



## **Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT)** Frequently Asked Questions

### **Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT)**

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act includes a benefit called Pandemic-EBT (P-EBT) for children who received free or reduced-price school meals in the 2019-2020 school year, but their school is was closed.

### **Who needs to apply for P-EBT?**

If your family is currently receiving SNAP, you may not need to apply for P-EBT. We will make every attempt to match our SNAP records with information provided in the Department of Education (DOE) files.

If we can match your child exactly, that child's benefits will automatically be added to your existing SNAP card. If we cannot exactly match your child between the SNAP records and the DOE records, see information on how to claim the P-EBT benefit for other children in your home in question and answer 4.1 below.

### **Everyone else must apply to get P-EBT benefits.**

Complete the entire application to see if your child is eligible. Answering all questions will help us process your application more quickly.

Applications will be processed in the order they are received. The P-EBT amount for *each eligible child* is **\$256.50**.

### **Application will be available late July 2020.**

### **P-EBT FACTS:**

The Georgia Division of Family & Children Services (DFCS) in partnership with the Georgia Department of Education (DOE) has been approved to operate the new Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) program.

This program will provide extra help to families of more than 1.1M children who normally would receive free or reduced school lunch.

Families will receive a one-time allotment of \$256.50 in total P-EBT benefits per child.

DFCS is working to operationalize the P-EBT program, so please continue to visit this page for more information and updates.

Families who are currently receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly Food Stamps) do not need to apply for P-EBT benefits. Eligible SNAP recipients will receive a P-EBT benefit preloaded on their existing Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card.

The program is also available to families not currently receiving SNAP but approved for the free or reduced school lunch program. These families will need to submit a formal application to receive P-EBT benefits. Once the application is approved, an EBT card will be mailed to the family within three (3) to four (4) weeks. The family will receive information with their P-EBT card in the mail explaining how to activate and use their P-EBT card.

Below are Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) regarding the P-EBT program:

### **1. What is P-EBT?**

Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) is a new program authorized by the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA), which provides assistance to families with children who have temporarily lost access to free or reduced-price school meals due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The P-EBT program is a collaboration between the Georgia Division of Family & Children Services (DFCS) and the Georgia Department of Education (DOE) and is intended to help families provide meals for their children.

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

All children who would receive free or reduced-price meals, if not for their school closure due to COVID-19, are eligible to receive P-EBT. Due to school closures caused by the pandemic, these households are now eligible to receive benefits on an EBT card to help them buy food for their children. The Georgia Division of Family & Children Services (DFCS) is utilizing data from Georgia DOE to determine a child's eligibility for P-EBT and enrollment in the school lunch program.

- **2.1 My child is entitled to free lunch because everyone in their school gets free under the Community Eligible Provision (CEP) program. I do not get SNAP and did not apply for the free or reduced-price lunch program. Is my child still eligible?** Yes. If your children are eligible for free or reduced school lunch through a school that participates in the National School Lunch Program and is eligible for free or reduced-price meal benefits, they should be eligible to receive P-EBT benefits.

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

All children who would receive free or reduced-price meals, if not for their school closure due to COVID-19, are eligible to receive P-EBT. The Georgia Division of Family & Children Services (DFCS) is utilizing data as of May 2020 from Georgia DOE to determine a child's eligibility for P-EBT and enrollment in the school lunch program.

- **3.1 Will getting P-EBT impact my family's 'public charge' status?** No. Using P-EBT benefits does not impact your or your child's immigration status. The Public Charge rule does not apply to P-EBT benefits.

### **4. How to apply for P-EBT**

The P-EBT program will be available to children that were eligible to receive free or reduced lunch as of March 2020. The program will use data from Georgia DOE to determine a child's eligibility for P-EBT and enrollment in the school lunch program.

- Currently receiving SNAP:  
Families who are currently receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly Food Stamps) do not need to apply for P-EBT. Eligible SNAP recipients will receive a P-EBT benefit on their existing Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card.
- **4.1. I am a current SNAP recipient and I have multiple children eligible for P-EBT but did not receive an allotment for all of them. What should I do?**  
DFCS Customer Contact Center (CCC) staff will be able to confirm that P-EBT benefits have been issued for children living in the SNAP household. For any children that did not receive a benefit, the parent should verify that student's information through the GA DOE Student Portal and submit an application with the confirmed portal information.
- Not currently receiving SNAP:  
The P-EBT program will also be available to families who are not currently receiving SNAP but were receiving free or reduced school lunch. These families will need to submit a formal application to receive P-EBT. The application is short and should take only a few minutes to complete. If approved, an EBT card will be mailed to the family within three (3) to four (4) weeks. **The family will receive information with their P-EBT card in the mail explaining how to activate and use their P-EBT card.**

