

WAC 388-439-0005 What is the pandemic EBT program?

(1) The pandemic electronic benefits transfer (P-EBT) program is a temporary federally funded nutrition program authorized specifically through the families first coronavirus act. P-EBT provides food benefits to eligible children who do not have access to meals at a covered childcare center or free or reduced-price school meals due to the COVID-19 public health emergency. P-EBT is administered by the department of social and health services (department) and is not bound by the same state or federal rules, regulations, and procedures governing the supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP). P-EBT is governed by its own specific rules as found in this chapter. The 2022-2023 school year will be the final year for all P-EBT programs due to the May 2023 expiration of the federal public health emergency (PHE).

(2) The following definitions apply to this program:

(a) "Benefit level" means the P-EBT benefit amount provided to an eligible child;

(b) "Child and adult care food program (CACFP)" means a federal program that provides reimbursements for nutritious meals and snacks to eligible children and adults who are enrolled for care at participating childcare centers, day care homes, and adult day care centers;

(c) "Direct certification" means a determination that a child is eligible for free or reduced-priced school meals without further application to the national school lunch program due to:

(i) Receiving a benefit from a federal means tested assistance program, including SNAP, temporary assistance for needy families (TANF), food distribution program on Indian reservations (FDPIR), some medicaid programs; or

(ii) Other source eligible categories, including children in foster care, children experiencing homelessness, students enrolled in the migrant education program, and children enrolled in head start or the early childhood education and assistance program (ECEAP);

(d) "Eligible student" means a child or student, regardless of age, who would have access to free or reduced-price school meals through the national school lunch program (NSLP) and school breakfast program (SBP) during the school year, who is:

(i) Enrolled in a school or registered in a program in Washington state that normally participates in the NSLP;

(ii) Attending a school that has been closed or has reduced attendance or hours for five or more consecutive days during the school year due to the COVID-19 PHE designation; and

(iii) Determined by the school to be eligible for free or reduced-priced school meals or attends a school that operates the community eligibility provision or the provision 2 lunch and breakfast program. Students are identified as eligible for free or reduced-price school meals using direct certification or free or reduced-price school meals application;

(e) "Free or reduced-price school meals" means meals provided to students qualified as eligible by the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act;

(f) "Meal service" means the typical meals (SBP and NSLP) served when school is in session and consumed on-site as part of the school day. Meal service includes both breakfast and lunch.

(g) "Operating days" are days a school regularly operates, excluding weekends, breaks, and holidays;

(h) "P-EBT card" means the unique electronic benefit transfer (EBT) card that accesses P-EBT food benefits issued to eligible students or children under age six;

(i) "Public health emergency" means a federal declaration of a public health emergency due to the COVID-19 pandemic as issued by the secretary of health and human services;

(j) "School" means any public or nonprofit private schools, charter schools, and tribal compact schools within the state of Washington;

(k) "School closure" means that the school was closed for in-person or remote learning with no meal service available to students enrolled in the school;

(l) "Summer period" means the months of July and August between the end of the school year and the start of the next school year.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 74.04.050, 74.04.055, 74.04.057, 74.04.500, 74.04.510, 74.08.090, 74.08A.120, and Section 1101 of H.R. 6201, Families First Coronavirus Response Act, and amended by Section 1108 of H.R. 1319, American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. WSR 23-20-014, § 388-439-0005, filed 9/22/23, effective 10/23/23.]