



# Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance

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## General Information System (GIS) Message

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### Section 1

<b>Transmittal:</b>	24DC034 Upstate and New York City
<b>Date:</b>	June 21, 2024
<b>To:</b>	Subscribers
<b>Suggested Distribution:</b>	Commissioners, SNAP Directors, TA Directors, Medicaid Directors, EBT Coordinators
<b>From:</b>	Valerie Figueroa, Deputy Commissioner, Employment and Income Support Programs
<b>Subject:</b>	2024 Summer EBT Food Benefit Program
<b>Effective Date:</b>	Immediately
<b>Contact Information:</b>	Email: <a href="mailto:SummerEBT@otda.ny.gov">SummerEBT@otda.ny.gov</a>
<b>Attachments:</b>	<a href="#">Attachment 1 - Summer EBT Reference Guide</a>

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### Section 2

The purpose of this GIS is to advise social services districts of the launch of the Summer EBT program in New York State. Summer EBT is a new, permanent child nutrition program that provides low-income families with school-age children access to food benefits to help buy groceries during the summer when kids might not have access to school meals.

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023, signed into law on December 29, 2022, established a permanent Summer EBT program. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has issued an Interim Final Rule [88 FR 90230](#) and regulatory guidance [7 CFR Part 292](#) to guide state agency implementation.

The New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) will be the lead Summer EBT agency, with support from the New York State Education Department, the NYS Office of Children and Family Services and the NYS Office of Information Technology Services.

Summer EBT is built upon the successful Pandemic-EBT (P-EBT) program that was in place from 2020 to 2023, but has important distinctions as described below. While social service districts have no role in the administration or issuance of Summer EBT food benefits, they will inevitably receive questions from families in their county. This directive outlines program rules and operations, and resources to assist with program inquiries. Comprehensive program information is available at [Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer \(EBT\) | OTDA \(ny.gov\)](#) (short URL is [OTDA.ny.gov/SummerEBT](https://www.otda.ny.gov/SummerEBT)).

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## Section 3

### Eligibility

Most eligible children will be identified and issued Summer EBT food benefits automatically; however, some families may need to apply.

#### Automatically Eligible (also known as Streamline Certified)

- A child must be between the ages of 6-16 at any time during the period of eligibility and receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and/or Temporary Assistance (cash) benefits, or be directly certified for free meals through Medicaid, **OR**
- A child must be determined eligible for free/reduced price school meals through the **National School Lunch Program** by their school. This includes children who participate in SNAP/TA or Medicaid (regardless of age) or are directly certified for free meals if they are homeless, migrant, runaway, foster, enrolled in Head Start or an eligible pre-kindergarten program, or through an income application.

These children will receive benefits automatically and **DO NOT** need to apply. Most eligible children will receive their benefits this way. Children who are automatically eligible will receive an eligibility notice in the mail in advance of their benefit issuance. Copies of the eligibility letters can be found at [Information for Schools and Providers | Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer \(EBT\) | OTDA \(ny.gov\)](#). These letters will be sent **beginning in late June**, and throughout the summer.

The period of eligibility for Summer 2024 includes the 2023-24 academic year (July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024) AND the Covered Summer Period, which is June 25, 2024 through September 3, 2024. A child can establish eligibility for 2024 Summer EBT benefits at any time from July 1, 2023 through September 3, 2024 to receive 2024 benefits.

#### Eligible through an Application

If a child is not automatically eligible, but meets the eligibility criteria below, they must apply to receive Summer EBT food benefits. To be eligible through an application:

- A child must attend a school that participates in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), **AND**
- The household's income must be at or below the limits for eligibility for free/reduced price school meals (185% federal poverty level).

Unlike P-EBT, Summer EBT requires an individual eligibility determination for each child, either through Streamline Certification or an application. Attending a school that offers free meals to all students through the **Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)** is not enough to qualify a child for Summer EBT.

Summer EBT eligibility requirements have been summarized in the flow chart: [Eligibility Verification Chart - Summer EBT Benefits for Children \(ny.gov\)](#)

### Benefits

Each eligible child will receive \$120 in food benefits for the summer period. Similar to P-EBT, Summer EBT benefits are issued outside of the Welfare Management System (WMS) and OTDA'S Benefit Issuance Control Systems (BICS). Most district staff therefore will not have access to any Summer EBT food benefit issuance information. However, staff who have access to the ebtEDGE system will be able to see the deposit of these benefits into EBT accounts.

#### Summer EBT Benefit Accounts and Cards

Each eligible child will have their own Summer EBT food benefit account and EBT card. Unlike P-EBT, **Summer EBT benefits will NOT be issued to any household SNAP EBT accounts.** Each child will have their own Summer EBT account and EBT card through which they can access benefits. Additionally, Summer EBT cards do not differ in appearance from P-EBT or SNAP EBT benefit cards.

