



GOVERNOR GREG ABBOTT

For Immediate Distribution | July 28, 2020 | (512) 463-1826

Governor Abbott, HHSC Extend Deadline For Pandemic Food Benefits For Families Affected By COVID-19 School Closures

AUSTIN – Governor Greg Abbott today announced that the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) is extending the application deadline for the [federal Pandemic-Electronic Benefit Transfer program \(P-EBT\)](#) to August 21 to ensure eligible families have more time to apply for this one-time food benefit.

P-EBT is a one-time benefit of \$285 per eligible child and can be used in the same way Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) food benefits pay for groceries. Eligible families include those with children who lost access to free or reduced-price school meals through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) due to school closures.

"The P-EBT program helps ensure that families continue to have access to healthy food as some schools, and subsequently school lunch programs, remain closed due to COVID-19," said Governor Abbott. "I encourage eligible Texans to apply for these benefits so they can continue to provide food for their families during these challenging times."

"If your family is eligible, we want you to apply for this one-time benefit because we don't want to leave federal lunch money on the table," said HHS Access and Eligibility Services Deputy Executive Commissioner Wayne Salter. "We're pleased with how many families have so far received this benefit, but there are still thousands of eligible families in our communities that can apply for assistance."

HHSC partnered with the Texas Department of Agriculture and the Texas Education Agency to launch the \$1 billion federal program on June 1 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. More than three million children in Texas were certified to receive free or reduced-price meals at school during the 2019-2020 school year. To date, nearly \$790 million in P-EBT has been issued to families, benefiting more than 2.8 million children. Families who are eligible for P-EBT were notified by their school districts in May. After completing the online application, families receive their benefits on a new Texas P-EBT card in the mail.

Families who have been denied but think they are eligible should contact HHSC within 15 days of receiving their denial notice. They can either call the P-EBT Call Center at 833-613-6220 or send an email to AES_PEBT_Complaints@hhsc.state.tx.us with proof of free or reduced-priced meals. Proof includes the award letter that is sent to parents when their children become eligible for the National School Lunch Program.

Visit hhs.texas.gov/pebt to learn more about P-EBT and other types of proof acceptable. For questions regarding eligibility or to learn more, Texans may also contact the P-EBT Call Center at 833-613-6220, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Central Standard Time. When applying, it is especially important to include a valid phone number on their application. HHSC staff may need to call families to get additional information to approve P-EBT benefits. The deadline to apply has been extended to Aug. 21.

Texans in need can apply for benefits, including SNAP and Medicaid, at YourTexasBenefits.com or use the Your Texas Benefits mobile app to manage their benefits.

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