

# P-EBT FAQ

Updated 08/28/2020, Questions through 08/28/2020.

Updates/Changes are highlighted in the document.

## 1. What is P-EBT?

- i** *Pandemic Electronic Benefits (P-EBT) provides a benefit on an EBT card to North Carolina families whose children have access to free and reduced lunch at school. The P-EBT card functions like a standard EBT card, and the same guidelines apply. The P-EBT program is a collaboration between the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services and the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and is intended to help families during school closures due to COVID-19.*

## 2. Who is eligible for P-EBT?

- i** *All families with one or more children in their household who normally have access to free and reduced lunch at school are eligible for P-EBT benefits. Due to school closures caused by COVID-19 pandemic, these households are eligible to receive a benefit on an EBT card to help them buy food for their children.*

## 3. Do Students that have already turned 18 before the end of the school year receive P-EBT if they are still a full-time student receiving free or reduced lunches?

- i** *Students over 18 are eligible for P-EBT benefits if they are enrolled in school and would have normally had access to free or reduced lunch.*

## 4. Does legal status of the child affect eligibility for P-EBT? Are school aged children who are undocumented non-citizens enrolled in a free/reduced lunch school program receive the P-EBT benefits?

- i** *Any child that receives free/reduced lunch is eligible for P-EBT regardless of other criteria.*

## 5. Do families need to apply for the P-EBT program?

- i** *There is no application for P-EBT benefits. P-EBT eligibility information comes from the Department of Public Instruction based off enrollment in free and reduced-price meals. Families should contact their local schools for more information about eligibility for free and reduced-price meals.*

## 6. What about children who enrolled in free and reduced lunch programs after schools were closed?

- i** *Those enrolled in free and reduced lunch after March 2020 are eligible for P-EBT benefits and should have received their P-EBT card.*

## 7. How and when will I get my benefits?

**i** There are two categories of ways people will receive benefits:

- P-EBT benefits for P-EBT families already receiving Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) benefits were issued mid-May.



- For those not receiving FNS, P-EBT cards will be/were sent out in three phases. The first phase included those families with children already enrolled in free and reduced lunch as of December 2019. The second phase of recipients included those students who enrolled between January and March 2020. The third and final phase includes issuances to those enrolled in free and reduced lunch after March 2020, along with some other students who were missed in Phase 1 and Phase 2 due to issues with the data collected in the PowerSchools system. An example of these issues includes students dual enrolled at a Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) school, along with another school that is not CEP. Some of these students were missed due to being inadvertently counted only into the non-CEP school.

The first phase of P-EBT cards for families who are not receiving FNS benefits were mailed out by June 3<sup>rd</sup>. All households should have received their cards by June 12<sup>th</sup>. If you have not received your P-EBT card, call

P-EBT benefits were placed on cards at different times to account for supply chains needs and other FNS benefits. As of June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020, all phase one and phase 2 recipients should have received P-EBT allotments. Phase 3 recipients should receive P-EBT allotments by mid to late July, 2020.

## 8. How will you know where to send my P-EBT benefits?

**i** For those families not actively receiving Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) benefits, North Carolina DHHS sent the P-EBT card to the address provided by the Department of Public Instruction as indicated in the child's school record. Please contact your child's school if you are unsure if your address is correct.

## 9. What if my address is incorrect or I have moved?

**i** There are two categories of ways people will receive benefits and thus the answer varies:

- P-EBT families actively receiving Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) benefits will need to contact their caseworker to report the change of address and if needed, to reissue their EBT card via NC FAST.
- P-EBT families not currently receiving FNS benefits should update their address or request reissuance of their card through ebtEDGE.

