

May 19, 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act of 2020, families that qualify for free or reduced lunch at school may be eligible for a new benefit of up to \$302 per child (Pre-Kindergarten – Grade 12), known as the Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT) program, to help with food costs while students continue to learn at home.

The benefits include:

- \$57 for March
- \$125 for April
- \$120 for May

If you are eligible, the benefit months you are eligible for will be loaded onto an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card. If you received Food Stamp (SNAP) benefits in March, **DO NOT** apply for these new/additional benefits. The full \$302 will automatically be loaded to your existing EBT card. If you need more information on SNAP, visit [mydss.mo.gov](http://mydss.mo.gov).

**If you did not receive Food Stamp (SNAP) benefits in March, you must apply for this benefit and complete all sections of the application.** An individual child is also eligible for the new benefit if the child was attending a school that participates in Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), Provision 2, or Provision 3 during the unanticipated school closure. If you are not sure your child attended an eligible school, you should contact the school district the child attends before you apply. If you do not want to receive this benefit, you do not need to apply. To find out if you may be eligible, please see Attachment A.

Resource Parents qualify to receive P-EBT, as Foster Care children receive free lunch. If you are a Resource Parent who wants to receive these benefits, you will also need to complete the application.

Select one of the following ways to apply:

- Complete the online application at [EmergencyMealSurvey.com/MO](http://EmergencyMealSurvey.com/MO)
- Scan your completed and signed application, then email it to:  
[FoodandNutritionServices@dese.mo.gov](mailto:FoodandNutritionServices@dese.mo.gov)
- Mail your completed application to:  
DESE Food and Nutrition Services  
205 Jefferson Street  
P.O. Box 480  
Jefferson City, MO 65102

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) will verify that your household qualifies to receive free or reduced price meals and will then send your application to the Department of Social Services, Family Support Division (FSD). **FSD will send you a letter. If you are approved, you will receive an EBT card with the benefit on it to buy food.** Your card will have the one-time benefits loaded on the EBT card to purchase food at any retailer with the QUEST Mark ® logo.

Items you can buy include:

- Fruits and vegetables
- Meat, poultry, and fish
- Dairy products
- Breads and cereals
- Snack foods and non-alcoholic beverages
- Seeds and plants that produce food



Items you cannot buy are:

- Beer, wine, liquor, cigarettes, or tobacco
- Vitamins, medicines, or supplements
- Live animals (except shellfish or fish)
- Hot foods
- Any nonfood items like pet food, cleaning supplies, paper products, household supplies, hygiene items, or cosmetics

For more information on the EBT card, visit: [mydss.mo.gov/food-assistance/ebt](http://mydss.mo.gov/food-assistance/ebt).

If you have questions on how to apply, you can use the online chat feature at [mydss.mo.gov](http://mydss.mo.gov) or call 855-373-4636. If you need additional assistance with food, childcare, transportation, and/or other services, visit the Missouri Services Navigator at [mo.servicesnavigator.org](http://mo.servicesnavigator.org).

## Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT) Program Eligibility Criteria

Household Size	Monthly Income
1	\$1,926
2	\$2,607
3	\$3,289
4	\$3,970
5	\$4,652
6	\$5,333
7	\$6,015
8	\$6,696
For each additional person	+682

**Family/Household** means a group of people who may or may not be related and who do not live in an institution or a boarding house, but who are living as one economic group. Students who are temporarily away at school should be counted as members of the family; however, students who are full-time residents of an institution are considered a family of one.

**Gross Income** means income before deductions for income taxes, employee's social security taxes, insurance premiums, charitable contributions, bonds, etc. It includes the following:

1. Monetary compensation for services, including wages, salary, commissions, or fees;
2. Net income from non-farm self-employment;
3. Net income from farm self-employment;
4. Social security;
5. Dividends or interest on savings or bonds or income from estates or trusts;
6. Net rental income;
7. Public assistance or welfare payments;
8. Unemployment compensation;
9. Government civilian employee or military retirement, or pensions, or veterans payments;
10. Private pensions or annuities;
11. Alimony or child support payments;
12. Regular contributions from persons not living in the household;
13. Net royalties; and
14. Other cash income. Other cash income would include cash amounts received or withdrawn from any source including savings, investments, trust accounts, and other resources which would be available to pay the price of a child's meal.

