

**State Plan for Pandemic EBT  
Children in School and Child Care, 2022-2023**

<b>Issuing Agency/Office:</b>	FNS / Child Nutrition Programs, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
<b>Title of Document:</b>	State Plan for Pandemic EBT: Children in School and Child Care, 2022-2023 <b>(Child Care only)</b>
<b>Document ID:</b>	
<b>Z-RIN:</b>	
<b>Date of Issuance:</b>	September 8, 2022
<b>Replaces:</b>	N/A
<b>Summary:</b>	(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) 2022-2023. (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 State Guidance on Coronavirus P-EBT: [Click Here](#)*

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

**State Plan for Pandemic EBT**  
**Children in School and Child Care, 2022-2023**

1. **State:** New Jersey

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*<sup>1</sup> covered by this initial plan (or subsequent amendment).

- 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
- e. Names of state agencies involved in administering this plan.

**Response:**

New Jersey's P-EBT plan for the 2022-2023 school year covers the period of September 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023 for children in child care.

It is estimated that \$6,900,000 will be issued monthly to non-school children and \$70,000,000 for the year. New Jersey estimates issuing P-EBT benefits to 130,000 non-school children in child care. This increased estimate accounts for the increased daily meal rate and overall

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<sup>1</sup> 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 2022 through June 2023, for example).

increased P-EBT benefit level.

New Jersey is committed to informing USDA of any significant increase or decrease in these data points during the September 1, 2022-June 30, 2023 dates covered by this initial plan.

Children's eligibility for P-EBT child care benefits ends once the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services lifts the public health emergency for COVID-19. However, children remain entitled to all benefits accrued on P-EBT-eligible days prior to the end of the public health emergency.

## P-EBT for Children in Child Care (see Q&As #26-33)

### *Standard for P-EBT Eligibility*

A child enrolled in a covered child care 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 child care facility. (Note that under the FFCRA, USDA deems all children under the age of 6 to be enrolled in a covered child care facility.)
3. During a public health emergency designation, the child's child care 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.

There are no changes for P-EBT for children in child care from SY 2021-2022. USDA encourages states to refer to their **approved** SY 2021-2022 child care plan to complete this section. Please describe:

- how the state will identify eligible children and confirm their eligibility consistent with the above standard,
- how the state will set benefit levels for children,
- the roles and responsibilities of each state agency or other partners involved in P-EBT and
- any simplifying assumptions the state proposes to use and the justification for using those simplifying assumptions.

If the state will establish a reduction in access to child care using the CACFP data method, we recommend that the state respond to all points as described in their **approved** SY 2021-2022 child care plan, such as:

- The state will confirm that there has been a statewide reduction in access to child care for each of the months of the current school year relative to the same months immediately prior to the pandemic, and will share this data and calculations with USDA before issuing benefits for any months.
- The state will use the sum of CACFP lunch claims for child care centers and family day care homes as reported by the state on the FNS-44<sup>2</sup>. The state will exclude at-risk lunches and adult lunches.
- The state will set an average monthly P-EBT child care benefit using the reduction in aggregate lunch claims over a designated period of time, the average number of school instructional days over the course of the current school year, and the SY 2022-2023 P-EBT benefit per day.
- The designated period over which the state will set the average monthly benefit (e.g., a separate average monthly benefit for the fall semester and the spring semester).

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<sup>2</sup> The burden associated with state reporting of CACFP meal claims via the FNS-44 form is covered under OMB Control number 0584-0594, *Food Programs Reporting System (FPRS)*, expiration date July 31, 2023.

- The state will monitor CACFP lunch claims through the end of the school year (or through the end of the public health emergency, as applicable) and will only issue benefits for months where lunch claims remain below claims for the most recent same month prior to the pandemic.

USDA will continue to support states with their calculations for the above approach.

If the state will establish a reduction in access to child care using a different approach, such as individual children’s eligibility or proximity to area schools, then please describe below what the state will do and how this approach will be consistent with the above standard, such as:

- 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 #30)
- 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 those children’s eligibility? (See Q&A #32-33). 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 child care 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.)

**Response:**

New Jersey proposes to determine all children enrolled in SNAP and under the age of 6 as of September 1, 2022 eligible for P-EBT child care benefits throughout the state. As a simplifying assumption, New Jersey assumes that children who were under age 6 and not enrolled in school at the start of school year 22-23 remain enrolled in a covered child care facility through the end of the school year, even after they reach their 6th birthday. New Jersey understands that a child’s eligibility for P-EBT child care benefits ends when a child’s SNAP enrollment ends.

