



Food and Nutrition
Service

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February 24, 2021

**SUBJECT: Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer Program (P-EBT)
Approval of Kentucky's State Plan for School Children**

**TO: Willie Taylor
Regional Administrator
Southeast 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 the continuation of a temporary assistance program for households with children affected by school closures during the public health emergency that was declared on January 27, 2020. Pursuant to the authority granted under Section 1101 of the Act, FNS approves Kentucky's enclosed plan to operate P-EBT for school children.

Summary of State's Plan

The Kentucky Department for Community Based Services and the Kentucky Department of Education will issue P-EBT benefits through the State's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) EBT card system to current SNAP households and non-SNAP households with eligible children. The State's plan covers the months of October 2020 through June 2021.

Children are eligible 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 for a period of at least 5 consecutive days. 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 at school.

The State and its school districts will identify children eligible for free or reduced price NSLP meals using the most current available data. All school districts that rely on SY 2019-2020 eligibility data will have a means to address that they do not issue benefits to last year's graduates and non-students, and will offer households with new students the ability to establish their eligibility through the traditional school food authority-run school meal application and direct certification processes.

In addition, Kentucky has or will:

- begin to issue benefits for the months of October 2020 through February 2021 within 25 days of plan approval; October benefits will be issued first and the remaining benefits will be issued in one-month benefit increments every two weeks until all benefits are issued,

- issue benefits for March through June retroactively on a monthly basis by the 25th calendar day of the following month,
- identify, confirm and monitor the status of individual school districts through a monthly online survey to determine a singular benefit for children in that school district using the predominate learning model used by schools in the district; students that attend schools that operate fully in-person will not receive benefits,
- provide a reconsideration process for students whose schedules justify a higher benefit level than their district's default learning model,
- reviewed school district schedule data at the time of plan submission and determined that a 12-day average benefit is a reasonable reflection of hybrid schedules across the state for October through February,
- use schedule data collected from school districts to set or adjust average benefits for each remaining two-month period in the school year for children with hybrid schedules; if justified by the data, the state will set a single statewide average benefit for these children, and
- set a constant monthly benefit for fully virtual schedules by averaging the number of instructional days over the number of months in the school year.

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.

Kentucky estimates that it will issue \$590 million to approximately 600,000 children for school closures and reductions in attendance and hours extending from October 2020 through June 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 Kentucky. 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

Kentucky 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 Southeast Regional Office as soon

as possible. The FNS Southeast Regional Office will work with the State to identify reasonable solutions and review revised plans for approval or further revision.

Civil Rights

Kentucky 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 Kentucky Department for Community Based 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 Kentucky Department for Community Based Services will complete the FNS-292B, the FNS-46, the FNS-388, and the FNS-778 reports in accordance with existing requirements.

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

Sincerely,

Cindy Long
Deputy Administrator
Child Nutrition Programs