



## **P-EBT Questions and Answers**

**(Answers are based on what is known and approved as of 9.24.20)**

### **Q: What is P-EBT?**

A: Pandemic EBT is a special SNAP benefit that will be issued to households with school age children who receive free and reduced-price meals at school, but who are unable to receive meals in school due to the COVID-19 pandemic. All school age children in RI, eligible for P-EBT, will receive the benefit for the two-week period (August 31-September 11) when the statewide start of school was postponed. Individual children may also receive a P-EBT benefit when they are out of school, for five consecutive days due to: virtual learning, their school's hybrid school model and/or quarantine.

### **Q: How will those benefits be distributed?**

A: Benefits may be distributed on EBT cards or P-EBT cards depending on whether the child is part of a SNAP household.

Children who receive SNAP benefits, will have their P-EBT benefit issued on their SNAP EBT card.

If a child received their P-EBT benefit on their EBT card in the spring, and their household no longer receives SNAP, their P-EBT benefits this fall will be issued on their EBT card from the spring.

Children who do not receive SNAP benefits, will have their P-EBT benefit issued on a P-EBT card.

If a child received their P-EBT benefit on a P-EBT card in the spring, and their household now receives SNAP, their P-EBT benefits this fall will be issued on their P-EBT card from the spring.

### **Q: When will P-EBT benefits be issued?**

A: The P-EBT benefits being issued due to the delay of the start of the school year, will be issued on September 24. P-EBT benefits being issued due to a child being out of school for five consecutive days will be issued by Sept. 30th.

### **Q: How will DHS send EBT cards to families that don't have SNAP benefits?**

A: P-EBT cards will be mailed to the child who is eligible for free or reduced-price meals and not a SNAP recipient. The card will be mailed to the address that is on file with the child's school district and will be in the child's name.

**Q: I had a P-EBT card last Spring but I threw it away after I spent the benefits. How do I get a new card?**

A: If you had a P-EBT card last spring and you no longer have it or it is not working, you may request a new one by calling, 1-888-979-9939

**Q: Will the P-EBT benefits expire if they aren't spent?**

A: P-EBT benefits will expire if they have not been spent one-year from issuance.

**Q: I don't have children, or, my child is 3 years old and not yet in school, do I get P-EBT benefits?**

A: No, this benefit is meant to provide additional purchasing power to families whose children usually eat meals at school and now need to eat those meals at home.

**Q: How much will the benefit be?**

A: The benefit is in the amount of the value of the school meals that children would have received if they were attending school. The value of both the school breakfast and school lunch is \$5.86 per day for any period in which the child is not attending school in person for at least five days in a row. The benefit amount for each student will be different based on the student's attendance status with their school. Children in the same household may have different benefit amounts.

**Q: Is the P-EBT benefit the same amount regardless of how many kids are in the household?**

A: No. All eligible children will receive \$52.74 in P-EBT benefits for the two weeks school was delayed. On-going P-EBT benefits will be based on a child being out of school for **five consecutive days due to virtual learning, quarantine, or a school's hybrid learning model.** Children in the same household may receive different issuance amounts based on their school attendance.

**Q: Will this P-EBT benefit continue beyond September?**

A: Our ability to offer P-EBT benefits after September 30 will depend on Congressional approval for on-going issuance.

**Q: What can I buy with is money?**

A: This is a SNAP benefit, which means it can only be used to purchase food.

**Q. What grades do children need to be in to receive the P-EBT benefit?**

- All children who receive free or reduced-price breakfast and lunch through a public school will get a P-EBT benefit. Those children may be enrolled in Pre-K through grade 12 (including those age 18+ who are still enrolled in school for special education).
- All children who are considered public school students but enrolled in a private school due to special education purposes, who receive free or reduced-price breakfast and lunch, will get a P-EBT benefit.
- Children in private school in grades PK-12 who receive free or reduced-price lunch, and whose school shared the names of those children with the RI Department of Education, will receive a P-EBT benefit.
- Child care center pre-k students are not eligible for P-EBT

**Q: I get SNAP and have school-aged children but didn't get any extra benefits, what do I do now?**

A: If families don't see the benefit on or about September 24th, they should call the DHS Call Center at 1- 855-MY-RIDHS before September 29. A worker there can look at your case and can re-issue if there was a problem with the issuance. If the information in the RIDE file and the SNAP case did not match, a P-EBT card may have been issued even if your child receives SNAP. In that case, the P-EBT card may have been sent to the wrong address and could re-issue the card. If there are other reasons why the issuance didn't go through, and eligibility is confirmed, the worker will do its best to re-issue in the timeframe set by the federal government.