### **5. How and when will I get my P-EBT benefits?**

There are two categories of people who will receive benefits:

- Families currently receiving SNAP benefits will receive a P-EBT benefit on their existing EBT card.
- Families not currently receiving SNAP benefits will have to apply and be approved to receive P-EBT benefits. Families will be mailed a P-EBT card with preloaded benefits within three (3) to four (4) weeks. The family will receive information with their P-EBT card in the mail explaining how to activate and use their P-EBT card.

**6. How will you know where to send my P-EBT benefits?**

Families not currently receiving SNAP benefits may apply and be approved to receive P-EBT benefits. Families will be mailed a P-EBT card with preloaded benefits within three (3) to four (4) weeks. The family will receive information with their P-EBT card in the mail explaining how to activate and use their P-EBT card. For those families not currently receiving SNAP benefits, a P-EBT card will be sent to the address listed on the application.

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

Families will receive approximately \$256.50 in total P-EBT benefits per child based on the number of school closure days between March 2020 through May 2020. Georgia DFCS was approved to issue \$5.70 per day for the 45 days the child missed school in Georgia. All children will receive the same amount.

The allotment amounts below are the total benefits issued to families based on the number of children in the household:

<b><u>No. of Children Eligible for Free or Reduced Lunch</u></b>	<b><u>Allotment Amount</u></b>
1 child	\$256.50
2 children	\$513.00
3 children	\$769.50
4 children	\$1,026.00
5 children	\$1,282.50
6 children	\$1,539.00
7 children	\$1,795.50
8 children	\$2,052.00

**\*The allotments issued to families' accounts are for school closure days in March, April, and May 2020.**

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

Families will receive a one-time allotment of approximately \$256.50 in total P-EBT benefits per child. Unused benefits will rollover month-to-month and must be used within 365 days. Benefits not used within 365 after your last purchase or return will be removed from your account and cannot be replaced.

### **9. How do I activate my P-EBT card?**

Recipients will receive information with their P-EBT card in the mail explaining how to activate and use their P-EBT card. Families receiving a P-EBT card will need to create a Personal Identification Number (PIN) to activate the card. Applicants may log into <https://www.connectebt.com/gaebtclient/> or call [888-421-3281](tel:888-421-3281) to complete this process.

### **10. I did not get a P-EBT card and believe I should have. What do I do?**

- If you are currently receiving SNAP, P-EBT benefits will be automatically loaded to your EBT card.
- If your family is not currently receiving SNAP, you will need to submit a formal application to receive P-EBT. If approved, a P-EBT card will be mailed to your household within three (3) to four (4) weeks. Recipients will receive information with their P-EBT card in the mail explaining how to activate and use their P-EBT card. If a P-EBT card is not received from the vendor, recipients can email [ebt@dhs.ga.gov](mailto:ebt@dhs.ga.gov) for assistance.
- Should you need to order a replacement card, log into <https://www.connectebt.com/gaebtclient/> or call [888-421-3281](tel:888-421-3281) to complete this process. When requesting a replacement card, the P-EBT customer should enter **ALL ZEROS for the social security number**, their DOB and zip code.

### **11. My child attends a charter school; will I receive P-EBT benefits for my child?**

If your children receive free or reduced school lunch through a Georgia charter school that participates in the National School Lunch Program and is eligible for free or reduced price meal benefits, they should be eligible to receive P-EBT benefits. P-EBT eligibility is verified by the Department of Education records of students who participated in the school lunch program as of May 2020.

### **12. My child attends a private school. Will I receive P-EBT benefits for my child?**

P-EBT is for any child that is eligible for free or reduced meal benefits enrolled in a school that participates in the National School Lunch Program. If your child's private school participates in the National School Lunch Program, your child may be eligible. P-EBT eligibility is verified by the Georgia Department of Education records of

students who participated in the school lunch program as of May 2020.

**13. I homeschool my child. Will I receive P-EBT benefits for my child?**

Children attending schools that participate in the federal free or reduced school lunch program are eligible to receive P-EBT benefits.

**14. 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?**

Head Start programs are not eligible to receive P-EBT.

