

Summer 2023
February 16, 2023

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Title of Document:	State Plan for Pandemic EBT: Summer 2023
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Summary:	(1) This document is a template to assist states in the development of an approved state plan to operate Pandemic EBT for school children and for children in child care during summer 2023. (2) This document relates to Section 1101 of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (P.L. 116-127) as amended by the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2021 and Other Extensions Act (P.L. 116-159), the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (P.L. 116-260), the American Rescue Plan Act, 2021 (P.L. 117-2), and the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 (P.L. 117-328).
Disclaimer:	The contents of this guidance document do not have the force and effect of law and are not meant to bind the public in any way. This document is intended only to provide clarity to the public regarding existing requirements under the law or agency policies.

Additional context and background for this document can be found at:
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/state-guidance-coronavirus-pandemic-ebt-pebt>

The submission of a P-EBT state plan, associated template and related reporting obligations are addressed in OMB# 0584-0660, expiration 11/30/2023.

**State Plan for Pandemic EBT
Summer 2023¹
February 16, 2023**

*Please note that due to the FY 2023 Consolidated Appropriations Act, states can submit a P-EBT Plan for Summer 2023 **without** a School Year 2022-2023 P-EBT Plan for School Children or Children in Child Care.*

1. State: Florida

2. Primary Citation: Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA), as amended.

3. Executive Summary:

Please provide the following data. In addition, please include a statement indicating that you commit to informing USDA of any significant increase or decrease in these data points during the summer period covered by this initial plan (or subsequent amendment).

- a. Estimated total amount of P-EBT benefits the state will issue to school children within this amendment's date range.² (Consult the appropriate table in Section 4, "Benefit Levels.") **\$264 million**
- b. Estimated total number of school children to which the state will issue P-EBT benefits. **2.2 million**
- c. Tentative P-EBT issuance schedule (the date(s) on which Summer P-EBT benefits will be issued). Assuming that the public health emergency ends on May 11 as anticipated, P-EBT funds will not be available beyond the end of fiscal year 2023. **As a result, states must issue all P-EBT benefits by September 30, 2023.** This applies to P-EBT benefits for school year 2022-2023 and summer 2023. Benefits issued by the states for the summer and school year after this date may result in liability to the state.

School children: Florida will issue P-EBT benefits to school children in three issuances:

1. School children who are current SNAP recipients
 2. School children who currently have a P-EBT card
 3. School children who need a P-EBT card issued
- d. Names of state agencies involved in administering this plan.**
- Florida Department of Children and Families (Department)
 - Department of Education (DOE)
 - Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS)

¹ Changes to the Summer P-EBT program contained in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 are highlighted in yellow throughout this document.

² The Biden Administration recently announced that, at present, it intends to end the COVID-19 public health emergency declaration on May 11, 2023. In the event that the public health emergency does end on May 11, prior to the start of P-EBT's covered summer period, states may not issue P-EBT summer benefits to children in child care in 2023.

Response: [please use as much space as needed]

The Department is working with the appropriate partners to issue summer 2023 P-EBT benefits to school-aged children for the period of June 1, 2023, through August 16, 2023. Benefits will be issued from July 2023 through September 2023, if possible. All benefit issuances will be completed no later than December 31, 2023. As outlined in the P-EBT Deadline Issuance Letter, the Department will attempt to complete as many of the issuances by September 30, 2023, as possible, barring any unforeseen circumstances. The Department will notify USDA of any significant increase or decrease in the data points listed above for the summer period covered by this plan.

4. Summer P-EBT for school children:

- Describe how the state will identify school children who attended an NSLP-participating school at the end of school year 2022-2023 who qualified to receive free or reduced price school meals under the NSLP or SBP. This group includes:
 - School children who attended a school that participated in the Community Eligibility Provision or Special Provisions 2 or 3 in school year 2022-2023.
 - Children who were directly certified for free school meals or who were certified by application for free or reduced price school meals during school year 2022-2023, or children who are determined newly eligible for free or reduced-price meals.

