-EBT BENEFITS?

- For children whose family does not receive SNAP or TANF, separate EBT cards that were pre-loaded with the P-EBT benefits were mailed to their homes during the Spring and Summer of 2020 and a September 29th payment was added to those cards. No new cards were mailed for the September payment.
- If a family did not retain their originally issued card, they can request a new one by calling FIS, the District's EBT partner 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at their hotline (888) 304-9167.

7. WHY ARE OCTOBER 2020 BENEFITS BEING ISSUED IN SPRING 2021?

- On October 1, 2020, the federal government amended the Families First Coronavirus Response Act of 2020, which authorizes the P-EBT program, to allow USDA to review State plans to continue issuing P-EBT benefits under qualifying conditions.
- The District received USDA guidance on November 16, 2020. The Continuing Appropriations Act, 2021 extends P-EBT through the end of September 2021. That means that P-EBT is now available for all of SY 2020-2021.
- The District's Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) and the Department of Human Services (DHS) submitted the State's Plan and received approval on 3/23/2021 from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to begin implementing P-EBT for District families.
- The District will issue a payment for October through December 2020 in the spring.

**8. WILL HOUSEHOLDS BE NOTIFIED THAT THEY ARE RECEIVING P-EBT BENEFITS?**

- Yes. Notices will be mailed to all households who received P-EBT benefits when an issuance is made.
- Yes. Robo-calls will be made to notify eligible families when an issuance is made.
- Families can also always log in to www.ebtedge.com or download the free EBT Edge app from the Apple store or Google Play Store to check their balances.

9. WHAT CAN HOUSEHOLDS PURCHASE WITH P-EBT BENEFITS?

- P-EBT benefits work the same as SNAP food benefits. Households that receive P-EBT benefits can use the funds to purchase food only. The intent of these benefits is to provide funds to purchase food to make meals for children that would normally have been provided to them at school.

10. WHERE CAN P-EBT BENEFITS BE USED?

- P-EBT benefits can be used to purchase food at any SNAP retailer. Most retailers have signs stating they accept SNAP or EBT. Authorized SNAP retailers are listed at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/retailer-locator>.
- Families can also visit www.ebtedge.com or download the EBT Edge Mobile app from the Apple or Google Play store to find retailers that accept EBT cards.
- P-EBT benefits can also be used to make online food purchases for delivery at Amazon and Aldi. More information is at: <https://www.amazon.com/snap-ebt/> or shop.aldi.us/.



11. DO THE P-EBT BENEFITS HAVE TO BE USED IN THE MONTH THEY ARE RECEIVED?

- No. The money will carry over from month to month. Benefits that are not used for over a year will be removed from the card.

12. WHAT IF AN ALREADY-ISSUED EBT CARD HAS BEEN LOST OR CUT UP?

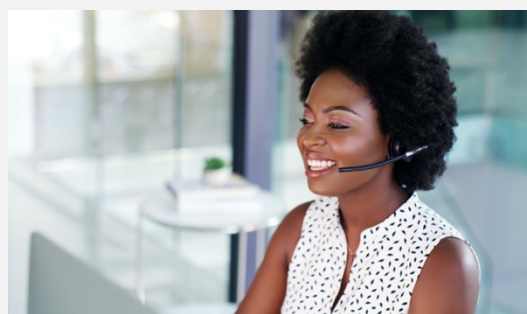
- For case-specific questions, please call us at 877-4DC-PEBT (877-432-7328) or TTY: 711, Monday–Friday, 7:30 am – 4:45 pm (EST).

13. WILL GETTING P-EBT IMPACT A HOUSEHOLD’S “PUBLIC CHARGE” STATUS?

- No. Using P-EBT benefits does not impact parents or their children’s immigration status. The Public Charge rule does not apply to P-EBT benefits.

14. WHERE IS ADDITIONAL INFORMATION LOCATED?

- Visit DHS’ P-EBT page: dhs.dc.gov/p-ebt.
- For case-specific questions, please call us at 877-4DC-PEBT (877-432-7328) or TTY: 711, Monday–Friday, 7:30 am – 4:45 pm (EST).



These resources are available for households in need of food immediately:

Resources	Phone	Website
DC’s Coronavirus Food Resources Page		https://coronavirus.dc.gov/food
Capital Area Food Bank	(202) 644-9800	https://www.capitalareafoodbank.org/
So Others Might Eat (SOME)	(202) 797-8806	https://www.some.org/
Bread for the City	(202) 265-2400	https://breadforthecity.org/