

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Financial Assistance Available for Families That Qualify for Free and Reduced School Lunches
Families can apply for the Pandemic EBT program starting today

NASHVILLE – The Tennessee Department of Human Services (TDHS) and the Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) announced Tennessee families are now eligible to receive financial support for their children’s nutritional needs during the COVID-19 pandemic. This support is provided through the Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) program.

Under the new P-EBT program, families of children who receive free or reduced meals at school or attend a Community Eligibility Provision school may receive financial assistance to replace school meals during the months of March, April and May due to COVID-19 school closures. The program will provide parents with \$5.70 per child for each day that child qualifies for P-EBT.

“Families across our state depend on the meals their children receive at school and many were not prepared to immediately replace those meals when schools shut down for COVID-19,” said TDHS Commissioner Danielle W. Barnes. “The P-EBT program brings economic support to ensure children receive the nutrition they need. Helping families through this emergency is how we continue building a thriving Tennessee.”

Parents who already receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits currently, do not need to apply. The funds began arriving on the EBT card they already use beginning June 12. Parents who do not receive SNAP benefits, but whose children do qualify for free or reduced school meals, will need to apply for P-EBT online [here](#) beginning June 15. The application period will end June 29, 2020.

Individuals who need assistance completing their P-EBT application or have general questions about the program are encouraged to call the TDHS hotline at 1-833-496-0661 and select option 3. Qualifying families will receive P-EBT support in two installments, one for meals in March and April initially, and then one additional disbursement later next month for May meals.

“During the COVID-19 school closures, we saw an incredible, herculean effort to keep providing meal services to students and families,” said TDOE Commissioner Penny Schwinn. “This additional relief from P-EBT will be helpful during this time of uncertainty for families and it is important to make sure every eligible family knows about the program.”

Throughout the COVID-19 school closures, many districts and schools across Tennessee used innovative ways to continue delivering meals to students and families, such as “grab and go”



options, drive-throughs, or bus delivery, and on average provided 1.5 million meals a week to families regardless of a student's enrollment. Many emergency sites are continuing to provide student meals and receiving these meals does not disqualify a family from the P-EBT program.

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act authorized the U.S. Department of Agriculture to approve states for Pandemic EBT (P-EBT). Approved state agencies may operate P-EBT when a school is closed for at least five consecutive days during a public health emergency designation when the school would otherwise be in session. Tennessee is among the more than 40 states that have received P-EBT approval.

Learn more about the Tennessee Department of Human Services at www.tn.gov/humanservices.

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