

Arkansas Amendment to Approved State Plans (Summer and School Year) for Pandemic EBT

Arkansas is requesting to amend its approved Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) plans for School Year 2020-2021 as set forth below.

1. Reissue expunged benefits. The agency previously set expungement in accordance with 7 CFR §274.2(h). However, because of the nature of the P-EBT program, some cards were mailed to an incorrect address and those households did not receive PEBT benefits they were entitled to. The agency continues to receive inquiries from households that were issued benefits but were unable to access them before they were expunged.

While Arkansas DHS continues to issue benefits to households that were not paid previously, households that were paid but could not access benefits before they were expunged have been unable to receive P-EBT benefits. To ensure all students receive benefits to which they are eligible, the agency proposes to amend the plan as follows:

SY 20-21 language:

Section 7, bullet point 7 amended to read:

3. Arkansas DHS will systematically expunge P-EBT benefits after 274 or 365 days of account inactivity, depending on issuance date, in accordance with 7 CFR §274.2(i), to ensure funds are released if the household was eligible but decided not to use benefits. However, the agency will reissue P-EBT benefits that were expunged in cases where the household requests it or the agency becomes aware the benefits were expunged during normal case review, subject to program termination deadlines. Cases chosen for review will be identified through our dispute resolution process and legislative escalation procedures plus ad hoc triage of contacts made to local school districts and local DHS field offices. Only those cases will be evaluated to determine if P-EBT benefits should be reinstated. We will cover only those families who did not have a fair chance to use their benefit – specifically, families who never received or never activated their cards. (1) families who did not receive their cards and thus never pinned the cards (2) families who did not know what the cards were and threw them away without pinning. We will not engage in an extensive or comprehensive review of cases with expunged benefits or outreach effort.

Arkansas PEBT Expungement Restoration:

- **Maximum number of children: 30,982**
- **Maximum dollar amount of benefits to be reissued: \$11,618,250.00**
- **Estimated number of children/assuming that not all households will request a reissuance: 6,194 (20% of the maximum stated above)**
- **Estimated dollar amount of benefits to be reissued/assuming that not all households will request a reissuance: \$2,322,750**
- **Description of how the state will make eligible households aware of this opportunity.** Dispute Resolution and Legislative Escalation processes and ad hoc contact response to inquiries made to school districts and local DHS field offices.
- **Amount of time that parents will have to request a restoration of expunged benefits: Through 4/30/2023**

Mary Franklin

Signature

Mary Franklin, Division Director, 01/20/2023