States may not issue summer 2023 P-EBT benefits to children who did not attend an NSLP-participating school at the end of the school year immediately preceding the summer (i.e. at the end of SY 22-23).

- Describe how the state will ensure that households with children eligible for free or reduced price school meals will have an opportunity to establish their eligibility by application through the end of SY 22-23 and into the summer of 2023 (*to the extent possible*). USDA understands that states that elect to keep their school meal application process open beyond the end of the school year will set a summer application deadline that allows the states to process these applications and issue benefits by September 30, 2023.

Response: [please use as much space as needed]

Implementing Summer P-EBT for school-aged children will require the input and cooperation of several state agencies, including the Department of Children and Families (Department), the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS), and the Florida Department of Education (DOE). The following outlines the key players and the processes necessary to identify eligible school-aged children.

FDACS will provide a list of NSLP-participating schools during SY 2022-2023.

The Department will build on the existing processes that identify and record student eligibility for free or reduced-price meals, which includes the Direct Certification process. Currently, the Department provides nightly data on clients newly eligible for SNAP, TANF and Medicaid to FDACS. FDACS also receives enrollment data from local schools/school districts that participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). FDACS compares the Department's program eligibility information with the school enrollment data, directly certifies students for free or reduced-price school meals and returns the eligibility information of the matched students to their participating school/school district.

The Department will collect eligible student data for private, public, and charter schools that participated in the NSLP from FDACS and DOE. FDACS will provide a list of direct certified eligible NSLP schools with public, private, and charter school students to the Department. DOE will provide a list of eligible NSLP public, private, and charter school students to the Department.

Data collected will include:

- Student first and last name
- Student ID number
- Student DOB
- Parent/Legal Guardian first and last name
- Mailing address
- School of attendance
- County

Note: Social Security Numbers will be collected when available to match to SNAP, TANF, and Medicaid data but is not required for eligibility.

FDACS and DOE will transmit the applicable data to the Department. As an administrative simplification, the Department assumes that the data provided by FDACS and DOE captures all eligible school-aged children enrolled in an NSLP-participating school at the end of School Year 2022-2023. The Department will compare eligible clients to SNAP recipient data to identify, where possible, clients with active SNAP payments.

- Students currently receiving SNAP will receive P-EBT benefits on their existing EBT card.
- Students not currently receiving SNAP but previously received P-EBT benefits, will receive benefits on their existing P-EBT card.
- Students who are not currently receiving SNAP or do not have an existing P-EBT card will be issued a new P-EBT card.

Newly eligible school-aged children will be eligible for Summer 2023 P-EBT benefit if they 1) attended an NSLP-participating school at the end of School Year 2022-2023 and determined eligible through direct certification by June 30, 2023, or 2) submit an application for NSLP and be determined eligible for free or reduced-price meals by June 30, 2023. Applications for the NSLP must be submitted by June 30, 2023 for households of children who become newly eligible during the covered summer period.

5. Benefit Levels

Summer 2023 P-EBT Benefit

Please note that this new benefit from the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 has changed from the level for Summer 2022 P-EBT benefits.

Summer 2023 P-EBT Benefit	
Contiguous U.S.	\$120
Alaska	188
Hawaii, Guam, Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands	139

6. Implementation Timeline, EBT Processing, and Benefit Issuance

Please provide an implementation timeline for summer 2023 with estimated dates for major milestones in your plan.

- States should develop their timeline cooperatively, including input from its EBT processor and all state agencies involved in implementing P-EBT. Instead of using specific dates, describe important milestones and realistic durations between them. USDA suggests that states build their timelines from the date USDA approves the state's plan (Day #0).
- The timeline must include the state's tentative issuance dates. In past years, most states issued in phases, and on a rolling basis thereafter. For example: issuance to SNAP households Day #10, to non-SNAP households on Day #15, and to newly identified cases from Day #16 onward. This is a best practice, which we encourage states to continue.
- If the PHE ends on or before September 30, 2023, states must issue all P-EBT benefits by September 30, 2023.
- Examples of other possible milestones include, but are not limited to:
 - State Education agency provides student data to SNAP state agency (Day #5)
 - P-EBT hotline becomes active (Day #9)
 - Public notice campaign begins (Day #10), etc.

