

**State Plan for Pandemic EBT
Children in School and Child Care, 2021-2022**

Issuing Agency/Office:	FNS / Child Nutrition Programs, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
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Summary:	(1) This document is a template to assist States in the development of State plans to operate Pandemic EBT for children in schools or child care during school year (SY) 2021-2022. (2) This document relates to Section 4601 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), and the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (P.L. 117-2).

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

The P-EBT Assistance for Children in Schools and Child Care is covered under OMB Control # 0584-0660, Pandemic EBT (Schools) which expires on August 31, 2021. The collection covers the burden associated with States submitting school year plans and the submission of the FNS-366a and SF-425 reporting forms. FNS has submitted a renewal request for OMB # 0584-0660, Pandemic EBT (Schools) which accounts for the information collection burden associated with the increased complexity of determining benefit levels under the Schools portion of P-EBT, administrative cost grants, and submitting plans for the Child Care and Summer portions of P-EBT which are not currently approved under OMB #0584-0660

State Plan for Pandemic EBT
Children in School and Child Care, 2021-2022

1. State New Mexico:

- 2. Primary Citations:** Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA);
Continuing Appropriations Act, 2021 and Other Extensions Act;
Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021;
American Rescue Plan Act of 2021

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 *date range*¹ covered by this initial plan (or subsequent amendment).

******New Mexico has developed a plan for P-EBT childcare; however, USDA-Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has informed us to hold this childcare portion of the plan for further review and confirmation by USDA/FNS.******

- a. The *date range* covered by this State plan or amendment
 - for children in school
 - for children in child care
- b. Estimated monthly and total *amount* of P-EBT benefits the State will issue within this plan/amendment's date range.
 - Estimated amount issued to school children in SNAP households.
 - Estimated amount issued to school children in non-SNAP households
 - Estimated amount issued to non-school children in child care
- c. Estimated total *number* of children to which the State will issue P-EBT benefits.
 - Estimated number of school children in SNAP households
 - Estimated number of school children in non-SNAP households
 - Estimated number of non-school children in child care
- d. Tentative P-EBT issuance schedule (the dates on which you will issue P-EBT benefits).
 - School children in SNAP households
 - School children in non-SNAP households
 - Children in child care

Response:

The *date range* covered by this P-EBT plan is **August 1, 2021** through **June 30, 2022**. New Mexico Human Services Department (NMHSD) in collaboration with the New Mexico Public Education Department (NM PED) commits to informing USDA of any

¹ The date range covered by P-EBT State plan or amendment. A State's plan will typically cover the instructional months in the State's school year (September 2021 through June 2022, for example).

significant increase or decrease in these data points during the date range covered by this plan.

- a. The estimated monthly and total amount of P-EBT benefits NM will issue within this plan is **\$9,940,000 monthly for a total of \$99,400,000 for the entire plan period. The State anticipates issuing in 2-month increments.**
 - Estimated amount issued to school children in SNAP households based on an average of 50,000 students being remote 10 days a month for a total of 20 days per issuance (2-month period) times the \$7.10 per day, equals **\$7,100,000 per issuance.**
 - Estimated amount issued to school children in non-SNAP households based on an average of 20,000 students being remote 10 days a month for a total of 20 days per issuance (2-month period) times the \$7.10 per day, equals **\$2,840,000 per issuance.**
- b. The estimated total number of children to which New Mexico will issue P-EBT benefits is **70,000 school aged students.**
 - Estimated number of school children in SNAP households is **50,000.**
 - Estimated number of school children in non-SNAP households is **20,000.**
- c. Tentative P-EBT issuance schedule (the dates on which you will issue P-EBT benefits).

PEBT benefits issuance schedule will be developed upon approval of the plan. The state anticipates issuing for both populations below at the same time in 2-month increments including two (2) months of P-EBT benefits. For the first issuance, the state will issue all back months to bring current and will stagger the issuance in two avoid overwhelming the grocery stores.

