



# Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance

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## General Information System (GIS) Message

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### Section 1

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<b>Date:</b>	May 05, 2023
<b>To:</b>	Subscribers
<b>Suggested Distribution:</b>	Commissioners, SNAP Directors, TA Directors, Medicaid Directors
<b>From:</b>	Valerie Figueroa, Deputy Commissioner of Employment and Income Support Programs
<b>Subject:</b>	COVID-19 Pandemic EBT Food Benefits for the 2021-2022 School Year and Summer 2022 period
<b>Effective Date:</b>	Immediately
<b>Contact Information:</b>	P-EBT Bureau email: <a href="mailto:otda.sm.eisp.pebt@otda.ny.gov">otda.sm.eisp.pebt@otda.ny.gov</a>
<b>Attachments:</b>	None

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### Section 2

The purpose of this GIS is to advise social services districts that the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) has begun to issue Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) food benefits for the 2021-2022 school year and summer 2022 period to eligible children. To be eligible, students must have attended a school that participates in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), been certified as eligible to receive Free/Reduced Price Lunch (FRPL) and had a reduction in in-person attendance during the 2021-2022 school year due to COVID-19. This GIS also outlines the issuance of P-EBT food benefits for children under age 6 in receipt of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits (“Children in Childcare”) for the 2021-2022 school year and summer 2022 period.

The terms and conditions of eligibility for P-EBT food benefits, originally set forth by the Families First, Coronavirus Response Act, 2020, were amended for the 2021-2022 school year by the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2021 and Other Extensions Act (P.L. 116-159); the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (P.L. 116-260); and the American Rescue Plan Act (P.L. 117-2). P-EBT food benefits will be issued in accordance with the terms of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) memorandums of [August 26, 2021](#), [January 21, 2022](#), and [May 9, 2022](#), and in accordance with New York State’s federally approved plans.

P-EBT food benefits are issued directly by OTDA. Social services districts have no role in the administration or issuance of P-EBT food benefits. The benefits are issued outside of the Welfare Management System (WMS) and OTDA’s Benefit Issuance Control Systems (BICS). Most social services district staff therefore will not have access to any P-EBT food benefit issuance information. However, staff who have access to the EBT Electronic Payment Processing Information Control (EPPIC) system will be able to see the deposit of these benefits into EBT accounts.

## **P-EBT Food Benefits for SNAP and TA Households with Children Under Age 6**

OTDA has begun issuing P-EBT food benefits to children under age 6 who received SNAP during the 2021-2022 school year, including any eligible children who attended pre-kindergarten (Pre-K). Each eligible child will receive \$31 per month for each month they received SNAP from September 2021 through June 2022. Eligible children will also receive a Summer 2022 P-EBT food benefit of \$391 if they received SNAP for the months of June, July, or August 2022. Most of the benefits for this cohort were issued in April 2023.

Households may submit an application to be considered for additional benefits for any month that a child under age 6:

- Was in receipt of SNAP,
- Received \$31 automatically as described above,
- Attended pre-kindergarten, AND
- Was absent or remote learning for 6 or more days in that month due to COVID-19.

Parents will be asked to submit additional documentation from the child's Pre-K school to verify this information. If approved, the child will be issued the difference between the \$31 benefit and the school year P-EBT benefit for that month.

If an eligible child is still on an existing SNAP case, P-EBT food benefits will be deposited into their household's existing EBT account. Eligible children who are no longer receiving SNAP will be issued a new P-EBT Food Benefit card with instructions explaining how to activate the card and access the P-EBT food benefits, or they will receive the benefits on an existing P-EBT Food Benefit card if they have already been issued one.

Households that were issued a P-EBT food benefit to their existing SNAP case may have received a text message in early April, informing them that P-EBT food benefits were issued to their EBT account. Households that were issued P-EBT food benefits on a new or existing P-EBT Food Benefit card may receive a robocall with information and the phone number for the P-EBT Helpline if further assistance is needed.

## **2021-22 School Year P-EBT Food Benefits for Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 Students**

For the 2021-2022 school year, eligible children will automatically receive P-EBT food benefits based on daily attendance records and enrollment rosters submitted by school districts and schools participating in the NSLP. To receive an automatic benefit payment, schools must have submitted the necessary attendance data which shows that a student missed at least **five consecutive days** of in-person school in a month due to COVID-19 related school closures, absences, or remote learning. Automatic payments will begin to be issued in May 2023, with majority of benefit payments being made during the month of May and continuing through September 2023.

