

Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT) Program School Year 2021-2022 and Summer 2022 Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is P-EBT?

P-EBT refers to the Pandemic-Electronic Benefit Transfer, which provides eligible children with EBT benefits that can be used to purchase food or food items, similar to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as food stamps). Kindergarten through 12th grade students within eligible school buildings who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) or School breakfast Program (SBP) may be eligible for P-EBT benefits.

2. How is this third round of P-EBT different from the previous two rounds?

The first round of P-EBT was a reimbursement for the meals children ate at home during March, April, and May 2020 while schools were closed due to COVID. The second round of P-EBT was a reimbursement for the meals children ate at home while participating in hybrid or virtual learning methods. This third round of benefits is a reimbursement for only the meals the student ate at home due to a COVID-19 related absence that occurred September 2021 through the end of the regular school year.

3. Who is eligible for school year 2021-2022 P-EBT?

Children in school:

- must be enrolled in free or reduced-price school meals at a school operating the National School Lunch Program; **OR**
- must be enrolled in a school operating a Community Eligibility Program (CEP) or Provision II school, which offers breakfast and/or lunch free to all students;
- must be enrolled in a kindergarten through 12th grade; **AND**,
- must be without access to consuming a meal at school due to a COVID-19 related absence that was onfile at the school.

Your Child's School:

- must operate the National School Lunch Program: **AND**
- must have been operating at reduced attendance for at least five consecutive days at some point during the 2021-22 school year.

4. How was my child eligible for free or reduced-price school meals?

Your child is eligible for free and reduced-price school meals by submitting a free or reduced-price meal application to the school; or by receiving Direct Certification benefits (DC) through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); or by being deemed homeless or considered a foster child through the State.

Many schools took advantage of nationwide waivers that allowed schools to operate the Seamless Summer Option (SSO), which is a provision that allowed all meals to be served at no cost to all students during the start of the pandemic through school year 2021-22. This provision allowed all meals to be served at no cost, but this **did not** qualify your child as "free or reduced-price eligible." Schools continued to distribute free or reduced-price meal applications and conduct direct certification processes to determine students as free or reduced eligible. Documentation must have been on-file at the school during the 21-22 school year to determine your child as free or reduced-price eligible.

If your child was NOT eligible for free and reduced lunch in the 2021-2022 school year your child may not be eligible for this round of P-EBT benefits.

Children in day care: This plan did NOT cover children under age 6 who were not in school grades K-12. This plan also did not include children enrolled in pre-k.

5. How do I apply for P-EBT?

There is NO application process.

DO NOT submit an old application by email or by mail to the office of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education or the office of the Missouri Department of Social Services. You will get a denial letter if you send in an old application.

In August 2022 your child's school district will begin submitting absence data from the 2021-22 school year. This absence data will be used to determine the level of benefits your child is eligible to receive. Benefits are based on the number of days the school has a COVID-19 related absence on file for your student.

If you have questions about the number of days your child was absent from September 2021 through the end of the school year, please contact your child's school.

6. How much will my child receive?

Below is the benefit levels table:

Number of days out of school	Number of days used for the benefit amount	Monthly benefit amount
Tier 1: 3-5	5 days	\$35.50
Tier 2: 6-15	10 days	\$71
Fully Virtual Due to COVID-19	19 days	\$135

Note: A school will be considered eligible once the school has operated at reduced attendance due to COVID-related absences for a 5-day threshold. Once this 5-day threshold is met then any subsequent absences due to COVID make students eligible for P-EBT benefits for those days the student had a COVID-19 related absence on-file at the school district.

Missouri will use a three-tiered benefit level to determine benefit amounts once a school has met the five-consecutive days for P-EBT eligibility.

7. How will my child get P-EBT benefits?

Your school-aged child can receive benefits once the school submits your child's absence data. The P-EBT benefit will be a onetime deposit to provide benefits for the entire 2021-22 school year. The data from schools will be sent to the Missouri Department of Social Services who will process and distribute P-EBT benefits.

If you already receive SNAP benefits and the child can be confirmed as part of your household, the benefits will be added to your existing EBT card. If you do not receive SNAP or the household cannot be confirmed your card will be mailed to the address the school had on-file during school year 21-22. If you have questions about the address please contact the school.

8. What time period will P-EBT benefits cover?

This P-EBT benefit will be for COVID related absences that occurred September 2021 through the end of the regular school year. If your child's school submits absence data, your child's P-EBT benefit will be loaded as a onetime deposit to provide benefits onto a new or existing P-EBT card.

9. How long will P-EBT benefits stay on my EBT card?

P-EBT benefits are good for 274 days or 9 months from the date the benefits are placed on your EBT card. After 274 days the benefits will be removed from your card.

10. Can my student still participate in meals provided by the school if I receive P-EBT benefits?

Yes, students can receive P-EBT and also get meals provided by the school district.

11. What if I did not receive benefits for my child, or I disagree with the benefit amount?

Schools will begin submitting student absence data in August-September 2022. Please remain patient as we have been working to develop a system to collect this data. If you have questions concerning your child's absence days and benefit amount please contact the school your child attended during the SY 21-22.

Once you receive the P-EBT card and you have questions about how to use the P-EBT card call the Family Support Division at 855-FSD-INFO (855-373-4636).

12. What if I did not apply for free or reduced priced meals through the application provided by the school district during the 2021-22 school year? How can I apply for free or reduced price meals so that I can be eligible to receive the P-EBT benefit?

Each local school district will accept new Free or Reduced Meal Program applications throughout the school year. Schools are no longer accepting free or reduced-price applications for the 2021-22 school year. You can contact the school to determine what your student's eligibility was during the 2021-22 school year if you are not sure. If you did not apply for free or reduced-priced meals you are not eligible for this round of P-EBT benefits.

