

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

Updated June 24, 2022

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 2021-2022 school year.

Q2: Who is eligible for P-EBT?

A2: 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 2021-2022 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 provide verification if needed.

Q3: My Children receive free or reduced-price meals, are they eligible?

A3: To be eligible for P-EBT benefits different eligibility requirements have to be met. 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 2021-2022 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 provide verification 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.

Q4: What is the P-EBT benefit amount?

A4: Nebraska is utilizing the average number of school days closed for all Nebraska schools to determine monthly benefits. The benefits will be \$121 monthly per student who has 16+ days of COVID-19 related absences, \$71 monthly for 6-15 days of COVID-19 related absences, and \$21 monthly for 1-5 days of COVID-19 related absences.

Q5: Is the \$121/\$71/\$21 a total amount for the 2021-2022 school year?

A5: The \$121/\$71/\$21 is the monthly amount per child. Eligibility for P-EBT will be determined monthly based on the number of missed school days. Issuances will be monthly and will include three months of benefits. The total amount is determined based on the number of COVID-19 related absences a student had per month. The benefits will be \$121 per student who has 16+ days of COVID-19 related absences, \$71 for 6-15 days of COVID-19 related absences, and \$21 for 1-5 days of COVID-19 related absences.

Example: A child who had 16+ days of COVID-19 related absences each month in August will get \$121, September \$121, and October \$121 for a total disbursement of \$363 for the first issuance in April.

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
August – October	April 20	\$21	\$71	\$121
November – January	May 19	\$21	\$71	\$121
February and March	June 16	\$21	\$71	\$121
April and May	August 16	\$21	\$71	\$121

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

Q6: How will the benefits be issued?

A6: 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 April 20.

Q7: How do I activate the P-EBT card?

A7: 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.

Q8: My school provided the summer eligibility after the deadline. Will we receive Summer P-EBT?

A8: Yes, Summer P-EBT funds will be issued to those families that were reported as eligible. Corrected Summer P-EBT will be issued on March 11 for \$375 per eligible child.

Q9: Will households receive a new P-EBT card?

A9: P-EBT benefits will be added to P-EBT cards issued to families during the 2020-2021 school year if possible. 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.

Q10: How will families receive P-EBT benefits?

A10: 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.

Q11: Is there an application process?

A11: No. P-EBT benefits will be issued from information received directly from the schools and the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE).

Q12: Are families that currently receive free breakfast and lunch from the school going to be eligible for this program?

A12: Many families are receiving free meals for the current school year through the extension of the Summer Food Program. Households eligible for P-EBT must have been determined eligible for free or reduced meals through the National School Lunch Program at their school and must meet the other eligibility factors.

Q13: Will this affect a family's ability to receive other benefits?

A13: No, it will not. These benefits replace school meals and are for families that receive free and reduced-price school meals.

Q14: How long do families have to spend P-EBT benefits?

A14: 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 year starts when the benefits are issued.

Q15: Are P-EBT benefits based solely on free and reduced-price meals through the schools or will there be additional income guidelines?

A15: There are no additional income guidelines.

Q16: If the family did not receive P-EBT benefits and they feel they were eligible, who can they contact?

A16: 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. 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. Home-schooled students are not participating in the National School Lunch Program and are not eligible.

Q17: What can families buy with P-EBT benefits?

A17: 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.

Q18: When and how will benefits be issued?

A18: The chart below provides additional details regarding the issuance of P-EBT benefits:

Months of eligibility reported by NDE	Dates benefits issued to EBT and P-EBT Cards	Benefit Amount	1-5 days absent	6-15 days absent	16 + days absent
Corrected 2021 Summer	March 11, 2022	\$375			
August – October	April 20, 2022		\$21	\$71	\$121
November – January	May 19, 2022		\$21	\$71	\$121
February & March	June 16, 2022		\$21	\$71	\$121
April & May	August 16, 2022		\$21	\$71	\$121

This benefit schedule will be followed if DHHS receives the information from the schools on eligible students. If the reports are not received timely from NDE, benefits will be issued on the next issuance date.

Q19: Can P-EBT cards be sold for cash?

A19: P-EBT benefits cannot be sold or traded. Selling P-EBT benefits could cause you to be ineligible to receive benefits in the future.

Q20: Some school districts, such as Omaha Public Schools (OPS), were unable to provide their student data for the April issuance. Will I still receive benefits?

A20: If a school district provides student data for August through October 2021, these benefits will be issued at a future scheduled issuance date. The school district must submit their student data to NDE before benefits may be issued.

Corrected 2021 Summer Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT)

Q21: Who is eligible for Corrected Summer P-EBT Benefits?

A21: These benefits are for the families who did not receive summer benefits that were originally issued during September and October 2021.

School-age children are eligible for P-EBT benefits if they were approved for free or reduced-price meals for the last month of school, or if they apply for free or reduced-price meals by August 13, 2021, and are approved by their school.

Q22: What is the Summer P-EBT benefit amount?

A22: P-EBT benefit amounts will be \$375 per eligible child. This is a one-time payment for the summer period.

Q23: How will families receive Summer P-EBT benefits?

A23: School districts will report eligible school children to NDE, NDE will provide the data to DHHS. DHHS will issue benefits to eligible children.

Q24: When will benefits be issued?

A24: Corrected P-EBT Summer benefits will be issued on March 11, 2022