



**D.C. Hunger Solutions**

Ending hunger in the nation's capital

# Back to School Nutrition Toolkit



## **School Year 2022-2023 Back to School Nutrition Toolkit**

*This toolkit was designed to provide important, up to date information on federal nutrition assistance programs to assist Councilmembers, Community Partners, Nonprofit Organizations, and other advocacy organizations with knowledge on the current state of food in D.C.*

*As District of Columbia students head back to school, there is important information regarding School Meals, Pandemic EBT, SNAP, Afterschool Programs, and other federal nutrition programs necessary for a healthy and successful school year.*

*With our focus on marrying policy with practice and in all aspects of our work, D.C. Hunger Solutions engages a diverse set of stakeholders – city and federal government agencies, community-based and faith-based organizations, businesses, students and families, and anti-hunger and anti-poverty advocates. Our work reduces hunger, boosts family economic security, improves health and learning, and brings federal dollars into the District.*

### **About D.C. Hunger Solutions**

*D.C. Hunger Solutions, founded in 2002 as an initiative of the Food Research & Action Center (FRAC), works to end hunger in the nation's capital and improve the nutrition, health, economic security, and well-being of low-income District residents.*

*D.C. Hunger Solutions utilizes a three-pronged strategy to overcome barriers and create self-sustaining connections between city residents and nutritious food. Specifically, we:*

- Improve public policies to end hunger, reduce poverty, promote nutrition, curb obesity, and increase the availability of healthy, affordable food in low-income areas.*
- Maximize participation in all federal nutrition programs (SNAP, school meals, early childhood nutrition programs, WIC, and summer meals) through a combination of outreach, removal of obstacles to participation, and close work with social service agencies.*
- Educate the public and key audiences both to the stark reality of hunger's existence in the midst of plenty and to solutions that are already at hand.*



## **Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT)**

### **Childcare P-EBT 2021-2022**

Children who were under 6 as of September 30, 2021 and were part of a household participating in SNAP will receive P-EBT benefits between August 30, 2021, and August 20, 2022. Total amount of P-EBT benefits for SY2022 anticipated by the District is \$602.02 per child. Students who turn 6 before September 30, 2021, will be designated as “school-age” children and ineligible for P-EBT for Childcare-age Children.

For children that are in childcare and currently receive SNAP, the District will issue the P-EBT benefits on the household’s existing SNAP EBT card. Unused P-EBT benefits will be expunged after 274 days of non-usage.

### **Summer P-EBT for School Age and Childcare Age 2021-2022**

A single issuance for all summer payments will go out August – September 2022. Total Summer P-EBT benefits for 2022 anticipated by the District is \$391.00 per child. School age children eligible for Summer P-EBT benefits include families with completed FARM applications before August 29, 2022, with approved or updated in SIS before September 15, 2022. Additionally, DC school age children over the age of 6 are eligible for Summer 2022 P-EBT benefits under the following circumstances:

- A child over the age of six should be, for SY2021- 2022, enrolled in a Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) School OR enrolled in a school that participates in the National School Lunch Program
- AND applied for Free and Reduced Price Meals (FARM) before August 29, 2022 (and become approved) OR
- Are categorically approved for FARM by their school (which includes students who are receiving SNAP and TANF)



## **Summer P-EBT for School Age and Childcare Age 2021-2022 (cont'd)**

*For childcare age under 6: The District will identify all SNAP-enrolled children who received P-EBT childcare benefits in the last month of the school year and have received SNAP benefits in at least 1 summer month (June, July, August). If a child over the age of 6 was not eligible in June, but their family experiences a change in income, their families can apply for Free and Reduced-price Meals (FARM) for Summer 2022 before August 29, 2022. If their child's school approves the application, they will receive summer P-EBT before October 2022.*

***Parents are encouraged to submit questions or concerns using the DHS P-EBT Online Form:***

***<https://forms.dc.gov/f/PEBTCardIssuesform>***

## **Pandemic EBT for 2022-2023 School Year**

*USDA has released guidance on Pandemic EBT for 2022-2023. Guidance remains the same as 2021-2022 (see above) with the exception of updated guidance for students attending virtual or home schools. Per USDA 2022-2023 Pandemic EBT Q&A's, students who attended a NSLP participating school at the beginning of the public health emergency declaration on January 27, 2020, but now attend a Non-NSLP participating school, a virtual school or homeschool, should be included in the 2022-2023 D.C. PEBT plans submitted to USDA, if they would have received free or reduced priced school meals.*

***\*District of Columbia has an option to include the above guidance in 2022-2023 plans\****

***As a reminder, District of Columbia must submit PEBT school year plans for either school age children or childcare age children (or both) in order for District children to receive 2023 Summer PEBT benefits. Based on Summer 2022, PEBT benefits would support an estimated 85,000 children living in low-income households distributing more than \$30M.***

*PEBT is a federal mandate based on the current federally declared public health emergency. District of Columbia students and children in childcare will continue to be eligible for these benefits as long as the federal designation is in place. Once the federal government declares the public health emergency is over, PEBT benefits will cease.*



## **School Meals**

The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) provides low or no-cost lunches to children and operates in nearly 100,000 public and nonprofit private schools (grades Pre-Kindergarten-12) and residential childcare institutions. During the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, USDA Food and Nutrition Services adopted several waivers and flexibilities allowing school meals (lunch and breakfast) to be served at no-cost.

This 2022-2023 school year, the waivers and flexibilities have not been extended, which means school meals will no longer be served to students at no-cost. However, schools who have adopted the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) will still serve meals to students at no-cost. Please review this list to see if your District of Columbia Public School student is or will be attending a CEP Participating School.

There are many students attending D.C. Public Schools and D.C. Public Charter Schools who qualify for free and reduced lunch. For D.C. Public School Students, to determine eligibility for free and reduced lunch, a student must meet one of the following requirements:

- Attend a CEP participating school OR
- Qualify via direct certification (students receiving SNAP or TANF benefits, children in foster care, or children who identify as unhoused, migrant, or runaway) OR
- Have completed a Free and Reduced Meal Application (FARM).

## **Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)**

WIC Cash Value benefits for fruits and vegetables purchase will increase on October 1st 2022. Consistent with WIC regulations, USDA FNS is providing WIC State agencies with the anticipated FY 2023 CVV/B inflation-adjusted amounts. Effective on the first day of FY 2023 (October 1, 2022), the CVV/B amounts will increase to \$25 for child participants, \$44 for pregnant and postpartum participants, and \$49 for fully and partially breastfeeding participants.



## **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)**

*Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provides nutrition benefits to supplement the food budget of income eligible individuals (even if you are working), families, older adults/seniors, persons experiencing homelessness, persons with a disability, many immigrants including children 18 and under, and citizen children in mixed status families. SNAP helps constituents purchase healthy food and move towards self-sufficiency. In 2019 USDA calculated that each dollar spent on SNAP generates \$2 of economic activity.*

*During COVID-19, U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has had enhanced authority from Congress to grant state SNAP agencies greater flexibility on enrollment procedures. In new policy guidance, FNS has clarified that, even after the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency Declaration (PHE) and its enhanced authority ends, it can use its normal waiver authority to approve requests for continuation of some of those workarounds*

*District of Columbia SNAP-eligible households have been receiving emergency allotments bringing each case to the maximum benefit while the public health emergency is in place. As of September 2022, District of Columbia Dept. of Human Services has submitted a request to USDA FNS stating, "due to the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, district residents continue to experience economic impacts due to job suspensions or losses, and because the district's emergency declaration remains active, the 89,000 eligible households currently receiving SNAP emergency allotments (total of \$14M per month) should continue."*