**Q: I don't get SNAP but my children do get free meals at school. I haven't gotten a P-EBT card in the mail. How do I get it?**

A: If you didn't receive the P-EBT card in the mail and you were previously receiving SNAP benefits, check to see if the benefits were issued on your EBT card. Otherwise, if you still haven't received a card by October 5th, call DHS at 1-855-MY-RIDHS. A DHS worker can see if you are on the list from our state's Department of Education (RIDE). If you were on the list and the card was sent to the wrong address, we can re-issue a P-EBT card. If you were not on the list, we will be unable to provide P-EBT benefits.

**Q. I called DHS and they said that I can't get P-EBT for September because my child wasn't on the RIDE list.**

A. DHS must issue all benefits by September 30th and can only issue benefits to children on the list from RIDE. If your child was not on the RIDE list, we are unable to the issue P-EBT benefit.

**Q: Is this just for kids in public school who get free and reduced-price meals? What about private, parochial, charter schools?**

A: Regardless of the type of school, this is for all children who received free or reduced-price meals through the National School Lunch Program while attending a school in Rhode Island.

**Q: In my child's school everyone gets free breakfast through Universal Breakfast. Will everyone get an EBT card?**

A: Not necessarily. Some schools provide meals through "community-eligibility". In a community eligibility provision school, all students will qualify for the P-EBT benefit. But if the child is not eligible for free meals by the school, and the school offers universally free breakfasts but not lunches, the child will not qualify for the P-EBT benefit.

**Q: What about Community Eligibility Provision schools, will everyone get an EBT card?**

A: Everyone in Community Eligibility Provision schools are entitled to P-EBT benefits for the period in which the start of school was delayed and for any period in which a child was not attending school in-person for at least five days in a row. Children who receive SNAP benefits, will have their P-EBT benefit issued on their SNAP EBT card.

If a child received their P-EBT benefit on their EBT card in the spring, and their household no longer receives SNAP, their P-EBT benefits this fall will be issued on their EBT card from the spring.

Children who do not receive SNAP benefits, will have their P-EBT benefit issued on a P-EBT card.

If a child received their P-EBT benefit on a P-EBT card in the spring, and their household now receives SNAP, their P-EBT benefits this fall will be issued on their P-EBT card from the spring.

**Q: At my child's school some kids usually have to pay for lunch, but this fall everyone's meals are free, does that mean everyone will get a P-EBT benefit?**

A: No. Some schools are giving everyone free meals due to the pandemic. But even in those schools only children who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals will receive P-EBT. You must complete the school meals application to know if you are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. The application in English and Spanish can be found on the Rhode Island Department of Education's website: <https://www.ride.ri.gov/CNP/NutritionPrograms/ForParentsFamilies.aspx>

**Q: Will undocumented kids get this benefit if they were receiving free lunch?**

A: Yes, as long as they were receiving free or reduced priced meals at their school, they are eligible.

**Q: How do I activate the card?**

A: Call the phone number on the back of the P-EBT card. You will need the EBT card number on the front of the card, your zip code, and the date of birth of the child named on the card. You will need to set a four-digit pin number.

**Q: What if I don't want this benefit?**

A: Participation in the program is voluntary. If you choose not to participate in the program, please dispose of your card by cutting through the magnetic stripe on the card and discard the card in a secure manner. You will not be able to redeem the food benefits, nor can you transfer the card to someone else. The money will be returned to the federal government.

**Q: I've been getting bagged lunches at my school's grab and go location, can I still do that?**

A: Yes, if you get a P-EBT card, you can use those benefits to buy food and you can still get meals in your community.

**Q: I haven't applied for public benefits because I'm afraid about public charge issues, does P-EBT jeopardize my immigration status?**

A: If you get a P-EBT card because your child gets free or reduced-price meals at school, there is no impact on your immigration status.

**Q: Where can I use my P-EBT card?**

A: P-EBT can be used to buy food at any location that accepts SNAP benefits. That includes grocery stores, supermarkets, convenience stores, and many farmers markets in RI.

**Q: My children did not qualify for free or reduced-price meals at school but since COVID-19 I've lost my job. Can I get P-EBT?**

A: If you have a change in your financial circumstances due to COVID-19, we encourage you to apply for SNAP benefits.