



Food and Nutrition  
Service

1320 Braddock Place  
Alexandria, VA  
22314

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** SNAP State Agencies  
Child Nutrition State Agencies

**FROM:** Jessica Shahin, Associate Administrator, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)  
Kristen Hyatt, Acting Deputy Administrator, Child Nutrition Programs

**DATE:** March 20, 2020

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act of 2020 provides the Secretary of Agriculture authority to approve State agency plans for temporary emergency standards of eligibility and levels of benefits under the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008. Children who would receive free or reduced price meals under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act if not for the school closure are eligible under this provision. State Agencies may submit plans in any case in which a school is closed for at least 5 consecutive days during a public health emergency designation during which the school would otherwise be in session. The attached is guidance to State agencies on plan requirements in order to receive approval.

Please be advised that the contents of this document do not have the force and effect of law and are not meant to bind the public in any way. This document is intended only to provide clarity to the public regarding existing requirements under the law or agency policies. Any questions should be directed to Angela Kline, Director, Policy and Program Development Division, Child Nutrition Programs, and Andrea Gold, Director, SNAP Retail Policy and Management Division.

Sincerely,

**JESSICA  
SHAHIN**

Digitally signed by  
JESSICA SHAHIN  
Date: 2020.03.20  
20:24:16 -04'00'

Jessica Shahin  
Associate Administrator  
Supplemental Nutrition  
Assistance Program (SNAP)

**KRISTEN  
HYATT**

Digitally signed by  
KRISTEN HYATT  
Date: 2020.03.20  
20:19:25 -04'00'

Kristen Hyatt  
Acting Deputy Administrator  
Child Nutrition Programs

Attachment

## **State Plan for Pandemic EBT (P-EBT)**

The contents of this document do not have the force and effect of law and are not meant to bind the public in any way. This document is intended only to provide clarity to the public regarding existing requirements under the law or agency policies.

**1. Type of Request:** Initial

**2. Primary Citation:** Families First Coronavirus Response Act

**3. State:**

**4. Proposed Alternative Procedures:**

The State proposes to provide P-EBT benefits to SNAP and non-SNAP households with children who have temporarily lost access to free or reduced-price school meals due to pandemic-related school closures. These households are eligible for P-EBT because they:

- Include an eligible child or children, who if not for the closure of their school during a public health emergency designation and due to concerns about a COVID-19 outbreak, would receive free or reduced-price school meals under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act, as amended, and
- The child's school or district will be (or has been) closed for at least 5 consecutive days during a public health emergency designation and due to concerns about a COVID-19 outbreak.

The household allotment amount will be no less than the value of school meals at the free rate over the course of five (5) school days for each eligible child in the household. The value of the school meals is equal to the Federal reimbursement rate for breakfast and lunch at the free rate, as specified by USDA.

**Verification of P-EBT Eligibility:** [STATE MUST ADDRESS HOW THEY WILL OBTAIN ENROLLMENT DATA FROM LOCAL EDUCATIONAL ENTITIES, TO DETERMINE WHO THE CHILDREN ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE P-EBT BENEFITS

ARE, AND MATCH THEM TO THEIR EXISTING SNAP CASE, WHERE APPLICABLE.

Release Of Information. Per Section 1101(e) of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act: Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of Agriculture may authorize State educational agencies and school food authorities administering a school lunch program under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1751 et seq.) to release to appropriate officials administering the supplemental nutrition assistance program such information as may be necessary to carry out this section.”