Please also address each of the following:

- Will the state issue P-EBT benefits on a unique P-EBT card design? If so, who will receive these cards, non-SNAP households only? Or also SNAP households?
- How will the state distinguish P-EBT from SNAP and D-SNAP issuances? USDA strongly encourages the use of a sub-benefit type, even if your state did not do so in P-EBT issuances for previous school years. This will greatly facilitate the states' ability to report and USDA to maintain accountability for P-EBT.

- What will be your draw/spend priority for P-EBT, SNAP, and D-SNAP? USDA suggests making P-EBT first on your draw/spend priority.
- How will the state handle expungement of P-EBT benefits? USDA recommends that states follow the same expungement rules that the state currently follows for SNAP.
- How will you and your EBT processor handle returned P-EBT cards? How will you handle the need to issue replacement cards in these cases?
- Will you issue *new* P-EBT cards to existing P-EBT households?
 - If so, who will receive these cards? Non-SNAP households only? Or also SNAP households?
 - If not, how will you handle cases where the P-EBT household no longer has their P-EBT card?

Response: [please use as much space as needed]

Implementation Timeline:

- June 1 – FDACS provides direct certified file of eligible NSLP schools with public, private, and charter school students to the Department.
- June 1 – DOE provides lists of eligible NSLP public, private and charter school students to the Department.
- July 10 – Department submits file of all students identified as eligible to EBT vendor for payments.
- Benefits are issued to SNAP households, non-SNAP households, and newly identified households by September 30, 2023, if possible. All benefit issuances will be completed no later than December 31, 2023.
- Any additional issuances for resolving parent/guardian requests will be staggered biweekly through September 22, 2023. All benefit issuances will be completed no later than December 31, 2023.

As outlined in the P-EBT Deadline Issuance Letter, the Department will attempt to complete as many of the issuances by September 30, 2023, as possible, barring any unforeseen circumstances.

The Department will issue P-EBT benefits in the same manner as the issuance for the previously approved P-EBT plans, including the same card stock available from the state’s EBT vendor. The Department has identified a benefit type, coded as FSDDEF, which is distinguishable from other SNAP and DSNAP benefits.

The Department will compare eligible students to SNAP recipient data to identify, where possible, clients with active SNAP benefit payments. Clients currently receiving SNAP will receive P-EBT benefits on their existing EBT card. Students not currently receiving SNAP but who have previously received P-EBT benefits, will receive benefits on their existing P-EBT card, where possible. Students not currently receiving SNAP or do not have an existing P-EBT card will be issued a new P-EBT card.

For individuals who receive both SNAP and P-EBT benefits, spending priority defaults to P-EBT benefits first, and P-EBT expungement periods follow SNAP expungement periods. P-EBT cards returned to the vendor as undeliverable will be de-activated, with a status of

“Undeliverable,” and destroyed. Customers requiring replacement cards may contact the vendor or the call center and confirm or update the address to have the card re-issued.

7. Customer Service

To complete Section 7, we encourage states to use language from their previously approved SY 22-23 plans, if applicable.