Children who are automatically eligible and who successfully accessed P-EBT benefits using a P-EBT Food Benefit card within the past year will have their Summer EBT benefits issued to that same card and will not receive a new one. Households who may no longer have their child's existing P-EBT food benefit card and need a replacement card to access Summer EBT benefits, can find instructions for requesting a replacement Summer EBT card at [OTDA.NY.gov/card-replacement](https://OTDA.NY.gov/card-replacement).

Children who are automatically eligible and who did not successfully access P-EBT benefits within the past year using a P-EBT card will receive a new Summer EBT food benefit card in the mail. This includes if they did not activate/use a previously issued P-EBT food benefit card; were issued their most recent P-EBT benefits on their household's SNAP case; or are new to the program with no prior P-EBT history.

All children determined eligible through an application will receive a new Summer EBT card when their benefits are issued.

Instructions on how to activate/PIN a Summer EBT card are available at [Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer \(EBT\) | OTDA \(ny.gov\)](https://OTDA.NY.gov/Summer-Electronic-Benefits-Transfer-EBT).

OTDA may not have the most current address on file for some eligible children. If a household has to update an address for the purpose of receiving a replacement Summer EBT food benefit card, they MUST submit that update directly to OTDA using the linked form available at [OTDA.NY.gov/card-replacement](https://OTDA.NY.gov/card-replacement). If the household has moved AND is also in receipt of SNAP benefits, they should update their address with the local district AND with OTDA so they can receive Summer EBT food benefits in a timely manner.

For the purposes of Summer EBT, both P-EBT and Summer EBT food benefit cards have the same appearance and function. The card that is used to access Summer EBT benefits will become the child's permanent summer EBT card and should be retained for any future year benefits the child is eligible for.

### **Benefits Expire**

Summer EBT benefits differ from SNAP and P-EBT in two important ways. Summer EBT food benefits remain available and accessible on the Summer EBT food benefits card for only **122 days** after the date they were issued. After 122 days, **all** unused benefits are removed from the card, regardless of when the benefits were last accessed. Once removed, benefits cannot be replaced.

### **Summer EBT Application**

For children who are not automatically eligible, they may be eligible through an application if the child:

- Attends a school that participates in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), **AND**
- Resides in a household where the HH income is at or below the limits for eligibility for free/reduced price school meals (185% federal poverty level). Visit the Eligibility section at [Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer \(EBT\) | OTDA \(ny.gov\)](https://OTDA.NY.gov/Summer-Electronic-Benefits-Transfer-EBT) to see income eligibility guidelines for Summer EBT.

The online portal will open in early July 2024. A parent/guardian only need to complete one application for all students in the household. Applications must be completed and submitted by September 3, 2024 to be considered for Summer 2024 benefits. Visit the Apply section at [Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer \(EBT\) | OTDA \(ny.gov\)](https://OTDA.NY.gov/Summer-Electronic-Benefits-Transfer-EBT) for more details on the application process, and a link to the application once it is available. Using the online application is the fastest and easiest way to apply, however, paper applications will be available for download or mailing from the Summer EBT helpline after July 1.

### **Benefit Issuance Timing**

Summer EBT benefits will generally be issued to eligible children in this order:

- Public School students who are automatically eligible (issued July through August)
- Private school students who are automatically eligible (issued August through September)
- Students determined eligible through an application (issued August through October)

- Students who are automatically eligible and were determined eligible by their school or through SNAP or Medicaid at the end of the eligibility period - May through August (issued September through October)

These dates are estimates and subject to change. Visit [Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer \(EBT\) | OTDA \(ny.gov\)](#) for the most up-to-date benefit issuance information.

Additionally, households may be notified that benefits have been issued via text message issued by OTDA (OTDA text messages use the short code 696832).

### **Summer EBT Outreach**

Outreach materials including flyers and newsletter/website content is available at [Information for Schools and Providers | Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer \(EBT\) | OTDA \(ny.gov\)](#). Districts may post or distribute flyers to SNAP families with school-age children throughout the summer.

### **Additional Information**

Summer EBT food benefits are not SNAP benefits. However, Summer 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 SNAP-Eligible food items at participating retailers.

Eligibility for Summer EBT food benefits is not limited by immigration status, nor will it impact a family's "public charge" status.

Summer EBT Benefits are not eligible for replacement if stolen.

Families with children 18 years of age and younger can also receive free meals during the summer at a summer meal site. Families can call 1-866-3-HUNGRY or 1-877-8-HAMBRE (or text "food" to 304-304), or visit [SummerMealsNY.org](#) to find the location closest to them.

### **Summer EBT Helpline and Assistance**

Any families with questions can be directed to the Summer EBT Helpline at **1-833-452-0096**, which is managed by the Human Services Call Center at the Office for Children and Family Services. Attached to this directive is a reference guide to answer common questions and to assist with directing callers.