



Updated July 10, 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?

Children in Head Start and 4K-12 students 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. Children enrolled in Head Start and 4K programs operated outside of public schools are not eligible for 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 South Carolina public and private schools participating in the National School Lunch Program, including CEP schools, 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. Are 4K students eligible for P-EBT?

Children who attend a 4K program in a CEP school or are enrolled in free or reduced-price meals are eligible for P-EBT. Please check the list of participating schools on the DSS website. Children enrolled in 4K programs operated by private child care facilities are not eligible for P-EBT.

7. Are Head Start children eligible for P-EBT?

Children who attend a Head Start program in a CEP school or are enrolled in free or reduced-price meals are eligible for P-EBT. Please check the list of participating schools on the DSS website. Children enrolled in Head Start programs operated outside a public school are not eligible for P-EBT.

8. 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.

9. What if all the children in my SNAP household did not receive a P-EBT benefit on my current EBT card?

If one or more children in your SNAP household did not receive a P-EBT benefit, it may be because the child's demographic information could not be matched with data provided by the SC Department of Education. If you believe a child(ren) in your household is eligible for P-EBT and you did not receive a benefit with your monthly SNAP allotment, please verify that your address is correct by accessing the [DSS P-EBT Address Verification Portal](#) by July 19th, 2020. If your address in the portal needs to be updated or changed, once you do that a P-EBT card will be mailed to your address between July 20th and July 24th.

If you are unable to verify your address in the DSS P-EBT Address Verification Portal please email PEBTBenefits@dss.sc.gov. DSS will review the case and if it is determined that the child meets the eligibility criteria, a P-EBT card will be mailed to your address between July 20th and July 24th.

10. 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.

11. What if my address has changed since March and I did not update it with my child's school?

DSS has implemented an address verification portal on our website (www.dss.sc.gov) for households eligible for P-EBT benefits to verify and/or update your current mailing address. **Any changes or updates you make to your**

address on the [DSS P-EBT Address Portal](#) will only be used for the purposes of P-EBT. Updating your address on the DSS Address Portal **will not** update your address on file with your child's school or on a current SNAP case. If an address change is necessary, please remember to contact your child's school to amend your address for the upcoming school year and/or notify your local county DSS office to update the address on an active SNAP case.

DSS strongly encourages ALL households with potentially eligible students to validate their address in the [DSS P-EBT Address Portal](#) on or before July 19th, particularly if they have moved since the start of the 2019-2020 school year.

12. If I received SNAP a few months ago, but haven't recently, will I get a new card or will the funds be added to that old card?

If your SNAP case is closed as of July 6th, your child will receive their P-EBT benefit as a non-SNAP recipient. A P-EBT card will be mailed to the address on file with your child's school district.

13. 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.

14. 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.

15. 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.

16. 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.

17. Will I receive a P-EBT benefit for a foster child living in my home?

Children in foster care who meet the eligibility criteria for P-EBT will receive a benefit. If a child in foster care was enrolled in a free or reduced-price (FRP) meals program or attending a CEP school as of March 13, 2020 and is living in your home as of July 20th, the P-EBT benefit will be mailed to your address on July 24th. P-EBT cards will be issued in the name of the qualifying child.

18. 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)

19. 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.

20. 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.

21. 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>



22. When will my P-EBT benefit expire?

P-EBT benefits expire one year (365 days) after issuance.

23. 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.

24. 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.

25. 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.

26. 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>.