**Institutionalized Children** are considered a one-member family and only monies the child actually receives and controls shall be considered as income for determining eligibility.

**Adopted Children** for whom a household has accepted legal responsibility is considered to be a member of that household. If the adoption is a "subsidized" adoption, which may include children with special needs, the subsidy is included in the total household income.

**Foster Children** are children who are formally placed by a court or a State child welfare agency. Resource Parents qualify to receive P-EBT, as Foster Care children receive free lunch. If you are a Resource Parent who wants to receive these benefits for the foster child, you will need to complete the application.

**Special Provisions** are available to students enrolled in certain schools. The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), Provision 2, and Provision 3 options provide eligible school districts the opportunity to offer free meals to all students in high poverty schools. As such, students attending schools that participate in CEP, Provision 2, or Provision 3 are eligible to receive P-EBT. Households must submit an application to apply for the P-EBT card for children who received free meals through one of these special provisions.

## **Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT) Program Frequently Asked Questions**

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

Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT) helps cover food costs for children who qualify for free or reduced lunch at school but are not in school due to the pandemic.

### **Who is eligible?**

You may be able to get P-EBT benefits if you have a child or children in grades Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 who would have received free or reduced-price meals at school if schools were still open.

You may also qualify based off your income. For example, if your child was not previously getting free or reduced-price meals but you have lost income, you may be able to get P-EBT benefits. You will receive a letter from the school district with income guidelines and additional information. If you would like to apply for benefits and have not received this letter by May 29, 2020, contact your local school district.

### **How do I get benefits?**

P-EBT benefits are loaded to an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card. If you received Food Stamp (SNAP) benefits in March, P-EBT benefits will be automatically loaded to your EBT card. You will not need to call or apply to get P-EBT.

If you did not receive Food Stamp (SNAP) benefits in March, you will need to apply for P-EBT. If you aren't sure if you received SNAP benefits in March, you can [check the status of your benefits](#) to find out.

### **How do I apply?**

The letter you receive from your school district will include information on how to apply online or by mail.

### **How much is the P-EBT benefit?**

If you received Food Stamp (SNAP) benefits in March, you will receive \$302 per eligible child for the months of March, April, and May.

If you did not get Food Stamp (SNAP) benefits in March, you will report your income for March, April, and May when you apply. The amount of your P-EBT benefits will depend on your eligibility for those months. The maximum amount is \$302 per eligible child, which includes:

- March: \$57
- April: \$125
- May: \$120

Resource Parents who did not receive Food Stamp (SNAP) benefits in March will need to apply for P-EBT benefits. You will only be eligible for help the months you were caring for a child in foster care. You will need to include all children who may be eligible for P-EBT benefits in your household on your application.

**How did you determine the P-EBT benefit amount?**

If you received Food Stamp (SNAP) benefits in March, your benefit amount was figured based on the cost of free and reduced-price lunch:

- The cost of free and reduced lunch is \$5.70 per eligible child per day
- As March 18<sup>th</sup> was the average day of school closures, the amount was calculated from March 18<sup>th</sup> – May 31<sup>st</sup> or 53 days
- The final calculation was  $\$5.70 \times 53 = \$302$

If you did not get Food Stamp (SNAP) benefits in March, your benefit will be calculated and issued for each eligible child: month.

- March: \$57 (10 days at \$5.70)
- April: \$125 (22 days at \$5.70)
- May: \$120 (21 days at \$5.70)

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

P-EBT benefits are good for 365 days from the date the benefits are placed on your EBT card.

**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 during the school closure.

**What if I did not receive benefits for all of the children in my household, or I disagree with the benefit amount?**

You will need to call the Family Support Division Information Center at 855-373-4636 and ask for your case to be reviewed.

If you are eligible for benefits for a child who was not previously included, that benefit will be added to your EBT card. If you are not eligible for benefits, you will get a letter in the mail letting you know you have been denied and the reason why.

**If my household income has changed during the pandemic, how can I apply to have my children participate in the Free or Reduced Meal Program when schools reopen?**

Each local school district will accept new Free or Reduced Meal Program applications once schools are back in session.