

Memo to parents

To: Parents or legal guardians of Arkansas students

RE: Second Round of Pandemic Food Assistance (P-EBT) for Eligible Families

The Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) and Department of Human Services (DHS) have announced that the State will soon be sending out additional financial assistance to some students through the federal Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) program, which helps cover additional grocery costs for eligible families. Last year, this benefit was available to *all* students enrolled in a free or reduced lunch program at the time of school closures last March, and families got the same amount for each eligible child. **This year, the eligibility requirements have changed, and the benefit will only be given to eligible students who were virtual learners and students of schools who reported school closures and virtual learning days due to COVID-19 concerns.** Benefit amounts will be determined by the number of days a school closed and benefits will be issued in four payments. **This means (1) benefit amounts may differ for each child, even if the children live in the same household and attend the same school district but are in different classrooms, and (2) families should keep their children's new P-EBT cards until all benefits are issued.**

To be eligible, your student *must*:

- Be enrolled in a free or reduced lunch program through a federal National School Lunch Program (NSLP) at a public or private school location.
- Attend a school that reported school closures or virtual learning days due to COVID-19 concerns during the 2020 – 2021 school year.
- Chose to attend school virtually during the 2020 – 2021 school year

Your student *does not* qualify if:

- He or she was not enrolled in a free or reduced lunch program through an NSLP.
- His or her **school and classroom** did not close or have virtual learning days due to COVID-19 concerns.
- The student or his/her family was affected, but the school or classroom did not close.
- He or she was not enrolled in a free or reduced lunch program through an NSLP but ate free meals because the state or district provided free meals to all students because of the public health emergency.

Families do not need to take any action to get P-EBT, as eligibility for the benefit is based on records provided your child's school. However, families of eligible students are encouraged to:

- Update their child's personal information with their child's school district, including their child's date of birth and mailing address before school is let out for the summer.
- Add their child's name to their mailing list with their local post office to avoid issues getting EBT cards. (The cards will be mailed in your child's name).

Families of eligible students can expect to get their P-EBT benefits by July 31.

- If the student's family has an active SNAP case, benefits will be issued to the family's EBT card, **unless the address DHS has on file is different than the address the school has on file.** In that case, a new P-EBT card will be issued to the family by mail. Cards should arrive by July 31.
- If the family does not have a current SNAP case, but the student is eligible for P-EBT, a new P-EBT card will be issued to the family by mail to the address on file with the child's school. Cards should arrive by July 31.