

Pandemic EBT

Public Awareness Outreach Toolkit

Phase 1: May 6 - May 20, 2020



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How to use this toolkit

This Pandemic EBT Outreach Toolkit is intended to bring awareness about this new COVID-19 response initiative to families whose children are eligible for free and reduced-price school meals.

During PHASE 1 outreach- roughly May 6th through May 20th- the key goals of P-EBT outreach are to:

- Build public awareness about Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) to familiarize likely-eligible families and community about what P-EBT is, how to get P-EBT benefits, and how P-EBT benefits can be used to purchase food.
- Inform families that receive CalFresh, CalWORKS, Medi-Cal or other social services that they DO NOT need to apply for P-EBT, and to let them know to look for their P-EBT card arriving in the mail between May 8-22.
- Prepare to do outreach to free and reduced-eligible school meals families that will need to apply starting on May 22.

A key principle of P-EBT outreach is to have consistent, clear communication about what P-EBT is, and how these benefits can be obtained. Misinformation is widespread in times of crisis, and this consistent messaging will help build trust in P-EBT.

Remember that the majority of P-EBT households will receive P-EBT directly, with no action needed. **A primary goal is to reduce the number of direct-issuance P-EBT families from thinking they need to apply, as that can slow down the process for those who do.**

A PHASE 2 outreach toolkit will follow, which will include materials and messaging to reach families who do need to apply after May 22. **With such a short timeline for P-EBT, it's important to use the correct messaging and timing to reach families about P-EBT.**

It's best to use multiple communication channels, and emphasize the benefit amount of up to \$365 per child. Let people know that P-EBT is being provided in partnership with their children's school, and is to help them buy food for their children while they are home.



Who should receive P-EBT awareness outreach between May 6-20th

Schools and counties can do general P-EBT education outreach to families who are eligible for free/reduced school meals.

- Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) is not familiar to families, as it is a new crisis-response benefit. Clear, proactive information on P-EBT will help ease confusion and worry for families.
- Families that are directly-certified through for school meals through CalFresh, CalWORKS, Medi-Cal or social services **do not need to apply** for P-EBT. They should receive a new P-EBT card in the mail between May 8-22. Schools and counties should be prepared to confirm that the P-EBT card is loaded with funds to purchase food.
- Families eligible for free and reduced-price school meals through a school application and some attending schools where meals free for all students **will likely need to apply** for P-EBT online between May 22-June 30. To prepare to reach these families, schools can create contact lists of students who were not directly certified for school meals.

Schools, counties, and community feeding sites can do on-site outreach to families receiving emergency meals with flyers, and do P-EBT outreach to families through mass communication channels, such as social media, email, or text/SMS.

Community organizations - such as food banks and family resource providers - play a key role in reaching families who are struggling to make ends meet and likely eligible for P-EBT.

Families may hear about Pandemic EBT through the media or word of mouth, and community organizations should be prepared to provide general P-EBT information. They can also help families who need to apply for P-EBT later in May and June.

Before May 22, community organizations can focus on letting families that they may receive a P-EBT card in the mail without any action. For those who need to apply, further outreach to apply will occur later in May.



Get help buying food while schools are closed

Because schools are closed due to COVID-19, children who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals can get up to \$365 in food benefits in addition to their pick up meals from school. These food benefits are called Pandemic EBT or P-EBT.



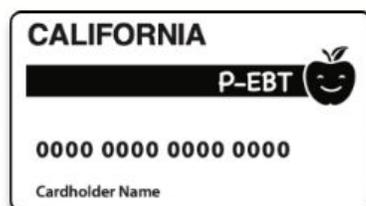
P-EBT benefits coming soon in **May 2020**

Where can families apply?

Families should look out for a message from their school district or local community based organization about how to apply in mid to late May.

Use it like a debit card.

Families will get up to \$365 per eligible child on their P-EBT card to use on food and groceries. If you already have this card, you do not need to apply online.



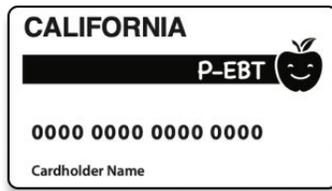
How will families get their P-EBT benefits?

