

Frequently Asked Questions

Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) Food Benefits in Maryland

The new federal nutrition program that provides a grocery benefit to families

Who is eligible for P-EBT benefits?

- P-EBT benefits were designed to support students engaged in virtual instruction, due to the pandemic, by providing a food benefit to replace missed school meals.
- P-EBT was first available in the spring of 2020 to support students who qualify for free or reduced-priced school meals, including all students attending a school using options like the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) to offer universal free school meals.
- Beginning with the 2020-2021 school year, eligibility was expanded to most children under the age of six in families participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

How much is the P-EBT benefit?

- The P-EBT benefit provided during the 2019-2020 school year was **\$5.86 per school day** and most students received about \$370 for the March-June period of school closures.
- Each eligible child will receive **\$6.82 for each school day** in which in-person learning was impacted due to the pandemic during the 2020-2021 school year. The total benefit will vary with a maximum benefit of about \$34 per child, per week.
- P-EBT benefits for the 2021 summer break will average \$375 per child.

How will families receive P-EBT benefits?

- P-EBT benefits are issued to **most** eligible children automatically.
- Students in families receiving SNAP benefits receive P-EBT benefits on their existing SNAP EBT cards.
- Students eligible for free or reduced-price school meals, but not enrolled in SNAP, receive P-EBT benefits on a P-EBT card that is mailed to the address on record with their school.
- P-EBT cards were mailed to most students in May and June, 2020. If a P-EBT card is lost, call Maryland EBT Customer Service at 1-800-997-2222 or go to [ConnectEBT.com](https://connectebt.com).
- While P-EBT benefits are provided automatically to most eligible children, it is important for families to complete a school meal benefit application (especially Kindergarten and transfer students) and to make sure the school has the correct mailing address on file.

When can families expect to receive P-EBT benefits?

- The Maryland Department of Human Services and Department of Education are working to issue P-EBT benefits for the 2020-2021 school year and for the summer of 2021.
- Eligible students will receive back benefits after the state plan is approved and implemented.
- Check the website for updates: <https://dhs.maryland.gov/p-ebt/>

Remember—Families can also access free meals for all children under age 18 by sending a text message with the word **FOOD to **877-877**.**