**15. My child is in a Pre-K Program and is in a school that participates in the free or reduced meals program. Will Pre-K students receive P-EBT benefits or does that only apply to students in public schools?**

Pre-K students are eligible for P-EBT if the Pre-K students are in a school that participates in the federal free or reduced school lunch program. Those Pre-K children are included in that program and are eligible to potentially receive P-EBT benefits.

**16. My child was not eligible for free or reduced lunch for the 2019-2020 school year, but my child has received free or reduced lunch in previous school years. Will I receive P-EBT benefits for him/her?**

P-EBT eligibility is verified by the Georgia Department of Education records of students who participated in the free or reduced school lunch program for the 2019-2020 school year.

**17. I am not currently receiving SNAP and have more than one child enrolled in free or reduced lunch. Will I receive one card or individual cards for each child?**

Applicants should include all eligible children on the application for P-EBT. One card will be mailed to the head of household to access benefits.

**18. How does this affect children in foster care?**

The foster parent will have to apply for P-EBT benefits for children currently in their care if the child is not currently receiving SNAP. All children who would receive free or reduced-price meals are eligible to receive P-EBT benefits. This includes children in foster care as reported by their school as of May 2020.

**19. Where can I use my P-EBT benefits? What can I buy with them?**

You can use your P-EBT benefits at any store that accepts SNAP. Most retailers have signs stating they accept SNAP or EBT. You can also use your P-EBT benefits, similarly to SNAP benefits, to buy groceries online from some major

retailers.

**20. What is the identification requirement for using the P-EBT card at the grocery store?**

By federal statute, retailers cannot ask for personal identification for EBT purchases if they do not request ID on regular debit card purchases. The P-EBT card PIN will serve as customers identification.

**21. Does this replace the current COVID-19 supplements, other SNAP benefits, or meals families may be receiving at this time?**

No. P-EBT benefits are in addition to other services and benefits families may be currently receiving due to COVID-19. We encourage families to continue utilizing local school and community meal sites for free, nutritious meals for children.

**22. Does this cost anything?**

There is no cost to families as P-EBT benefits are entirely federally funded. The State does not provide any of the funds for P-EBT benefits but does incur some modest costs to operate the program.

**23. Do I have to pay these benefits back?**

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

**24. What if my children are not eligible for P-EBT?**

Families not eligible for P-EBT can contact 211 for assistance from food banks, food pantries or other resources. For more info visit: <https://www.unitedway.org/our-impact/featured-programs/2-1-1>.

**25. My family lives on a military base and my children attend school on the military base. They do participate in the free or reduced lunch program. Can I apply?**

You do not need to apply. A P-EBT card will be sent directly to each family for the child that attends schools on either of these two military bases in Georgia: Ft. Stewart and Ft. Benning. Parents of these children do not need to apply.

**26. May I share my benefits with others that need assistance but were not eligible for P-EBT?**

No. P-EBT benefits are non-transferrable.

**27. What if I do not want P-EBT benefits?**

Families not interested in receiving P-EBT should destroy the P-EBT card. If they change their mind, they may call the EBT call center at [888-421-3281](tel:888-421-3281) to request a replacement card at any time prior to the expiration of the benefits.

## 28. What if I need more information about the P-EBT program or my eligibility?

For more information or assistance, please call the Customer Contact Center at [\(877\) 423-4746](tel:8774234746).

### RESOURCES:

#### State P-EBT website URL address

<https://dfcs.georgia.gov/>

#### State P-EBT online application URL address and deadline

<https://dfcs.georgia.gov/pandemic-electronic-benefit-transfer>

The P-EBT application is expected to be released in mid-July 2020. Applicants will have **60 days** to request benefits before the application cycle closes.

#### State P-EBT general information email address

[customer\\_services\\_dfcs@dhs.ga.gov](mailto:customer_services_dfcs@dhs.ga.gov)

#### State P-EBT general information phone number

[\(404\) 657-3433](tel:4046573433)

Customer Contact Center (Toll-Free): [\(877\) 423-4746](tel:8774234746)

#### Other State P-EBT means of contact (e.g., advocate partners contact information)

##### 1. Georgia Department of Education:

Local: (404) 656-2800

Toll Free: (800) 311-3627 (GA)

Email: [askdoe@gadoe.org](mailto:askdoe@gadoe.org)

##### 2. Georgia Family Connection Partnership, Inc.

Local: 404-527-7394

Email: [communications@gafcp.org](mailto:communications@gafcp.org)