P-EBT notices and cards will forward to new address if mail forwarding is established. Undeliverable cards will be returned to the EBT vendor. Counties will receive a report of the undeliverable cards and someone will attempt to contact the family to get their card to them. These attempts will be made via the phone number on file for the child(ren) in the Department of Public

*Instruction's records, or through collaboration with your local school if the phone number on file is not correct.*

## **10. I received my P-EBT notice that was forwarded to my new address. Will my card come here as well?**

**i** *If your mail is being forwarded, the notice and your P-EBT card should arrive at the new address. Please call the EBT Call Center at 1-888-622-7328 to reissue any missing cards. The EBT Call Center has verification protocols in place to assist in reissuing cards.*

*If your child was approved to receive free or reduced lunch after April 2020, you should wait until July 15 to call the EBT Call Center.*

## **11. How much will I get in P-EBT benefits?**

**i** *The daily rate for of benefits for P-EBT is \$5.70 per eligible student. Families will receive \$370.50 in total P-EBT benefits per child, most families will receive the benefits in two installments although some may receive them as an allotment. Based on date of eligibility, students should receive the following:*

- *Students who have a date of eligibility between 7/1/2019 and 3/31/2020 will receive a full 65 days of benefits at \$5.70 per day, per student (accounting for weekdays between 3/16/2020 and 6/12/2020; \$370.50 per student).*
- *Students who have a date of eligibility between 4/1/2020 and 4/30/2020 will receive 53 days of benefits at \$5.70 per day, per student (accounting for weekdays between 4/1/2020 and 6/12/2020; \$302.10 per student).*
- *Students who have a date of eligibility between 5/1/2020 and 5/31/2020 will receive 31 days of benefits at \$5.70 per day, per student (accounting for weekdays between 5/1/2020 and 6/12/2020; \$176.70 per student).*
- *Students who have a date of eligibility between 6/1/2020 and 6/30/2020 will receive 10 days of benefits at \$5.70 per day, per student (accounting for weekdays between 6/1/2020 and 6/12/2020; \$57.00 per student).*

## **12. My child(ren)'s P-EBT card has their other parent's name on it. I have custody of the child(ren). Can I use the card for my child(ren)'s P-EBT benefits or do I need to get a new card issued?**

**i** *If you have custody of the children and that is the children's address of record with the school, then you may use the card. Be advised that you should check with the school at some point to update the parent name listed on the child's school record as the data was generated based on DPI reports.*

## **13. My child lives with me but the P-EBT card went to another family member. What should I do?**

**i** *Information for P-EBT eligibility and mailings was obtained from the Department of Public Instruction. If the address is incorrect, please contact the school the child attends to correct the information for future reference. The*

household will need to contact the person that received the card and have them provide the card to the person the child is currently living.

#### 14. How long will this program last and how long will I have to use benefits?

**i** Unused benefits will rollover month-to-month and must be used within 365 days.

#### 15. What happens if the Governor expands school closures?

**i** Currently, benefits are calculated based on school closures through June 12th, 2020.

#### 16. What if I do not want P-EBT benefits?

**i** Families should destroy the P-EBT card. If they change their mind, they may call the EBT call center at 1-888-622-7328 to request a replacement card at any time prior to the expiration of the benefits.

#### 17. How do I create and utilize my Personal Identification Number (PIN) for my P-EBT card?

**i** Families receiving a P-EBT card will need to create a Personal Identification Number (PIN) to activate the card. Applicants may log into [www.ebtEdge.com](http://www.ebtEdge.com), utilize the ebtEDGE mobile app, or call 1-888-622-7328 to complete this process.

The caregiver will be asked to enter the date of birth of the youngest child school age child receiving free or reduced lunch in the household prior to creating the PIN.

For example: The household consists of 2 school age children; one is 13 years old (DOB: 04/04/2007) and one is 15 years old (DOB: 01/01/2005) and both receive free or reduced lunch through school. To create the PIN, the family would enter the date of birth for the 13-year-old (04042007). The user will then be prompted to create a unique PIN.

Note: If there are multiple children in your household it may be necessary to try each child's date of birth to successfully activate your P-EBT card.

