

Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. What are Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) benefits?

The Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) program was created by federal law in March 2020 to supplement school meals that eligible children missed while schools were closed or operating at reduced schedules due to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE). The program was expanded in October 2020 to include eligible children in child care.

The Department of Human Services (DHS), together with the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), have administered the program every year between School Year (SY) 2019-2020 and 2022-2023.

2. Who is eligible for P-EBT benefits?

P-EBT eligibility has changed for SY 2022-2023 and Summer 2023 due to changes in federal law.

Children who were under age six (6) on October 1, 2022 and part of a household receiving SNAP benefits for the month of payment coverage are eligible for P-EBT benefits for SY 2022-2023 for the period that the PHE was in effect (August 2022 to May 11, 2023). These children are not eligible for the Summer 2023 payment unless the child is separately eligible as a student as listed below.

Students are eligible for P-EBT benefits for Summer 2023 if they were approved for Free and Reduced Price Meals (FARM) at a school that participates in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and enrolled at the end of SY 22-23.

For additional information on eligibility by School Year, visit dhs.dc.gov/p-ebt.

3. How much are P-EBT benefits?

P-EBT benefit amounts have changed for SY 2022-2023 and Summer 2023 due to changes in federal law.

For School Year 2022-2023, the monthly benefit amount is \$50.36. Children who are eligible for all months of benefits will receive a total payment of \$478.42.

For Summer 2023, the benefit amount is \$120.00.

For additional information on benefit amounts by School Year, visit dhs.dc.gov/p-ebt.



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4. How will I be notified if I receive P-EBT benefits?

After benefits are issued, DHS will mail notices to the address on the child's P-EBT record.

You can also check your balance by calling (888) 304-9167 or through ebtEDGE, which is accessible online at [ebtedge.com](https://www.ebtedge.com) or with the free ebtEDGE mobile app, available from the Apple App Store or Google Play.

5. Can I apply for P-EBT benefits?

There is no separate application process for P-EBT benefits.

DC students who became eligible for FARM during Summer 2023 are eligible for the Summer 2023 P-EBT payment. If your child is not currently certified for Free and Reduced Price Meals at their school, the school must receive a FARM application for the child on or before June 30, 2023 and approve the application before July 15, 2023 for the child to be eligible for Summer 2023 P-EBT benefits. Please contact your child's school for more information on applying for FARM.

6. How do I access P-EBT benefits?

The P-EBT program provides food benefits on a [Capital Access Electronic Benefits Transfer \(EBT\) card](#).

Eligible families who are currently receiving SNAP benefits or who received a P-EBT card previously will be issued benefits on their existing EBT card. Students who are new to the P-EBT program, as well as students who previously received P-EBT on their family's existing SNAP EBT card but are no longer receiving those benefits, will be mailed a new EBT card when benefits for the child are issued.

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7. How do I activate or reset the PIN on my P-EBT card?

To activate a P-EBT card and create a Personal Identification Number (PIN), or to change the PIN, call FIS at (888) 304-9167 and follow these instructions:

- **If the card is issued in your child's name** -- Use all zeroes for the child's Social Security Number (SSN), the child's date of birth (in format MM/DD/YYYY), and the ZIP code of the address where the card was mailed
- **If the card is issued in your name** – Use all zeroes for the Social Security Number (SSN), the date of birth of the oldest child eligible for P-EBT benefits (in format MM/DD/YYYY), and the ZIP code of the address where the card was mailed

Be prepared to select a four-digit PIN when you call FIS. Keep your PIN secure and never share it with anyone. If you cannot remember it or someone finds out your PIN, call FIS at (888) 304-9167 to select a new PIN. You can find more information at dhs.dc.gov/page/ebt-card-updates.

8. What can I purchase with P-EBT benefits?

P-EBT benefits work the same as SNAP food benefits and can only be used to purchase eligible food. This includes fruits, vegetables, meat, poultry, fish, dairy products, bread, and other foods, including snack foods and non-alcoholic beverages.

You can find additional information at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/eligible-food-items>.

