



P-EBT FAQs for Families

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WHAT IS P-EBT?

Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT) is a program that helps children who would have received free or reduced-price meals at their schools if not for the COVID-19 pandemic. In Oklahoma, the Department of Human Services (OKDHS) administers the program through funding provided by a federal grant. Children who qualify will receive a debit card preloaded with funds that can be used for groceries.

WHO QUALIFIES FOR P-EBT?

For the 2020-21 school year, schoolchildren must meet both important eligibility requirements:

- Children must have been enrolled in a school district that participates in a federal meal program where meals are served at a school.
- Children must qualify for free or reduced-price meals based on income and have turned in the free or reduced-priced meals application to your children's school for 2020-21, OR be enrolled in a school that participated in the [Community Eligibility Provision \(CEP\) or Provision 2 or 3 federal program in 2020-21](#).

HOW MUCH WILL EACH STUDENT RECEIVE?

Families of students who are eligible will receive a P-EBT benefits card equivalent to \$6.82 per day for school days in which the student was enrolled in a participating school AND received virtual instruction. No benefits will be issued for those days in which the student received in-person instruction or was counted absent from virtual instruction.

HOW ARE BENEFITS DETERMINED?

The student's school data determines the number of days a student qualifies for benefits based on the school's calendar, student attendance records, school participation and the student's free and reduced-price meal status. That data is securely transmitted to OKDHS, which loads and distributes the P-EBT benefits card. There is no application process for these benefits. Families will receive benefits automatically if their school has identified to OSDE via data reporting that a student qualifies.

HOW WILL MY STUDENTS RECEIVE THEIR P-EBT CARDS?

Every eligible child will be mailed a 2020-21 P-EBT card. Families with multiple children will receive a card for each eligible child in their household. P-EBT benefits for 2020-21 will begin arriving in mailboxes in mid-September 2021 and may arrive in a plain-looking envelope. The mailout process will take some time. Please allow several weeks to receive your child's card. It will take up to 10 business days for all benefits to be fully loaded onto the cards.

ONE OF MY STUDENTS RECEIVED A DIFFERENT AMOUNT ON THEIR CARD THAN A SIBLING. IS THIS CORRECT?

P-EBT benefit amounts are individualized for each student, depending on their attendance records and the number of days that student was in virtual/distance learning.

WHY IS THE AMOUNT ON THE CARD DIFFERENT FROM LAST YEAR?

The benefits for the 2019-20 school year were a set amount for each student, since school buildings closed statewide for everyone during March through May 2020. The benefits for the 2020-21 school year are individualized for each student, depending on how many days they received virtual/distance instruction.

WHY DIDN'T I RECEIVE BENEFITS UNTIL AFTER THE SCHOOL YEAR ENDED?

Oklahoma's P-EBT program calculates benefits for the entire school year, then distributes cards in the fall of the following school year.

MY STUDENT QUALIFIES FOR FREE AND REDUCED LUNCH BUT ATTENDS AN ONLINE VIRTUAL CHARTER SCHOOL. DOES MY STUDENT QUALIFY FOR P-EBT?

No. Only children who are enrolled in a school that serves in-person meals qualifies for the P-EBT program, as the intent of the program is to offset the cost of meals that children would have received if they had attended their school in person. These rules are set by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

WHAT IF MY STUDENT DID NOT RECEIVE A P-EBT CARD?

If you believe your student is eligible for the program but did not receive a card by Oct. 15, or you believe the card is missing benefits, please fill out the [Benefit Review form](#) by Feb. 28, 2022. School districts will have an opportunity to correct your student's information and submit additional benefit eligibility to OSDE.

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO RECEIVE BENEFITS AFTER COMPLETING THE REVIEW?

Any corrected benefits for the 2021-22 school year are set to be disbursed in Spring 2022.

The [Benefit Review form](#) will allow families to request a review from their local school districts. After the review window closes for families, school districts will have a period to correct eligibility information and submit to OSDE. Then the information will be processed and forwarded to OKDHS, which will distribute benefits. Schools must verify individual student eligibility information for a benefits change to occur.

WHAT IF MY STUDENT LIVED WITH A DIFFERENT FAMILY LAST YEAR?

Each student receiving P-EBT benefits for the 2020-21 school year will be issued their own card, which will be delivered to the address of record with their local school as of June 2021. For students in foster care who have changed placements or students whose guardianship has changed, it is possible the card could be delivered to a family who no longer has custody of the child.

Families who receive a card for a child no longer in their custody should either get the card to the child's current caretaker or destroy the card. The family who currently has custody of the child may complete this [form](#) to update the child's address.

