

NCDHHS Urges Congress to Extend P-EBT

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The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services is requesting Congressional support to extend the [Pandemic-Electronic Benefit Transfer](#) (P-EBT) program to provide food for children beyond the traditional school calendar year. Extending P-EBT benefits through the summer months would help provide the families of nearly half of North Carolina school children about \$250 in additional support per child to buy groceries.

“One of the challenges of COVID-19 is making sure our children have the nutritious meals they need to thrive while schools are closed,” said NCDHHS Secretary Mandy Cohen, M.D. “That need doesn’t go away at the end of the school year, and neither should food assistance for families.”

Secretary Cohen has written a [letter](#) to the NC Congressional delegation urging them to support extending P-EBT through the summer as families continue to struggle from the economic disruption caused by the COVID-19 emergency. Currently, states are not authorized to provide P-EBT benefits beyond the end of the state school year (June 12 in North Carolina).

North Carolina was one of the first states to take advantage of the USDA’s P-EBT program, securing federal funding for the families of nearly 900,000 children who receive free and reduced lunch. This program has provided critical help feeding children since schools closed in March due to COVID-19, and families have received about \$370 per child to buy groceries and support good nutrition.

If P-EBT benefits were to be extended through the summer for two additional months at the current benefit levels, North Carolina would receive more than \$200 million in critical help to families with school-aged children throughout the state. Without Congressional action, the funding will end in June.

For more information, read Secretary Cohen’s [full letter](#) to the NC Congressional delegation. To learn more about P-EBT in North Carolina, visit [covid19.ncdhhs.gov/information/human-services/pandemic-electronic-benefit-transfer-p-ebt-program](https://www.covid19.ncdhhs.gov/information/human-services/pandemic-electronic-benefit-transfer-p-ebt-program).