

Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT) – COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions

Updated October 18, 2023

Q1: What is P-EBT?

A1: Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT) is a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) program designed to provide cash benefits on an EBT card to be used to purchase food. This program is in response to the COVID-19 public health emergency. The purpose of the program is to provide benefits to children on free and reduced-price meals who lost access to food due to school closures and adjusted schedules during the 2022-2023 school year and the 2023 summer period.

2022-2023 Child Care Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT)

Q2: Who is eligible for the 2021-2022 Children in Child Care P-EBT benefits?

A2: Nebraska SNAP families with children, under the age of six, are eligible for 2022-2023 Child Care P-EBT benefits if the children received SNAP benefits in the month benefits are being issued. A child may not receive the 2022-2023 school year P-EBT and 2022-2023 Child Care P-EBT for the same month.

Q3: What is the 2022-2023 Children in Child Care P-EBT benefit amount?

A3: The benefit will be \$21 per child for each eligible month for the Fall semester months (August – December 2022). The benefit amount for the Spring semester months (January – May 2022) will be \$21 monthly for Jan-April 2023, and May 2023 will be \$11.00.

Q4: How will the 2022-2023 Children in Child Care P-EBT benefits be issued?

A4: DHHS will send 2022-2023 Children in Child Care P-EBT benefits to SNAP households with children under the age of six. Children must be participating in SNAP the month benefits are being issued.

Q5: How will families receive 2022-2023 Children in Child Care P-EBT benefits?

A5: The 2022-2023 Children in Child Care P-EBT benefits will be issued directly to their SNAP EBT card.

Q6: When will the 2022-2023 Children in Child Care benefits be issued?

A6: The first issuance of 2022-2023 Children in Child Care P-EBT benefits will occur on May 17, 2023, for August through December 2022. The second issuance of 2022-2023 Children in Child Care P-EBT will occur on July 20, 2023, for January through May 2023.

Q7: If the family did not receive P-EBT benefits and they feel they were eligible, who can they contact?

A7: If the family received SNAP benefits for the eligibility month, please send an email to DHHS.NebraskaPEBT@nebraska.gov. Please include the following information in the email: the parent's name, Master Case Number, address, email address, phone number, child's name, and child's date of birth.

Summer 2023 Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT)

Q8: Who is eligible for 2023 Summer P-EBT benefits?

A8: SNAP and non-SNAP school-age children are eligible for 2023 Summer P-EBT benefits if they were approved for free or reduced-price meals for the last month of school (May 2023).

Q9: What is the 2023 Summer P-EBT benefit amount?

A9: The 2023 Summer P-EBT benefit amount will be \$120 per eligible child. This is a one-time payment covering the summer period.

Q10: When will 2023 Summer P-EBT benefits be issued?

A10: 2023 Summer P-EBT benefits will be issued after the eligibility information is received from the schools. The issuance of 2023 Summer P-EBT benefits will occur on the following dates:

- School Children – Omaha Metro area: September 12, 2023.
- School Children – All other districts: September 14, 2023.

Q11: How will the 2023 Summer benefits be issued?

A11: If possible, the 2023 Summer P-EBT benefits for school-age children will be added to P-EBT cards issued to families during the previous school years. New P-EBT cards will be issued to families if their address information or parent contact information has changed or if they are newly eligible. All efforts are made to issue benefits to existing P-EBT cards.

2022-2023 School-Age Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT)

Q12: Who is eligible for P-EBT?

A12: Nebraska families are eligible for P-EBT benefits if:

- Children have been determined eligible by their school for free or reduced-price meals for the 2022-2023 school year.
- Attend a school that has met the criteria for P-EBT eligibility by having a COVID-related absence, closure, or reduced attendance or hours for at least 5 consecutive days; and,
- Had an eligible COVID-19 absence from school and can verify if needed.

Q13: My Children receive free or reduced-price meals, are they eligible?

A13: Certain eligibility requirements must be met to be eligible for P-EBT benefits. Benefits will be issued to students who:

- Have been determined eligible for free or reduced-price school meals by application or directly certified through SNAP, TANF, or Medicaid eligibility for the 2022-2023 school year;
- Attend a school that has met the criteria for P-EBT eligibility by having a COVID-related absence, closure, or reduced attendance or hours for at least 5 consecutive days; and,
- Had an eligible COVID-19 absence from school and can verify if needed.

Due to these circumstances, the student would not have access to food at school, and therefore, could be eligible for a P-EBT payment.

Q14: What is the P-EBT benefit amount?

A14: Nebraska is utilizing the average number of school days closed for all Nebraska schools to determine monthly benefits. The benefits will be \$139 monthly per student who has 16+ days of COVID-19-related absences, \$82 monthly for 6-15 days of COVID-19-related absences, and \$25 monthly for 1-5 days of COVID-19-related absences.

Q15: Is the \$139/\$82/\$25 a total amount for the 2022-2023 school year?

A15: The \$139/\$82/\$25 is the monthly amount per child. Eligibility for P-EBT will be determined monthly based on the number of missed school days. The total amount is determined based on the number of COVID-19-related absences a student had per month. The benefits will be \$139 per student who has 16+ days of COVID-19-related absences, \$82 for 6-15 days of COVID-19-related absences, and \$25 for 1-5 days of COVID-19-related absences.