- How will the state resolve disputes or issuance errors (incorrect benefit amount, denied benefits, etc.)? Based on the large number of such inquiries received by USDA, the states, and EBT processors, USDA suggests a phone number (hotline) staffed by personnel empowered to research and address such cases.
- Please describe how the state will serve groups with potential access problems, for example: homeless children, foster children, children without social security numbers, children and caregivers with limited English proficiency, households without internet access, and people living with disabilities.
- Describe the state’s public information campaign. That is, the information you will provide to the general public (i.e., **not directly** to P-EBT participants), and how you will provide that information (i.e., print or broadcast advertising, social media, mailers to the general population).
- Describe what information you will provide for households that do not want the P-EBT benefit that is directly issued to them. How to dispose of the card, etc.
- Describe the information you will provide **directly** to P-EBT participants (this is different than the information you provide to the general public), and how you will provide that information. For example:
 - What will you provide to explain the purpose of P-EBT and how to use the benefit? Based on the large number and wide variety of public inquiries that USDA, states, and EBT processor call centers received regarding P-EBT in over the past year, USDA recommends it include:
 - A description of P-EBT
 - Instructions for PINing a P-EBT card
 - Explanation of where benefits can be used
 - Explanation of how benefits can and cannot be used (i.e., eligible foods and non-eligible items)
 - Explanation of violations and penalties, such as trafficking
 - An indication that benefits are non-transferable
 - Instructions for destroying the card, if they want to decline benefits
 - Information regarding a hotline, helpdesk, or website/portal that participants can reach out to, if they have questions, need assistance (setting up a PIN, for example)
 - How will you provide P-EBT information to non-SNAP households? How will you provide P-EBT information to SNAP households?
 - Will you provide information via mailers? Will the mailer(s) be a flyer/brochure, buck slip, letter, or some other alternative? USDA recommends flyers/brochures, because these can be used more flexibly than buck slips.

- Will you provide information via e-mail, text messages, social media, website, robo-call, and/or other electronic means?

Response: [please use as much space as needed]

The Department has established the P-EBT customer call center and P-EBT Portal for parents/guardians to utilize regarding issues with P-EBT benefits, card issuance, and information about the P-EBT program. The Department provides job aids, FAQs, and training to P-EBT customer call center agents. In addition, P-EBT agents are connected to a Microsoft Teams Chat which allows Department staff to provide immediate guidance and assistance to the call center agents. Parents/guardians will be able to contact the Department regarding issues related to summer 2023 P-EBT program through September 22, 2023. No new requests will be accepted after this date to allow time to process as many of the remaining issues prior to the last issuance date of September 22, 2023.

The Department monitors the P-EBT call center performance metrics daily to determine if additional agents are required to assist with customer requests and adjusts staffing as needed. The daily performance metrics include:

- Number of call center agents
- Calls to the Interactive Voice Response (IVR)
- Calls to the EBT vendor
- Calls answered
- Average handle time

Access Issues

P-EBT eligibility through automated data matching limits potential access issues. To mitigate program access issues, the following service flexibilities are allowed:

- Homeless individuals may identify a safe address for receiving their card if one has not previously been provided.
- Those with limited English proficiency will be able to use an interpreter through the customer call center and mailings will be provided in Spanish and Haitian Creole.
- Individuals with disabilities will be served in the same way the Department currently serves SNAP participants who require additional assistance.

Public Information Campaign

The Department will conduct a public information campaign to inform eligible families of the purpose of P-EBT benefits and how they are to be used. The campaign will include information posted on the Department's website, social media, and notifications to community partners. The Department will also partner with FDACS and DOE on the public information campaign to ensure consistent messaging across all State agencies.

8. Over-issuance of P-EBT benefits

To complete Section 8, we encourage states to use language from their previously approved SY 22-23 plans, if applicable.

States should outline a process to recover or adjust P-EBT payments to correct errors on previous issuances. States cannot simply apply their existing SNAP benefit claim process to P-EBT. Accordingly, states should develop P-EBT-specific rules and procedures and include those in their state plans. States must also consider the capability of their SNAP systems to distinguish P-EBT from SNAP benefits.

The process should take into consideration that many households received their benefits, without application, through an automated match process that relied on the state's own administrative data. Reclaiming benefits under those circumstances calls for a process that weighs the equity of the claim, the burden on affected households, and the likelihood and costs of recovery. Given those considerations, a state's P-EBT plan should consider reasonable thresholds for taking action to recover over-issued benefits. States that establish a process for benefit recovery must provide clear notice to beneficiaries of the circumstances under which the state may attempt to recover benefits or reduce a future issuance. Under no circumstances may the state reduce a SNAP benefit to settle a P-EBT claim.

