

Talking Points for Pandemic EBT Benefits, April 24, 2020

Background

The U.S Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services, has approved Wisconsin's request to issue Pandemic EBT or P-EBT benefits. These benefits will ensure children who normally receive free or reduced priced meals through their schools continue to have access to nutritious meals while schools are closed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. A [detailed list of food that can be bought with these benefits](#) is available on the Food and Nutrition Services website.

Timeline

- People enrolled in FoodShare who are also receiving free and reduced price school meals will be issued P-EBT benefits for March and April on April 27. They will be issued benefits for May and June at the end of May. The benefits will be issued on their QUEST card.
- People not enrolled in FoodShare but receiving other public assistance benefits will be issued P-EBT benefits for March and April on May 10. They will be issued benefits for May and June at the end of May. The benefits will either be issued on a QUEST card or [P-EBT card](#) (a white card specific to P-EBT benefits).
- People whose information is not available through existing data sources will be able to apply for P-EBT benefits in early May. The benefits will be issued on a P-EBT card.

Member Notification

- People enrolled in FoodShare who are being issued benefits will receive a [letter](#) with information about the benefits.
- People not enrolled in FoodShare but receiving public assistance benefits will receive one of two letters telling them how P-EBT will work for them. One letter will be for people who have active QUEST cards and one will be for people who do not.
- People receiving the P-EBT card will receive a separate mailer containing the card and information about using the card.
- School districts will be contacting people who are neither FoodShare members nor receiving other state benefits. These people will need to apply for the P-EBT benefits.

Member Questions Regarding P-EBT Benefits

1. Why did I get these benefits?

You have a child or children who usually get free or reduced price meals through school but cannot due to COVID-19 school closures. You are getting Pandemic EBT (also known as P-EBT) in place of school meals.

2. How long will I get these benefits?

You will get benefits for the months your child or children would be in school. You will get benefits for March and April in April or early May. You will get benefits for May and June at the end of May.

3. How many benefits will I be getting?

- For March and April combined, you will get a total of \$176.70 for each child who gets free or reduced price meals.
- For May and June combined, you will get a total of \$148.20 for each child who gets free or reduced price meals.

You can check your card balance at any time by going to ebtedge.com or using the ebtEDGE mobile app.

4. When will I get the benefits?

People enrolled in FoodShare

You will get the food benefits for March and April on April 27. You will get additional benefits for May and June at the end of May. The benefits will be on your QUEST card.

People not enrolled in FoodShare but receiving other public assistance benefits

You will get food benefits for March and April on May 10. You will also get benefits for May and June at the end of May. The benefits will either be put on a QUEST card or P-EBT card (a white card specific to P-EBT benefits).

People whose information is not available through existing data sources

You can apply for P-EBT benefits in early May. School districts will be reaching out to share application information. The benefits will be put on a P-EBT card. You will be able to use this like a debit card to buy food.

5. What can I buy with the P-EBT benefits?

You can buy food, such as:

- Fruits and vegetables.
- Meat, poultry, and fish.
- Dairy products.
- Breads and cereals.
- Other foods such as snack foods and non-alcoholic beverages.
- Seeds and plants, which produce food for the household to eat.

You cannot buy:

- Beer, wine, liquor, cigarettes, or tobacco.
- Vitamins, medicines, and supplements.

- Live animals (except shellfish, fish removed from water, and animals slaughtered prior to pick-up from the store).
- Prepared foods fit for immediate consumption.
- Hot foods.
- Any nonfood items, such as:
 - Pet foods.
 - Cleaning supplies, paper products, and other household supplies.
 - Hygiene items, cosmetics.

6. How long do I have to use P-EBT benefits?

You will have one year from the date the benefits are put on your card.

7. Do I have to use P-EBT benefits?

No, you don't have to use them.

Everyone can choose not to use the benefits. People who get a P-EBT card can also cut up the card and dispose of it securely.

8. What should I do if I think I should be getting these benefits but haven't?

People not enrolled in FoodShare but receiving other public assistance benefits

You will get food benefits for March and April on May 10. You will also get benefits for May and June at the end of May. The benefits will either be put on a QUEST card or P-EBT card (a white card specific to P-EBT benefits).

[P-EBT cards will first be mailed the week of May 10.]

People whose information is not available through existing data sources

You can apply for P-EBT benefits in early May. School districts will be reaching out to share application information. The benefits will be put on a P-EBT card. You will be able to use this like a debit card to buy food.

People who have applied but whose information couldn't be verified

We couldn't verify your information because your school may have different information on file from the information you gave us, you may be getting these benefits already, or you may not be able to get these benefits.

If you think you should be getting these benefits:

- You can contact your school district or school to make sure the information you gave us is correct.
- You can ask for a hearing to tell us why you think you should be getting these benefits.
*[Direct them to the following DOA website:
<https://doa.wi.gov/Pages/LicensesHearings/DHAWFSRequestingaHearing.aspx.>]*