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Pandemic EBT Benefits to Support Children during the COVID-19 Emergency

COLUMBUS, OHIO – About 850,000 Ohio children who receive free or reduced-price meals at school will soon receive money to buy food through the Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) program, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) announced today. This funding was made possible by the federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act. ODJFS worked with the Ohio Department of Education to submit Ohio’s plan, which just received federal approval.

“We know families are struggling right now, balancing work or career searches, distance learning, and caring for families,” said Ohio Governor Mike DeWine. “Hopefully, this additional assistance will provide more choices for families.”

The P-EBT benefits may be added to the Ohio Direction cards of families that receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. Families that do not receive SNAP benefits will be sent P-EBT cards with the one-time benefit added. No application is needed. ODJFS estimates that it will issue \$150.9 million to 506,953 children in SNAP households and \$103.6 million to 343,047 children in non-SNAP households.

“Food budgets have been stretched thin as a result of the pandemic,” said ODJFS Director Kimberly Hall. “We are grateful to be able to provide this extra help to families, especially since some children may not be able to access emergency school or community meal locations.”

Individuals may qualify for SNAP if their household’s gross monthly income is at or under 130% of the federal poverty guidelines. Ohioans can apply at benefits.ohio.gov. Benefits can be used to buy most food products, with the exception of alcoholic beverages, vitamins and/or medicines, and hot food made to be eaten immediately, including prepared food from grocery stores and restaurants.

“Our highest priority continues to be ensuring the health and safety of students,” said State Superintendent of Public Instruction Paolo DeMaria. “That’s why we are eager for this opportunity to work together with ODJFS to facilitate an additional way for students to receive meals while school buildings are closed. While many schools continue to offer meal services, this EBT opportunity will add one more option for families and caregivers to make sure students are getting the nutrition they need.”



ODJFS has provided additional assistance to SNAP recipients during the pandemic:

- Those who did not already receive the maximum monthly allotment for their household size in March and April were issued additional payments. This same benefit will be issued in May, as well.
- Administrative verifications normally required at food banks were waived, to streamline the process and limit person-to-person contact.
- Recertification periods for March, April, and May were extended by six months. June recertifications also will be extended.
- Recipients can take advantage of “click and collect” payment options to order groceries online and pay at pickup.

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The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services manages vital programs that strengthen Ohio families. These include job training and employment services, unemployment insurance, cash and food assistance, child care, child and adult protective services, adoption, and child support services.