CACFP lunch claims will be used to identify any in access to child care for each of the months of the most current school year (through June 2023) relative to the same months immediately prior to the pandemic. For purposes of this plan, New Jersey will use the sum of

CACFP lunch claims for child care centers and family day care homes as reported by the state on the FNS-44. The state will exclude at-risk lunches and adult lunches. New Jersey will monitor CACFP lunch claims through the end of the school year and will only issue benefits for months where lunch claims (to the extent that preliminary data are available) remain below claims for the most recent same month prior to the pandemic.

New Jersey will set an average monthly P-EBT child care benefit based on aggregate months of CACFP data for the current school year as they become available. Before calculating its monthly P-EBT benefit, New Jersey commits to sharing its CACFP lunch claim data and calculations with USDA prior to issuance.

<b>P-EBT Benefit Months</b>	<b>Calculation of reduction of CACFP lunch claims</b>		<b>CACFP Data Available</b>	<b>NJ Issuance Date</b>
	<b>Current school year</b>	<b>Pre-Pandemic</b>		
Sept, Oct, Nov 2022	Sept-Oct 2022	Sept-Oct 2019	Mid Jan 2023	Mid/Late Feb 2023
Dec 2022 & Jan 2023	Sept-Nov 2022	Sept-Nov 2019	Mid Jan/Feb 2023	Starting in March 2023
Feb & March 2023	Aggregate months of CACFP claims data through month of data availability		Aggregate months of CACFP claims data through month of data availability	Starting in April 2023
April 2023				Starting in May 2023
May 2023				Starting in June 2023
June 2023				Starting in July 2023

As the state agency administering SNAP benefits, the New Jersey Department of Human Services Division of Family Development (DHS/DFD) holds all SNAP caseload data. DFD will identify eligible children by querying its eligibility system records ongoing on a monthly basis for all children under the age of 6 in a SNAP household for the prior month (e.g. February end of month, query system files for January caseload data). All children under the age of 6 in a SNAP household for that month of issuance will be included in the benefit issuance file for processing. DFD plans to issue P-EBT benefits for non-school children in SNAP households on a monthly basis corresponding to the applicable previous month(s) of the school year. This process will create a standard for SY 22-23 for monthly issuances and a clear and simple message in communications to P-EBT participants for SNAP households.

#### 4. 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 2022-2023. The benefit is multiplied by the number of days that the eligible child’s status makes them eligible for P-EBT benefits.

SY 2022-2023 July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023	Free Reimbursements USDA School Meal Programs			
	Lunch	Breakfast	Snack	Daily Total
<b>Contiguous U.S.</b>	\$4.43	\$2.67	\$1.08	<b>\$8.18</b>
<b>Alaska</b>	6.87	4.21	1.75	<b>12.83</b>
<b>Hawaii, Guam, Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico</b>	5.10	3.09	1.26	<b>9.45</b>

**Notes:**

1. Lunch rates include the 8 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
4. The figures include the temporary additional funding for school lunch and school breakfast authorized under Section 2 of the Keep Kids Fed Act of 2022.

Source: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2022/07/26/2022-15892/national-school-lunch-special-milk-and-school-breakfast-programs-national-average-paymentsmaximum>

- 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.

**Response:**

P-EBT benefit levels will be determined once CACFP data becomes available for SY 2022-2023. New Jersey will utilize the FNS methodology and set an average monthly P-EBT Child Care benefit for all available months of the current school year prior to the first issuance. New Jersey will use aggregate months of CACFP data for the current school year as they become available for ongoing P-EBT benefit allotments. Before calculating its monthly P-EBT benefit, New Jersey commits to sharing its CACFP lunch claim data and calculations with USDA prior to issuance.

## 5. Implementation Timeline, EBT Processing, and Benefit Issuance

Please provide an implementation timeline for SY 2022-2023 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.
- 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:

New Jersey anticipates the following implementation plan for P-EBT issuance.



