



Food and Nutrition
Service

1320 Braddock Place
Alexandria, VA
22314

May 4, 2021

SUBJECT: Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer Program (P-EBT)
Approval of California's State Plan for Children in Child Care

TO: Jesus Mendoza, Jr.
Regional Administrator
Western Regional Office

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (P.L. 116-127; the Act) as amended by the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2021 and Other Extensions Act (P.L. 116-159) and the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (P.L. 116-260) authorized a temporary assistance program for households with certain SNAP-enrolled children in child care during the public health emergency declared on January 27, 2020. Pursuant to the authority granted under Section 1101 of the Act, FNS approves California's enclosed plan to operate P-EBT for children in child care.

Summary of State's Plan

The California Department of Social Services and California Department of Education will issue P-EBT benefits through the State's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) EBT card system to households with eligible children. The State's plan for SNAP-enrolled children in child care covers the months of October 2020 through May 2021.

Children in child care are eligible for benefits if they are enrolled in SNAP and their child care facility is closed or operating with reduced attendance or hours, or if they live in the area of a school that is closed or operating with reduced attendance or hours. The State will use the best feasibly available data and USDA-approved simplifying assumptions to issue benefits in amounts that are tied as closely as possible to the number of days that eligible children do not receive a meal service through their covered child care facility.

At a minimum, the State will identify all children under age 6 who are enrolled in SNAP at any time since October 1, 2020. The State will not issue child care benefits to any child for months after their SNAP enrollment ends. Finally, the State will ensure that children who receive a benefit through P-EBT's child care component do not also receive a benefit through P-EBT's school component for the same month.

In addition, California has or will:

- identify the county of residence for each SNAP-enrolled child under age 6,
- for each month from October through the end of the school year, determine whether any school in the county has at least one school that is issuing P-EBT benefits to its students:
 - if the State identifies at least one school operating fully virtually, all SNAP-enrolled children under age 6 in the county will receive a P-

- EBT benefit equal to the fully virtual P-EBT benefit for school children;
- if the State does not identify any fully virtual schools but does identify schools operating a hybrid model, all SNAP-enrolled children under age 6 in the county will receive a P-EBT benefit equal to the hybrid P-EBT benefit for school children;
 - if the State does not identify any schools operating fully virtually or using a hybrid model, no P-EBT benefits will be issued to SNAP-enrolled children under age 6 in the county for that month,
 - set a constant monthly benefit equal to 18 days for school children with fully virtual schedules by dividing the number of instructional days by the number of months in the school year; the State will use this fully virtual benefit for P-EBT's school and child care components,
 - surveyed a representative sample of school districts in April to determine that an average hybrid schedule includes 55% distance learning days; California will multiply the State's fully virtual benefit by 55% to set a standard hybrid benefit for P-EBT's school and child care components,
 - tentatively issue benefits for the months of October through January in a single issuance beginning in late June and continuing through July, and
 - issue benefits for the months of February through May throughout the month of October.

Finally, the State will identify risks for improper payments and ensure a high level of integrity.

Estimated Caseload and Value of P-EBT Benefits

The State will calculate monthly benefits for each eligible child in the household equal to the daily reimbursement for a free breakfast, lunch, and snack multiplied by the number of benefit days calculated as described in the State's plan.

California estimates that it will issue \$984.0 million to approximately 1.0 million SNAP-enrolled children in child care from October 2020 through May 2021.

Release of Information

Pursuant to Section 1101(e) of the Act, the Secretary hereby authorizes the release of the information necessary to carry out P-EBT in California. Section 1101(e) of the Act states, "Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of Agriculture may authorize State educational agencies and school food authorities administering a school lunch program under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1751 et seq.) to release to appropriate officials administering the supplemental nutrition assistance program such information as may be necessary to carry out this section."

Plan Timetable and Revisions

California will distribute benefits to households consistent with the timeframes identified in the State plan. Should the State encounter challenges or delays that significantly impair its ability to implement the approved P-EBT plan or require substantive changes, the State must notify the FNS Regional Office as soon as possible. The FNS Regional Office will work with the State to identify reasonable solutions and review revised plans for approval or further revision.

Civil Rights

California will continue to comply with civil rights requirements, to include providing equal access to individuals with disabilities and individuals who are limited English proficient.

Administrative Funds

The California Department of Social Services will participate in a P-EBT Administrative Budget Planning process using the FNS-366(a) Program and Budget Summary. When the FNS-366(a) is finalized, that will determine the State's Administrative Grant level. However, the FNS-366(a), Program and Budget Summary, may be updated and revised as the State's operational plan evolves.

Reporting

The California Department of Social Services will complete the FNS-292B, the FNS-46, the FNS-388, and the FNS-778 reports in accordance with existing requirements.

FNS appreciates California's commitment to meet the nutritional needs of children during a challenging time. If you have questions, please contact the FNS Western Regional Office.

Sincerely,

Cindy Long
Deputy Administrator
Child Nutrition Programs