- School children in SNAP households – **TBD – state anticipates beginning in the 2nd quarter of FY 22.**
- School children in non-SNAP households – **TBD – state anticipates beginning in the 2nd quarter of FY 22.**

Once the plan is approved, the State will notify FNS of the anticipated issuance dates.

- d. The estimated total amount of administrative funds New Mexico needs to complete the work described in this P-EBT plan is **\$1,998,813.17.**
 - **Benefit Issuance Activities** - are approximately **\$137,666.64 for each issuance.** New Mexico anticipates that there will be a total of five (5) separate issuances for a total of **\$688,333.17.**

This amount includes the estimated costs for ASPEN preparation as well as state staff members' salaries for the span of this plan specific to P-EBT activities. The costs include ASPEN preparation for issuance, user acceptance testing, as well as state staff to complete project management activities. Some project management activities could include, but are not limited to, oversight of UAT projects, discovery documents and decisions, attendance at P-EBT meetings, oversight of development and submission of all PEPT plans, oversight of the issuance of benefit activities, coordination and collaboration between all departments, coordination of communication to field staff and

customers as well as any training necessary for call center and/or field staff.

SFY 2021 - 2022 STATE STAFF			
Labor Cat	Role	Hourly Rate plus benefits	Hours
ASPEN Research Analyst-A	User acceptance tester X2	\$ 34.89	112
Bureau Chief	Project Manager X1	\$ 50.15	40
Total:		\$ 85.04	152
Total Cost (five (5) issuances)		\$12,926.08*5 = \$64,630.40	

SFY 2021 – 2022 ELIGIBILITY SYSTEM CONTRACTOR			
Category	Hours/Sprint	Cost (Excluding GRT)	Cost (Including GRT)
Manager Tasks:	37.80	\$ 7786.80	\$ 8,443.81
Development Hours:	220.50	\$ 25,137.00	\$ 27,257.93
Senior Systems/Business Analysts	141.75	\$ 25,231.50	\$ 27,360.41
Database Administrator and Technical Staff	28.35	\$ 3515.40	\$ 3,812.01
Quality Assurance Testing Analyst	69.30	\$ 5682.60	\$ 6,162.07
Total Cost:	497.70	\$ 67,353.30	\$73,036.23

- **FIS Support Services** - are projected to be **\$1,235,805.00**. HSD used caseload count of 140,000 to estimate General Processing costs for five scheduled issuances. The New Case Set-Up Fee is only estimated during the first issuance and average cost from past issuances was used to estimate Replacement Card cost for each issuance. Average Storage costs was estimated for all the months August through June except for the month the cards are ordered.
 - Storage fee for cards over 10,000 which is \$1,500 per month per every 10,000 P-EBT cards: **\$15,000.00**
 - New case set up fees: **\$630,000.00**
 - Replacement card fees: **\$2,805.00**
 - Various support fees (including General Processing fee): **\$588,000.00**

FIS Service Cost Estimate

Services	August	September	October	November	December	February	March	April	May	June	Total
General Processing Costs	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$117,600.00		\$117,600.00	\$117,600.00		\$117,600.00		\$117,600.00	\$588,000.00
Storage Fee	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$4,500.00	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00	\$15,000.00
New Case Set-Up Fee	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$630,000.00								\$630,000.00
Replacement Card Fee	\$0.00	\$0.00			\$935.00	\$935.00		\$935.00			\$2,805.00
										Total Cost	\$1,235,805.00

4. P-EBT for School Children (see Q&As #6-24)

A. Eligible Children

Standard for P-EBT Eligibility

A child is eligible for P-EBT benefits if two conditions are met:

1. The child would be eligible for free or reduced-price meals if the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program were operating normally. This includes children who are:
 - a. directly certified or determined “other source categorically eligible” for SY 2021-2022, **or**
 - b. certified through submission of a household application processed by the child’s school district for SY 2021-2022, **or**
 - c. enrolled in a Community Eligibility Provision school or a school operating under Provisions 2 or 3, **or**
 - d. on the school’s most current prior year list of directly certified children, children determined other source categorically eligible, or children certified by application **and** the school district has not made a new school meal eligibility determination for the child in SY 2021-2022.
2. The child does not receive free or reduced-price meals at the school because the school is closed or has been operating with reduced attendance or hours for at least 5 consecutive days in the current school year. Once the minimum 5 consecutive day threshold is met, children are eligible to receive P-EBT benefits for closures or reductions in hours due to COVID-19.

