

# P-EBT FAQ

Updated 05/05/2020, Questions through 5/4.

Updates/Changes are highlighted in the document.

## 1. What is P-EBT?

- i** *Pandemic Electronic Benefits (P-EBT) provides a benefit on an EBT card to North Carolina families whose children have access to free and reduced lunch at school. The P-EBT program is a collaboration between the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services and the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and is intended to help families during school closures.*

## 2. Who is eligible for P-EBT?

- i** *All families with one or more children in their household who normally have access to free and reduced lunch at school are eligible for P-EBT benefits. Due to school closures caused by COVID-19 pandemic, these households are now eligible to receive a benefit on an EBT card to help them buy food for their children.*

## 3. Do Students that have already turned 18 before the end of the school year receive P-EBT if they are still a full-time student receiving free or reduced lunches?

- i** *Students over 18 will receive P-EBT benefits if they are enrolled in school and would have normally had access to free or reduced lunch.*

## 4. Does legal status of the child affect eligibility for P-EBT? Will school aged children who are undocumented non-citizens enrolled in a free/reduced lunch school program receive the P-EBT benefits?

- i** *North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services is utilizing data from the Department of Public Instruction for free and reduced lunch only. Eligibility will be determined based on the enrollment of a child in that program. Any child that receives free/reduced lunch qualifies. There are no other filtered criteria.*

## 5. How to apply for P-EBT

- i** *There is no application for P-EBT benefits. P-EBT eligibility information comes from the Department of Public Instruction based off enrollment in free and reduced-price meals. Families should contact their local schools for more information about eligibility for free and reduced-price meals.*

## 6. What about children who enrolled in free and reduced lunch programs after the report was run for P-EBT eligibility?

- i** *The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services is working with the Department of Public Instruction to work through how these will be reported and possibilities for inclusion for P-EBT benefits.*

## 7. How and when will I get my benefits?

**i** There are two categories of ways people will receive benefits:

- P-EBT benefits for P-EBT families already receiving Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) benefits will be issued mid-May.
- P-EBT eligible families who are not already receiving FNS benefits will receive an EBT card in the mail in mid to late May, as long as their mailing address on file with their school is up to date. These families will first receive a letter from NCDHHS in the mail explaining how to activate and use their card.



*P-EBT benefits will be staggered when released to take into consideration supply chain needs and other Food and Nutrition (FNS) benefits. We expect the 2<sup>nd</sup> issuance to happen the first two weeks of June, 2020.*

## 8. How will you know where to send my P-EBT benefits?

**i** For those families not actively receiving Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) benefits, North Carolina DHHS will send the P-EBT card to the address provided by the Department of Public Instruction as indicated in the child's school record.

## 9. What if my address is incorrect or I have moved?

**i** There are two categories of ways people will receive benefits and thus the answer varies:

- P-EBT families actively receiving Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) benefits will need to contact their caseworker to report the change of address and if needed, to reissue their EBT card via NC FAST.
- P-EBT families not actively receiving Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) benefits will not have benefits showing in NC FAST. Their benefits will be available in ebtEDGE and any updates to address and reissuance of card will need to be conducted in that system.

*It should be noted that undeliverable cards will be returned to the EBT vendor. Counties will receive a report of the undeliverable cards and someone will attempt to contact the family to get their card to them. These attempts will be made via the phone number on file for the child(ren) in the Department of Public Instruction's records, or through collaboration with your local school if the phone number on file is not correct.*

## 10. How much will I get in P-EBT benefits?

**i** Families will receive approximately \$371 in total P-EBT benefits per child, provided over two installments.

# of Children Eligible for Free or Reduced Lunch	1st Allotment (34 Days)	2nd Allotment (31 Days)
1 child	\$194	\$177
2 children	\$388	\$353
3 children	\$581	\$530
4 children	\$775	\$707
5 children	\$969	\$884
6 children	\$1,163	\$1060

*The first allotment accounts for closed school days in March and April 2020. The second allotment accounts for closed school days, May 1 – June 12th, 2020.*

### 11. How long will this program last and how long will I have to use benefits?

**i** Families will receive approximately \$371 in total P-EBT benefits per child, provided over two installments. Unused benefits will rollover month-to-month and must be used within 365 days.