### **Application Portal**

For any additional absences during the 2021-2022 school year (other than five consecutive days for which benefits will automatically be issued) families will have the option to apply via a newly created online application. The application allows parents to attest to their child's total number of COVID-19 related absences and remote learning days for each month of the 2021-2022 school year. The child's school must have submitted attendance data, which OTDA will compare to the parent's attestation in order to validate the household's application for benefits. OTDA will pay the difference between any benefits that have already been issued for the 2021-2022 school year and the tiered monthly benefit amounts based on parent/guardian attestation and the attendance data received from the child's school.

Because daily attendance records were not available for children attending Pre-K programs, most children who attended Pre-K in the 2021-22 school year will not receive automatic school year or summer payments. The online application will allow parents/guardians to provide documentation validating FRPL eligibility, NSLP school enrollment, and eligible absences. Applications and supporting documentation will be reviewed to determine eligibility for P-EBT food benefits and benefit levels for the 2021-22 school year and the Summer 2022 benefit.

The application portal is scheduled to open on May 15. Applications will be accepted through August 15, 2023. All approved benefits will be issued by the end of September 2023. Specific instructions to use the portal will be available when the portal website opens. Applicants can receive assistance with submitting an application by calling the P-EBT Helpline at **1-833-452-0096**. The application will be available on the P-EBT FAQ webpage by May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023. <https://otda.ny.gov/SNAP-COVID-19/Frequently-Asked-Questions-Pandemic-EBT.asp>

**P-EBT Summer 2022 Benefits for Kindergarten through Grade 12 Students**

For the Summer 2022 period, students attending and enrolled in an NSLP-participating school in June 2022 and certified eligible for Free/Reduced Price Lunch are eligible for a one-time \$391 benefit. Schools have been instructed to submit enrollment information for all eligible students. Once school enrollment data is received and processed by OTDA, all eligible children will receive the summer 2022 benefit automatically. There is no application for the summer 2022 benefit, except for some Pre-K students who must apply for school year and summer benefits through the application portal. Benefits will be issued in the same manner as the 2021-2022 school year benefit, and in many cases, will be paid at the same time as a 2021-2022 school year benefit.

**All P-EBT food benefits for the 2021-2022 school year will be issued in the following manner:**

- Eligible children currently receiving SNAP or Temporary Assistance will have their P- EBT food benefits issued to their household’s EBT card.
- Eligible children who successfully accessed their food benefits for previous school years on a P-EBT food benefit card will receive their food benefits for the 2021-2022 school year on the same P-EBT card.
- All other eligible children will be mailed a P-EBT Food Benefit card with instructions explaining how to activate the card and access the benefits.

Households may be notified that benefits have been issued either via text message issued by OTDA (OTDA text message short code 696832) or robocall from the P-EBT Helpline, operated by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) Human Services Call Center.

**Benefit Amounts**

Monthly payment tiers for 2021-2022 school year benefits are as follows:

<b>Payment Tier</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Number of days absent or remote per month due to COVID-19</b>
1	\$ 21	1-5
2	\$ 78	6-15
3	\$128	16+

The Summer 2022 Benefit is \$391.

**Additional Information**

P-EBT food benefits are not SNAP benefits. Under the authorizing legislation, P-EBT food benefit eligibility, and rights and responsibility rules and regulations that apply to SNAP do not all apply to these benefits. For example, disputes regarding eligibility for or the amount of P-EBT food benefits received

are not eligible for fair hearings. Eligibility for P-EBT food benefits is not limited by immigration status, nor will it impact a family's "public charge" status. However, P-EBT food benefits are subject to the same purchase and use restrictions as SNAP benefits. They are intended to be used to purchase food for the household of the children that received them and may only be used to purchase the same food items that may be purchased with SNAP benefits. P-EBT food benefits will remain available and accessible on the EBT or P-EBT food benefit card for 274 days from the date they were issued.

The Continuing Appropriations Act of 2021 allows for pandemic related benefits to be issued only during the fiscal year in which the federal Public Health Emergency (PHE) is in place. The PHE is ending on May 11, 2023, and payment of P-EBT food benefits must be completed by September 30, 2023.

Information about benefits for the 2022-2023 school year and Summer 2023 period is forthcoming.

### **P-EBT Helpline and Assistance**

Families with questions can be directed to the P-EBT Helpline at **1-833-452-0096** or submit a question through the P-EBT information form at <https://otda.ny.gov/PEBT-Info>.

P-EBT Frequently Asked Questions can be found on the OTDA website: <https://otda.ny.gov/SNAP-COVID-19/Frequently-Asked-Questions-Pandemic-EBT.asp>