



D.C. Hunger Solutions

Ending hunger in the nation's capital

Pandemic-EBT Frequently Asked Questions

What is Pandemic-EBT (P-EBT)?

Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) provides benefits to purchase foods to families who have lost access to free school meals due to COVID-19 related school closures. Benefits are retroactive to when schools initially closed. P-EBT is a [federal program](#) and is administered locally by the [D.C. Department of Human Services](#) (DHS).

How do I qualify?

All households with students in pre-kindergarten to twelfth grade receiving free school meals at D.C. Public Schools and public charter schools are eligible for P-EBT. This includes income-eligible families who have submitted a Free and Reduced-priced Meals (FARM) application, families receiving SNAP (formerly Food Stamps) or TANF (cash assistance), and all families with students attending a [Community Eligibility Provision \(CEP\) school](#). If someone in your household recently lost a job or wages, you might be newly eligible for P-EBT. Please [apply for SNAP benefits](#) or contact your school to complete a FARM application.

U.S. citizenship is not a requirement for P-EBT eligibility. Participation in P-EBT is not considered in a Public Charge test. Non-U.S. citizen students and mixed citizenship households residing in the District of Columbia are encouraged to apply for and use P-EBT benefits.

Do I need to apply to receive P-EBT benefits?

No. If your child already receives free or reduced-priced school meals, you are automatically enrolled in P-EBT, and benefits will be mailed to you. If someone in your household recently lost a job or wages, you might be newly eligible for P-EBT. Please [apply for SNAP benefits](#) or contact your school to complete a FARM application.

Unsure if you are already enrolled? Contact DHS's P-EBT Call Center at (202) 868-6663, Monday - Friday from 7:30am - 4:45pm.

How will I receive the P-EBT benefits?

If your family receives SNAP benefits on an EBT card, P-EBT benefits will be automatically uploaded onto your current EBT card. If your family does not already receive SNAP benefits, a new EBT card loaded with your P-EBT benefits will be mailed to you.

How much money will I receive?

Each household will receive \$5.70 per eligible student per school day, or \$28.50 per eligible student per week. This is the amount of federal reimbursement schools receive for each free breakfast and lunch served. P-EBT benefits will be provided to families retroactively to when D.C. schools closed on March 16, 2020 and will extend to June 19, 2020. Families who have become newly eligible will receive benefits for the full month that they applied in. For example, a family who applies for benefits on April 12, 2020 will receive benefits for all of April, all of May, and through June 19, 2020.

All P-EBT benefits for your family will be issued at one time. Benefits will expire one year after date of transfer.

How do I use my P-EBT card?

After activating your P-EBT card, you can use your card like you would any debit card at authorized stores. Benefits will roll over month to month, and families do not need to use all of their P-EBT benefits at once. Benefits will expire one year after date of transfer.

- Households that receive a new EBT card with P-EBT benefits will need to activate their EBT card before they can start purchasing food. To activate the EBT card they will need to:
 - Call 888-304-9167 to activate their new card.
 - When prompted to enter the primary card holder's date of birth, enter the birthdate of their oldest child in the household who received free or reduced-price meals.
 - When prompted to enter the last four digits of the primary card holder's social security number, type 0000.
- For example, a non-SNAP or TANF household that has three children who received free and reduced-price meals will receive a new EBT card with P-EBT benefits. When they call to activate the new card, they will be prompted to enter the primary card holder's date of birth. As the oldest child in the household who receives free or reduced-priced meals has a birthdate of April 4, 2010, the household will enter 04042010. The household will then be prompted to enter the last four digits of the primary card holder's social security number, instead they will need to type 0000.

Will this affect my ability to receive other benefits like SNAP or WIC?

No. P-EBT benefits will not count towards income eligibility for other benefits like SNAP, WIC, cash assistance, etc.

Where can I purchase food using my P-EBT benefits?

P-EBT will be accepted at all SNAP-EBT authorized stores. In D.C., this includes most grocery stores, some farmers' markets, convenience, and big box stores.

D.C. has been approved for [online SNAP ordering and delivery](#) which went live on May 13. [Amazon](#) is currently the only approved vendor to accept SNAP-EBT, but DHS is currently working on onboarding additional stores. Once implemented, P-EBT benefits can also be used for online grocery order and delivery anywhere SNAP-EBT is accepted.

What foods can I purchase with my P-EBT benefits?

P-EBT benefits can be used to buy most food items with some exceptions. P-EBT benefits **cannot** be used to buy prepared foods, vitamins, alcohol/tobacco, and non-food items (like soap or toothpaste).

Does P-EBT replace grab & go meal sites?

No. P-EBT benefits supplement grab and go meal sites. They do not replace them. Families can find a meal site in their community at coronavirus.dc.gov/food.

Questions?

For more information about P-EBT benefits, [view this helpful FAQ](#) or contact the **P-EBT Call Center** at **(202) 868-6663, Monday - Friday from 7:30 am - 4:45 pm.**

I still need help!

If you have questions about P-EBT or what additional benefits or programs you may qualify for, call D.C. Hunger Solutions at (202) 640-1088.