#### 18. I receive FNS benefits but did not receive P-EBT benefits and I believe I should have. What should I do?

- i**
- If the household was eligible for P-EBT but did not receive benefits on their EBT card or did not receive a card, they should call the EBT call center at 1-888-622-7328. The list was generated from information obtained from the Department of Public Instruction. There is no application process for the P-EBT through the Department of Social Services, applicants must apply for and be approved to receive free or reduced-price meals under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act. The household must contact the child's school to apply for free and reduced-price meals.
  - If the household is not on the report as being approved for P-EBT and wants a hearing: Hearing rights are not applicable to this special issuance because the household did not make an application for P-EBT benefits through the department of social services. The information was based on the application

for free or reduced meals through DPI (<https://www.dpi.nc.gov>). The household must contact the school for further information about free or reduced meals eligibility.

- If the household is listed on the report as being issued a card but it went to someone other than the individual that is stating the children are living with them: The list was generated from information obtained from the Department of Public Instruction. If the information is incorrect the client will need to contact the local school to correct the information for future reference. There is no application process for the P-EBT through the Department of Social Services, applicants must apply for and be approved to receive free or reduced-price meals under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act. The household will need to contact the person that received the card and have them provide the card to the person the child(ren) are currently living. The household must contact the child's school to apply for free and reduced-price meals.

### **19. I received a benefit on my existing EBT card and received a P-EBT card, is this in error?**

- i** This is likely not an error. We may not have been able to match all of the children to your existing FNS case which led to a P-EBT card generating.

### **20. If my child attends a charter school, private school, or is homeschooled, will I receive P-EBT benefits for him/her?**

- i** P-EBT is only for children that participate in the national free and reduced-priced lunch program. Eligibility is pulled from the Department of Public Instruction records. If your children receive free and reduced-price lunch through an NC Charter school that participates in the national free and reduced-price lunch program, they should receive P-EBT benefits. If you have questions about whether or not your child's school participates in the free and reduced lunch program, contact the school.

### **21. My child is in a Head Start Program and qualifies for meals through CACFP. Will Head Start students receive P-EBT benefits or does that only apply to students in public schools?**

- i** Head Start programs are not included, however it should be noted that some Pre-Ks are. If the Pre-K is in a grade school participating in the federal free and reduced lunch program and those children in the Pre-K are included in that program, those children will be eligible and receive P-EBT benefits. P-EBT is only for those children eligible for free or reduced-price meals under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act, which is separate from the USDA Child Nutrition Program-CACFP.

### **22. I did not complete a free or reduced lunch application this past school year, but my child has received free or reduced lunch in previous school years. Will I receive P-EBT benefits for him/her?**

- i** No. The information generated from the Department of Public Instruction is from the 2019-2020 school year. The child must be enrolled in a participating school during that school year to be considered eligible for P-EBT benefits. Families may contact their local school for enrollment options and eligibility for free or reduced lunch.

### 23. I have more than one child enrolled in free or reduced lunch. Will I receive one card or individual cards for each child?

**i** NCDHHS used data from the Department of Public Instruction to try to confirm sibling sets and consolidate household records as much as possible. In some instances, this was not possible. Those households should have received separate notices with unique case identifiers on them for the children. The number of notices with unique case identifiers on them for the children should equal the number of cards a household should receive. If you have not received all the P-EBT cards assigned to your household indicated by number of notices, this could be due to staggering requirements for benefit issuance. Households can call 1-888-622-7328 to inquire about missing cards.

*Foster children in congregate care will have the same address, however they will not be linked as a household and would receive individual cards.*

### 24. Will children receiving free lunches in a school that the entire school receives free lunches and the parents did not fill out any paperwork for the free lunches receive P-EBT?

**i** Yes, these students will receive P-EBT. These are Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) schools and the students are eligible to receive P-EBT benefits. These schools are part of the amended National School Lunch Program.

### 25. How does this affect children in foster care?

**i** All children who normally have access to free and reduced lunch at school are eligible for P-EBT benefits. This includes children in foster care as reported by their school. The P-EBT card for children in foster care will go to the address as reported within the child's school record.

*Foster children in congregate care will have the same address, however they will not be linked as a household and would receive individual cards. For children in foster care, if the child is matched to an existing FNS case, the P-EBT benefit will be loaded on the EBT card for the FNS household the child is a member of. If a child is NOT matched to an existing FNS case, the card will be mailed to whatever address was on record with the child's school as of May 2020.*

### 26. For Children in Foster Care who have had recent changes in care, what if the card is mailed to the wrong address?

