

Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) is for families with children (up to age 21) who temporarily lost access to free or reduced-price meals at school during the COVID-19 pandemic.

P-EBT for the 2020–2021 school year (August 2020 to June 2021) is for families with children who are certified for free or reduced-price meals through the National School Lunch Program and families with children born after Aug. 1, 2014 who receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) food benefits.

P-EBT benefits can be used the same way as SNAP benefits.

P-EBT is administered by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, Texas Department of Agriculture and Texas Education Agency.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who is eligible for P-EBT?

A child must meet one of the following criteria for the 2020–2021 school year to be eligible for P-EBT:

- Certified for free or reduced-price meals through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP).*
- Attends a Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) or Provision 2 (P2) school that offers free meals to all students.*
- Born after Aug. 1, 2014, in a family who received SNAP benefits for at least one month between October 2020 and June 2021.

**Contact your child's school if you have questions about the school's participation in these programs. The P-EBT application will provide a list of Texas schools that participate.*

It is possible that a child is eligible for P-EBT but no benefits will be issued because all students at their school attended in-person classes. For more information, refer to the question *How much money will I receive for P-EBT?*

How much money will I receive for P-EBT?

P-EBT benefit amounts vary based on the school a child attends.

The P-EBT benefit amount for each campus is calculated based on (1) information provided by schools about virtual students, (2) the daily benefit amount and (3) the number of school days per month.

(1) Every Texas school participating in the National School Lunch Program was asked to provide the number of days each month that most students learned virtually during the 2020–2021 school year. The higher the number of days that students attended school virtually, the greater the P-EBT benefit amount for that campus.

(2) The Food and Nutrition Service approved a daily benefit amount of \$6.82 that covers the cost of two meals and a snack.

(3) An average number of school days per month was calculated by looking at the largest school districts in Texas.

August: 9 days

September–May: 18 days per month

June: 5 days

Students attending the same school will get the same P-EBT benefit amount. It is possible that a child is eligible for P-EBT but no benefits will be issued because all students attended in-person classes at their school.

Families who received SNAP for at least one month between October 2020 and June 2021 with children born after Aug. 1, 2014, will receive a benefit for the months they got SNAP benefits based on the highest P-EBT benefit amount of an elementary school in their county. This includes children in SNAP families who are enrolled in school.

Do I have to apply for P-EBT?

Families who got SNAP benefits during the 2020–2021 school year:

- If an eligible student born on or before Aug. 1, 2014 and is part of a family who received SNAP benefits for at least one month between August 2020 and April 2021, the PARENT/GUARDIAN DOES NOT HAVE TO APPLY for P-EBT benefits. If HHSC can match these children with information provided by their school or district, P-EBT benefits will automatically be placed on the current Lone Star Card.
- If an eligible student born on or before Aug. 1, 2014 is part of a family who received SNAP benefits for the first time during the 2020-2021

school year in May or June 2021, the PARENT/GUARDIAN MUST APPLY FOR P-EBT BENEFITS.

- Families who received SNAP benefits for at least one month between October 2020 and June 2021 and who have children born after Aug. 1, 2014, will have P-EBT benefits placed on their current Lone Star Card. The PARENT/GUARDIAN DOES NOT HAVE TO APPLY for P-EBT.

Families who DID NOT get SNAP benefits during the 2020–2021 school year:

If an eligible student enrolled in K-12 and was NOT part of a family who received SNAP benefits for at least one month between August 2020 and June 2021, the PARENT/GUARDIAN MUST APPLY FOR P-EBT BENEFITS.

The child's school should provide a link to the P-EBT benefit application to families when the application period is open. Once HHSC receives the application and verifies the child's eligibility with the information provided by the school, a P-EBT card loaded with funds will be mailed to the family.

If it has been five weeks since you applied for P-EBT benefits and you have not received a P-EBT Card or notice from HHSC, contact the P-EBT Call Center at 833-442-1255, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m.–6 p.m. Central time.