- *Describe how the State will identify eligible school children for P-EBT. Also describe what measures the State will take to prevent the issuance of benefits to school year 2020-2021 graduates and other non-students. (Please review P-EBT Q&As #16-19 on P-EBT eligible and P-EBT ineligible virtual learning models.)*

The NM PED identifies eligible students and confirms P-EBT eligibility by receiving the new free and reduced data for SY 2021-2022 for each month that P-EBT benefits will be issued. The School Food Authority (SFA) verifies and certifies students free and reduced lunch by utilizing household applications and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) income eligibility thresholds set for the school year. The SFA’s also utilize the NM direct certification

system to identify students that are certified for free meals based on identified student categories (SNAP, TANIF, FDPIR, Foster Care, Migrant, and Head Start). The SFA's submit their free, reduced, and paid price eligibility for their students during official reporting periods to the NM PED. Once the data is received, NM PED staff verifies and validates the data ensuring students are coded correctly. Once validated, the data is sent to NMHSD to issue the P-EBT benefits to all students identified as eligible for a P-EBT benefit. The NM PED certifies that the children sent to NMHSD are current and eligible for the P-EBT benefit ensuring that HSD will only issue P-EBT to students that are certified for free and reduced meals for the current SY 2021-2022 and not issue benefits to student's school year 2020-2021 graduates and other non-students.

Through the validation and certification process of student eligibility data, NM PED ensures that any child that is no longer eligible for P-EBT will not be issued the P-EBT benefit. SFA's submit data that is current and only includes those students who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals for SY 2021-2022 reporting period and does not include any child who has graduated, is no longer a student or who may no longer qualify for free or reduced priced meals.

- *How will the State determine and/or confirm each child's eligibility for free or reduced-price meals²? Please describe separately for SNAP-recipient and non-SNAP-recipient children, children in public and non-public schools, new students (such as kindergarteners and transfer students), and children who become eligible during the school year.*

The NM PED determines and/or confirms each child's eligibility for free or reduced-price meals by utilizing household applications and the USDA income eligibility thresholds set for the school year; this process is used for all children in public and non-public schools, new students and children who become newly eligible during the school year. The SFA's utilize the NM direct certification (DC) system to identify students that are certified by the SFA for free meals. The SFA and state agency utilize the USDA Income Eligibility Manual in the certification of free and reduced-price meals for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP).

All SFA's, Public, Charter, BIE, and Private Schools that participate in the NSLP utilize this process. The DC system identifies students that are on SNAP and TANF along with other identified students' categories, so that SFA's can certify students for free meals utilizing this information. The DC system separates and can distinguish SNAP and SNAP only qualified students. The way the student qualified for free and reduced-price meals is identified in the PED student reporting system, STARS. STARS has reporting fields that are separated by SNAP, DC, free and reduced categories to identify specifically how each student qualified and was certified for free or reduced-price meals

- *How will the State confirm each child's lack of access to meals at school? Please describe separately for children in public and non-public schools.*

² The burden associated with National School Lunch Program applications is covered under OMB Control # 0584-0026, 7 CFR Part 245 - Determining Eligibility for Free & Reduced Price Meals and Free Milk in Schools, expiration date 7/31/23.

Again, the NM PED tracks schools both public and private schools that are closed due to the pandemic. The guidance given is for these schools to close for 10 days and qualify the free and reduced students for P-EBT. The public schools are required to code the students that are in remote learning for more than 5 days due to pandemic circumstances. We will then be able to extract that data and the amount of days that the public-school student qualifies for P-EBT when we issue the P-EBT benefits. The private and BIE schools will send an ADHOC file with the students that are in remote learning due to the pandemic with the number of days they were in remote learning for 5 or more consecutive days.

