

Frequently Asked Questions School Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) -and- Summer P-EBT for School Children (**New!)

2020-2021 School Year (*July 15, 2021*)

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 students who would normally receive free or reduced-price meals at school under the National School Lunch Program. Benefits are available for a month if the student spent most of the month learning through either a remote or hybrid learning model.

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

A: Your student's school will determine if your student is eligible, based on criteria provided by the state. The school may contact you to make sure they have the correct information on file. Please respond to their request. If you are eligible, you'll get a letter from DCF that explains how and when you'll get the benefit.

Q4: If we are eligible, how will we receive these benefits?

A: If you currently get 3SquaresVT on an EBT card, you will be issued the P-EBT benefit on that card. If not, you will receive a special P-EBT card. If you have already received a P-EBT card for the 2020-2021 school year, please keep this card as your benefits will be added to this card. Please note that the federal *Families First Coronavirus Response Act* authorized your student's school to share needed data with the Department for Children and Families (DCF) for this purpose.

Q5: I received a P-EBT card last spring (2020), but no longer have it. Is that a problem?

A: No. New cards are being issued for the 2020-20201 school year. If you'll be getting your benefit on a special P-EBT card, please keep the new card you get. Additional benefits may be added to it since there is more than one round of payments this school year.

Q6: I received my new P-EBT card, but I lost it, threw it out, it was stolen or damaged. What should I do?

A: Please call ESD to speak with a P-EBT specialist at 1-800-479-6151 option 7 to receive a replacement card.

Q7: When will benefits be issued?

A: The first round of benefits (for September 2020 - February 2021) was issued in April 2021. Benefits for March -June 2021 will be issued in July 2021. These dates are subject to change, please continue to check this site for updated FAQs.

Q8: How much is the P-EBT benefit?

A: Benefits are based on your student's learning model for the month:

- \$119.35 for a remote learning month.
- A partial benefit for a hybrid learning month (some days at school, some days remote). *The partial benefit for September through February 2021 was \$71.61 per month. The partial benefits for March – June are lower due to schools returning to more in-person learning in the spring:*
 - March \$38.19
 - April \$37.51
 - May \$33.42
 - June \$30.69
- No benefit for an in-person learning month.

Q9: Is the P-EBT benefit the same regardless of how many kids are in the household?

A: No. The benefit is calculated based on each student's learning model and eligibility for free and reduced meals. The benefit may vary from student to student.

Q10: Custody for my student is split between two households. Who gets the benefit?

A: The benefit will be sent to the adult who is listed as Head of Household by the student's school. This may be the adult who submitted a free and reduced application for the student, or the adult listed as the primary contact in the school's system. Schools contacted households in February to confirm who should be listed as Head of Household. Please contact the school if the Head of Household needs to be updated.

Q11: What can I buy with this benefit?

A: See the [list of eligible food items](#) on the USDA website.

Q12: 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](#).

Q13: I don't have children in school. Do I get this benefit?

A: No. This benefit is only for households whose children usually get free or reduced-priced meals at school through the National School Lunch Program and now need to eat those meals at home because they are learning remotely or in a hybrid learning model.

Q14: Is this just for kids in public school?

A: No. Some independent schools participate in the National School Lunch Program, and children at those schools may be eligible for this benefit. However, many independent schools do not participate in the National School Lunch Program, and their students are not eligible for this benefit.

Q15: What about schools that offer free breakfast and lunch to all students using the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) or Provision 2?

A: All students in these schools will get a P-EBT benefit for months that they are learning in a hybrid or remote learning model. You can see a [list of these schools](#) on the AOE website.

Q16: Everyone in my child's school normally gets free breakfast through Provision 2. Will everyone get a P-EBT benefit?

A: No. The benefit is only available to students at schools that normally offer both breakfast and lunch for free using Provision 2 or CEP. If your school normally only offers free breakfast using Provision 2, eligibility for P-EBT will be based on each student's eligibility for free and reduced-price lunch.