Most families with children who applied for CalFresh or Medi-Cal benefits do not need to apply. They will get their P-EBT card in the mail during the month of May. P-EBT cards will begin arriving around May 12, 2020 through May 22, 2020.

Families with children who are eligible for free and reduced-price meals and who do not get their P-EBT card in the mail by May 22, 2020 must apply online before June 30, 2020.

***Students can still pick up to-go meals if they have P-EBT benefits.**

Frequently Asked Questions about P-EBT



What are ‘P-EBT’ or Pandemic EBT benefits?

Due to coronavirus (COVID 19), children who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals at school will get extra food benefits. These food benefits are called Pandemic EBT or P-EBT benefits. P-EBT benefits help families in California buy food when school is closed.

Who is eligible for P-EBT benefits?

Children are eligible for P-EBT benefits if:

- their school is closed due to coronavirus (COVID 19); and
- they are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals

How do I get P-EBT benefits?

[Apply online](https://ca.p-ebt.org) at ca.p-ebt.org before June 30, 2020.

Most families with children who receive CalFresh, Medi-Cal or Foster Care benefits do not need to apply online. They will get their P-EBT card in the mail between May 7- 22, 2020.

Families with children who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals and who do NOT get CalFresh, Medi-Cal or Foster Care benefits must apply online before June 30, 2020.

If I already got a P-EBT card in the mail do I need to apply online?

No. If you already got a P-EBT card in the mail do not apply online. Follow the instructions that came with your P-EBT card and create your private PIN number. Then your card will be ready to use.

Is my family still eligible to participate in school meal programs through COVID-19 emergency feeding if we receive P-EBT?

Yes. P-EBT benefits are additional benefits that do not replace any child nutrition program meals being offered. Children may continue to receive

FAQ continued

“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.

How much in P-EBT benefits will I get?

You can get up to \$365 for each child who is eligible for P-EBT benefits. As long as you apply before June 30th, 2020, you will get the full amount of benefits for all four months.

The total amount you will get depends on how many eligible children are living in your home. For each eligible child, your card will be paid the following each month:

- March 2020: \$68 per child
- April 2020: \$120 per child
- May 2020: \$120 per child
- June 2020: \$57 per child

This means each eligible child will get a total of \$365 in P-EBT benefits over a four month period.

What can I buy with P-EBT benefits?

Your P-EBT benefits can buy food in most grocery stores and farmers' markets.

Use your P-EBT card like a debit card:

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

What should I do when I get my P-EBT card in the mail?

Follow the instructions that came with your P-EBT card and create your private PIN number. Then your card can be used to buy food in most grocery stores and farmer's markets.

FAQ continued

When is the deadline to apply for P-EBT benefits?

You must apply by June 30, 2020 to get P-EBT benefits. P-EBT benefits are only available while schools are closed due to coronavirus (COVID 19). If you didn't get a P-EBT card in the mail and do not apply by June 30, 2020 you will not be able to get P-EBT benefits. [Apply online](#) at ca.p-ebt.org.

What if I applied online and haven't received my P-EBT card?

Call California's EBT customer service center at (877) 328-9677. You can reach them 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

How long do I have to spend my P-EBT benefits?

You can use your P-EBT benefits for one year. It starts on the date you get your P-EBT card.

If I get P-EBT benefits, will it make me a public charge?

P-EBT is a disaster emergency benefit based on free and reduced fee school meals eligibility, similar to other benefits that DHS has said would not be considered for public charge purposes. However, USCIS 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 [here](#), including a list of free and low-cost immigration services providers.

Robocall script

Hello [**parent's name**].

This is an important message from [**school district name**].

We believe you may be eligible to get \$365 per child to help feed your family since schools are closed due to COVID-19. Pandemic EBT, or P-EBT, is a new benefit for families that usually receive free and reduced-price school meals.

Most families who receive CalFresh, CalWORKS, Medi-Cal or other social services will get a P-EBT card in the mail before May 22. Please keep an eye out for this card in the mail over the next few weeks.

