

# NCDHHS to Provide Additional Food Benefits for More than 800,000 Children Impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic

Raleigh

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Governor Roy Cooper announced today that North Carolina has been approved for the new Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) program, to help families purchase food for children impacted by school closings due to COVID-19. NCDHHS is working to operationalize the program and families will begin to receive this benefit in coming weeks.

“So many families are in need, especially with so many out of work right now. This approval helps people get assistance faster to feed their families,” said Governor Cooper.

The program provides a benefit on an EBT card to North Carolina families whose children are eligible for free and reduced lunch at school. Families will receive \$250 in P-EBT benefits per child, provided in two installments, with the possibility of an additional benefit if North Carolina schools are closed beyond May 15. 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 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. 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 receive a letter from DHHS in the mail explaining how to activate and use their card.

“As our schools closed, many families across the state worried about where their next meals would come from—and we knew we had to take action,” said NC Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Mandy Cohen, M.D. “The P-EBT program will provide extra help buying groceries for the families of the more than 800,000 children who normally receive free and reduced lunch at school.”

North Carolina is one of the first four states to receive federal approval from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to provide P-EBT benefits, which are entirely federally funded.

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.