13. Last school year, I sent in an application. Can I apply online this year or how do I find the application?

No, there is not a paper or online application for the 2021-22 school year P-EBT benefits. Schools will begin submitting student absences to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education after the start of the new school year (2022-23).

14. If I currently receive SNAP, will I automatically receive benefits or do I have to apply?

P-EBT benefits will not be added automatically. This third round of P-EBT benefits is specifically related to each COVID-related absence your child experienced during the 2021-22 school year.

15. At my school, all students receive free meals during the 2021-22 school year, so my child received free meals even though we don't usually qualify for free or reduced meals. Does this make my children eligible for the P-EBT benefit?

No, this does not make your child automatically eligible for free or reduced-price meals. In general, households must have been certified for free or reduced price meals on an individual or household basis to be eligible for free or reduced-price meals. If your school does not usually offer free meals, and has just started offering free meals for all this school year, then you will likely need to qualify on your own. You can contact your local school district for questions related to free or reduced price meal status.

However, if all students are free because the school is participating in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) or Provision 2, then those students are eligible for P-EBT benefits if the child had a COVID-related absence.

16. If I chose to have my children learning virtually for the year, will they receive the benefit even if the school wasn't closed?

NO. Benefits are provided based on the days the child was absent due to COVID-19 or the child was not at school due to a school closure due to COVID-19. Students who chose to learn virtually for the entire school year are not eligible for benefits.

17. What if my child's school did not track COVID-related absences?

Your Child's School:

- must operate the National School Lunch Program: **AND**
- must have been operating at reduced attendance for at least five consecutive days at some point during the 2021-22 school year.

If your child's school did not have, a mechanism to track COVID-related absences you should contact the school and review your child's attendance records. If the child's attendance records indicate the child was absent from school for a minimum of five days then the parent must attest that the child's absence was COVID-related. The child must have a record on file to document a minimum excused absence of five consecutive days. The school can then assume the five-day absence was COVID-related. The parent must attest verbally with the school that the five-day absence was COVID-related. The school will then submit the number of days the child was absent through the secure portal to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The absence must be five school days (Monday-Friday). Weekends do not count in the five consecutive day threshold.

18. If I have other children in my household who are not school-aged, can I receive benefits for them?

No. Children in a household who are not school age (grades K-12) are not eligible for this third round of P-EBT benefits.

19. Where can I use my P-EBT benefits?

You can use your P-EBT card in any grocery store or retail location anywhere in the United States that displays the QUEST Mark®.

20. What can I buy with P-EBT benefits?

P-EBT benefits can be used to buy food and food products, such as plants and seeds to grow food, just like SNAP benefits.

21. Are there any restrictions when using a P-EBT card?

Yes, the same restrictions that apply for regular EBT cards will also apply to P-EBT cards. P-EBT benefits cannot buy any of the following:

- Hot prepared foods
- Foods prepared to be immediately eaten
- Vitamins, medicine, supplements
- Non-food items such as paper products, soap, or pet food
- Alcohol
- Tobacco

Please review [EBT Cardholder Information](#) for more information.

22. I applied for P-EBT, how long will it take to get approved?

There is no application for this third round of P-EBT benefits. If you sent in an old application you may receive a denial letter.

23. What if I disagree with the benefit amount?

Please contact the school your child was enrolled in during SY 21-22 to review the days your child was absent due to COVID-19. Please do not call the Family Support Division with questions concerning the benefit amount.

Number of days out of school	Number of days used for the benefit amount	Monthly benefit amount
Tier 1: 3-5	5 days	\$35.50
Tier 2: 6-15	10 days	\$71
Fully Virtual Due to COVID-19	19 days	\$135
Summer 2022	55 days	\$391

24. What should I do if I did not get P-EBT benefits for all of my children?

If you do not get P-EBT benefits for all of your children and you believe you should have, please call the Family Support Division at 855-FSD-INFO (855-373-4636) and ask our team to review your case.

25. How do I know if my child's school submitted absence data for my child's P-EBT?

Please contact the school your child was enrolled in for questions related to the number of days the school has absence data on-file for your child during the 2021-22 school year.

26. What is Summer P-EBT?

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (the FFCRA), as amended by the American Rescue Plan Act, 2021, authorizes USDA to approve an extension of the State P-EBT plan during a "covered summer period." The statute defines a covered summer period to mean "a summer period that follows a school year during which there was a federal public health emergency declaration." Schools participating in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program "shall be deemed closed" for purposes of the covered summer period. As a practical matter, that means that States with an approved extension for a covered summer period may issue P-EBT benefits during the covered summer period without regard to students' school status, individual COVID-related absences and virtual learning days, or the operating status of covered child care facilities

Note: Missouri's plan for Summer P-EBT has not yet been approved by USDA.

27. How is my child eligible for Summer P-EBT?

All school children who would have received free or reduced-price school meals at school under the NSLP or SBP are eligible for P-EBT benefits in the summer of 2022. If your child attended a school participating in CEP and/or Provision 2, your child may receive benefits. School children are eligible for P-EBT benefits during the entire 2022 covered summer period (55 days).

28. How do I apply for Summer P-EBT?

Once our State has an approved plan we will begin working with the schools to collect data. There will not be an application to apply for Summer P-EBT. Your child's school will submit data to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education with the student information needed to provide a list of students eligible for Summer P-EBT to the Department of Social Services.

29. When can I expect to receive Summer P-EBT and how much?

Expect these benefits sometime in the fall of 2022. The benefit amount will be based on a calculation of 55 days at a rate of \$7.10 per day for a total amount of \$391.

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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; or
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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