

Overview

North Carolina has been approved for the new Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) program. This program will provide extra help buying groceries for the families of the more than 800,000 children who normally receive free and reduced lunch at school. Families will receive approximately \$371 in total P-EBT benefits per child, provided over two installments. Unused benefits will rollover month-to-month and must be used within 365 days.

Benefit issuance

P-EBT eligible families currently receiving Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) benefits will receive an additional benefit on their existing Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card. Some P-EBT eligible families who already receiving FNS will instead be mailed a P-EBT card because DHHS was not able to definitively match their school lunch data back to an FNS case. P-EBT eligible families not currently enrolled in FNS (or who DHHS was unable to successfully match to an FNS case) will be mailed a P-EBT card.

Benefit timing

P-EBT families whose benefits will be loaded onto their existing FNS EBT card will all receive the benefit early the week of May 11th. P-EBT families being mailed an EBT card will be sent a card in a staggered 10-15 day issuance process beginning early the week of May 11th.

All P-EBT families will receive the second P-EBT benefit installment in early June on whatever EBT card they received the first installment. Children who have newly enrolled in free and reduced lunch this school semester will receive their benefits on a slightly later timeline.

Communications/Notices

P-EBT families (FNS and non-FNS) who had a cell phone number on record will be sent a text message about the benefit. Notices will be sent by mail to those receiving a new P-EBT card(s) which will include instructions about how to activate and use the card, how to decline the benefit, along with other helpful information.

Who can handle what types of questions and calls

People may call county DSS offices with a wide variety of questions about P-EBT. DHHS has done as much as possible to provide counties with materials to help field these questions. Steps have also been taken to lighten the call volume load for counties:

- Questions about applying for free and reduced lunch should be referred to the child's school.
- Many questions about activating/pinning a P-EBT card can be handled by Counties but may also be directed to the EBT Call Center when needed.
- General information inquiries about P-EBT may be handled by Counties but may also be directed to North Carolina 2-1-1 when needed.

Primary responsibilities for counties regarding P-EBT

- 1) Fielding phone calls about P-EBT and either helping address the caller's question/issue or directing them to the correct place for an answer or for help
- 2) Making efforts to identify correct addresses for returned notices and/or undeliverable P-EBT cards and then re-mailing those notices and/or reissuing the P-EBT cards to a corrected address via EBT Edge.

Please submit any commonly asked questions that our materials may have missed to PEBTQuestions@dhhs.nc.gov and we will provide updates as quickly as possible. This email is meant for county and state staff use, so please do not provide it to the public.

**Note: The "Do Not Forward" text was removed from the envelopes being used for this program.*