



Food and Nutrition
Service

1320 Braddock Place
Alexandria, VA
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July 26, 2021

**SUBJECT: Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer Program (P-EBT)
Approval of the District of Columbia's State Plan for Summer 2021**

**TO: Dr. Patty Bennett
Regional Administrator
Mid-Atlantic Regional Office**

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (P.L. 116-127; the Act), as amended, authorized a temporary assistance program for households with children without access to meals in school and to certain SNAP-enrolled children in child care during the public health emergency originally declared in January 2020. The March 11, 2021 American Rescue Plan Act (the ARP, P.L. 117-2) extends P-EBT through the end of the public health emergency, a period that includes the summer of 2021.

Pursuant to the authority granted under Section 1101 of the Act, FNS approves the District of Columbia's (the District's) enclosed plan to issue P-EBT benefits to children in schools and child care for the 2021 covered summer period.

Summary of State's Plan

The District of Columbia Department of Human Services and the District's Office of the State Superintendent of Education will issue P-EBT benefits through the District's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) EBT card system to households with eligible children. In general, school children are eligible for benefits if they would have received free or reduced price meals at their schools through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) if not for the closure or reduced attendance or hours of their schools. Children in child care are eligible 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 ARP deems all schools closed for the 2021 P-EBT covered summer period.

Children in Schools

The District and its school districts will identify the children who were eligible to receive free or reduced price NSLP meals as of the end of school year 2020-2021. The District will offer households who become income-eligible for free or reduced price meals the ability to establish their eligibility during the 2021 covered summer period. In addition, the District and its school districts will identify eligible children through direct certification during the same period.

In addition, the District of Columbia will:

- issue the U.S. standard benefit of \$375 to all eligible children,

- tentatively issue a single benefit for the entire summer period for children determined eligible by June 25 on August 25 for children in SNAP households and on August 30 for non-SNAP households,
- accept applications from July 1 through August 29 for children who become newly eligible during the covered summer period:
 - District of Columbia SFAs will use their standard NSLP applications for summer P-EBT benefits,
 - school districts will process these applications immediately after the end of the covered summer period,
 - the District will issue summer P-EBT benefits to these households on September 30.

Children in Child Care

The District will identify all children under age 6 who are enrolled in SNAP as of the end of school year 2020-2021. The District 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 covered summer period.

In addition, the District of Columbia will:

- issue P-EBT benefits for the full covered summer period to children whose SNAP enrollment begins or ends during that period,
- tentatively issue a single benefit for the entire summer period on August 25 for children that previously received P-EBT child care benefits and continued to be enrolled in SNAP during the covered summer period,
- tentatively issue a single benefit for the entire summer period on September 30 for children newly determined eligible during the covered summer period.

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

Estimated Caseload and Value of P-EBT Benefits

The District of Columbia estimates that it will issue \$27.4 million to approximately 73,000 school children, and \$4.5 million to approximately 12,000 SNAP-enrolled children in child care during the 2021 covered summer period.

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 the District of Columbia. 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

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

Civil Rights

The District of Columbia 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 District of Columbia Department of Human 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 District's Administrative Grant level. However, the FNS-366(a), Program and Budget Summary, may be updated and revised as the District's operational plan evolves.

Reporting

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

FNS appreciates the District of Columbia's commitment to meet the nutritional needs of children during a challenging time. If you have questions, please contact the FNS Mid-Atlantic Regional Office.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Jackson Lewis
Acting Deputy Administrator
Child Nutrition Programs