Q17: Our school is offering free meals to all children this year. Does that mean all students will get the benefit?

A: No. If your student's school does not normally offer "Universal Meals" through CEP or Provision 2 then eligibility will be based on individual student eligibility for free and reduced school meals. Schools may offer free meals to all children this year using USDA's Summer Food Service Program, but that does not qualify all students at the school for P-EBT.

Q18: My child is being homeschooled this year. Do we qualify for the benefit?

A: No. The P-EBT benefit is available only for students who are enrolled at a school that normally participates in the National School Lunch Program. The benefit is available for enrolled students who are learning remotely, but not for students who have unenrolled from their school and enrolled in home study for this year. Students enrolled in home study may still receive meals from open meal sites. Visit the [USDA's Meal Finder](#) to find an open meal site near you.

Q19: 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? Does that disqualify us from the benefit?

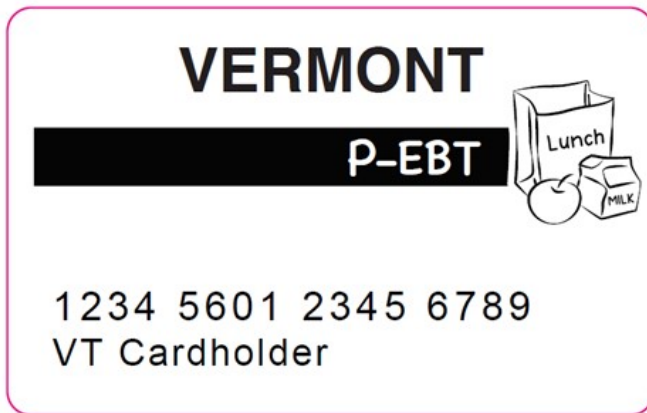
A: No. Students receiving meals for remote learning days are still eligible for the P-EBT benefit. You can still get those meals and qualify for this benefit.

Q20: I have other children not enrolled in school. Are they eligible for the benefit?

A: No. The benefit is only available to children who are enrolled in a school that normally participates in the National School Lunch Program. Please see the Childcare P-EBT FAQs for information on which children are eligible for the childcare benefit.

Q21: What does the P-EBT card look like?

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



Q22: Why did I receive a letter with a social security number that is not mine?

A: If you received a P-EBT card, ESD assigned a “fake social security number” to for purposes of activating your card. Please use the social security number listed on the letter (not your real social security number) and follow these instructions for activating your card:

How To Activate Your Card:

1. Call 1-800-914-8605 toll free.
2. Use the automated system to choose a four-digit pin number.
3. Enter [INSERT FAKE SSN] when asked to enter a Social Security number.
4. When asked to enter a date of birth, use the one for your oldest child listed on the letter you received.

Q23: 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, 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. You may also get the form on [AOE's website](#). If your household is determined to be eligible, you'll receive a P-EBT benefit the months your student was learning in a hybrid or remote learning model. Approved applications submitted to your school by April 1, 2021 may qualify for benefits back to September 2020. After April 1, approved applications will qualify the student only for the current and future months' benefits.

Q24: What if I don't want this benefit?

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

- Don't 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.

Q25: Will P-EBT benefits expire if they aren't spent?

A: Yes. P-EBT benefits will expire if the card is not used within 274 days.

Q26: I have more questions. Where can I learn more?

A: Go to <https://dcf.vermont.gov/esd/covid19/P-EBT> or call 1-800-479-6151 option 7 for more information. Please contact your student's school if you have specific concerns about your student's eligibility for free and reduced meals or would like to change the head of household or mailing address that will be used to issue the card.

******* Summer P-EBT*******

Q27: What is Summer P-EBT?

A: It is an extension of P-EBT benefits for school children over the summer.

Q28: Who is eligible for Summer P-EBT benefits?

A: Vermont households with students who were eligible during the 2020-2021 school year and who were enrolled in a Vermont school as of June. Eligible students are those who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals or attend a school that provides free breakfast and lunch through Provision 2 or CEP.

