



## **Project Bread – Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) Fact Sheet April 2020**

### **What is Pandemic EBT or P-EBT?**

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act of 2020 includes a provision called “Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer,” or “P-EBT.” This allows states to issue benefits to families with children who would receive free or reduced-price school meals, if not for school closures associated with COVID-19.

### **Who will receive P-EBT?**

All Massachusetts students (preK-12) who are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals or attend a school that offers universally free breakfast and lunch will receive P-EBT.

### **How much is the benefit?**

Each student will receive a P-EBT benefit that is equivalent to the cost of school breakfast and school lunch – \$5.70/day. The total benefit amount is to be determined.

### **What do families need to do to receive the benefit?**

If families are already receiving SNAP and/or TAFDC (TANF) benefits, they will receive the additional P-EBT benefit for each school-age child on their EBT card. If they do not receive SNAP or TAFDC, but their children receive free or reduced-price school meals, they will receive a P-EBT card – like a debit card – for each student in the mail that can be used at grocery stores to buy food. There is no application to complete.

### **What can families, who are low-income, but not receiving SNAP or free or reduced-price meals, do to receive P-EBT benefits?**

Families who have recently lost jobs or income are encouraged to apply for SNAP through DTA Connect or Project Bread’s FoodSource Hotline (800-645-8333). If they are approved for SNAP, they will also receive P-EBT benefits for their school age children. If they are not eligible or do not wish to apply for SNAP, they may still apply for free or reduced-price school meals through their school district.

### **Where can families use the P-EBT card? What can they purchase?**

P-EBT is NOT SNAP, but it operates very similarly. P-EBT cards can be used where SNAP EBT cards are accepted (<https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/retailer-locator>). P-EBT can be used to purchase the same food as SNAP benefits – fruits, vegetables, bread, meats, dairy, etc. (<https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/eligible-food-items>). P-EBT cannot be used to purchase toiletries, paper products (e.g. toilet paper), alcohol, or hot prepared food items.

### **If a family uses their P-EBT card, can they still pick up/receive meals at school sites?**

Families using their P-EBT card can still take advantage of all food resources in their community including picking up/receiving meals from schools or community organizations like the YMCA, going to food pantries, and applying for federal nutrition programs such as SNAP. For more information about each of these resources, please go to [www.projectbread.org/covid19](http://www.projectbread.org/covid19)

**Will using P-EBT impact a family's immigration status?**

The Public Charge rule does not apply to P-EBT benefits and does not impact a family's or child's immigration status. Undocumented students are eligible for P-EBT if they are enrolled in free or reduced-price meals at their school or attend a school that offers universally free breakfast and lunch.

**What if a family has questions about P-EBT?**

All questions should be directed to Project Bread's FoodSource Hotline (800-645-8333).

**When will families receive P-EBT benefits?**

The roll-out of P-EBT has just started and eligible households are being identified.