Funds used by someone other than the child's current caretaker or guardian could be considered benefits fraud. If a family who currently has custody of the child believes someone else has used funds intended for the child in their custody, they should report it to their OKDHS case worker.

DOES MY STUDENT QUALIFY FOR SUMMER BENEFITS?

For the 2021 Summer P-EBT program, schoolchildren must meet two important eligibility requirements:

- As of May 2021, children must have been enrolled in a school district that participates in a federal meal program where meals are served at a school.
- Children must qualify for free or reduced-price meals based on income and have turned in the free or reduced-priced meals application to your children's school for 2020-21, OR be enrolled in a school that participated in the [Community Eligible Provision, Provision 2 or Provision 3 federal program in 2020-21](#).

The standard benefit is \$375 per student, regardless of how many days the student participated in distance learning in the 2020-21 school year. Graduating seniors are included if they meet the above eligibility requirements.

Summer benefits will be added to the white P-EBT card that families received for 2020-21. If a student did not qualify for 2020-21 benefits, a card will be mailed to them. If you believe your student is eligible for Summer 2021 benefits but did not receive them by Jan. 31, 2022, fill out the [Benefits Review Form](#). Schools will have an opportunity to correct your student's information and submit additional benefit eligibility for disbursement in Spring 2022.

WHAT IF MY ADDRESS HAS CHANGED?

Cards will be sent to the address on file with your school as of the end of last school year. To report a change of address, you may fill out an [electronic form](#) with OKDHS directly.

I KNOW SOMEONE ELSE WHO RECEIVED A CARD, SO WHY HAVEN'T I RECEIVED ONE FOR MY STUDENT?

It will take several weeks for all identified students to receive their cards through the mail. If you believe you qualify (based on the above criteria) but have not received a card by Oct. 15, 2021, please use [this form](#) so your school can review your child's file.

MY STUDENTS RECEIVED FREE MEALS AT SCHOOL LAST YEAR. DOES THIS MEAN THEY QUALIFY FOR P-EBT?

It depends. Your student must have qualified for the free and reduced-price meal program, based on household income, through their school and your family must have turned in the appropriate paperwork last school year OR your child must attend a [Community Eligibility Provision \(CEP\) or Provision 2 or 3 school](#). Many schools provided free meals last year regardless of family income through federal pandemic-related waivers, but CEP differs from these waivers.

WHAT CAN I BUY WITH MY STUDENT'S P-EBT CARD?

The benefits loaded on the cards can be used to purchase groceries at authorized retail food stores and farmers' markets under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) at any retailer that accepts SNAP benefits. Visit the [SNAP web page](#) to learn more about SNAP-eligible purchases and participating retailers, including retailers who accept SNAP for online grocery purchases.

SHOULD I KEEP MY STUDENT'S CARD AFTER THE FUNDS HAVE BEEN USED?

Yes. It will take up to 10 business days for all 2020-21 benefits to be loaded onto the card. Please also keep this card for possible future P-EBT issuances.

HOW DO I ACTIVATE (PIN) THE CARD?

Call (888) 328-6551 and follow the prompts. Speaking to a representative is not required to activate a P-EBT card. When prompted, enter '0000' for the last four digits of the Social Security Number, as SSN's are not assigned to P-EBT cases. If the system tells you the birthdate you entered is incorrect, call (405) 522-5050 for assistance.

HOW LONG WILL BENEFITS REMAIN ON MY STUDENT'S CARD?

Unused benefits will expire 274 days after the date of the last purchase or return. Once benefits are removed, they cannot be restored.

WHAT IF I LOSE MY STUDENT'S CARD?

For information about how to use the P-EBT cards and for help with lost cards, call DHS at (405) 522-5050.

WHAT CAN I DO TO ENSURE MY STUDENT RECEIVES BENEFITS NEXT YEAR?

We do anticipate that the P-EBT program will continue for the 2021-22 school year. Please fill out a free and reduced-price meal form with your school for this school year in the event the program is renewed.

WHERE CAN I GO FOR ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE?

If your student qualifies for free and reduced-price school meals, you might also qualify for [SNAP or other benefits](#). The federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provides a monthly benefit to buy food. Your benefit amount is based on the size of your household, your income and your allowed expenses. DHS issues SNAP food benefits on a plastic card, called the ACCESS Oklahoma Card. You can use your ACCESS card just like a bank card at most food stores.

If you have additional concerns, visit the [OSDE P-EBT web page](#).