

Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer

Issuance of Spring 2020 Benefits – FAQs

1. What is the Pandemic EBT program?

The Pandemic EBT program, or P-EBT, provides food benefits to eligible students to replace the cost of meals students would have received if not for the lack of in-person instruction or due to school closures during the spring of 2020.

These benefits are issued by the Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Public Assistance in partnership with the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development, Child Nutrition Programs.

2. Why are we receiving benefits from last school year?

The 2019-20 school year P-EBT program originally provided food benefits to eligible school-aged children for the months of March, April, May, and June 2020. Households had a short period of time to opt into these benefits. Alaska has recently been approved to issue benefits to children who did not have the opportunity to opt-in. Those eligible students who were part of families who receive SNAP (food stamp) benefits or who submitted opt-in forms previously were already issued benefits.

Alaska is still seeking federal approval to issue P-EBT benefits to children because of school closures for the 2020-21 school year, from August 2020 to May 2021.

3. Who was eligible for P-EBT last school year?

Children who normally had access to the National School Lunch Program, or NSLP, and School Breakfast Program, or SBP, and are registered/enrolled at a school in Alaska that:

- Was closed as a result of the COVID-19 public health emergency from March 16, 2020 thru the end of the 2019-2020 school year; and
- Determined the child is eligible for free or reduced-priced school meals.

You don't have to apply for this program. We worked directly with school districts to obtain lists of children who had been determined to be eligible by the school district.

4. If my children attended Community Eligibility Provision schools with access to breakfast and lunch at no cost, were they eligible for P-EBT?

All children attending a Community Eligibility Provision school are eligible for P-EBT if the school closed due to COVID-19 last spring.

5. My child is home schooled. Do they qualify for P-EBT?

No. P-EBT is available only to children enrolled in and receiving education services in a school, and who would normally have received free or reduced-price school meals through the NSLP or SBP if the school weren't closed.

6. How do I find out if my child is eligible for P-EBT benefits?

Eligible children will receive a notice and a P-EBT card with their name on it. We anticipate the notice to be sent to eligible children this spring. Families should keep their cards as more benefits may be added later if they are eligible.

7. What address will the new P-EBT card be mailed to?

P-EBT cards will be mailed to the address on file with the school. Contact your school to ensure they have your current mailing address.

Families submitting school meal applications with a current address should also update the address with the school. School meal systems and student information systems may not be the same.

8. We do not need these benefits. Can I decline them?

We encourage households determined eligible for P-EBT to use the benefits for your family and to help boost the local economy. Benefits are not transferrable and cannot be gifted or donated. If you still wish to decline the benefits, you may destroy the card or return the card to the address on the back of the card. Benefits will be automatically removed after 274 days of non-use.

9. How do I get P-EBT benefits for the 2020-21 school year?

Alaska has not yet been approved for P-EBT benefits for the 2020-21 school year. Once approved, to be eligible for P-EBT benefits a child must be eligible for school meals, families will not need to separately apply to get P-EBT benefits for this school year. Each eligible child will receive a P-EBT card mailed directly to families without having to apply. Additional information will be provided to families once Alaska is approved to continue P-EBT benefits.



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Alaska Department of Education & Early Development, Division of Finance & Support Services
Child Nutrition Programs Phone (907) 465-8708 Fax (907) 465-8910