

**WAC 388-439-0015 General information about pandemic EBT benefits.** (1) Pandemic electronic benefit transfer (P-EBT) benefits will be deposited into an account accessible with a designated P-EBT card. A P-EBT card and eligibility notice will be issued to each eligible student or child under age six. Each P-EBT card will be:

(a) Linked to a P-EBT account for each eligible student or child under age six for P-EBT benefits; and

(b) Mailed to either:

(i) The last known address on file with the school as reported by the parent or caregiver for the eligible student; or

(ii) The last known address on file with the department as reported by the parent or caregiver for the basic food case for the child under age six.

(c) It is the parent's or caregiver's responsibility to accurately and timely report any address changes to the department for children under six and to the school for school age children. The department or school is not responsible for the expungement of benefits due to unreceived P-EBT notices or cards sent through the mail.

(2) To use a P-EBT account:

(a) The P-EBT card can be used by the eligible student or child under age six or responsible household member, such as a parent or caregiver, on behalf of the eligible student or child under age six, to access the benefits in their EBT account;

(b) A personal identification number (PIN) has to be created that must be used with the P-EBT card to purchase food items;

(c) P-EBT benefits must be accessed from the P-EBT card of an eligible student or child under age six. P-EBT benefits cannot be transferred to a bank account or issued as a check;

(d) P-EBT benefits must be used within 274 days from the initial deposit or last purchase activity on the eligible child's account;

(e) P-EBT benefits not used within 274 days of either activity will be removed; and information about the removal of benefits is included in the initial notice of approval.

(f) P-EBT benefits cannot be replaced once redeemed, removed, lost, or stolen due to fraudulent use.

(g) Families are responsible for keeping the P-EBT card and PIN of an eligible student or child under age six in a safe and secure place.

(3) The purpose of P-EBT benefits is to help low-income families or individuals have a more nutritious diet by providing food benefits to eligible children during the COVID-19 PHE.

(a) P-EBT benefits are used to buy food items for an eligible child (or youth) from a food retailer authorized to accept supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP) benefits by the U.S. department of agriculture food and nutrition service (FNS).

(b) Use P-EBT benefits the same as other food benefits under WAC 388-412-0046 (2)(c).

(c) It is not legal to use P-EBT benefits as described under WAC 388-412-0046 (2)(d).

(d) If people intentionally misuse P-EBT benefits, they may be:

(i) Subject to fines; or

(ii) Subject to legal action, including criminal prosecution. Department of social and health services (DSHS) will cooperate with state, local, and federal prosecuting authorities to prosecute trafficking P-EBT benefits.

(4) The household must request a hearing within 90 days of the mailing date in the notice when disagreeing with a decision explained in the notice.

[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, § 388-439-0015, filed 9/22/23, effective 10/23/23.]