



Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
Chris Reykdal, State Superintendent

Washington families get help to buy food during school closures

Pandemic EBT available early July for children whose schools closed due to COVID-19

OLYMPIA—June 20, 2020—Because schools have been closed due to COVID-19, families in Washington state will soon have food benefits available to them to help buy groceries while children have been home from school. Called [Pandemic EBT, or P-EBT](#), these food benefits are available to families with children who are eligible for schools' free or reduced-price meal programs. The [Public Charge rule](#) does not apply to P-EBT benefits and will not impact immigration status.

The [Department of Social and Health Services](#) received federal approval to implement P-EBT and is partnering with the [Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction](#) to distribute these benefits by early July.

"Many students rely on their school for nutritious meals during the day," said Superintendent of Public Instruction Chris Reykdal. "These benefits will help families most impacted by the COVID-19 crisis to continue to have access to nutritious meals."

"I believe food is often our best medicine," said DSHS Secretary Cheryl Strange. "Every bit of support we can provide families to help them achieve their full potential is critically important, especially during this time."

Most families who already receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits, also known as SNAP or Basic Food in Washington state, and whose children already receive free or reduced-price meals do not need to apply. The P-EBT benefits – a one-time amount up to \$399 per eligible child in each household – automatically will be deposited onto existing EBT cards in early July.

Families with children who become eligible for free and reduced-price meals after their school closed may get less than \$399 per child. This depends on when a family applied for Basic Food benefits or when they completed a household income application with their school district.

Other families, including those whose children attend a school where meals are free for all students, will need to apply. Families with children who are newly eligible for free or reduced-price school meals must fill out a meal application with their school district before June 30 and before they apply for P-EBT.

P-EBT benefits do not replace any Child Nutrition Program already offered, and families are encouraged to continue participating in grab-n-go meals or emergency food programs at their local schools and community locations, even if they receive P-EBT benefits.

Families with children who are eligible and approved by their school district for free or reduced-price meals and who do not currently get Basic Food benefits, must apply online at Washingtonconnection.org for P-EBT before August 31 or the start of the 2020-2021 school year—whichever is later. The website is available in English and Spanish.

Families who need to apply or who have other questions about [P-EBT benefits](#) can call the DSHS Customer Service Contact Center at 877-501-2233 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday-Friday (except observed holidays).

Contact Information

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