

P-EBT Food Benefits for the 2020-21 School Year

New York State is providing Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) food benefits to all households with children who receive free school lunch under the National School Lunch Act and whose school was closed or operating with reduced in-school attendance due to COVID-19 during the 2020-2021 academic year

We estimate the food benefit distribution will commence no earlier than the end of April and continue for several months, due to the large number of eligible children and schools participating in the National School Lunch Program across the state. Information about New York State's distribution of P-EBT food benefits will be posted at otda.ny.gov/SNAP-COVID-19 once it is available.

Frequently Asked Questions for the Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) Food Benefits

Answers to many commonly asked questions about the P-EBT food benefits for **New York State** residents:

What are P-EBT food benefits?

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act of 2020 authorized the payment of P-EBT food benefits to households with children who would have received free school lunches under the National School Lunch Act, if not for a school closure. These temporary food benefits were to help cover the cost of meals children would have otherwise received at school. All children who were eligible for P-EBT food benefits for the days school was closed due to COVID-19 during the 2019-2020 school year have already received their P-EBT food benefits.

When did qualified child/children receive P-EBT food benefits for the 2019-2020 school year?

1. Families with children ages 5 through 18 who received either **SNAP** or **TA (Cash)** benefits for March 2020 received their P-EBT food benefits in May and June 2020.
2. Most families with children ages 3-18 who get **Medicaid** AND who received free school lunches received their P-EBT food benefits on a NYS Medicaid Card in July 2020.
3. **All other families** with children eligible for P-EBT food benefits received a P-EBT Food Benefit card for each of their eligible children sometime between September and December 2020.

How do I use P-EBT food benefits if they are on a NYS Medicaid card?

To access your P-EBT food benefits using your NYS Medicaid card, you must have a Personal Identification Number (PIN).

- If you do not already have a PIN, you can select one over the phone by calling **1-888-328-6399**. Please be prepared to provide security information, including your zip code and the last four digits of the cardholder's social security number, to complete this process.
 - For detailed instructions on how to select a PIN for your NYS Medicaid card view the **Activating a NYS Medicaid Card for P-EBT Food Benefits** video at: <https://youtu.be/EwwFPUDLX8o>.

- For written instructions on how to select a PIN for your NYS Medicaid card visit: otda.ny.gov/SNAP-COVID-19/P-EBT-Medicaid-Card-PIN-Instructions.asp.

How do I order a replacement NYS Medicaid Card?

- If the cardholder receives Medicaid through your local department of social services, you can order a replacement NYS Medicaid Card by calling 1-888-328-6399. Please be prepared to provide security information, including the cardholder's date of birth and social security number.
- If the cardholder receives Medicaid through the New York State of Health: Health Plan Marketplace, you can order a replacement NYS Medicaid card by calling 1-855-355-5777. Please be prepared to provide security information, including the account holder's name, social security number, account number or health care exchange identification number.
- Please note that P-EBT food benefits will remain available and accessible on your NYS Medicaid card for at least 274 days from the date they were issued. Once you have set up a PIN to access your P-EBT food benefits, you can check your family's P-EBT food benefits balance by visiting www.connectebt.com or by calling 1-888-328-6399.

How do I use P-EBT food benefits if they are on a P-EBT Food Benefit card?

To access your P-EBT food benefits using a P-EBT Food Benefit card, you must have a Personal Identification Number (PIN). It is important that you follow the directions for selecting a PIN to be able to access your food benefits.

- You can select one over the phone by calling **1-888-328-6399**. Please be prepared to provide security information, including your zip code and the month and day of the cardholder's birthday (MM/DD), to complete this process.
 - For detailed instructions on how to select a PIN for your P-EBT Food Benefit card view the **Activating a P-EBT 2020 Food Benefit** video at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JvWV-FvyA5Y&feature=youtu.be>
 - For written instructions on how to select a PIN for your P-EBT Food Benefit card visit: <https://otda.ny.gov/SNAP-COVID-19/P-EBT-Card-PIN-Instructions.asp>

Once your benefits have been used, please be sure to keep your P-EBT Food Benefit card in the event your child's P-EBT food benefits are issued to this card for the 2020-2021 school year.



How do I order a replacement P-EBT Food Benefit card?

