

Training for P-EBT Officials School Year 21-22

February 2, 2022

Today's Topics

- Basics of P-EBT
- Overview of SY21-22 P-EBT
 - Differences from SY20-21, Summer 2021
- Roles and responsibilities
- P-EBT Admin Funds
- What to do now

Basics of P-EBT

- Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Card issued to Head of Household with eligible students
- Value on card is meant to make up for the value of free meals students would have received at school if not for COVID
- Can be used to buy food anywhere EBT cards are accepted
- Federal program, implemented by State with significant assistance from schools

SY 21-22 P-EBT

- School building must be determined eligible first
 - Normally participates in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP)
 - 5 consecutive days of reduced attendance qualifies the building to meet this requirement for the rest of the school year
- Monthly benefit amount (TBA) issued to eligible students
- Eligible Students
 - Eligible for Free/Reduced Meals AND
 - Had any COVID-related absence or impacted by COVID-related school closure in that month

Differences from Prior Years

- One benefit level per-month for all eligible students
 - No tracking of hybrid vs. fully-remote
 - No tracking of # of days each student was absent. One or more COVID-related days absent per month qualifies the student for that month.
- Households not already qualified for Free and Reduced meals can submit an application at any point in the school year and become eligible for benefits for the full year

Roles and Responsibilities

School Food Authority (SFA)

- Send template letter & FAQs or equivalent communication to households
- Determine date that each school building became eligible
- Determine Head of Household for eligible students, if unclear
- Gather data on eligible students (FRL & Absences/Closures) into template spreadsheet provided by AOE/DCF two times (Sept.- Jan. and Feb. – June)
- Submit template spreadsheet to AOE using Electronic File Transfer (EFT) system
- Respond to DCF/AOE if contacted with questions about individual students
- Report address changes or corrections needed to AOE/DCF
- The Superintendent should appoint a P-EBT official to manage this work, but work may be shared among administrators, data managers, determining officials, food service directors and outreach staff.

Roles and Responsibilities

- Agency of Education (AOE)
 - Provide training and templates to SFAs to communicate with households
 - Gather data from SFAs and supply to DCF
 - Respond to SFA questions about P-EBT
 - Coordinate between DCF and Schools when there is a question about individual student eligibility
 - Ensure that all eligible schools report data
 - Distribute P-EBT Admin funds to SFAs

Roles and Responsibilities

- Department of Children and Families
 - Check data to ensure no duplicate children reported from multiple schools
 - Issue benefit cards to households
 - Send issuance letters to households receiving benefit
 - Issue replacement cards
 - Manage P-EBT call center to respond to individual inquires from households

P-EBT Admin Funds

- USDA anticipates making P-EBT Admin Funds available to SFAs for costs associated with P-EBT administration
- Likely similar to last year, 2 options:

- Streamlined amount:

Number of P-EBT Eligible Children in Local Entity ¹	Streamlined Funding Amount per Local Entity
Less than 1,000	\$ 614
1,001-5,000	\$ 3,063
5,001 - 1,000,000 +	\$ 5,814

- Reimbursement for actual costs incurred
 - If planning to request reimbursement, set up a code to track costs now
 - Maintain documentation of costs incurred
 - Allowable costs include staff time, printing, and mailing costs

Three Requirements for P-EBT Eligibility

- **Requirement 1:** School building must be eligible because the school normally participates in NSLP and has had 5 days or more of reduced attendance or closure, due to COVID-19
- **Requirement 2:** Student must be eligible for free or reduced meals, or attend a school that normally offers CEP, Provision 2, or a Non-Pricing Program
- **Requirement 3:** Student must have missed one or more days of school due to a COVID-related reason to receive the benefit for that month
 - Closure due to COVID-related reason
 - Excused Absence for a COVID-related reason

All requirements must be met for a student to be eligible for the benefit that month.

Meeting Requirement 1, Building Eligibility

- School must normally participate in NSLP
- School building had a closure or reduced attendance for a COVID-related reason for 5 days or more
 - One or more student absences due to COVID constitutes reduced attendance*
 - The first day of the 5-day period is the date that the school building becomes eligible
 - For most schools, this will have happened in September 2021
 - Absences before the 5-day period are not eligible for P-EBT
 - August 2021 was covered with Summer 2021 P-EBT benefits and will not be included.

*Updated 2/7: Different students may be absent on different days during the 5 day period – it does not need to be the same student absent all 5 days.

