

P-EBT FAQ for Youth in Foster Care

(Pandemic - Electronic Benefit Transfer)

Background

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) provides free and reduced lunch for eligible students, including foster children and youth who are enrolled in a Maryland public school.

The Pandemic-Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) program provides food benefits to youth who have temporarily lost access to free meals at school due to COVID-19 (see <https://dhs.maryland.gov/p-ebt/> for general information). The P-EBT card given on behalf of youth is intended to provide retroactive payments for meals provided to the youth while school buildings were closed and should follow the youth in their current out of home placement. Older youth who are placed in Independent Living programs (ILP) and Semi-Independent Living Arrangements (SILA) will receive their P-EBT cards for food purchases. Children and youth residing with a resource provider or resource parent will receive P-EBT cards with the intent for the resource parent or provider to utilize the card to purchase food for the child as they normally would.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Are youth in foster care eligible for P-EBT?

Yes, all youth in foster care who were enrolled in school through MSDE are eligible for P-EBT. Monthly benefits will be calculated at the daily rate of \$5.70 per youth for each day the youth's school was closed in a particular month.

2. How will P-EBT benefits be calculated?

P-EBT benefits are calculated based on when schools closed and the cost of school meals. The total amount you will get depends on how many eligible children are living in your home.

Most families with children who are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals will get \$370.50 for each child. Families with children who applied for and became eligible for Free and Reduced-Price School Meals after their schools closed may get less than \$370.50 for each child.

3. Is there an application process for youth in foster care?

No, the MSDE and the Department of Human Services (DHS) are working together to ensure that all youth in foster care receive the P-EBT benefits.

4. Do the P-EBT benefits need to be used all at once?

No. You must use at least \$1 per month for your card to remain active. If there is no activity on your card for 365 days (1 year), the benefits will be removed.

5. Are there any P-EBT benefits for youth in foster care who were enrolled in the extended learning during the summer?

No, this program does not include summer meal programs after the school term is over.

6. Will the youth receive a P-EBT card in the youth's name?

Yes, the name of the youth in foster care will be on the individual P-EBT card.

7. How will youth in foster care receive the P-EBT card?

The P-EBT card will be mailed to eligible youth in foster care at their current or last known foster home or ILP/SILA address.

8. What mailing address will be used for the youth in foster care to receive the P-EBT card?

The address of the youth in foster care will be determined by the most current address on file with the local department of social services.

9. When will the P-EBT cards be issued?

The first issuance of the P-EBT cards are expected to be mailed on or about June 22, 2020 for youth in foster care who were enrolled in school as of March 16, 2020.

10. Will new youth who came into foster care after March 16, 2020, be eligible for P-EBT Card?

Yes, youth who came into foster care will be eligible to receive a P-EBT card after March 16, 2020.

11. Can a public or private resource parent use the P-EBT card issued to the youth in foster care for P-EBT benefits on behalf of the youth to purchase food for the youth?

Yes, public or private resource parents may use the P-EBT card to purchase food specifically for that youth.

12. Can the Group Home Director use the P-EBT card issued to the youth in foster care to purchase food for youth?

Yes, the Group Home may use the P-EBT card to purchase food specifically for that youth.

13. How will the P-EBT card for youth in Independent Living Arrangements utilize the P-EBT card?

The P-EBT card will be issued directly to the youth to utilize the P-EBT benefits to purchase food.

14. How do I activate my card?

To activate your P-EBT card and manage your benefits, call 1-800-997-2222, or log on to connectebt.com to manage your EBT account. When you call to activate your card, you'll need to select a 4-digit PIN to use when you make purchases with the card. When the card is mailed to you, you will also receive information on how to activate it.

15. Where can the P-EBT card be used?

The P-EBT benefits card can be used at any store that accepts SNAP. Most retailers have signage stating they accept SNAP or P-EBT.

16. How do I use a P-EBT card?

A P-EBT card is used in a similar way as a bank debit card. For more information on how to use an EBT card call 1-800-997-2222 or go to www.connectebt.com.

Most major grocery stores are authorized to accept your P-EBT card. Please use the [SNAP Retailer Locator](#) to find an authorized grocery store closest to you.

You can also use the P-EBT benefits online to obtain groceries through Amazon, Walmart, and ShopRite. The P-EBT card cannot be used for restaurant meals or fast food.

17. Do I have to use the P-EBT food benefits right away?

No. P-EBT food benefits will remain available and accessible on your EBT card for up to one year from the date they are issued. You must use at least \$1 per month for your card to remain active. If there is no activity on your card for 365 day/1 year, the benefits will be removed.

18. What should happen to the P-EBT card if the P-EBT benefits are not needed for the youth?

P-EBT benefits are not transferable; therefore, it is prohibited to give the P-EBT card to someone else. Households that prefer to not participate in the P-EBT program may destroy the P-EBT card when they receive it. The card can be destroyed by cutting through the magnetic stripe and disposing of it securely. The benefits will expunge automatically after 365 days if they have not been used.

19. What do I do if my P-EBT card is lost?

You may call 1-800-997-2222 or go to connectebt.com to ask for a replacement. A replacement card may take up to 7 mailing days to reach you.