### 12. What happens if school closures are expanded by the Governor?

**i** Currently, benefits are calculated based on school closures through June 12th, 2020.

### 13. What if I do not want P-EBT benefits?

**i** Families should destroy the P-EBT card. If they change their mind, they may call the EBT call center at 1-888-622-7328 to request a replacement card at any time prior to the expiration of the benefits. Counties should document the client does not wish to participate and was instructed to destroy the P-EBT card on the P-EBT Log.

### 14. How do I activate my P-EBT card?

**i** Families receiving a P-EBT card will need to create a Personal Identification Number (PIN) to activate the card. Applicants may log into [www.ebtEdge.com](http://www.ebtEdge.com), utilize the ebtEDGE mobile app, or call 1-888-622-7328 to complete this process.

*The family will be asked to enter the date of birth of the youngest school age child receiving free or reduced lunch in the household prior to creating the PIN.*

*For example: The household consists of 2 school age children; one is 13 years old (DOB: 04/04/2007) and one is 15 years old (DOB: 01/01/2005) and both receive free or reduced lunch through school. To create the PIN, the family would enter the date of birth for the 13 year-old (04042007). The user will then be prompted to create a unique PIN.*

Note: If there are multiple children in your household it may be necessary to try each child's date of birth to successfully activate your P-EBT card.

## 15. I did not get a P-EBT card and believe I should have. What do I do?

- i** • If the household is on the report as being approved for P-EBT: The list was generated from information obtained from the Department of Public Instruction. There is no application process for the P-EBT through the Department of Social Services, applicants must apply for and be approved to receive free or reduced-price meals under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act. The household must contact the child's school to apply for free and reduced-price meals.
- If the household is not on the report as being approved for P-EBT and wants a hearing: Hearing rights are not applicable to this special issuance because the household did not make an application for P-EBT benefits through the department of social services. The information was based on the application for free or reduced meals through DPI (<https://www.dpi.nc.gov>). The household must contact the school for further information about free or reduced meals eligibility.
- If the household is listed on the report as being issued a card but it went to someone other than the individual that is stating the children are living with them: The list was generated from information obtained from the Department of Public Instruction. If the information is incorrect the client will need to contact the local school to correct the information for future reference. There is no application process for the P-EBT through the Department of Social Services, applicants must apply for and be approved to receive free or reduced-price meals under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act. The household will need to contact the person that received the card and have them provide the card to the person the child(ren) are currently living. The household must contact the child's school to apply for free and reduced-price meals.

## 16. My child attends a charter school, will I receive P-EBT benefits for him/her?

- i** If your children receive free and reduced lunch through an NC charter school that participates in the national free and reduced lunch program, they should receive P-EBT benefits  
If your children receive free and reduced lunch through an NC charter school that participates in the national free and reduced lunch program, they should receive P-EBT benefits.

## 17. My child attends a private school. Will I receive P-EBT benefits for him/her?

- i** P-EBT is only for children that participate in the national free and reduced lunch program. Eligibility is pulled from the Department of Public Instruction records from that program.

## 18. I homeschool my child. Will I receive P-EBT benefits for him/her?

- i** No. Only schools participating in the federal free and reduced lunch program are included in the P-EBT program. Eligibility is pulled from the Department of Public Instruction records from that program.