Example: A child who had 16+ days of COVID-19-related absences each month in the fall semester would receive \$695 for the first issuance in June (\$139 times five months).

| Months of eligibility reported by NDE | Dates benefits issued to EBT and P-EBT Cards | 1-5 days absent | 6-15 days absent | 16 + days absent |
|---|--|-----------------|------------------|------------------|
| Fall Semester (August – December 2022) | June 22 | \$25 | \$82 | \$139 |
| Spring Semester (January – May 11, 2023) | August 15 | \$25 | \$82 | \$139 |

*Issuance dates are subject to change. This document will be updated if changes occur.

Q16: How will the benefits be issued?

A16: P-EBT benefits will be issued monthly based on data received from the Nebraska Department of

Education (NDE) and the school districts. The first issuance will occur on June 22.

Q17: How do I activate the P-EBT card?

A17: To activate the P-EBT card, please call the number on the back of the card (877-247-6328). When it asks for the primary cardholder's date of birth, enter the 8-digit date of birth for the oldest child receiving free or reduced-price lunches. For example, if the child's date of birth is January 1, 2010, enter 01/01/2010. The automated prompt will then ask for the primary cardholder's zip code. Enter the zip code of the address where the card was mailed. The prompt will ask you to select a PIN. Once the PIN is set, the card will be activated and ready to use.

* Note: If the oldest child's date of birth does not activate the card, please try the birthdates of the other children.

Q18: Will households receive a new P-EBT card?

A18: If possible, P-EBT benefits will be added to P-EBT cards issued to families during previous school years. New P-EBT cards will be issued to families if their address information or parent contact information has changed or if they are newly eligible. All efforts are made to issue benefits to existing P-EBT cards.

Q19: How will families receive P-EBT benefits?

A19: An all-white P-EBT card will be mailed to them. Important: They must have their address registered with the post office to receive the P-EBT card.

Q20: Is there an application process?

A20: Not for children attending school. P-EBT benefits will be issued from information received directly from the schools and the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE). See below for additional information for homeschooled students.

Q21: Will this affect a family's ability to receive other benefits?

A21: No, it will not. These benefits replace school meals and are for families that receive free and reduced-price school meals.

Q22: How long do families have to spend P-EBT benefits?

A22: Families can use P-EBT benefits for 274 days, or 9 months. The time starts when the family makes their first purchase. If a purchase is never made, the time starts when the benefits are issued. If you do not spend your benefits after 274 days they will be removed permanently from your P-EBT account.

Q23: Are P-EBT benefits based solely on free and reduced-price meals through the schools or will there be additional income guidelines?

A23: There are no additional income guidelines.

Q24: If the family did not receive P-EBT benefits and they feel they were eligible, who can they contact?

A24: Benefits are for students eligible for free and reduced-price meals that attended a school that had a COVID-related absence, closure, or reduced attendance/hours for at least 5 consecutive days. If those two criteria apply to the student and a family believes their student is eligible, a reconsideration process will be done on a case-by-case basis. A reconsideration request must be received by October 18, 2023 by 5:00 pm

Program staff will verify the school's eligibility was met and will request verification of the student's COVID-related absence for reconsideration to be completed. If approved, benefits will be issued to students based on the number of COVID-related days they were absent (please review the chart provided in question 5).

Please include the parent's first and last name, address, phone number, email address, children's first and last names, and birthdates, school, school district, and summary of the issue in an email to DHHS.NebraskaPEBT@nebraska.gov.

Students who are attending school in-person full-time would not be eligible for P-EBT, as they are receiving meals at the school.

Q25: What can families buy with P-EBT benefits?

A25: Your P-EBT benefits can buy food at grocery stores and farmer's markets that accept SNAP EBT and purchase groceries online at Amazon, Aldi, and Walmart.

Use your P-EBT card like a debit card:

- Select "EBT".
- Swipe the card.
- Enter your private PIN.

Q26: Can P-EBT cards be sold for cash?

A26: P-EBT benefits cannot be sold or traded. Selling P-EBT benefits could cause you to be ineligible to receive benefits in the future.

Fully Virtual/Homeschooled 2022-2023 School-Age Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT)

Q28: Who is eligible for fully virtual/homeschooled P-EBT Benefits?

A28: School-age children are eligible for these P-EBT benefits if they enrolled in a fully virtual learning environment or were homeschooled in response to the COVID-19 public health emergency as of January 27, 2020. The children also have to meet the eligibility requirements for free and reduced-priced meals as they would have when attending an NSLP-participating school.

Q29: What is the P-EBT benefit amount for fully virtual/homeschooled students?

A29: P-EBT benefit amounts will be \$139 per month per eligible child for August 2022 thru April 2023, and \$74.00 for May 2023 due to the public health emergency ending on May 11, 2023.

Q30: How can I apply for my homeschooled/virtual student?

A30: A homeschooled/fully virtual application will be available on the DHHS P-EBT website on May 19, 2023, thru June 22, 2023.

Q31: When will benefits be issued?

A31: P-EBT benefits will be issued on August 15, 2023, for August 2022 thru May 11, 2023.

| Months of eligibility | Dates benefits issued to P-EBT Cards | August 2022-April 2023 | May 1-11, 2023 |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------|
| August 2022 – May 11, 2023 | August 15, 2023 | \$139.00 | \$74.00 |