

Get help buying food while schools are closed

Families can receive up to \$365 per child to spend on groceries in addition to pick up meals from school through a new program called Pandemic EBT or P-EBT.

Visit ca.p-ebt.org/info to learn more!



Application deadline extended! Apply online before July 15, 2020 at ca.p-ebt.org

Who is eligible?

Children are eligible for P-EBT benefits if they are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals and their school is closed due to COVID-19.

Use it like a debit card.

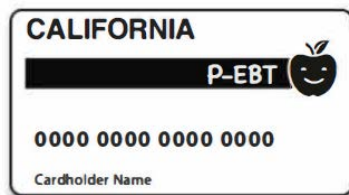
Families will get up to \$365 per eligible child on their P-EBT card to use on food and groceries. If you already have this card, you do not need to apply online. Starting in mid-June and until the end of the program, eligible families will get one P-EBT card per child.

How will families get their P-EBT benefits?

Many families with children already got their P-EBT card or already applied online and are waiting on the results of their application. If you already got your card or you already applied online, you do not need to apply again.

Families with children who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals and eligible for P-EBT may not get their card until August due to application processing and mail delays.

***Students can still pick up to-go meals if they have P-EBT benefits.**



There is a delay processing applications due to the high volume of people who need help during the pandemic.

[Español](#) [中文](#)

Information about P-EBT

Apply for P-EBT by June 30th.

[Apply now →](#)

Please do not call to check the status of your application. The call center does not have information on your application status. You will hear back from us with your final eligibility status by about July 15th.

When is the deadline to apply for P-EBT benefits?

If you do not get a P-EBT card in the mail, you must apply online by June 30, 2020 to get P-EBT benefits. P-EBT benefits are only available while schools are closed due to coronavirus (COVID 19). If you did not get a P-EBT card in the mail and do not apply by June 30, 2020 you will not be able to get P-EBT benefits.

What are 'P-EBT' or Pandemic EBT benefits?

Due to coronavirus (COVID 19), children who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals at school will get extra food benefits. These food benefits are called Pandemic

EBT or P-EBT benefits. P-EBT benefits help families in California buy food when school is closed.

Who is eligible for P-EBT benefits?

Children are eligible for P-EBT benefits if:

- Their school is closed due to coronavirus (COVID 19); and
- They are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals

How do I get P-EBT benefits?

Most families with children who receive CalFresh, Medi-Cal or Foster Care benefits do not need to apply online. They will get their P-EBT card in the mail during the month of May. P-EBT cards will begin arriving around May 11, 2020 through May 22, 2020.

Families with children who applied for CalFresh, Medi-Cal or Foster Care benefits after their school closed will get their P-EBT card in the mail before June 30, 2020.

Families with children who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals and who do NOT get CalFresh, Medi-Cal or Foster Care benefits must apply online before June 30, 2020.

If your children were not enrolled in school meals before schools closed, they may not be able to be verified for P-EBT eligibility. Contact your school district to see if they are still accepting applications for free/reduced meals at this time.

How long do I have to spend my P-EBT benefits?

You can use your P-EBT benefits for one year. It starts on the date you get your P-EBT card.

If I already got a P-EBT card in the mail do I need to apply online?

No. If you already got a P-EBT card in the mail do not apply online. Follow the instructions that came with your P-EBT card and create your private PIN number.

To activate your card, call the EBT Customer Service Center at [\(877\) 328-9677](tel:(877)328-9677). Option 4 will allow you to set a PIN for your new card. You'll need the following information to activate your card: the 16-digit card number found on the front of your card, your zip code for your mailing address, and the 6-digit date of birth for the child named on the card.

Is my family still eligible for other food benefits like CalFresh and school meal programs at COVID-19 emergency locations if we receive P-EBT?

Yes. P-EBT benefits are **additional** benefits that do not replace CalFresh or any child nutrition program meals being offered. Children may continue to receive "grab n go" meals or emergency food at COVID-19 emergency feeding sites offered by schools and community locations, even if they are receiving P-EBT benefits.

How much in P-EBT benefits will I get?

You can get up to \$365 for each child who is eligible for P-EBT benefits. 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 \$365 for each child. If you do not get your P-EBT card in the mail and you apply before June 30th, 2020, you will get the full amount of benefits.

Families with children who applied and got CalFresh, Medi-Cal or Foster Care benefits after their school closed, may get less than \$365 for each child. This depends on when you applied for CalFresh, Medi-Cal or Foster Care.

What can I buy with P-EBT benefits?

Your P-EBT benefits can buy food at most grocery stores and farmer's markets, and to purchase groceries online at [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com) and [Walmart](https://www.walmart.com). Unfortunately your P-EBT card may not be used for restaurant meals or fast food.

Use your P-EBT card like a debit card:

- Select "EBT"
- Swipe the card
- Enter your private PIN number

What should I do when I get my P-EBT card in the mail?

Follow the instructions that came with your P-EBT card and create your private PIN number. Then your card can be used to buy food in most grocery stores and farmer's markets.

To activate your card, call the EBT Customer Service Center at [\(877\) 328-9677](tel:877-328-9677). Option 4 will allow you to set a PIN for your new card. You'll need the following information to activate your card: the 16-digit card number found on the front of your card, your zip code for your mailing address, and the 6-digit date of birth for the child named on the card.

What if I applied online and haven't received my P-EBT card?

The state is experiencing delays, so P-EBT cards may take longer to reach you. You will hear back from us with your final eligibility status by about July 15th.

If I get P-EBT benefits, will it make me a public charge?

Since schools closed because of COVID-19, children who are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals can get Pandemic EBT (P-EBT). P-EBT is similar to disaster emergency benefits that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has confirmed would not be considered for public charge purposes.

In addition, free and reduced-price school meals are not considered public benefits for public charge purposes. Additionally, benefits received by children do not count

against their parents for public charge purposes. Children are the recipients of P-EBT, so it won't be considered as a benefit received by their parents.

Public charge does not apply to all immigrants. If you have questions about your immigration status and this food benefit, more information is available [here](#), including a list of free and low-cost immigration services providers.

What if I'm supposed to get a P-EBT card sent without applying, but had a recent change in address?

If you have not received a P-EBT card by May 25 AND you currently receive CalFresh, CalWORKs, Medi-Cal, or Foster Care benefits we may not have your most recent address. Do NOT apply online to report a change of address. Instead, you can call the EBT Customer Service Center ([877-328-9677](tel:877-328-9677)) to request a change of address beginning the week of May 25. After confirming eligibility, a new card can be issued to your new address.

What if I have shared custody of my children?

Children who are automatically eligible for P-EBT will receive their P-EBT card at the mailing address on file. Children who are eligible for P-EBT, but are not receiving CalFresh, Medi-Cal or Foster care benefits must apply. The P-EBT application should be completed by the parent who is responsible for purchasing and preparing a majority of a child's meals (more than 50%). P-EBT benefits cannot be split on two cards, but parents can share a single P-EBT card.

What if I received a P-EBT card but it did not have benefits for all the children in my family?

If you got a P-EBT card, but it did not include benefits for all your eligible children, you should fill out an application for all the students in your household.

What if I received multiple P-EBT cards?

Some families will receive one P-EBT card in the oldest child's name with benefits for several students. Some families will receive multiple cards, one for each eligible student. The cards will have \$365 per student. Check the balance on your card to determine if you received benefits for all eligible students.

[Apply now →](#)

[Information about P-EBT](#)

ca.p-ebt.org is a service delivered by [Code for America](#) on behalf of the people of California.