What information do I need to have when I apply for P-EBT?

The following items are required on the P-EBT application:

- Parent/legal guardian name, date of birth and sex
- Physical address
- Child's information, including name, date of birth, sex, school district county, school district and campus name
- Applications for public school students must provide either the student's Social Security number or state-assigned number (S-number)

How will I know if my child is approved or denied for P-EBT benefits?

Families who do not need to apply for P-EBT benefits will get a notice in the mail letting them know when their children are approved. P-EBT funds will be placed on their Lone Star Card.

Families who apply for P-EBT benefits will get a notice in the mail letting them know if their children are approved or denied. If approved, a P-EBT card loaded with funds will be mailed to the family.

What if my child's school isn't listed on the P-EBT application?

The P-EBT application will provide a list of Texas schools that participate in the National School Lunch Program as well as the Community Eligibility Provision and Provision 2 programs. If your school isn't listed, call the P-EBT Call Center at 833-442-1255, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m.–6 p.m. Central time.

When and how will I get my P-EBT funds?

Families who got SNAP benefits during the 2020–2021 school year:

If a SNAP family does not need to apply, P-EBT benefits will be placed automatically on the current Lone Star Card by May 28. A notice will also be mailed to the family that shows which children will receive P-EBT benefits.

If a SNAP family needs to apply, P-EBT benefits will be placed on the current Lone Star Card when approved. It could take two to five weeks to get benefits on the card.

Families who DID NOT get SNAP benefits during the 2020-2021 school year:

For families who need to apply for P-EBT benefits, it could take two to five weeks after completing your application to receive a P-EBT card loaded with benefits in the mail. You will receive a notice in the mail letting you know if your children are approved or denied. Cards will be mailed to the address entered on the application.

P-EBT applications will be worked on in the order they are received. HHSC staff may try to call your family or contact the child's school to get additional information.

What do I do if I'm having trouble activating my P-EBT card?

You have to call the Lone Star Card Help Desk at 800-777-7328 to activate your P-EBT card and choose your PIN. You will need to type in the last four digits of the parent/guardian's Social Security number and date of birth. The information typed in must match the head of household information on the P-EBT application. If you do not have a Social Security number, type in four zeroes (0000).

If your Social Security number or date of birth is not working when you try to activate your card or select your PIN, you will need to visit an HHSC office to update your information. [Click HERE to find the office closest to you.](#)

If I have more than one child, will I get different cards for each child?

If you have to apply for P-EBT benefits and have more than one child, it is possible you will get more than one P-EBT card.

Do I need to keep my P-EBT card once I use all the funds?

Yes, there may be P-EBT benefits issued for the summer, so keep your card in a safe place.

Why did I only get P-EBT funds for some of my children?

Applications are compared to information provided by schools and districts. If there is not an exact match, the child's information is reviewed by HHSC staff and/or sent to the school or district for further review. You will get P-EBT benefits for any child(ren) who are eligible.

Why was my child approved for P-EBT but received \$0?

It is possible that a child is eligible for P-EBT but, based on the information the school provides, no benefits will be issued. For more information, refer to the question *How much money will I receive for P-EBT?*

If you want to talk to someone about your child's benefit, contact the P-EBT Call Center at 833-442-1255, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m.–6 p.m. Central time.

What can I purchase with my P-EBT funds?

P-EBT follows the same rules as SNAP food benefits. It helps people buy the food they need for good health. To learn more, [visit the HHS SNAP Food Benefits webpage](#).

My child's school is closed, but the school district is still providing meals. Can I still get P-EBT?

Yes, getting free meals from school does not change someone's ability to get P-EBT benefits.

Will there be more than one P-EBT payment per child?

Currently, P-EBT is a one-time payment for the 2020-2021 school year, but it is possible there will be a summer payment for children. Make sure you keep your P-EBT card in case there are more P-EBT benefits issued.

Will getting P-EBT affect my ability to get any other benefits?