### Timeline of Events

<b>Mid/Late December 2022</b>	Preliminary approval of P-EBT plan by FNS
<b>Mid/Late January 2023</b>	CACFP data becomes available for September and October 2022. USDA approves P-EBT plan with calculated benefit amount.
<b>Early/Mid February 2023</b>	System vendors (SNAP eligibility and EBT) code and test P-EBT benefit issuance based on approved plan
<b>Mid/Late February 2023</b>	P-EBT benefits issued for childcare children for the months of September 2022, October 2022, and November 2022.
<b>Starting in March 2023</b>	P-EBT benefits issued for childcare children for the months of December 2022 and January 2023.
<b>Starting in April 2023</b>	P-EBT benefits issued for childcare children for the month of February and March 2023.
<b>Starting in May 2023</b>	P-EBT benefits issued for childcare children for the month of April 2023.
<b>Starting in June 2023</b>	P-EBT benefits issued for childcare children for the month of May 2023.
<b>Starting in July 2023</b>	P-EBT benefits issued for childcare children for the month of June 2023.

All SNAP under 6 P-EBT eligible children will be issued P-EBT benefits to the SNAP case they were actively receiving benefit on during a particular month within the covered period. It will be noted that these benefits are P-EBT in the issuance file. If a household/client no longer has their SNAP EBT card, they will be directed to request a new EBT card. Replacement cards are handled at the local Board of Social Services (BSS) who also have access to the P-EBT data through the State’s internal case management system, ONETrac. Instructions on the P-EBT dedicated webpage direct and link P-EBT participants to their local BSS should they need a replacement card.

New Jersey will continue to use a P-EBT sub-benefit type on the EBT vendor’s EPPIC system for P-EBT issuances. P-EBT will be the draw/spend priority. The same expungement rules currently followed for SNAP will be utilized for P-EBT.

## 6. 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 questions from actual or potential P-EBT households.
2. USDA strongly encourages states to provide relevant program information to actual and potential P-EBT households.

***To complete Section 8, we encourage states to use language from their approved plan from SY 2021-2022 with all necessary updates. -***

- 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 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:**

As part of its public information campaign, DHS DFD will employ the use of press releases and social media to inform the general public about the P-EBT program and eligibility requirements. In addition, DFD has worked with its contracted Outreach agencies and community advocates to inform groups with potential access problems about the program and messaging language through various means (e.g. social media, website, robo-calls, and text messages).

To meet the customer service need, DFD has implemented a P-EBT dedicated webpage to provide current information and frequently asked questions (FAQs). The website provides general information to the public as well as information directed to P-EBT participants. The P-EBT dedicated webpage advises that benefits are for the intended children (non-transferrable) and that benefits received in error should not be accessed and to report it to the BSS. If P-EBT participants are in need of further support not addressed through the FAQs such as to resolve disputes or issuance errors, they may complete an online inquiry form that is transmitted to a dedicated P-EBT email address staffed by DFD. DFD has dedicated staff, including bilingual representatives, who respond to P-EBT inquiries online or through DFD's P-EBT hotline number to provide further assistance. P-EBT participants may also contact their local BSS for assistance with replacement EBT cards.

## 7. Over-issuance of P-EBT benefits

*To complete Section 9, we encourage states to use language from their approved plan from SY 2021-2022 with all necessary updates.*

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:**

DFD's systematic benefit issuance process involves data matching and duplicate issuance review to ensure eligible children receive the correct amount of P-EBT benefits. DFD's IT team retains master issuance files of children that have received P-EBT benefits with their allotment issuance amounts. All data is cross-checked against previous master issuance files for duplicate issuance. Upon completion of this duplicate issuance process, a summary of the findings is presented to authorized DFD staff for review. Identified duplicates are itemized for DFD review. Upon approval for issuance, the file is then transferred to the EBT vendor for issuance.

The P-EBT webpage provides instructions to P-EBT recipients who believes they may have received benefits in error. DFD logs over-issuances reported by BSSs and parents. In the event that benefits are issued erroneously, the State agency may take measures to account for the over-issuance such as canceling the P-EBT issuance amount on the SNAP EBT card. In no event shall the household's SNAP benefit be reduced to reclaim P-EBT benefits. DFD

will report any over-issuance or improper payment to USDA and inform USDA of any overpayment using the method designed by USDA before taking any action to recover benefits from households.

## **8. 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.

## **9. 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, 2022 through September 30 2023. 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.

## **10. 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.”

## **11. 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.

**12. 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:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Natasha Johnson  
Assistant Commissioner

\_\_\_\_\_  
Rose Chamberlain  
Director

**Date of Request:** \_\_\_\_\_