

Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for Parents/Guardians

June 22, 2020

What is the Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer?

Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) provides eligible families with a one-time payment for each child who previously received free or reduced-price meals. P-EBT works the same way Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits do and will help families get the food they need during the current pandemic. P-EBT will be administered by the Department of Human Services (DHS) in collaboration with the Department of Education (DOE).

Who is eligible to receive P-EBT?

Households are eligible because they:

- include an eligible student(s) who, if not for the closure of their school, would receive free or reduced-price school meals; AND
- include a student whose school has been closed for at least five consecutive days.

Hawai'i households are eligible if they have students who are either enrolled for free or reduced-price school meals or enrolled in a school that provides free meals to all students through the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) or another provision. A list of CEP schools can be found here:

<http://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/TeachingAndLearning/HealthAndNutrition/StudentHealthResources/Pages/CEP.aspx>

Do I need to get SNAP benefits to be eligible for P-EBT benefits?

No, it does not matter if you get SNAP benefits. Hawai'i households are eligible if they have students who are either enrolled for free or reduced-price school meals or enrolled in a school that provides free meals to all students through the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) or another provision.

How much benefits will I receive for P-EBT?

Households will receive benefits equivalent to one free lunch and one free breakfast for each eligible student, \$6.66 per regularly scheduled school day through the end of the 2019-20 DOE school year. This includes days during the months of March, April, and May.

Benefits will be retroactive to March 16, 2020 through May 28, 2020 for students who were eligible to receive free and reduced-price meals at the time that schools closed due to the Pandemic. For newly eligible free or reduced-price students, benefits will start at the beginning of the month that the family was certified as eligible for free or reduced-price meal or the date of enrollment at a CEP school. Eligible families may receive, depending on their date of certification, or CEP school enrollment, the following for each student:

- \$80 for March
- \$147 in April
- \$133 in May

Do I need to apply for P-EBT?

No, the DOE will provide information for all eligible students directly to DHS. Households do not have to apply for P-EBT. If you believe there are eligible students in your household, but you do not receive P-EBT by July 20, 2020, e-mail hi.pebt@dhs.hawaii.gov.

Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for Parents/Guardians

How will I get the P-EBT funds?

The Hawai'i Kokua Card (EBT) system is used to provide funds to ALL eligible students. Families receiving SNAP and/or cash assistance from DHS and already have a Kokua Card will have these additional funds added to their existing cards. Families who do not already have a Kokua Card will receive a pre-loaded Hawai'i P-EBT card in the mail.

The Kokua Card and the Hawai'i P-EBT card will function in the same way. More information about the Kokua Card can be found here: <http://humanservices.hawaii.gov/bessd/general-ebt-card-information-and-frequently-asked-question-and-answers/>

When will I receive my P-EBT benefits?

The P-EBT benefits for each eligible student for existing SNAP and/or cash assistance recipients will be loaded on the family's Kokua Card by the first week of July.

The P-EBT benefits for each eligible student for households receiving a Hawai'i P-EBT card through the mail will be loaded on the Hawai'i P-EBT Card by early to mid-July.

If you haven't received your P-EBT benefit by July 20, 2020, contact DHS at hi.pebt@dhs.hawaii.gov.

If I have more than one child, will I get different cards for each child?

All eligible students located at the same address on file with their school will be under one Hawai'i P-EBT card with the card account under the name of the oldest child. Parents/guardians will need to activate the card by following the instructions that will be mailed with the card. In situations where adding the eligible student is not possible or appropriate, a separate card will be mailed for the eligible student.

What can I purchase with my P-EBT benefits?

P-EBT follows the same rules as SNAP benefits. Please see the link for more information: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/eligible-food-items>

Where can I use my P-EBT benefits?

P-EBT benefits can be used where EBT payments are accepted, including Farmer's Markets. Most retailers will have signs that they accept EBT or SNAP. To find the retailer nearest you: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/retailer-locator>

Will there be more than one P-EBT payment per child?

No, only one lump-sum payment will be approved.

My child's school is closed, but the school district still offers grab and go meals. Can I still get P-EBT?

Yes, if your children are eligible for P-EBT, you will get it even if you currently receive free meals from your school district.

Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for Parents/Guardians

Do I need to spend my P-EBT benefits all at one time?

No. You will have 180 days (6 months) from the month you receive P-EBT benefits for families with a Kokua Card, or 180 days (6 months) from the date that you activate your Hawai'i P-EBT card, to spend your P-EBT benefits before it expires. For families with Kokua Cards, P-EBT benefits will automatically be spent first before your regular SNAP benefits.

Will getting P-EBT benefits affect by ability to receive any other benefits?

No.

Do I or my child have to be U.S. citizen to receive P-EBT benefits?

No. These benefits are for all children who are either enrolled for free or reduced-price school meals or enrolled in a school that provides free meals to all students through the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) or another provision.

Will getting P-EBT benefits count against me under public charge?

No. Getting P-EBT benefits does not impact you or your child's immigration status. The public charge rule does not apply to P-EBT benefits.

My child attended a Charter school. Can we get P-EBT benefits? What about attendance at a private school?

If your child gets free or reduced-price meals at a charter or private school that participates in the National School Lunch Program or another provision, they can get P-EBT benefits.

My child got free or reduced-price meals at school. How do I know if my child's school participated in the National School Lunch Program?

Contact your school or district and ask if they participate in the National School Lunch Program.

I share custody of my child, which parent/guardian will receive the Hawai'i P-EBT card?

The Hawai'i P-EBT card will be mailed to the primary address on file with the student's school.

My child is enrolled at a child care center or family child care home that receives meals through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Is my child eligible for P-EBT?

No, children that participate in CACFP are not eligible for P-EBT benefits. Eligible students have to be certified for free or reduced-price meals at a school that participates in the National School Lunch Program or another provision to receive P-EBT benefits.

I'm eligible for P-EBT but have more questions. Who do I contact?

You can contact DHS via email at hi.pebt@dhs.hawaii.gov. When emailing please provide the following information: Your name (first and last), Student's name (first and last), Student's school, SNAP or TANF case number (if known or applicable), and your question.