**i** If the student has lived with the Foster Parent who received the card during the period of school closure, the Foster Parent who received the card should use the benefits for that student. The DPI data was based on the most up to date living arrangement reported to and logged by the school. We are unable to process multiple issuances that coincide with specific ranges of days based on various placement moves. This is consistent with non-foster-care students who may have been with one parent during part of school closure, and the other parent during another part of school closure. If a student is determined to have been linked to a Foster Parent completely in error (i.e. that student has not been residing with that Foster Parent at all during the period of school closure and the DSS can verify that based on placement records), we will log the case, collect verification information from the local DSS, and process a reissuance.

## 27. For children in Foster Care, will the Foster Family receive the P-EBT benefits, or will the biological parents(s) receive them?

- i** For children in Foster Care, if the child is matched to an existing FNS case, the P-EBT benefit will be loaded on the EBT card for the FNS household the child is a member of. If a child is NOT matched to an existing FNS case, the card will be mailed to whatever address was on record with the child's school as of May 2020.

## 28. Can I buy hot foods with my P-EBT benefits?

- i** No. The Notice for P-EBT has examples of items that can and cannot be purchased with the P-EBT card.  
<https://files.nc.gov/ncdhhs/pebt/P-EBT-Admin-Letter-5-11-2020.pdf>

## 29. What is the ID requirement for using the P-EBT card at the grocery store?

- i** The Grocery Retailers Association is aware of the process for P-EBT and have been informed of the card design as well as benefit projections. By federal statute, retailers cannot ask for ID for EBT purchases if they do not request ID on regular debit card purchases.

## 30. Does this replace the current COVID-19 supplements, other FNS benefits, or meals families may be receiving at this time?

- i** No. P-EBT benefits are in addition to other services and benefits families may be participating in currently. We encourage families to continue utilizing local school and community meal sites for free, nutritious meals for children. Families can text FOODNC to 877-877 to find local meal sites. The service is also available in Spanish by texting COMIDA to 877-877.

## 31. Can I get my card and notice from the school?

- i** No. The USDA has given the NCDHHS the authority to administer P-EBT benefits in collaboration with the Department of Public Instruction.

## 32. Does this cost anything? Do I have to pay these benefits back?

- i** The P-EBT benefit is entirely federally funded and there is no cost to the recipient. Families who receive P-EBT benefits will not have to pay back the benefits.

## 33. What if the family has more questions or needs additional resource information?

- i** NC 211 is not able to help clients with specific questions related to their EBT account or a P-EBT card. It is not appropriate to send callers to NC 211 for questions related to cards that have not been received, account balances, or other P-EBT specific questions. Please only direct calls to 211 if they have additional needs such as food pantries or other financial assistance. North Carolinians can call 2-1-1 or 888-892-1162, 24 hours a day to speak to an NC 211 call specialist. NC 211 will link callers to resources such as food pantries and distributions as

well as additional health and human services. Calls to NC 211 are free, confidential, and the service is available in most languages. The NC 211 resource database can also be searched online at [www.nc211.org](http://www.nc211.org).

### 34. Will P-EBT disbursements show in NC FAST?

- i** *P-EBT disbursements will only appear in the EBTedge app. P-EBT benefits are not typical FNS payments and will not be recorded in NC FAST.*

### 35. Will P-EBT benefits continue to be added into the Summer?

- i** *NCDHHS has requested Congressional support to extend the 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. An extension has not been granted at this time.*

### 36. Should I have already received my P-EBT benefits?

- i** *Yes, for phase 1 and phase 2 recipients should have received P-EBT benefits.*

### 37. Will my family receive an additional P-EBT card for the second benefit allotment?

- i** *No, the second allotment will be applied on the original P-EBT card issued.*