You can order a replacement P-EBT Food Benefit card by calling **1-888-328-6399**. Please be prepared to provide security information, including the 19-digit card number that was printed on the front of the P-EBT Food Benefit card you are replacing. If you do not have that number, you will be asked for the cardholder's Social Security Number; however, when ordering a replacement P-EBT Food Benefit card (and only when ordering a P-EBT Food Benefit card), you must enter 999-99 and then the 2-digit month and 2-digit day (MM/DD) of the cardholder's birthday. For example, if your child's date of birth is July 4, you would enter 999-99-0704 when asked for his/her social security number. You will then be asked to verify the cardholder's 8-digit birthday (MM/DD/YYYY) and to enter the 4-digit Personal Identification Number (PIN) you selected for the P-EBT food benefit card that you are replacing. If you did not previously create a PIN, you will still be able to order a replacement card by following the prompts.

Please note that P-EBT food benefits will remain available and accessible on your P-EBT Food Benefit card for at least 274 days from the date they were issued. Once you have set up a PIN to access your P-EBT food benefits, you can check your family's P-EBT food benefits balance by visiting www.connectebt.com or by calling **1-888-328-6399**.

How do I use an EBT card (NYS Medicaid card or P-EBT Food Benefit card)?

An EBT card looks and is used like a bank debit card to buy food at authorized retail food stores. For more information on how to use an EBT card visit: <http://otda.ny.gov/workingfamilies/ebt/>.

To find authorized retail food stores near you, the SNAP Retailer Locator can be found at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/retailer-locator>.

What can I purchase with my child/children's P-EBT food benefits?

P-EBT food benefits can be used to purchase food at authorized retail food stores. A detailed list of food items that may be purchased with food benefits can be found at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/eligible-food-items>.

Will I need to pay back my child/children's P-EBT food benefits?

No. Families who receive P-EBT food benefits will not have to pay back the benefits.

Do I have to use my child/children's P-EBT food benefits right away?

No. P-EBT food benefits will remain available and accessible on your NYS Medicaid card or P-EBT Food Benefit card for at least 274 days from the date they are issued. You can check your family's P-EBT food benefit balance by visiting www.connectebt.com or by calling 1-888-328-6399.

Will receiving P-EBT food benefits impact my family's 'public charge' status?

Receiving P-EBT food benefits will not affect the 'public charge' status for non-citizen households.

Should I contact my local department of social services if I have any questions about P-EBT food benefits?

No. P-EBT food benefits are being issued by the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance. They are **not** SNAP benefits, and your local department of social services has no information about your eligibility for these benefits, and no information about when you will receive these benefits if you are eligible.

Do my homeschooled child/children qualify for P-EBT food benefits?

Only children who receive free lunch at school are eligible for P-EBT food benefits. Households with homeschooled children do not usually receive free school lunches and therefore are not eligible for P-EBT food benefits. Please contact your school district with questions concerning access to the free school lunch program.

What if I get P-EBT food benefits for my children but do not want or need the benefits? Can I give them to somebody who does need them or donate them to my local food bank?

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has advised that P-EBT food benefits are not transferable and cannot be donated. The P-EBT food benefits are intended for you to use to buy food for you and your child[ren]. USDA advises that if you and your family have received a P-EBT Food Benefit card and do not want to use the benefits to buy food, you should dispose of the card by cutting through the magnetic stripe on the card or shredding the card and discarding it in a secure manner. If your child[ren]'s P-EBT food benefits were issued to a NYS Medicaid card do **NOT** dispose of the card—you are required to keep this card while enrolled in Medicaid.

P-EBT food benefits will remain available and accessible on your NYS Medicaid card or P-EBT Food Benefit card for at least 274 days from the date they are issued.

We appreciate your interest in supporting the nutrition needs of those in your community during these difficult times. In most communities there are a number of nonprofit organizations that accept donations—including donations of non-perishable food items and/or donations of money they can use to buy food—to help those in your community who do not have enough food. For more information please visit:

coronavirus.health.ny.gov/food-pantries

Are there other food benefits or programs besides P-EBT food benefits that can help my family?

Yes. If your family does not already receive SNAP, you can see if you are eligible for and apply for SNAP by visiting www.mybenefits.ny.gov.

To locate a food pantry in your area visit coronavirus.health.ny.gov/food-pantries

To find a location where you can pick up free meals for your child/children:

- Visit the USDA Meals for Kids Site Finder at www.fns.usda.gov/meals4kids
- Text “Food” or “Comida” to **877-877**
- Call the USDA National Hunger Hotline at **1-866-3-HUNGRY** or **1-877-3-HAMBRE** (Spanish)
- Call **211** for New York State Residents
- Call **311** if you live in New York City

Where do I go if I have questions about P-EBT food benefits?

If you have questions, you may call the P-EBT Food Benefits Helpline: 1-833-452-0096 or visit: [P-EBT Information Form](#).