July 14, 2023

Dear interested parties and community partners,

I am pleased to share that on June 22, 2023, the United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service approved Washington’s Pandemic-EBT (P-EBT) Child Care Programs Plan and P-EBT Summer Plan. Benefit issuance is in process now and is planned to be completed by September 30.

P-EBT food benefits are available to families with young children who are eligible for Basic Food benefits as well as school-aged children who are eligible for free or reduced-price school meal programs. P-EBT benefits can be used to shop at any grocery store, farmers market or food retailer that accepts EBT card payments. The Public Charge rule does not apply to P-EBT benefits, and receipt of P-EBT will not affect immigration status.

The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 continues P-EBT in a school year in which there is a public health emergency designation, or in a covered summer period following a school session. Due to the end of the federal public health emergency on May 11, 2023, this is the final year of P-EBT.

Last year, P-EBT benefits helped provide food security for more than 670,000 children throughout Washington. With inflation continuing to increase the costs of food, gas and other basic needs, eligible families will receive valuable assistance that can go a long way to help relieve hunger this summer.

Eligible children will receive separate P-EBT benefits under each plan as follows.

**Summer 2023 Benefits:**

Summer P-EBT will be provided in one lump-sum amount of $120 to eligible school-age children. To be eligible a child must receive free or reduced-price school meals and be registered and enrolled at the end of the school year in a Washington state public K-12 school that participates in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program. This includes high school graduates. Federal P-EBT rules exclude home school, virtual academies and private schools not participating in the NSLP/SBP program.
2022-2023 School Year Benefits for Children Under 6:
Children under age 6 who live in a household that receives Basic Food will receive retroactive P-EBT benefits as a lump sum for each month they were active on food benefits from Sept. 1, 2022, through May 11, 2023, the date the federal PHE designation ended.

Monthly benefits for eligible months:
Sept. 1, 2022 - April 30, 2023: $43.88 per month
Prorated amount for May 1 - 11, 2023: $28.94

Automatic eligibility determination and benefit issuance process:
In collaboration with the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, we are continuing to work with our third-party vendor, Accenture, to determine eligibility for P-EBT automatically and to load benefits onto a designated P-EBT card. Eligible children will receive an approval letter in the mail, and newly eligible children will also receive a P-EBT card. Families who have misplaced or gotten rid of previous P-EBT cards can call 833-518-0282 for a replacement card.

As this is the final year of P-EBT, families are encouraged to use their benefits. Any unused P-EBT benefits will be removed after 274 days of non-usage. Any transaction, regardless of amount, will prevent removal of these benefits for 274 days from the transaction date.

Families can sign up for text message alerts about the status of their child’s P-EBT by going to textpebt.dshs.wa.gov and filling out a simple verification form. Please refer families to the P-EBT Contact Center at 833-518-0282 for additional support.

To assist families who may have questions about P-EBT, we have updated our DSHS P-EBT web page to provide the latest information on eligibility, benefit amounts and whom to contact for more information as needed.

If you have any questions, please contact Troy Burgess at troy.burgess@dshs.wa.gov.

Thank you for your continued collaboration and support to spread the word about P-EBT.

Sincerely,
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She/her/hers
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