- *Describe the process that the State will use to update and re-establish each child's in-person and virtual schedules. How frequently will that information be updated? (Note that this information must be updated no less frequently than every other month.).*

The NM PED collects student eligibility data for students to issue P-EBT benefits every 40-day reporting period which is more frequent than every other month. The SFA's are required to update their system once they certify and validate the free and reduced status of each student and report the data every 40th day.

- *Describe the roles and responsibilities of each State agency or other partners involved in P-EBT (e.g. which agency is responsible for confirming eligibility).*

The NM PED's responsibility is to collect the SFA student's free and reduced data that is validated and certified by the SFA. The NM PED validates, confirms eligibility, and sends the data for the qualified students under USDA guidance to NMHSD. The NM PED also assists NM HSD staff with the P-EBT hotline calls and collaborates with all state agency partners to issue these benefits timely and accurately.

The NMHSD issues the benefits via the P-EBT card based on the data provided by the above-mentioned data sets as well as the data provided by NM PED. The NMHSD maintains the P-EBT online portal that was developed through NMHSD's online application. This online portal is used by customers to update addresses.

All Departments, in collaboration, work to communicate and issue a unified message to New Mexicans and P-EBT recipients. All Departments work to issue Press Releases, consistent messages to staff to answer questions uniformly, update Department websites with consistent language and information (P-EBT FAQs).

- *Describe any simplifying assumptions the State proposes to use and the justification for using those simplifying assumptions. **Please address both in detail.** In addition, please describe any proposed measures that the State will take to address program integrity when using the proposed simplifying assumptions.*

NM is utilizing a simplified assumption in terms of total operating school days. This will be applied for all schools and districts for the months of October and November. In calculating

operating school days, Veterans Day, Columbus Day and two (2) days for the Thanksgiving Holiday will be deducted when calculating the amount of total qualifying school days for the P-EBT benefit amount. The NM PED and NMHSD removed these days to ensure that the total days used to calculate the P-EBT benefit is accurate and only issue benefits for the days that qualify under USDA guidance.

Response:

B. School Status

Standard for P-EBT Eligible School Status

Children are eligible for P-EBT benefits if they are eligible for free or reduced price meals, but are unable to receive those meals at school due to the operating status of their schools as outlined below:

1. The school is closed (including any delayed start or early closure to the school year), or the school is operating with reduced attendance or hours.
2. School closures do not include weekends, or days when the school is closed due to a holiday or regularly scheduled break (Thanksgiving, New Year's Day, Spring Break, etc.).
3. The period of closure or reduced attendance or hours must meet the current school year minimum 5 consecutive day threshold before any child is eligible for P-EBT benefits. Once the minimum 5 consecutive day threshold is met, children are eligible to receive P-EBT benefits for closures or reductions in hours and/or attendance due to COVID-19.

- *Describe how the State will identify, confirm and monitor the status of individual schools. Also describe how the State will identify the period of duration of the closure, reduced hours, or reduced attendance of the State's schools.*
- *How will the State confirm that the child's school has been closed or is operating with reduced attendance or hours for a minimum of 5 consecutive days?*
- *Describe how this information will be obtained and how often the State will collect updated information from schools. (Note that this information must be updated no less frequently than every other month.)*
- *Describe the State's plan for monitoring changes in eligible school status between the State's bi-monthly (or more frequent) collection of updated school data. Describe how the State will use this updated school information to revise issuance amounts.*

