

P-EBT Announcement Talking Points and FAQs

About P-EBT Overall Talking Points:

- North Carolina has received approval from the USDA to begin a new Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) Program. This program will help families who have been impacted by school closings due to COVID-19 purchase food for their children.
- The program provides benefits on an EBT card to North Carolina families whose children, under the age of 18, would receive free and reduced lunch as part of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act at participating schools.
- P-EBT benefits will be issued from Department of Public Instruction files for children enrolled in the free and reduced lunch program. There is no application process to receive P-EBT benefits.
 - P-EBT eligible families *already* receiving Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) benefits will receive an additional benefit on their existing EBT card.
 - P-EBT eligible families *not already* enrolled in FNS will be mailed an EBT card in the next few weeks. Families who receive an EBT card will first receive a letter from DHHS in the mail explaining how to activate and use their card.
- Families will be able to use the P-EBT benefit to purchase food items at EBT authorized retailers, including most major grocery stores.
- Families will receive a total of around \$257 in P-EBT benefits per child, provided over two installments, with the possibility of an additional benefit if North Carolina schools are closed beyond May 15.
 - The first of these 2 installments will account for a higher percentage of the \$257 per child, as it will cover the school closure days in March and April. The second will be lower as it will only cover May.
- The new P-EBT program is in addition to other services families may be participating in.
 - As announced previously on March 30, 2020, all families that receive Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) will receive the maximum amount allowed for March and April 2020 for their household size.
 - Families are encouraged to continue utilizing feeding programs at 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.

P-EBT Frequently Asked Questions

What is P-EBT?

NCDHHS, working in collaboration with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, requested activation of the Pandemic Electronic Benefits program (P-EBT) program for North Carolina families to use during school closures. The P-EBT program 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 card will function like a standard EBT card, and the same guidelines will apply.

When will benefits be available?

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) is working to operationalize the program and P-EBT recipients will receive this benefit in the coming weeks. We will provide additional details to county DSS offices and school districts as they become available.

Who is eligible for P-EBT?

All families with one or more children in their household who normally receives free and reduced lunch at school are eligible for P-EBT. Due to school closures caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, these households are now eligible to receive a benefit on an EBT card to help them buy food for their children. It is not necessary to apply for the P-EBT program as the Department of Health and Human Services will use files received from the Department of Public Instruction to administer benefits.

Do families need to apply for the P-EBT program?

- Eligible families will not need to apply for the P-EBT program. P-EBT eligible families already receiving Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) benefits will receive an additional benefit on their existing EBT card in the next few weeks.
- P-EBT eligible families not already enrolled in FNS will be mailed a new EBT card in the next few weeks. Families who receive a new EBT card will first receive a letter from DHHS in the mail explaining how to activate and use their card.

What if a family does not want P-EBT benefits?

Families who do not wish to use P-EBT benefits may destroy the P-EBT card when received. If the family changes their minds, the benefits will be available for 365 days and the family may call the call center to request a replacement card.

How long will this program last?

Families will receive approximately \$257 in total P-EBT benefits per child, provided over two installments, with the possibility of an additional benefit if North Carolina schools are closed beyond May 15. Unused benefits will rollover month-to-month and must be used within 365 days.

Will this benefit replace current benefits or meals families may be receiving at this time?

This new P-EBT program is in addition to other services 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.

How much will families receive in benefits?

A family with 1 child will get \$194 for their first allotment and \$63 dollars for their 2nd.

# of Children Eligible for Free or Reduced Lunch	1st Allotment (34 Days)	2nd Allotment (11 Days)
1 child	\$194	\$63
2 children	\$388	\$125
3 children	\$581	\$188
4 children	\$775	\$251
5 children	\$969	\$314
6 children	\$1,163	\$376

The first allotment accounts for closed school days in March and April 2020. The second allotment accounts for closed school days, May 1-May 15, 2020. If school closures are extended, additional allotments will be considered.

What if my family has moved recently?

The Department of Health and Human Services is utilizing the address indicated in the Department of Public Instruction’s files for public school children. If the address associated with your child’s school record is no longer correct, the undelivered EBT card may be returned to the Department of Health and Human Services’ EBT Vendor. Counties will receive a report of the undeliverable cards and someone will attempt to contact you to get your EBT card to you. These attempts will be made via the phone number on file for your child in the Department of Public Instruction’s records, or through collaboration with your local school if the phone number on file isn’t correct.

What do I do if I have the children, but someone else received the P-EBT card for them?

The information used to issue P-EBT benefits was obtained from the Department of Public Instruction. If the information is incorrect, please contact the local school to correct the information for future reference. 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.

Will I have to pay this back?

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

How will I know if I got P-EBT benefits?

P-EBT eligible families already receiving Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) benefits will receive an additional benefit on their existing EBT card.

P-EBT eligible families not already enrolled in FNS will be mailed a new, white P-EBT card in the next few weeks.

What if my child goes to a school that is entirely free lunch?

All students who receive free and reduced lunch are eligible for P-EBT benefits, including those who attend a Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) school.