9. Where can P-EBT benefits be used?

P-EBT benefits can be used to purchase food at any store that accepts SNAP. Most stores will have signs stating they accept SNAP or EBT, but you can also locate stores by:

- Searching at www.fns.usda.gov/snap/retailer-locator
- Searching at [ebtedge.com](https://www.ebtedge.com) or on the free ebtEDGE mobile app, available from the Apple App Store or Google Play

P-EBT benefits can also be used to make online food purchases at approved retailers. In DC, a number of retailers, including Amazon, Aldi, and Walmart, allow eligible purchases to be made with P-EBT funds. You can find more information at dhs.dc.gov/service/snap-benefits.

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10. Do I have to use all the P-EBT funds in the month that benefits are issued?

No, the money will carry over from month to month. However, benefits may be expunged (removed from the card) if no purchases are made for 274 days.

11. How can I get a replacement card?

If you need a replacement P-EBT card, you can either request it by mail or pick one up in person.

To pick up a replacement card in person, you will need to visit an EBT Card Distribution Center. Information on locations and hours can be found at dhs.dc.gov/page/ebt-card-updates.

To request a replacement by mail, call FIS, the District's EBT vendor, at 888-304-9167. Please note that they cannot update the address they have on the record, so if your address has changed you will need to either pick up a replacement card in person or submit a P-EBT Issue Form to update your address and request a replacement to be sent by DHS.

12. How can I update my address or other information?

To update P-EBT record information, please submit a P-EBT Issue Form at dhs.dc.gov/p-ebt.

13. Where can I get more information about P-EBT?

You can find additional information about P-EBT at dhs.dc.gov/p-ebt.

14. What should I do if I think I should have received P-EBT benefits but did not?

If you think your child should have received P-EBT benefits, please review FAQ #2 above to determine if your child was likely to be eligible based on the school year and whether the child was enrolled in school or a member of a household receiving SNAP benefits during the period that P-EBT benefits covered. If you have any questions about whether your child was approved for FARM during a school year, you should contact the nutrition services or FARM contact at your child's school.

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15. What should I do if I do not want P-EBT benefits?

While you are not required to use P-EBT benefits, you cannot transfer them to another person or request us to redirect the funds to someone else. If you do not want P-EBT benefits, you can destroy the card and the benefits will automatically be expunged (removed from the card) after 274 days. If you want to ensure future benefits are not issued to your child, please complete a webform at dhs.dc.gov/p-ebt to opt out.

16. What should I do if I am a victim of fraud?

DHS is aware of card skimming, scam, and phishing attempts surrounding EBT cards. Beware of calls and text messages asking for your EBT card number and/or Personal Identification Number (PIN). DHS will never contact you by phone call or text message to ask for your EBT card number and/or PIN.

Immediately report any suspicious activity and/or fraudulent usage of your P-EBT benefits to the DHS Office of Program Review, Monitoring, and Investigation (OPRMI) at 202-671-4460 so that DHS can complete an investigation. More information is available at dhs.dc.gov/page/fraud.

17. Will receiving and/or using P-EBT benefits impact my “public charge” status?

No. Receiving or using P-EBT benefits does not impact immigration status for either parents and guardians or eligible children. The public charge rule does not apply to P-EBT benefits.

18. Are P-EBT benefits taxable?

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has not published guidance on the taxability of P-EBT benefits in particular, but based on previous IRS Revenue Rulings assessing taxability of other benefit programs, it is likely that P-EBT would be treated as general welfare and not as taxable income. Please consult with a tax professional if you have any questions about your taxes.

19. Are there other food or financial resources available?

More information about food resources available in the District can be found [here](#).

Families that may be eligible to participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or other benefit programs offered by DHS can find information about how to apply [here](#).

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20. How can I get further assistance if I have a question that is not answered in these FAQs or on the DC P-EBT website?

Please make sure to review the FAQs and the website. Many common questions and issues are addressed above and on the P-EBT Eligibility and Payments, P-EBT FAQs, and P-EBT Card Information sections of the website. If your question is still not answered, please submit a webform at dhs.dc.gov/p-ebt. Due to a high volume of inquiries, we are not able to respond to inquiries if review of the case shows that benefits were issued correctly unless the request is for a replacement P-EBT card.