The majority of SFA's that are participate in NSLP in SY 21-22 are anticipated to be face-to-face learning model unless Covid-19 cases increase and may cause the school and students to go to remote learning model. In this case, the school will be on remote for 10 days. The PED tracks the learning models of operation within each district and school on a weekly basis. The public schools' districts and schools are required to notify the PED their schedules, operations, and learning models, and report immediately if changes occur due to Covid-19 pandemic issues. The PED requires every school and district, whether they are a Public or Private school, to develop and submit a comprehensive plan on how they are operating the schools within the district (remote, face-to-face, hybrid) during the Covid-19 State of Public Health Emergency. All

changes in the school operation from the original plan, are required to be reported to the PED by the designated school or district staff. The PED has tracked the operation of all schools since the beginning of SY 2020-2021. The PED now has a field in their data reporting system for districts and schools to code the students as remote learning (RMEATTD) due to Covid-19. The RMEATTD Guidance and training that has been given to SFA's as coding students as P-EBT eligible days or under the RMEATTD flag to the NM PED include the following:

1. Any absence where the school directs students to stay home for a COVID-related reason. As long as students are home at the school's direction, and the school is acting out of "concern" about COVID^[1] then these are P-EBT-eligible days. This would include a school-ordered quarantine of a student, a group of students, a classroom, or a school. It would also include any other stay-at-home order mandated by the school, whatever its duration, as long as it is part of the school's or the state's protocol for managing COVID outbreaks, positive tests, potential exposure, etc.; or
 2. Any absence initiated by the parent that is recognized and accepted by school officials as COVID-related. At the discretion of the SFA, this could include a parent's decision to keep their child home after a positive test or possible exposure to COVID. It could also include a parent's decision to keep their child home after exposure at school in cases where the school does not direct the child to stay home. In all cases, the school may count these as P-EBT-eligible days if the school records them as excused absences and recognizes/accepts them as COVID-related and code and report them to the NM PED as RMEATTD. The PED will not simply count every excused absence as a P-EBT eligible day including unexcused absences as P-EBT-eligible days.
- *Describe any simplifying assumptions the State proposes to use and the justification for using those simplifying assumptions. Please address both in detail. In addition, please describe any proposed measures that ensure program integrity when using the proposed simplifying assumptions.*

Please review P-EBT Q&As #16-19 on P-EBT eligible and P-EBT ineligible virtual learning models.

NM is utilizing a simplified assumption in terms of total operating school days. This will be applied for all schools and districts for the months of October and November. In calculating operating school days, Veterans Day, Columbus Day and two (2) days for the Thanksgiving Holiday will be deducted when calculating the amount of total qualifying school days for the P-EBT benefit amount. The NM PED and HSD removed these days to ensure that the total days used to calculate the P-EBT benefit is accurate and only issue benefits for the days that qualify under USDA guidance.

^[1] FFCRA 1101(j)(3) refers to school closures or reduced attendance or hours "due to concerns about a COVID-19 outbreak."

5. P-EBT for Children in Child Care (see Q&As #25-33)

Standard for P-EBT Eligibility

A child enrolled in a covered childcare facility is eligible for P-EBT if:

1. The child is a member of a household that is enrolled in SNAP in the benefit month.
2. The child is enrolled in a covered childcare facility. (Note that under the FFCRA, USDA deems all children under the age of 6 to be enrolled in a covered childcare facility.)
3. During a public health emergency designation, the child's childcare facility is closed or is operating with reduced attendance or hours for at least 5 consecutive days, resulting in the child's inability to attend the facility; or one or more schools in the area of the facility, or in the area of the child's residence, is closed or is operating with reduced attendance or hours.

