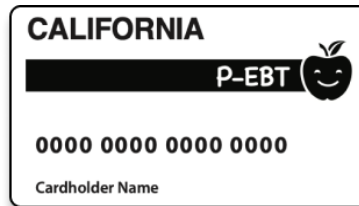


P-EBT Extension Frequently Asked Questions

Updated: October 29, 2020



Basic Information

1. What is the 'P-EBT' or Pandemic EBT program?

The Pandemic EBT or P-EBT program is intended to support children who lose access to free or reduced-price school meals due to pandemic related disruptions to in-person instruction or school facility closures. The program provides food benefits to children who would have received free or reduced-price school meals through the federal School Breakfast or National School Lunch Programs if not for the disruption to in-person instruction or school facility closure.

2. What is the P-EBT Extension?

Recently, California was approved to issue additional P-EBT benefits for the months of August and September 2020. This is referred to as the "P-EBT Extension."

The P-EBT program originally provided food benefits to eligible school aged children for the months of March, April, May, and June 2020. Eligible households received a standard benefit amount that was issued via a lump sum on their P-EBT card. P-EBT cards were issued beginning in May 2020 and through September 2020. Some families received their card in the mail automatically, while others had to apply online. The original P-EBT program is referred to as "P-EBT 1.0".

P-EBT Extension Eligibility

3. Who is eligible for P-EBT extension benefits?

Children who previously received benefits under the original P-EBT 1.0 program will receive P-EBT extension benefits if they:

- are still a California registered student; and
- were assumed to be attending school via distance learning or virtual instruction for at least 5 consecutive days during the months of August and September 2020.

Children who are newly eligible for free or reduced-price school meals for the current 2020-21 school year are not eligible for P-EBT extension benefits. This includes children who just started school for the first time as a preschooler or kindergartener for the current 2020-21 school year.

Children newly eligible for free or reduced-price school meals will be served under a new P-EBT program for the current 2020-21 school year. This is referred to as the “P-EBT 2.0 program”. More information about the new P-EBT 2.0 program is coming soon. Families can periodically check the [CDSS P-EBT Homepage](#) for more information about the upcoming program.

Eligibility for the P-EBT extension was determined through data matching between the California Department of Education (CDE) and the California Department of Social Services (CDSS). The data matching process is based on information about children who previously received P-EBT 1.0 benefits. It does not include children who may be newly eligible for free or reduced-price school meals for the current 2020-21 school year.

Children who were home-schooled during the 2019-20 school year were not eligible for P-EBT 1.0 benefits and are not eligible for P-EBT extension benefits.

4. How do I find out if I am eligible for P-EBT extension benefits?

If your child is eligible for P-EBT extension benefits, you will get a letter in the mail with a new P-EBT card included. New P-EBT cards will begin arriving in the mail in early November 2020 and through the end of December 2020.

Getting P-EBT Extension Benefits

5. How do I get P-EBT Extension benefits?

Eligible families do not need to do anything to get P-EBT extension benefits. Under the P-EBT extension, each eligible child will receive a new P-EBT card with benefits for the months of August and September 2020. These new P-EBT cards will be mailed directly to eligible families without having to apply online.

6. When will I get P-EBT extension benefits?

New P-EBT cards will begin arriving in the mail in early November 2020 and through the end of December 2020.

7. What do I need to do when the new P-EBT card arrives in the mail?

Follow the instructions that come with your P-EBT card and create your private PIN number. Families need to set up a new PIN even if they already set up a PIN for their original P-EBT card.

Because more benefits may be added later if the federal government extends the program again, do not throw away your card.

8. What if I think my family should have gotten P-EBT extension benefits, but did not receive a card?

First, you should find out if you did not receive a P-EBT extension card because of an address change. It is possible that a P-EBT extension card was mailed to an old address. If you can verify your information, an address change can be processed, and a new card issued. If you have not received your card by the end of December 2020, you can call the P-EBT Helpline at 877-328-9677.

If your family was not issued a new P-EBT card under the P-EBT extension,

your child is not eligible for P-EBT extension benefits. The P-EBT Helpline will not know the specific reason why your child was not eligible for P-EBT extension benefits.

California is working on a new P-EBT program for the current 2020-2021 school year. More information about the new P-EBT 2.0 program is coming soon. Families can periodically check the [CDSS P-EBT Homepage](#) for more information about the upcoming program.

P-EBT Extension Benefit Amounts

9. How much will I get in P-EBT extension benefits?

An eligible family will get \$5.86 per child per day for every eligible school day. The P-EBT extension benefit amount is based on each student's learning situation and can vary from student to student, even within a family.

Benefit amounts under the P-EBT extension are based on individual student and school level data. The total amount an individual child is eligible to receive depends on the start date of virtual instruction/distance learning at the school the child attended during the 2019-2020 school year. Benefit amounts were determined based on data matching between CDE and the CDSS.

10. Why were P-EBT extension benefits adjusted based on a school's instruction model (e.g. virtual instruction/distance learning or in-person)?

P-EBT is a federal program based on federal rules. The federal government required that California adjust benefit amounts based on whether a student is attending school via all virtual instruction/distance learning, all in-person instruction, or a hybrid of both.