Meeting Requirement 2, Pricing Programs

- Student was eligible for free or reduced-price meals in SY19-20, or SY20-21, either through an application or direct certification, and the household has not submitted a new application for this school year.
- Student has been determined eligible for free and reduced meals this school year because the household submitted a new application or because they were directly certified this year.
- Student transferred from CEP, Provision 2, or non-pricing program school at the beginning or partway through this school year.

Meeting Requirement 2, CEP/Prov. 2/Non-Pricing

All students enrolled at Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), Provision 2, or non-pricing programs meet Requirement 1.

This includes:

- Schools who were operating one of these programs in School Year 19-20
- Schools who intended to start operating CEP, Provision 2, or a non-pricing program this year.
 - A letter of intent submitted prior to the start of the school year; or
 - An application in the CNPWeb system submitted prior to the start of the school year showing these options
- Does not include schools who were Provision 2 for breakfast only

Meeting Requirement 3

To be eligible for the P-EBT benefit in a particular month, the student must have:

- Had an excused COVID-related absence OR
- Been impacted by a school or classroom closure for a COVID-related reason
- Schools will report whether or not a student was eligible for the P-EBT benefit each month (Yes/No)

Groups Not Eligible for P-EBT

- Students at schools not participating in the NSLP prior to COVID
 - Exception for schools who can show they intended to participate this year
- Students who un-enrolled from school to enroll in Home Study
- Children not in school (younger siblings, left school)

What to Do Now

- Determine who will be the P-EBT Official and who will be involved in each step of the process
 - Determining Officials, Data Managers, Food Service Director, Administrative staff, Outreach/Liaison staff, etc.
 - Ensure that each person understands their role and what they need to do

What to Do Now

- Determine the date that each building became eligible
 - 5 consecutive days of closure or reduced attendance* because of a COVID-related reason

*Reduced attendance means one or more students absent for a COVID-related reason

What to Do Now

- Prepare to send template P-EBT letters to households
 - Template letter will be available by Feb. 7
 - Translations will be available in the following languages: Arabic, Burmese, Dari, French, Karen, Kirundi, Nepali, Simplified Chinese, Somali, Spanish, Swahili, Vietnamese, Bosnian, Gujarati, Hindi, Kinyarwanda, Korean, Malayalam, Pashto, Portuguese, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu
 - If you need another language, please let AOE know right away!
 - Amend letter depending on whether school is normally CEP/Provision 2, or not

[date]

Dear Household,

The federal government has approved Pandemic-EBT benefits for the current school year — September 2021 to June 2022.

These benefits:

- Are meant to replace the value of free school meals students would have received at school.
- Will be provided to eligible students who had an excused COVID-related absence or were impacted by COVID-related school closures during the school year. *Getting free meals to eat at home during a closure or absence will not impact a student's eligibility for P-EBT.*

[CEP or Provision 2 schools]:

Because our school typically offers free meals to all students, this makes all student eligible to get P-EBT benefits for any months:

- They had an excused COVID-related absence, or
- There was a COVID-related school closure.

[Schools that normally operate pricing programs]:

To receive the P-EBT benefit, students must either:

1. Have an approved free and reduced meal application on file, or
 2. Have been directly certified for free school meals, because:
 - o the household receives 3SquaresVT or Reach Up, or
 - o the student is in foster care, homeless, migrant, a runaway, or Head Start participant.
- NO APPLICATION NEEDED:**
[Student name(s)] is/are eligible for free school meals based on the information we have on file. You will receive P-EBT benefits back to September 2021 for any months your student(s):
- o Had an excused COVID-related absence, or
 - o There was a COVID-related school closure.

Please let us know if there are any additional students living in your household.

APPLICATION NEEDED:

If you'd like to receive the P-EBT benefit, please complete the attached application, and return it as soon as possible. If approved, you'll receive P-EBT benefits back to September 2021 for any months your student(s):

- o Had an excused COVID-related absence, or
- o There was a COVID-related school closure.

REVIEW STUDENT'S INFORMATION:

Please review the information we have on file for your student.

Student name: Student date of birth:
Head of household: Mailing address:

- If the information is accurate, no further action is needed.
- If the information is not accurate, please contact **[provide contact information]** no later than February 28, 2022 to correct it.

See the enclosed list of [Frequently-Asked Questions about P-EBT](#) to learn more about these benefits. We don't expect them to be available until late April.

Thanks for your help.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

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- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov

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<https://education.vermont.gov/student-support/nutrition>