

## Frequently-Asked Questions About Pandemic EBT (P-EBT)

Revised May 12, 2020

### **Q1: What is P-EBT?**

A: It is a temporary food benefit approved by the federal government to help households affected by COVID-19 related school closures.

### **Q2: Who is eligible for P-EBT benefits?**

A: Vermont households with school-aged children (K-12) who receive free or reduced-price meals at school under the National School Lunch Program.

### **Q3. How do I find out if my household is eligible?**

A: If you were participating in the program as of April 1, 2020, you'll get a letter from DCF that explains how and when you will get the benefit.

### **Q4: How will benefits be distributed to households?**

A: Households that currently get 3SquaresVT on an EBT card will be issued this additional benefit on their cards — by May 27, 2020. Other families will be issued special P-EBT cards — which they should receive by May 27, 2020. The federal *Families First Coronavirus Response Act* authorized the Vermont Agency of Education (AOE) to share needed data with the Department for Children and Families (DCF) for this purpose.

### **Q5: Will P-EBT benefits expire if they aren't spent?**

A: Yes. P-EBT benefits will expire if they are not used within 12 months of being issued.

### **Q6: How much is the P-EBT benefit?**

A: The total benefit for March to the end of the school year is \$387.60 per eligible child.

### **Q7: Is the P-EBT benefit the same regardless of how many kids are in the household?**

A: The benefit of \$387.60 is per child who receives free or reduced-price meals.

### **Q8: I get 3SquaresVT, but my child's other parent received the P-EBT benefit. Why?**

A: The parent who is listed as head of household for the purpose of receiving free or reduced-price meals is the one who is eligible to get the P-EBT benefit for the child.

### **Q9: What can I buy with this benefit?**

A: You can use this benefit to buy eligible food items. You can see a [list of eligible food items](#) on the USDA website.

**Q10: Where can I use my P-EBT card?**

A: You can use it to buy food at any location that accepts 3SquaresVT. This includes grocery stores, supermarkets, convenience stores, and many farmers markets in Vermont. Learn more on DCF’s [EBT web page](#).

**Q11: What if I don’t receive my P-EBT benefit by May 27, 2020?**

A: If you received a letter saying that you will be getting a P-EBT benefit by May 27, 2020 and it is late, call 1-800-479-6151.

**Q12: I don’t have school-aged children (K-12). Do I get this benefit?**

A: No. This benefit is only for households whose children usually get free or reduced-priced meals at school and now need to eat those meals at home.

**Q13: Is this just for kids in public school?**

A: No. This is for all children who receive free or reduced-price meals at school — regardless of the type of school they attend.

**Q14: What about community eligibility provision schools?**

A: All students in these schools will get a P-EBT benefit. Get a [list of schools](#) on the AOE website.

**Q15: How do I activate the card?**

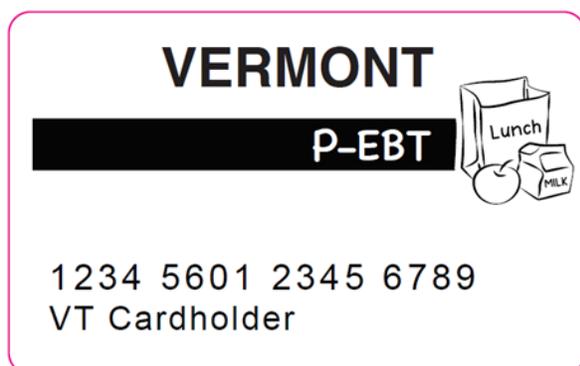
A: Instructions for activating and using the card are included in the letter being mailed to eligible households. If you don’t receive your letter by May 27, 2020 or you have misplaced it, call 1-800-479-6151.

**Q16: I’ve been picking up lunches for my child at our school’s *Grab and Go* location or they’ve been delivering them to us. Do I have to stop doing that if I get a P-EBT benefit?**

A: No. You can still get meals in your community.

**Q17: What does the P-EBT card look like?**

A. Here’s an example of the front of a card



**Q18: My children did not qualify for free or reduced-price meals before COVID-19, but I've lost my job since then. Can I get P-EBT?**

A: If your financial situation has changed due to COVID-19, we encourage you to apply for:

- [3SquaresVT Benefits](#). If you get a monthly benefit, your child qualifies for free meals at school and you may receive a P-EBT benefit.
- Free or reduced-price meals by contacting your child's school. Get the forms on the AOE's [free and reduced meals webpage](#). If they are determined to be eligible, you may receive a P-EBT benefit.

**Q19: I've never applied for free or reduced-price meals for my children, but I still received a card in the mail. Why?**

A: Some schools in Vermont are eligible to offer free or reduced meals (breakfast and lunch) for all children in the school, regardless of whether the families apply for the benefit. All children in these schools will receive a P-EBT benefit.

**Q20: Everyone in my child's school gets free breakfast through Universal Breakfast. Will everyone get a P-EBT benefit?**

A: No. This benefit is only for children who receive free or reduced-price breakfast and lunch.

**Q21: What if I don't want this benefit?**

A: Participation is voluntary. If you choose not to participate, either:

- Do not use the extra benefits issued on your 3SquaresVT EBT card. *OR*
- Dispose of your specially issued P-EBT card by cutting through the magnetic strip and discarding the card in a secure manner. You may NOT give your card to someone else.