- Describe how the State will identify eligible children and confirm their eligibility consistent with the above standard.
- How will the State determine and confirm the child's receipt of SNAP benefits in accordance with relevant SNAP privacy requirements?
- How will the State determine that a child's residence is in the area of one or more schools that is closed or is operating with reduced attendance or hours? (See Q&A #29)
- For children whose residence is *not* in the area of one or more closed schools or schools operating with reduced attendance or hours, how will the State determine that child's eligibility? Specifically, how will the State determine that:
 - the child's child care facility is closed or is operating with reduced attendance or hours, or
 - the child's childcare facility is in the area of one or more schools that are closed or operating with reduced attendance or hours?
- Are there any State or local public health ordinances that limit the capacity of child care facilities in response to COVID-19 in your State? If yes, describe how you will use those to find that all SNAP-participant children under age 6 are eligible for P-EBT in those areas?
- Describe the process that the State will use to update and re-establish each child's continued P-EBT eligibility and benefit level consistent with changes in the operating status of the child care facility or area schools? How frequently will that information be updated? (Note that this information must be updated no less frequently than every other month.)
- Describe how the State will set benefit levels for children once they have been determined eligible for some level of benefit? (See Q&A #29.)
- Describe the roles and responsibilities of each State agency or other partners involved in P-EBT (e.g. which agency is responsible for confirming eligibility).
- What simplifying assumptions does the State propose? Why must the State make those simplifying assumptions? Please address both of these questions in detail.

Response:

New Mexico has developed a plan for P-EBT childcare; however, USDA-Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has informed us to hold this childcare portion of the plan for further review and confirmation by USDA/FNS.

6. Benefit Levels

Standard for Benefit Levels

1. The full daily benefit level for each eligible child is equal to the free reimbursement for a breakfast, a lunch, and a snack for school year 2021-2022. The benefit is multiplied by the number of days that the eligible child's status makes them eligible for P-EBT benefits.

SY 2021-2022 July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022	Free Reimbursements USDA School Meal Programs			
	Lunch	Breakfast	Snack	Daily Total
Contiguous U.S.	\$3.75	\$2.35	\$1.00	\$7.10
Alaska	6.03	3.78	1.63	11.44
Hawaii, Guam, Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico	4.37	2.74	1.17	8.28

Notes:

1. Lunch rates include the 7 cent performance-based reimbursement and the extra 2 cents per meal received by school food authorities in which 60 percent or more of the lunches served during the second preceding school year were served free or at a reduced price.

2. Breakfast rates are those received by "severe need" schools.

3. Snack rates are those for afterschool snacks served in afterschool care programs

Source: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2021-07-16/pdf/2021-15107.pdf>

- *Describe the benefit levels proposed, including how days of eligibility will be determined. What simplifying assumptions does the State propose? Why must the State make those simplifying assumptions? Please address both of these questions in detail.*

The NM HSD and NM PED will issue benefits to students that are certified for free and reduced priced meals for the days the students are in the remote learning model and do not have access to lunch and breakfast in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) per USDA guidance. The NM PED will collect student free and reduced student level data from SFA's for the days the student was in remote learning for more than 5 days due to the pandemic. The NMPED is utilizing a simplified assumption in terms Holiday school day in which the children are not eligible for the P-EBT benefit. This will be applied for all schools and districts for the months in calculating qualifying P-EBT operating school days. This will apply to universal Holidays school and students are typically off. The state is utilizing this simplified assumption as most schools typically give the students one day off for Veterans Day, Columbus Day, and the Thursday and Friday off for Thanksgiving. The NM PED and HSD removed these days to ensure that the total days used to calculate the P- EBT benefit is accurate.

7. Implementation Timeline, EBT Processing, and Benefit Issuance

Please provide an implementation timeline for SY 2021-2022 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 SY 2020-2021, 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.
- 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.

Response:

- NM anticipates the first issuance to occur in early 2022 and then issuing every two months with a staggered issuance of benefits.
- NM milestones include, but are not limited to:

Ongoing Efforts-NM has implemented many efforts to address lessons learned and to continue collaboration between HSD and NM PED.

- **Team Meetings** – HSD, in collaboration with NM PED have reoccurring scheduled meetings to document and ensure that all milestones are met. These meetings are to:
 - Discuss upcoming activities and set specific dates as well as owners of all action items.
 - Discuss and address all concerns.
 - Review and document progress.
- **P-EBT hotline-**
 - This hotline accepts incoming calls and has a voicemail/email box.
- **Public Notice Campaign-**
 - Press releases have been issued for past P-EBT benefit issuances and will continue to be issued for any future issuances.
 - Social Media platforms are kept updated.
 - YesNM Banner update- provides useful information to constituents when they log into their account through YesNM
 - HSD and NM PED websites are kept updated.
 - P-EBT FAQs updated regularly for internal staff and customers to utilize.