### 38. I have more questions about P-EBT?

- i** *Please contact the EBT Call Center at 1-866-719-0141.*

### 39. What if the amount I received isn't correct for the number of eligible children I have?

- i** *NCDHHS used data from the Department of Public Instruction to try to confirm sibling sets and consolidate household records as much as possible. In some instances, this was not possible. Those households should have received separate notices with unique case identifiers on them for the children. The number of notices with unique case identifiers on them for the children should equal the number of cards and the allotment amount a household should receive. In some situations, one student in a household may have matched to an existing Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) case, and another may not have matched. In this type of situation, the benefits for the FNS matched student would go to the existing EBT Card associated with the FNS case that student is a part of, and the benefits for the other student would be issued on a new P-EBT card. This may appear like an under-issuance, but in reality the benefits are just split between an existing FNS EBT card and a newly issued P-EBT card(s). If you have not received all the P-EBT cards or benefit amounts assigned to your household indicated by number of notices, you may call the EBT Call Center at 1-888-622-7328 to inquire about missing cards and/or allotments.*

## 40. I received a letter but haven't received my P-EBT card yet. Who should I contact?

**i** If you have not received the P-EBT cards corresponding to your letters, your card(s) may have been undeliverable or somehow misdelivered by USPS. If the card was undeliverable, the county DSS office associated with the county of the school your student attends will be making efforts to reach out to you via the phone number on record with the school, obtaining a corrected address, and reissuing. If the card was misdelivered households can call 1-888-622-7328 to inquire about missing cards or can report a card lost/stolen and request a re-issuance.

## 41. I didn't receive a letter or P-EBT card yet, but I've told by my child's school that I qualify. Who should I contact?

**i** If you do not receive a notice or a card, but have confirmed with your school that your child is eligible, it could be the result of the following issues:

- 1) Your letter and card may have been undeliverable or somehow misdelivered by USPS. If the letter and/or card was undeliverable, the county DSS office associated with the county of the school your student attends will be making efforts to reach out to you via the phone number on record with the school, obtaining a corrected address, and reissuing. If the card was misdelivered, households can call 1-888-622-7328 to inquire about missing cards.
- 2) The student may be part of Wave 3 for P-EBT, which is set to be issued in early to mid-July 2020. Wave 3 includes students who:
  - a. Became eligible for free or reduced lunch on or after April 1, 2020

Or

- b. Were missed in Wave 1 or Wave 2 due to PowerSchools data entry issues. This circumstance is uncommon, but there have been examples where a dually enrolled student who attended a Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) school was not initially counted as a CEP student. These students have been identified and are now part of Wave 3.

If it is determined that your child or children are a part of Wave 3, please wait until August 3<sup>rd</sup> to call the EBT Call Center about not having received your P-EBT Card. Wave 3 P-EBT cards are set to be mailed in early to mid-July, and then time is needed to account for mailing and for the processing of undeliverable cards via the process in #1 above.

- 3) If #1 and #2 have been ruled out, and it has been confirmed that a record for the student in question was not sent by DPI to DHHS in either Wave 1, Wave 2, or Wave 3, the local school of the student in question would need to coordinate with DPI to figure out what may have caused the student to be excluded. If it is determined that there was an error, DPI may submit a correction record to DHHS for processing.

## 42. What if my school says I'm qualified for P-EBT, but the EBT Call center says I'm not?

**i** The local school of the student in question would need to coordinate with DPI to figure out what may have caused the student to be excluded. If it is determined that there was an error, DPI may submit a correction record to DHHS for processing. Up until 6/30/2020, the EBT Call Center did not have a list of Wave 3 students, so it is likely that if the EBT Call Center said this to you prior to 6/30/2020, that the student still may be a part of Wave 3.

**43. Are there any provisions made for Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI)/Cherokee Central Schools (CCS) to be included in the issuance of P-EBT?**

**i** *EBCI/CCS students enrolled in school will be included in Wave 3 of P-EBT benefits. NC HHS will work directly with the school system to administer these benefits. Questions regarding P-EBT benefits for students of Cherokee Central Schools should be directed to the EBT Call Center 1-888-622-7328.*