

Pandemic EBT

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Q: What is Pandemic EBT?

A: The Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT) program is extra money for families to buy food. P-EBT is for children, in grades kindergarten through 12th grade, who were eligible for free and reduced price meals when they were in school. When schools closed because of the COVID-19 pandemic, children lost out on the meals that they would have gotten at school. P-EBT is a one-time payment to replace those lost meals. P-EBT benefits come from the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS).

Q: How much will each child get in P-EBT benefits?

A: Each child who was eligible for free and reduced price meals as of March will get a one-time payment of \$302.10. Those children who were eligible beginning in April will each get \$239.40.

Q: How do I apply for Pandemic EBT?

A: You do not need to apply to get this benefit. Any student in kindergarten through 12th grade who got free and reduced priced school meals as of March or April will automatically get Pandemic EBT. Unfortunately, if your child was not enrolled in the program by April, they will not get the P-EBT payment.

Q: I am on SNAP, how will I get the P-EBT payment?

A: If your child is part of a SNAP household, their P-EBT payment should be loaded to the family's Ohio Direction EBT card. ODJFS issued these P-EBT payments at the end of May. However, there were problems matching all kids with SNAP households. Some children, who do get SNAP, will get their P-EBT on a separate card (see next section.) So, you may get the P-EBT payment for some of your children on your SNAP/Ohio Direction card, and you may get a special P-EBT card for other children.

Q: I am not on SNAP, how will I get the P-EBT payment?

A: Children who are not on SNAP, or those that were not matched up with a SNAP household, will get a P-EBT card. You should get these cards in the mail by mid-June. The card is white, and says Ohio P-EBT on the front. You can see a picture of the card at <http://ohiopebt.org/>. Each eligible child will get their own card. Each card will come with instructions on how to activate it. ODJFS is sending the cards to the address that was on file at your child's school as of April 29, 2020.

Q: What do I do if I do not get the P-EBT cards for my children?

A: If you do not get a card for each child by the end of June, you should call the ODJFS Pandemic EBT hotline at 1-866-244-0071.

Q: How do I activate the P-EBT card?

A: Call the phone number on the back of the card. To activate the card, you will need the EBT card number on the front of the card, your zip code, and the birth date of the child named on the card. When the system asks you for the last 4 digits of the child's Social Security number, you should end the 4 digits of the child's birth year instead (for example, 2009.) Do not enter the Social Security number. You will then need to set a new four-digit PIN number to use the card. You can find out more information on how to activate your P-EBT card here: <http://ohiopebt.org/downloads/Use-Your-Funds.pdf>.

Q: How can I use my Pandemic EBT?

A: You can buy most household grocery food items, including:

- Fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables
- Meat, dairy and eggs
- Rice, beans, pasta, and other dry goods
- Breads and cereals

You cannot use your P-EBT card to purchase prepared meals sold hot and ready to eat or any restaurant meals. You cannot buy non-food items like diapers, cleaning supplies or medicine.

Q: Will Pandemic EBT affect the immigration status of me or my child?

A: No. The public charge rule does not apply to EBT benefits. You can use this P-EBT benefit regardless of your immigration status, or the immigration status of your child.

Q: How do I know if my child will get a P-EBT payment?

A: All kindergarten through 12th grade children who got free or reduced meals when they attended school will get this benefit. In some schools, all of the children are eligible for this program. A school where all of the children are eligible for free and reduced price meals is called a Community Eligible school. If your child attended a Community Eligible school, they are eligible for the P-EBT payment, even if they were not individually signed up for the free and reduced price meal program.

Q: My child goes to a charter/private school. Are they eligible for the P-EBT payment?

A: If your child's school participates in the National School Lunch program, and your child gets free and reduced priced meals, they will get the P-EBT payment. You can call your school if you are unsure if they participate in the National School Lunch program.

Q: My child's school does not have the right address for me. What will happen to my Pandemic EBT card?

A: Your Pandemic EBT card will be mailed to the address your child's school had on file for you as of April 29, 2020. If your address has changed, or you do not get an EBT card and think you should have, call the ODJFS customer service line at 1-866-244-0071.

Q: How can I find out more about Pandemic EBT?

A: Visit <http://ohiopebt.org/>

Q: I got extra money on my SNAP card in March, April and May. Was this Pandemic EBT?

A: No. Ohio gave people who get SNAP extra benefits in March, April and May because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The P-EBT payment is on top of these other payments. For more information about the extra SNAP payments, please look at our COVID-19 SNAP information page (link).

If you have questions or need legal assistance, please call the
Legal Aid line at **(513) 241-9400**