



## GOVERNOR GREG ABBOTT

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### **Governor Abbott, HHSC Announce \$2.5 Billion In Pandemic Food Benefits For Texas Families**

AUSTIN - Governor Greg Abbott today announced that the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) has received approval from the U.S. Department of Agriculture for a second round of federal Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) food benefits for families with children who have temporarily lost access to free or reduced-price school meals due to COVID-19 during the 2020-2021 school year.

P-EBT provides a benefit of up to \$1,200 per child for the school year. The amount of the benefit is based on the school the child attends and is determined by the number of days that most students at that school received remote instruction during the 2020-2021 school year. P-EBT benefits can be used in the same way as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) food benefits to pay for groceries. The administration of P-EBT is a joint effort by HHSC, the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) and Texas Education Agency (TEA).

"Thank you to the U.S. Department of Agriculture for approving this second round of pandemic food benefits for Texas families," said Governor Abbott. "These additional benefits will continue to help Texans provide food for their families. I thank our state partners at HHSC, TEA, and TDA for working together to secure these benefits and administering them quickly to families across the state."

"These additional food benefits are a lifeline and will go a long way to help many Texas families put nutritious food on the table," said HHS Executive Commissioner Cecile Erwin Young. "We've worked closely with our many state and federal partners and we're thankful to get this program off the ground so we can help people during this challenging time."

In this second round of P-EBT, HHSC received federal approval to provide more than \$2.5 billion in benefits to approximately 3.7 million eligible children in Texas. The [first round of P-EBT](#) was distributed last summer and provided more than \$1 billion in food benefits to more than 3 million children.

P-EBT is for families with children who are certified for free or reduced-price meals through the National School Lunch Program and families with children born after Aug. 1, 2014 who receive SNAP food benefits.

Most families who receive SNAP benefits do not need to apply and will automatically receive P-EBT benefits on their Lone Star Card by May 28. Families who received SNAP benefits for

the first time during the 2020-2021 school year in May or June 2021 and have children born on or before Aug. 1, 2014 need to apply.

Families who have children certified for free or reduced-price meals, or attended a school defined as a Community Eligibility Provision or Provision II school and received meals at no cost, during the 2020-2021 school year but did not receive SNAP benefits will need to apply. Families that need to apply will receive a notification from their school district by June 2 which will include eligibility information and how to access the application. To ensure timely and accurate issuance of benefits, a Social Security number or School Identification Number must be submitted for each child in public school on the application. The application will be open from June 2 to August 13, and applications will be processed in the order they are received. After completing the application, families eligible for a benefit amount will receive benefits on a new P-EBT Card in the mail.

Visit [hhs.texas.gov/pebt](https://hhs.texas.gov/pebt) or call the P-EBT Call Center at 833-442-1255 to learn more.

#### **About the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program**

SNAP provides nutrition benefits to supplement the food budget of families in need, so they can purchase healthy food and move toward self-sufficiency. In Texas, SNAP benefits are put onto the Lone Star Card (EBT card), which can be used just like a credit card at any store that accepts SNAP. Texas Health and Human Services administers the federal program throughout the state.

#### **About the School Meal Programs**

The federally funded School Meal Programs include the School Breakfast Program (SBP) and National School Lunch Program (NSLP). The School Meal Programs serve over 5 million meals a day to Texas children in school and residential child care institutions. The School Meal Programs serve nutritious, low-cost or free meals to students in public and non-profit private schools in Texas. Meals must meet federal nutrition guidelines. The Texas Department of Agriculture administers SBP and NSLP in Texas.

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