Implementation Timeline

Day #0-

- HSD in collaboration with NM PED submit the P-EBT SFY 2021 - 2022 to FNS for review and approval.

Day #1-

- USDA approves P-EBT plan for the specified timeframe of SY 2021-2022.

- HSD and NM PED distribute FNS approval to all necessary bureaus and individuals for development of agreed upon issuance timeframe.
- Notify EBT to ensure that there are enough P-EBT cards in stock for the specific issuance; if determined that additional cards are needed, begin request. State will then submit P-EBT Implementation Approval Form requesting additional card stock to P-EBT card vendor to secure adequate P-EBT card stock inventory.

Three weeks prior to any issuance-

- NM PED provides student data to Deloitte for development and testing.
- HSD to lead the communications-
 - Develop the Press Release to be issued before 1st issuance.
 - Work in collaboration with the department’s Communications Director and staff to ensure all social media platforms are updated before any issuance.
 - Announcement to ISD Field Staff through QuiKGuide for HSD staff and email notifications for NM PED staff.

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?*

Every household/child that is eligible for the P-EBT benefit will receive a unique P-EBT card, regardless of the receipt or non-receipt of SNAP. If the household/child previously received a P-EBT card the benefits will be deposited onto that specific card. There are checks and balances to ensure that if a guardian or address has changed, that the P-EBT benefits get issued correctly to that child even if it means that a new P-EBT card is requested and issued.

- *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 SY 2020-2021. This will greatly facilitate the States’ ability to report and USDA to maintain accountability for P-EBT.*

HSD issues P-EBT benefits as a sub-benefit type, to distinguish between SNAP and D-SNAP cases. The P-EBT benefit is identified with a unique program code (FSEH5) to distinguish the P-EBT program category from all other assistance categories

- *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.*

HSD issues all P-EBT benefits on a unique P-EBT card so there is no need to prioritize the draw/spend among other benefits. P-EBT follows spend priority 1 process, first in first out within a month; this will be the priority if ever issued to an existing SNAP EBT card.

- *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.*

NM applies the same expungement rules that applies to SNAP cases to the P-EBT benefits. This is being built into ASPEN with the system modifications.

- During SY 2020-2021, large numbers of P-EBT cards were returned to EBT processors via mail, due to incorrect addresses. 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?

FIS (New Mexico's EBT Processor) will receive the P-EBT returned cards, code the cards as undeliverable and destroy them. Customers can request an address update and a new P-EBT card by logging into the P-EBT portal through YesNM. They can also update their address and request a new card by calling the P-EBT hotline (1-833-843-8303).

- 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?

HSD will not issue new P-EBT cards to existing P-EBT households. If the household no longer has their P-EBT card, they can request a new card by logging onto the P-EBT portal through YesNM, if they need to update their address, call FIS (P-EBT card vendor) directly to request a replacement card or contact the P-EBT hotline to request a replacement card. If additional children get added to a household with an existing P-EBT card, the benefits will automatically be added to the card.

8. Customer Service

Recommended Standard for Household Support

USDA strongly encourages States to develop a customer service plan that anticipates common questions from households of children that are eligible and potentially eligible to participate in P-EBT, and that ensures that all who are eligible are able to receive and use their P-EBT benefits.

1. USDA strongly encourages States to provide a means to resolve disputes and answer from actual or potential P-EBT households.
2. USDA strongly encourages States to provide relevant program information to actual and potential P-EBT households.

