



Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) Updates

What is P-EBT?

Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) is a federal temporary emergency nutrition benefit that is loaded on electronic cards for families to purchase food. P-EBT was first implemented for the end of the 2019-20 school year. Congress made changes to the program for the 2020-21 school year, including the addition of a school learning model component to determine eligibility. P-EBT is jointly implemented by the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) and the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS).



Eligibility

Eligibility for P-EBT for the 2020-21 school year differs significantly from eligibility during the 2019-20 school year. Families who received P-EBT in the 2019-20 school year are not automatically eligible for this year's benefits. There are two elements to eligibility for the 2020-21 school year. Each student must be eligible, and the school they attend must be eligible.

Students

Students who attend eligible schools and qualify for free or reduced-price (FRP) meals will receive P-EBT benefits based on a calculation that includes the number of distance learning and hybrid days each month at their school. This calculation will be shared once it is approved by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

IMPORTANT: Households that qualify for FRP meals but have not yet submitted an Application for Educational Benefits for the 2020-21 school year should do so immediately to qualify for the most benefits. In addition, households must have a current mailing address on file with the school in order to receive the P-EBT card in the mail. [View a P-EBT message for families in multiple languages.](#)

Schools

In addition, students must attend an eligible school. Schools that participate in the National School Lunch Program (or would have if not for the COVID-19 health emergency) become eligible after they are closed or operating with reduced hours or attendance for at least five consecutive days in the current school year. This includes distance learning or hybrid school learning models. Schools with an in-person learning model that have students who elected distance learning are also eligible, but only for the students who chose distance learning.

The months in which a student is eligible for P-EBT benefits depends on when the Application for Educational Benefits was submitted to the school. Applications **received by February 28, 2021**, will be eligible for retroactive benefits to September 2020.

Key Messages for Families

- There is no P-EBT application for school year 2020-21. Instead, students will be issued benefits based on the learning model and free or reduced-price meal data submitted to MDE by their school.
- Due to a waiver from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), many Minnesota students are receiving meals at no cost (regardless of income) from their school this year. Receiving meals at no cost does not make them eligible for P-EBT. Families can contact their school to verify if they were approved for free or reduced-price meals based on household income requirements.
- To be eligible for P-EBT, children must meet one of the following qualifications:
 - Receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP)
 - Approved for free or reduced-price meals through the Application for Educational Benefits for the 2020-21 school year
 - Enrolled in a Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) or Provision 2 school
- P-EBT benefit amounts will be calculated based on the school's reported learning model, particularly the number of distance learning and hybrid days each month. No P-EBT benefits are provided for in-person learning days. Children who choose full-time distance learning may qualify for P-EBT benefits if they are eligible for free or reduced-price meals.
- Families can take two steps right now, if they think they qualify for P-EBT:
 - Make sure the school has their current address and contact information.
 - Submit an Application for Educational Benefits to their child's school by **February 28, 2021** (if not already receiving SNAP, MFIP or attending a CEP or Provision 2 school).
- Families will receive a new P-EBT card for each eligible child. The dollar amount may differ for each child in a family depending on the learning model for each school and grade level.
- Additional information about benefit amounts and issuance timelines will be shared once the Minnesota P-EBT plan is approved by USDA.