Finally, the states recognize that USDA is responsible for ensuring accountability of funds for P-EBT purposes. As part of its oversight responsibilities, USDA may hold state agencies liable for aggregate over-issuances or improper payments. USDA's course of action is to pursue P-EBT over-issuance claims in the aggregate where USDA believes such action is merited, based on the nature of the error that gave rise to the over-issuance, the size of the error, and whether such action would advance program purposes.

Please describe how your state will manage P-EBT payment errors.

Response: [please use as much space as needed]

If an over-issuance is identified, the Department will contact USDA FNS prior to taking any action to cancel the card and stop subsequent benefits from being issued. In no instance will the Department reclaim P-EBT benefits by reducing a household's SNAP benefit. However, if a review of a P-EBT case provides information of inappropriate issuance on a SNAP case (such as a non-custodial parent claiming custody for SNAP purposes), the SNAP case will be referred to the Department's Office of Public Benefits Integrity for appropriate action. Additionally the Department will complete the over-issuance spreadsheet provided by FNS.

9. Benefit Issuance Reporting

The state agrees to complete the FNS-292 form as well as all other normally recurring SNAP reporting, including the FNS 46, 388, and 778 reports, on a timely basis in accordance with requirements.

10. Administrative Funding

A separate grant to cover state level administrative costs associated with the administration of P-EBT will be awarded to the SNAP state agency within each state. As the authorized grantee, the SNAP state agency will be granted access to the associated letter-of-credit in which the administrative grant funds will be placed. As P-EBT related state administrative

costs may be incurred by state agencies other than the SNAP state agency, the SNAP state agency will be responsible for entering into interagency agreements in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding, or document of similar construct, with all other respective state agencies responsible for delivering P-EBT benefits. The SNAP state agency will be responsible for reimbursing the administrative costs of all associated agencies accordingly.

Prior to USDA releasing the grant for administrative funding, each SNAP state agency will be required to submit a P-EBT Budget Plan using the FNS-366(a) Program and Budget Summary Statement. Funds will not be released to the SNAP state agency's letter-of-credit until this plan is submitted and approved. The SNAP state agency's Budget Plan should include the estimated administrative costs for all state agencies that will be handling P-EBT.

As noted in Item 10 above, the SNAP state agency will be also responsible for reporting all administrative expenditures on a separate FNS-778, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Federal Financial Report designated specifically for P-EBT. The expenditures on the FNS-778 should align with those outlined in the FNS-366(a), Program and Budget Summary Statement. The forms associated with P-EBT will be modified accordingly.

11. Release of Information

Per Section 1101(e) of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act: "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."

12. Civil Rights Statement

The state will continue to comply with civil rights requirements by not discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity. The state will also provide meaningful access to its programs and activities for individuals who are limited English proficient, and provide equal access to individuals with disabilities.

13. Administration of State P-EBT Plan

The state will administer P-EBT according to the terms of its approved state plan. In general, conditions related to benefit issuance reporting, administrative funding, and release of information remain in effect for the covered summer period. If the state wishes to change any of the terms of its plan, the state shall first notify USDA and will, if requested by USDA, submit a plan amendment for USDA review and approval.

Reminder

If the state needs to make any significant changes to its Summer 2023 plan after approval, the state needs to submit an amendment to USDA that describes the change and its impact on

operating summer P-EBT. USDA will review the amendment and approve allowable amendments.

Signatures and Titles of Requesting SNAP and Child Nutrition State Agency Officials:

Signature
Jason McCandless, Assistant Secretary for Economic Self Sufficiency
Florida Department of Children and Families

Signature
Vianka Colin, Food, Nutrition and Wellness Director
Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

Date of Request: _____