- *How will the State resolve dispute 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.*

NM PED and HSD have a dedicated hotline to handle P-EBT calls; this has been utilized since the Spring 2020 P-EBT issuance. This hotline accepts voicemails and is handled by a dedicated manager and staff. These staff are empowered to research and address such cases. An online P-EBT portal was developed through the HSD's YesNM online application for customers to update addresses and check eligibility. All address updates that are completed through the online portal are sent to dedicated staff that evaluates the address change to make any necessary changes and order new P-EBT cards as necessary. Address updates are sent frequently to ensure that staff can perform updates and request card replacements timely. The P-EBT manager along with managers from the Policy and Program Development Bureau work in collaboration to resolve disputes and/ or issuance errors. When necessary, the HSD works with appropriate school food directors to validate information that is disputed by the client. Once validated, HSD works with FNS approval. If approved, student info is sent to the contractor Deloitte, to correct and or issue corrected benefits; this is on a case-by-case basis.

- *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.*

The NM PED and HSD work in collaboration to identify all eligible children. Once identified by NM PED as eligible, the children are not required to complete any type of application and are not required to do anything further to receive the P-EBT benefit. If identified by NM PED as receiving and or eligible for free or reduced-price meals, the child will receive the P-EBT benefit. The data utilized for each issuance is the most current data to ensure that the P-EBT cards and benefits are issued to the correct addresses and all eligible children receive the benefit. NM offers a P-EBT hotline, an online P-EBT Portal, access to a point of contact with the School Districts and works closely with different advocates to address all the stated barriers.

- *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).*

The NMPED in collaboration with the NMHSD are diligent in getting information to the public regarding the P-EBT benefits and the eligibility. All Departments post information on the Departments websites and different social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter. All Departments post and issue Press Releases to issue current and updated

information regarding the P-EBT benefits. On different occasions, different advocacy groups have requested information to be able to provide mailers and complete various media campaigns of their own. We also have the ability to send text messages with this information.

- *Describe what information you will provide for households that do not want the P-EBT benefit that is directly issued to them. How dispose of the card, etc.*

Guidance has been provided to households on the proper disposal process of cards if the family or household does not want the P-EBT. Recipients are also advised that they are NOT to give the card to anyone else and is only for students that qualify for the P-EBT benefit.

- *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:

The NM PED and NMHSD recognize the importance of providing clear and concise information to the P-EBT participants. Currently, the recipients receive a flyer with the P-EBT card. It explains the purpose of the P-EBT benefits, how and where the P-EBT card

can be used, what to do if they do not wish to accept the P-EBT benefits, how to activate the card, that a PIN must be selected, and what to do if the card that is received is a replacement card. It also provides information on how to check the balance and to obtain other account information. The flyer provides a QR code that can be scanned to utilize the mobile App. Information regarding violations and penalties and that the P-EBT benefits cannot be transferred or given to someone else will also be provided. The same information is distributed to SNAP and non-SNAP households as all receive a P-EBT card. The NM PED also utilizes available notification technology to notify the students and families such as emails, text messages, and robo-calls.

The HSD keeps the banner on YesNM updated for constituents to receive updated information when they log onto their account through YesNM. NM HSD and NM PED websites have dedicated areas for P-EBT information that is kept current.

9. Over-issuance of P-EBT benefits

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:

The state looks at each instance of over-issuance or under-issuance on a case-by-case basis. In doing research to determine validity of either over or under issuance, all departments work together to review the child's living situation and the information that was reported to all departments, to include addresses,

etc. The NMHSD will evaluate the need for system changes to accomplish this requirement; until changes are implemented, this process will occur manually.

10. 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.

11. 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, for the period of performance October 1, 2021 through September 30 2022. 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 9 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.

12. 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.”

13. Civil Rights Statement

The State will continue to comply with civil rights requirements by not discriminating on the ground of race, color, or national origin, by providing meaningful access to its programs and activities for individuals who are limited English proficient, and by providing equal access to individuals with disabilities.

14. Administration of State P-EBT Plan

The State will administer P-EBT according to the terms of its approved State plan. 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.

Signature and Title of Requesting SNAP and Child Nutrition State Agency Officials:



Signature
Print Name and Title

KARMELA MARTINEZ

Signature
Print Name and Title

Date of Request 11/15/2021