Q29. How do I find out if my household is eligible?

A: Your student’s school will determine if your student is eligible, based on criteria provided by the state. The school may contact you to make sure they have the correct information on file. Please respond to their request. If you are eligible, you’ll get a letter from DCF that explains how and when you’ll get the benefit.

Q30: If we are eligible, how will we receive these benefits?

A: If you currently get 3SquaresVT on an EBT card, you will be issued the P-EBT benefit on that card. If you have received a P-EBT card already in 2021, you will be issued the P-EBT benefit on that card. If not, you will receive a special P-EBT card. Please keep your P-EBT card.

Q31: I received a P-EBT card last spring (2020), but no longer have it. Is that a problem?

A: No. New cards are being issued in 2021. If you’ll be getting your benefit on a special P-EBT card, please keep the new card you get. Additional benefits may be added to it.

Q32: When will Summer benefits be issued?

A: There are two rounds of Summer P-EBT benefits being issued:

- The first round of summer P-EBT benefits for students who are already eligible for free/reduced-priced meals or attend a CEP or Provision 2 school as of June are expected to be issued in July 2021.
 - For students enrolled in a Vermont school as of June 2021, but who are found eligible for free/reduced-priced meals over the summer period, benefits will be issued in September 2021.
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Q33: What is considered the summer period for purposes of applying for free/reduced-priced meals and receiving Summer P-EBT?

A: Families who are not already eligible for free/reduced-priced meals may apply anytime through August 16, 2021 and if found eligible will receive the full summer P-EBT benefit. Families who apply for free/reduced-priced meals after school is out of session and on or before August 16 will receive their Summer P-EBT benefits in the second issuance round in September. The deadline to apply for free/reduced-priced meals for purposes of receiving Summer P-EBT is August 16, 2021.

Q34: How much is the Summer P-EBT benefit?

A: The Summer P-EBT benefit is \$375 for every eligible child. This is a one-time flat rate benefit amount.

Q35: Is the summer P-EBT benefit the same regardless of how many kids are in the household?

A: The summer P-EBT benefit is \$375 per eligible child.

Q36: If I pick up meals for my child at our school's *Grab and Go* location or utilize other meal or food programs, do I have to stop doing that if I get a Summer P-EBT benefit? Does that disqualify us from the benefit?

A: No. You can still get those meals and qualify for this benefit.

Q37: I have other children not enrolled in school. Are they eligible for the benefit?

A: No. Please see the Child Care P-EBT FAQs for information on which children are eligible for the childcare P-EBT benefit, including the summer benefit.

Q38: My child graduated high school in June 2021, is my child eligible?

A: If your child was eligible for free/reduced-priced meals in June 2021, your child will be eligible for the summer P-EBT benefit.

Q39: My child graduated high school early in January 2021, is my child eligible?

A: No. To be eligible for Summer P-EBT, a child must be enrolled in school as of June 2021. Since your child graduated in January, they are not considered enrolled in June.

Q40: Does my child have to attend summer school to be eligible for Summer P-EBT?

A: No. Attending school during the summer is not a factor in determining whether a child is eligible for Summer P-EBT.

Q41: Will Summer P-EBT benefits expire if they aren't spent?

A: Yes. P-EBT benefits will expire if the card is not used within 274 days.

Q42: My child qualifies for free and reduced-priced meals but was learning in-person for the 2020-2021 school year, is my child eligible for summer P-EBT?

A: Yes. Eligibility is based on eligibility for free/reduced-priced meals.

Q43: I have more questions about Summer P-EBT. Where can I learn more?

A: Go to <https://dcf.vermont.gov/esd/covid19/P-EBT> or call 1-800-479-6151 option 7 for more information. Please contact your student's school if you have specific concerns about your student's eligibility for free and reduced meals or would like to change the head of household or mailing address that will be used to issue the card.