**19. My child is in a Head Start Program and qualifies for meals through CACFP. Will Head Start students receive P-EBT benefits or does that only apply to students in public schools?**

**i** *Head Start programs are not included, however it should be noted that some Pre-Ks are. If the Pre-K is in a grade school participating in the federal free and reduced lunch program and those children in the Pre-K are included in that program, those children will be eligible and receive P-EBT benefits. As well, P-EBT is only for those children eligible for free or reduced-price meals under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act, which is separate from the USDA Child Nutrition Program-CACFP.*

**20. I did not complete a free or reduced lunch application this past school year, but my child has received free or reduced lunch in previous school years. Will I receive P-EBT benefits for him/her?**

**i** *No. The information generated from the Department of Public Instruction is from the 2019-2020 school year. The child must be enrolled in a participating school during that school year to be considered eligible for P-EBT benefits. Families may contact their local school for enrollment options and eligibility for free or reduced lunch.*

**21. I have more than one child enrolled in free or reduced lunch. Will I receive one card or individual cards for each child?**

**i** *The Department of Health and Human Services will utilize data contained in the Department of Public Instruction file to confirm sibling sets and consolidate "household" records as much as possible. Children in the same household should be issued on one card in the Head of Household's name as indicated in the information sent from the Department of Public Instruction.*

*Exception: Foster children in congregate care will have the same address, however they will not be linked as a household and would receive individual cards. There also may be instances with siblings in the same household that do not consolidate correctly via DPI data. In these cases, households may receive individual cards.*

**22. Will children receiving free lunches in a school that the entire school receives free lunches and the parents did not fill out any paperwork for the free lunches receive P-EBT?**

**i** *Yes, these students will receive P-EBT. These are Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) schools and the students are eligible to receive P-EBT benefits. These schools are part of the amended National School Lunch Program.*

**23. How does this affect children in foster care?**

**i** *All children who normally have access to free and reduced lunch at school are eligible for P-EBT benefits. This includes children in foster care as reported by their school. The P-EBT card for children in foster care will go to the address as reported within the child's school record.*

*Foster children in congregate care will have the same address, however they will not be linked as a household and would receive individual cards.*

## 24. Can I buy hot foods with my P-EBT benefits?

**i** No. The Notice for P-EBT has examples of items that can and cannot be purchased with the P-EBT card.

## 25. What is the ID requirement for using the P-EBT card at the grocery store?

**i** The Grocery Retailers Association is aware of the process for P-EBT and have been informed of the card design as well as benefit projections. By federal statute, retailers cannot ask for ID for EBT purchases if they do not request ID on regular debit card purchases.

## 26. Does this replace the current COVID-19 supplements, other FNS benefits, or meals families may be receiving at this time?

**i** No. P-EBT benefits are in addition to other services and benefits families may be participating in currently. We encourage families to continue utilizing local school and community meal sites for free, nutritious meals for children. Families can text FOODNC to 877-877 to find local meal sites. The service is also available in Spanish by texting COMIDA to 877-877.

## 27. Why can't I get my card and notice from the school?

**i** The USDA has indicated that the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services is the authority for administering P-EBT benefits. While there is collaboration to streamline eligibility with the Department of Public Instruction, the USDA has indicated schools should not be administering P-EBT benefits.

## 28. Does this cost anything?

**i** There is no cost to the recipient as the P-EBT benefit is entirely federally funded. The State does not provide any of the cost of P-EBT benefits but does incur some modest costs to operationalize the program.

## 29. Do I have to pay these benefits back?

**i** No. Families who receive P-EBT benefits will not have to pay back the benefits.

## 30. What if the family has more questions or needs additional resource information?

**i** North Carolinians can call 2-1-1 or 888-892-1162, 24 hours a day to speak to an NC 211 call specialist. NC 211 has up-to-date resources and information to help people through these difficult times. NC 211 will link callers to resources such as food pantries and distributions, state government resources, mental health and healthcare assistance, general information on COVID 19, and current information on closures and government notices. Calls to 211 are free and confidential and the service is available in most languages. The NC 211 resource database can also be searched on-line at [www.nc211.org](http://www.nc211.org).