Other families will need to complete a simple and quick online application before June 30, 2020.

Visit ca.p-ebt.org/info for [more information](#).

Email body

Pandemic EBT

Get help buying food while schools are closed

Families can receive up to \$365 per child to spend on groceries in addition to pick up meals from school through a new program called Pandemic EBT or P-EBT.

Visit ca.p-ebt.org/info to learn more!



Hello [parent's name],

This is an important message from [school district name].

We believe you may be eligible to get \$365 per child to help feed your family, in addition to any grab-n-go meals you may be getting. Because schools are closed due to COVID-19, families who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals can get extra food benefits to help feed their children. These food benefits are called Pandemic EBT or P-EBT.

Families will get up to \$365 per eligible child on a P-EBT card. You can use your P-EBT card like a debit card to buy food and groceries for your children.

Most families who receive CalFresh, CalWORKS, Medi-Cal or other social services benefits will get a P-EBT card in the mail before May 22. Please keep an eye out for this card in the mail over the next few weeks.

Other families will need to complete a simple and quick online application before June 30, 2020.

For [more information](https://ca.p-ebt.org/info), visit ca.p-ebt.org/info or call [school district name]'s help desk at [phone number].

Sincerely,
[School District Name]

Text message

Hello **[parent's name]**. This is an important message from **[school district name]**.

We believe you may be eligible to get \$365 per child to help feed your family, in addition to any grab-n-go meals you may be getting.

Because schools are closed due to COVID-19, California is providing new food benefits called Pandemic EBT, or P-EBT.

You may receive a P-EBT card in the mail in the next few weeks, between May 8-22. Others will need to apply later this month.

[Learn more](https://ca.p-ebt.org/info) at ca.p-ebt.org/info.

Social media posts for May 6-20th

Twitter

Get help buying food while schools are closed. #COVID19 Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) benefits will be available for California families with children who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. [Learn more](https://ca.p-ebt.org/info): <https://ca.p-ebt.org/info>

With schools are closed due to #COVID19, children who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals can get up to \$365 in food benefits in addition to community 'grab-n-go' meals. [Learn more](https://ca.p-ebt.org/info) about these food benefits - Pandemic EBT or P-EBT. <https://ca.p-ebt.org/info>

#COVID19 Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) benefits will be available for eligible California families soon. Most families with children who get free or reduced-price school meals will get P-EBT cards in the mail soon. [Others will need to apply later this month](https://ca.p-ebt.org/info): <https://ca.p-ebt.org/info>

Facebook

Get help buying food while schools are closed. COVID-19 Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) benefits will be available soon. With schools are closed due to #COVID19, children who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals can get \$365 in food benefits in addition to community 'to-go' meals. [Learn more](https://ca.p-ebt.org/info) about these P-EBT food benefits: <https://ca.p-ebt.org/info>

Instagram

Get help buying food while schools are closed. #COVID19 Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) benefits will be available for California families with children who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. [Learn more](https://ca.p-ebt.org/info): <https://ca.p-ebt.org/info>



[Download the social media graphic](#)

Appendix

Coming soon flyer

Pandemic EBT

Get help buying food while schools are closed

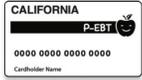
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***Students can still pick up to-go meals if they have P-EBT benefits.**

P-EBT is a program by CDSS and CDE, funded by the USDA, an equal opportunity employer.

Social media / email graphic

Pandemic EBT

Get help buying food while schools are closed

Families can receive up to \$365 per child to spend on groceries in addition to pick up meals from school through a new program called Pandemic EBT or P-EBT.



Visit ca.p-ebt.org/info to learn more!

[Download here](#)

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**This toolkit was created by
Code for America in partnership with the
California Departments of Education and
Social Services for school districts and
community partners in California.**

Credits

The online application for P-EBT is designed and maintained by Code for America staff: Tracey Patterson, Lauren Haynes, Rachel Edelman, Jazmyn Latimer, Luigi Ray-Montañez, Ben Calegari, and many others.

Illustrations by Orly Kapitulnik

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