11. Can P-EBT extension benefit amounts be changed or corrected?

No. Per federal rules, P-EBT extension amounts cannot be changed or corrected after September 30, 2020. Benefit amounts were determined based on data matching between CDE and CDSS. The State used the best available data to get approval to issue benefits before the deadline of September 30, 2020 set by the federal government.

12. Will there be more P-EBT benefits?

Recently, states have been granted authority, pending federal approval, to give children eligible for free or reduced-price school meals for the current 2020-21 school year P-EBT food benefits.

To give P-EBT benefits for the current 2020-21 school year, states must develop and submit a new P-EBT plan for federal approval. The CDE and CDSS are awaiting federal guidance and will be working collaboratively to develop and submit an approvable plan as soon as possible.

More information about the new P-EBT 2.0 program is coming soon. Families can periodically check the [CDSS P-EBT Homepage](#) for more information about the upcoming program.

Because more benefits may be added later if the federal government extends the program, do not throw away your card.

P-EBT Helpline Support

13. How do I reach the P-EBT Helpline?

The P-EBT Helpline is accessible via the California EBT Customer Service Center by calling (877) 328-9677. If a P-EBT cardholder does not have their card number accessible, they must wait through two card number prompts without entering their P-EBT card number. They will then hear a prompt to report their card as having not yet arrived, lost, stolen, or damaged. After choosing that option, they will hear a prompt for help regarding P-EBT benefits. At that time, the caller can select the option specific to their P-EBT inquiry and connect with a phone agent for further assistance.

The P-EBT helpline can help with PIN set-up, address changes, or replacing lost/stolen P-EBT cards.

The P-EBT Helpline cannot help with determining eligibility or issuing new benefits if your child is not found in the system.

14. Who do I contact if I need help setting up my PIN?

Families can call the P-EBT Helpline at 877-328-9677 for help setting up their PIN.

Some families, after attempting to use the automated system to set-up their PIN,

may require additional assistance. P-EBT cardholder information may need to be updated in the system for cardholders to successfully PIN their card.

15. Who do I contact if I did not receive my P-EBT card because of an address change?

Families can call the P-EBT Helpline at 877-328-9677 for help with an address change. P-EBT cardholders may request a replacement P-EBT card if their original P-EBT extension card was sent to the wrong address.

16. Who do I contact for questions on the P-EBT extension?

Call the P-EBT Helpline at 877-328-9677 or visit the [CDSS P-EBT Homepage](#) for more information.

Using P-EBT Extension Benefits

17. Where can I use my P-EBT extension benefits? What can I buy with them?

Your P-EBT extension benefits can buy food in most grocery stores and farmers markets. You can use your P-EBT benefits at any store that accepts CalFresh, including online from Amazon and Walmart. Most retailers have signs saying they accept CalFresh or EBT.

Use your P-EBT card like a debit card:

- Select "EBT"
- Swipe the card
- Enter your private PIN number

P-EBT benefits can be used to buy any food that can be bought with CalFresh. CalFresh eligible foods are most foods, except prepared foods and foods sold hot. You can learn more about CalFresh eligible foods by visiting myCalFresh.org.

18. Do I have to use all my P-EBT benefit when I get them?

No, the money will carry over from month to month. You can use your P-EBT extension benefits for one year. It starts on the date your P-EBT card was issued.

Because more benefits may be added later if the federal government

extends the program, do not throw away your card even when you have spent all your benefits.

19. Do I have to set up my PIN on my P-EBT card by a specific date?

We encourage all families to set up their PIN or “activate” their P-EBT benefits as soon as the card is received, but there is no set deadline to PIN or activate the P-EBT card.

20. How do I check my balance?

You can call the EBT Customer Service Center’s automated system at 877-328-9677 (the number on the back of the P-EBT card and the same number as the P-EBT Helpline) to check the balance.

21. I lost my P-EBT card. Can I get a new one?

Yes. Call the P-EBT Helpline at 877-328-9677 to request a new P-EBT card. Be prepared to provide your child’s name, date of birth, and mailing address to complete the request.

Other P-EBT Extension Information

22. Do P-EBT benefits replace school meals?

No. P-EBT benefits are additional food benefits that do not replace meals offered by your school. Children may continue to receive “grab n go” meals or emergency food at COVID 19 emergency feeding sites offered by schools and community locations, even if they are receiving P-EBT benefits.

23. I am facing homelessness. How do I get my P-EBT benefits?

If your family is facing homelessness and your children are eligible for P-EBT, you can request your P-EBT card be sent to a different address that you can access, i.e. a friend or family member. Call the P-EBT Helpline at 877-328-9677 to complete an address change.

24. If I get P-EBT extension benefits, will it affect my immigration

status or make me a public charge?

P-EBT is a disaster emergency benefit based on eligibility for free and reduced school meals, like other benefits that the Department Homeland Security has said would not be considered for public charge purposes. However, the US Citizenship and Immigration Services can consider several factors under their public charge test.

Public charge does not apply to all immigrants. If you have questions about your immigration status and this food benefit, more information is available by visiting the [CDSS Immigration Services Homepage](#), including a list of free and low-cost immigration services providers.

25. I need more food help. Who do I contact?

If you need more food assistance, you can apply for CalFresh food benefits by calling 1-877-847-3663 and connecting to your local county social service office or visiting [GetCalFresh.org](#).

If you need emergency food assistance, call 2-1-1.