**Calculation of Household Allotments:**

- IN ORDER TO STREAMLINE THE ISSUANCE OF P-EBT BENEFITS, STATES MAY USE AN AVERAGE DATE FOR THE END OF THE SCHOOL CLOSURES AND/OR AN AVERAGE NUMBER OF CANCELLED SCHOOL DAYS FOR WHICH BENEFITS ARE ISSUED.
- P-EBT BENEFITS MAY BE PROVIDED ON A MONTHLY BASIS THROUGH THE END OF THE STATE’S CALCULATED AVERAGE DATE FOR THE END OF THE REGULARLY SCHEDULED SCHOOL YEAR.
- THE BENEFITS ISSUED SHALL BE EQUIVALENT TO THE DAILY REIMBURSEMENT FOR FREE BREAKFAST AND LUNCH IN THE STATE, AS SPECIFIED BY USDA, MULTIPLIED BY THE AVERAGE NUMBER OF DAYS SCHOOL WAS CANCELLED IN THE MONTH FOR EACH ELIGIBLE CHILD IN THE HOUSEHOLD.
- THE STATE SHOULD INDICATE WHICH MONTH WILL BE THE FIRST MONTH OF ISSUANCE AND PROVIDE ESTIMATES FOR THE TOTAL FIRST MONTH.]

**Issuing P-EBT Benefits to Households:** [STATE MUST ADDRESS HOW THEY WILL ISSUE THESE BENEFITS TO EXISTING SNAP HOUSEHOLDS, E.G., IN A MANNER SIMILAR TO PROVIDING AUTOMATIC SUPPLEMENTS UNDER D-SNAP OPERATIONS, AND HOW THEY WILL SET UP NEW CASES AND ISSUE CARDS AND BENEFITS TO NON-SNAP HOUSEHOLDS.]

For SNAP households States will use existing case information to issue the benefit. Therefore, the State could provide the P-EBT benefit without contacting a SNAP household.

For non-SNAP households, an application is required so that a P-EBT case may be set up in the State's eligibility system and benefits can be issued. A non-SNAP household will need to provide household information in order to participate. A State may propose alternate procedures if the necessary data for non-SNAP households is readily available.

In instances where P-EBT eligible children are not part of an existing SNAP household, the State agency will obtain the following information prior to providing benefits:

- Name and signature of the head of household (which may be electronic).
- Number and names of eligible children in the household
- Address of household on record with the school district
- Mailing address if different than address on record with the school district

If available and practicable, States are encouraged to utilize existing household information from school meal applications in order to create P-EBT cases in their system.

**Other Requirements:** [If applicable, STATE SHOULD ADDRESS ANY OTHER STATE-SPECIFIC NEEDS THEY MAY HAVE.]

All P-EBT benefits will be delivered on an EBT card, and the State hereby confirms that it has sufficient card stock on hand to successfully begin operations for the number of households estimated below.

The State should conduct a public information campaign to alert those receiving benefits the purpose of P-EBT and how it is to be used.

The State's SNAP agency also agrees to complete the FNS-292 form on a timely basis in accordance with requirements as well as all other normally recurring SNAP reporting included the FNS 46 and 388 reports, on a timely basis in accordance with requirements.

In addition, the State agency will submit monthly reports to FNS with the following information for the entire State:

- The value of the P-EBT benefits issued to SNAP and non-SNAP households, separately identified.
  - Within SNAP households, the data must differentiate between base SNAP benefits and P-EBT benefits
- The average P-EBT issuance amount per household for SNAP and non-SNAP households, separately identified.
- The number of SNAP households issued P-EBT and the number of non-SNAP households issued P-EBT

## **5. Justification for Request: Coronavirus COVID-19**

**Affected Caseload:** One month estimates for existing SNAP households under these procedures:

- Number of households receiving P-EBT benefits:
- Number of children receiving P-EBT benefits:
- Amount of P-EBT benefits to be issued: \$

One month estimates for those non-SNAP households/children who will receive P-EBT under these procedures:

- Number of households receiving P-EBT benefits:
- Number of children receiving P-EBT benefits:
- Amount of P-EBT benefits to be issued: \$

**6. Anticipated Implementation Date: [STATES SHOULD SPECIFY TWO DATES IF THE IMPLEMENTATION DATE WILL VARY FOR SNAP AND NON-SNAP HOUSEHOLDS]**

**7. Signature and Title of Requesting SNAP and Child Nutrition State Agency Officials:**

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Signature

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Print Name and Title

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Signature

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Print Name and Title

**8. Date of Request:**