No, P-EBT does not affect your eligibility for any other benefits.

Will getting P-EBT count against me under public charge?

No, getting P-EBT benefits does not impact you or your child's immigration status. The public charge rule does not apply to P-EBT benefits.

Do I or my child have to be a citizen to get P-EBT?

No. These benefits are for all children who receive free or reduced-price school meals.

I never filled out a meal application because all meals are free at my child's school. Can my child get P-EBT benefits?

Yes. If your child goes to a Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) or Provision 2 (P2) school where all students receive free or reduced-price meals, they can get P-EBT benefits no matter your income. Contact your child's school if you have questions.

My child attends a charter or private school. Can they get P-EBT benefits?

If your child gets free or reduced-price meals at a charter or private school that participates in the National School Lunch Program, they can get P-EBT benefits.

My child gets free meals at day care. Can they get P-EBT benefits?

If your child was born after Aug. 1, 2014, and received SNAP benefits for at least one month between October 2020 and June 2021, the child is eligible for P-EBT. Your funds will automatically be placed on your Lone Star Card.

Children who are not yet in kindergarten and did not get SNAP benefits for at least one month between October 2020 and June 2021 are not eligible for P-EBT.

My family does not get SNAP food benefits, and I have a child who isn't in school yet. Is my child eligible for P-EBT?

No, they are not eligible. For more information, refer to the question *Who is eligible for P-EBT?*

I am raising my grandchild and they get free meals at school. Can I apply for P-EBT?

Yes, kinship caregivers should follow the same rules to see if the children are eligible for P-EBT.

Can children in foster care get P-EBT?

Yes, foster parents should follow the same rules to see if the children are eligible for P-EBT.

I share custody of my child. Which parent/guardian should apply?

A child is only eligible for one P-EBT benefit, even if they are part of two separate households.

If the child is part of a SNAP household, P-EBT benefits will be placed on the existing Lone Star Card.

If an application is required for the child, the primary caregiver of the child should apply. Custody and family matters should be worked out between families. HHSC will accept the first application for P-EBT that is submitted for a child and assume it is from the primary caregiver.

How long do I have to use my P-EBT benefits?

You can begin using your card at any time. If you do not use your card for one year, any unused benefits will expire.

Do I need to get SNAP benefits to be eligible for P-EBT benefits?

No, for more information refer to the question, *Who is eligible for P-EBT?*

My child got free or reduced-price meals at school. How do I know if my child's school participates in the National School Lunch Program?

Contact your school or district and ask if they participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). The P-EBT application will provide a list of schools that participate.

Why was my child denied for P-EBT?

The denial reason will be on the notice you received in the mail.

- **Not Eligible:** Based on the information provided by your child's school or district, your child does not meet the criteria to receive P-EBT. To be eligible for P-EBT the child must have attended school during the 2020–2021 school year that participated in the National School Lunch Program, or must attend a Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) or Provision 2 (P2) school that offers free meals to all students.
- **Not Found:** Your child was not listed in the information provided to HHSC by your child's school or district for the 2020–2021 school year.

Please note that if your child's information on the application you submitted did not match the records provided by their school and/or district, that could be the reason your child was not approved.

- **Already Received Benefits:** Your child was denied because we determined they already received P-EBT benefits.

If you have questions, contact the P-EBT Call Center at 833-442-1255, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m.–6 p.m. Central time.

Who do I contact if I think my child was incorrectly denied for P-EBT or was not given the correct benefit amount?

You can either call the P-EBT Call Center at 833-442-1255, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m.–6 p.m. Central time or yourtexasbenefits.com/Learn/initiatereview starting June 21. You will need to provide the Application ID on the top of the notice you received in the mail.

If we find your child is eligible after a review, we will send you a notice to let you know.

My child is eligible for P-EBT, but I have more questions. Who do I contact?

You can call the P-EBT Call Center at 833-442-1255, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m.–6 p.m. Central time.