

2021 Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) Program Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is Pandemic EBT (P-EBT)?

P-EBT is a benefit to help supplement family food costs resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and prolonged school schedule changes.

2. Who is eligible for P-EBT?

K-12 students who are enrolled in a Richland One school are potentially eligible for P-EBT. The P-EBT card benefit cannot be transferred to anyone else or used by someone outside your household.

3. My children are receiving free meals at school this year, will they be eligible for a P-EBT benefit?

All students are being fed meals free for the 2020-2021 school year. Students who are enrolled in a CEP school most likely will qualify for P-EBT.

4. Do I or my child have to be a citizen to be eligible for P-EBT?

No. These benefits are for all children that are approved for free or reduced-price school meals.

5. If my household already receives Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), how and when will the P-EBT benefit be issued?

All P-EBT benefits will be mailed out on new SNAP cards. The first payment will be issued at the end of March 2021.

6. What should I do if I feel my child should have received P-EBT benefits but did not?

If students do not receive P-EBT benefits and you feel they should have, please contact the Richland One Office of Nutrition Services for a copy of an eligibility letter. The eligibility letter should be sent via email to the Department of Social Services (DSS) at pebtbenefits@dss.sc.gov.

7. What do I do if I feel my child was not paid for enough virtual days on their P-EBT card?

If you feel your child was not paid for all virtual days of school the child attended, please reach out to the child's school and have the school double-check the days the child was marked as virtually present. If the attendance is wrong, the school will adjust the days to match the number of days the student attended school virtually. Once the school has adjusted the days in PowerSchool, the underpayment will be received on the next P-EBT payment issued from DSS.

8. If I am not a current SNAP recipient, how and when will I receive a P-EBT benefit?

For all eligible household children, a P-EBT card will be mailed to the address on file with your child's school district. The first P-EBT payment will happen at the end of March 2021.

Please allow a minimum of 14 business days for card delivery. No further action is required on your part to receive your P-EBT benefit.

9. What do I do if the address on file for my child(ren) is incorrect?

DSS will open an address portal to change incorrect addresses once the first PEBT cards are issued near the end of March. Addresses must be changed in the portal for the card to be mailed to the correct address. The address portal can be found at <https://benefitsportal.dss.sc.gov/#/pebt/addressverification>. Addresses can only be changed by the legal guardian of the child(ren). The parent/legal guardian must enter the last name, date of birth, student number, school district and the school name to review or change the address on file. All address issues will be handled through DSS.

10. What P-EBT benefit amount will I receive?

The benefit amount for each child that qualifies for P-EBT is based on a daily rate of \$6.82, for the number of days the student attended school virtually. The first payment of P-EBT benefits for the 2020-2021 school year will be issued at the end of March 2021. This will cover the months of September-December 2020.

11. What if an eligible P-EBT household is not a SNAP recipient and does not want to participate in the P-EBT program?

If an eligible household receives a P-EBT card and does not want to participate in the program, the household should destroy the P-EBT card. The P-EBT card and food benefit cannot be transferred to anyone else or used by someone outside your household.

12. If I have more than one child, will I get a different card for each child?

If you have more than one child approved for P-EBT, you will receive a P-EBT card for each eligible child.

13. What can be purchased with the P-EBT benefit?

Purchasing rules are the same for SNAP and P-EBT.

The P-EBT benefit can be used to purchase food for a household, such as:

- fresh, frozen, canned, or dried fruits and vegetables
- meat, poultry, fish, dairy products, eggs
- cereal, bread, pasta, rice
- any ingredients you use for cooking
- baby formula
- diabetic foods
- snack foods and non-alcoholic beverages
- seeds and plants for growing food at home

P-EBT benefits CANNOT be used to buy:

- beer, wine, liquor, cigarettes or tobacco

- vitamins, medicines and supplements
- prepared foods, hot foods
- non-food items (pet foods, cleaning supplies, paper products, hygiene items or cosmetics)

14. What if a child/children resides in multiple residences?

For children who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals, the P-EBT benefit will be mailed to the address on file with their school district. P-EBT cards will be issued in the name of the qualifying child.

15. What retailers accept P-EBT?

P-EBT benefits can be used to purchase food items at retailers displaying a SNAP logo/signage. Find the closest retailer where you can use your benefits at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/retailer-locator>

16. When will my P-EBT benefit expire?

P-EBT benefits expire one year (365 days) after issuance.

17. How do I request a replacement card?

To check your balance or report your P-EBT card lost, stolen or damaged, call 1-800-554-5268.

18. Do I have to use all my P-EBT benefit when I get them?

No. The benefit will carry over from month to month. Benefits not used within 365 days of issuance will be automatically removed from the card.

19. Do P-EBT benefits replace summer feeding programs or other community feeding programs for children and families?

No. The P-EBT benefit is provided in addition to other meal programs; it does not replace them.