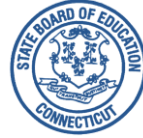




STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



TO: School Superintendents

FROM: Ajit Gopalakrishnan, Chief Performance Officer
John D. Frassinelli, Division Director

DATE: May 6, 2020

SUBJECT: Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer Program

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) continues to seek ways in which students facing food insecurity can access proper nutrition during COVID-19 school closures. The CSDE has partnered with the Connecticut Department of Social Services (DSS) to implement the Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer Program (P-EBT). The P-EBT program complements other efforts to provide food to children during this difficult time, but is not intended to replace any existing benefits or meal services, such as school meal distribution. The P-EBT Program provides households with an EBT debit card that contains the cash value of one school breakfast and one lunch for each day that school classes are canceled due to COVID-19 (\$5.70 per day per child).

Eligible households include those whose children are certified to receive free or reduced-price school meals, and children who attend schools that offer free school meals to all students (such as Community Eligibility Provision or CEP schools). P-EBT Cards must be used only for food purchases at participating food retailers. Cards will be issued in three phases starting around late May, through the remainder of school closures and the benefits will be retroactive to March 17, 2020. Households will receive P-EBT Cards according to the following implementation plan:

- Phase 1** - Around Late May: Students in households receiving benefits through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF);
- Phase 2** - Around Late May: Students in households directly certified for free school meals based on their enrollment in Medicaid (HUSKY A); and,
- Phase 3** - Around Mid-June: Students not included in Phase 1 or Phase 2 but receiving free or reduced-price school meals when school is in session (e.g., students who are not participating in SNAP/TANF/HUSKY but are enrolled in a CEP school and receiving free school meals; students determined eligible for free or reduced-price school meals through traditional household income applications; and, students who are homeless or in foster care).

Families will receive the attached P-EBT flyer with the P-EBT Card that provides instructions on how to activate and redeem the benefits. To activate the card, families will need the 18 digit card number and the date of birth of the individual listed on the card.

DSS already possesses mailing addresses for students in Phase 1 and 2. However, neither DSS nor CSDE possess mailing addresses for students in Phase 3. Therefore, the CSDE will be requesting districts to upload the primary address for all currently enrolled students in their district in the Public School Information System (PSIS) Register module. In addition to primary address, the upload will also ask districts to report the most currently known free or reduced-price meal eligibility status *and* homeless status for their currently enrolled students. Districts can start uploading these data in PSIS on Wednesday, May 6, 2020. Districts are asked to upload these data by COB Wednesday, May 13, 2020.

The CSDE will then provide address information to DSS for only those students who are:

- currently enrolled in CEP schools;
- were reported as eligible for free or reduced-price meals in any non-CEP district/school anytime during 2019-20;
- were reported as homeless in PSIS anytime during 2019-20; or
- were reported to the CSDE as being in foster care by the Department of Children and Families (DCF).

Please communicate about this program to households in your district and emphasize its primary purpose of providing all families who may be facing food insecurity with access to proper nutrition during COVID-19 school closures. Households whose students received free- or reduced-price meals anytime during the school year should expect to receive a P-EBT Card in the mail. Please rest assured that the CSDE is working with DSS to ensure that the address information provided by CSDE is safeguarded by DSS and that data for students who were not previously enrolled in a benefits program administered by DSS will be deleted upon completion of the P-EBT benefits being issued and will not be retained by DSS.

For questions about the P-EBT Program, please contact Shannon Yearwood at Shannon.yearwood@ct.gov. For questions related to this data collection, please contact Kendra Shakir at Kendra.shakir@ct.gov or visit the [PSIS Help Site](#).