

**State Plan for Pandemic EBT
Child Care 2020-2021**

Issuing Agency/Office:	FNS / Child Nutrition Programs, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
Title of Document:	State Plan for Pandemic EBT: Children in School and Child Care, 2020-2021
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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 school children during school year (SY) 2020-2021 and for children in childcare during federal fiscal year 2021. (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) and the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (P.L. 116-260).
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 P-EBT Assistance for Children in Schools and Child Care should be covered under an Emergency Information Collection Request for the Pandemic EBT (Schools), to be adjusted as appropriate, which is currently under review at OMB. Once OMB has approved the request and assigned the OMB# Control Number, FNS will include the necessary information on the State Plan.

State Plan for Pandemic EBT
Child Care 2020-2021

1. **State:** West Virginia
2. **Primary Citations:** Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA);
Continuing Appropriations Act, 2021 and Other Extensions Act;
Consolidated Appropriations Act, 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).

Note that P-EBT benefits for school children are available from the start of school year 2020-2021. P-EBT benefits for children in childcare are only available from the start of federal fiscal year 2021, or October 1, 2020.

- a. The *date range* covered by this State plan or amendment
 - for children in school
 - for children in childcare
- 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 childcare
- 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 childcare
- d. Estimated total amount of administrative funds the State needs to complete the work described in this State plan/amendment.²
- e. 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 childcare

¹ The date range covered by P-EBT State plan or amendment. For example: A State's initial plan could cover August 31 through September 30, 2020; and a later amendment could cover October 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020.

² Note that States may only claim 100% reimbursement for P-EBT administrative expenses incurred from October 1, 2020 forward.

Response:

West Virginia's P-EBT non-school (childcare) date range for year 2020-2021 will be October 1, 2020 – September 30, 2021, providing benefits to non-school children; deemed eligible based on USDA and West Virginia's simplified assumptions that all children under 6 from a SNAP household are eligible based on local school closures and reductions in benefits attendance/hours extending from WV's P-EBT student plan.

The daily allowable rate for eligible students under this plan is \$6.82 per day. Based on DHHR SNAP eligibility data, West Virginia has 36,329 children under the age of 6 who may be eligible to receive a P-EBT non-school benefit. These children received SNAP on or after October 1, 2021. DHHR determined this population by using a baseline birthdate of October 1, 2014.

West Virginia will issue approximately \$3,716,456.70 for the initial benefit month of October 2020. This monthly estimate is based on the statewide average benefit days (15) in the same benefit month as the WV P-EBT student plan. $\$6.82 \times 15 \times 36,329 = 3,716,456.70$

At the time of this writing October 2020 average student benefit information was not yet available. The initial month is based on September 2020 data. This information is being used to establish a baseline only, P-EBT benefits will be issued based on actual student benefit data.

West Virginia estimates that it will issue *at least* **\$18,582,283.50** under this plan during SY2021. This number is the monthly estimate x 5 months (October 2020 – February 2021). In February 2021, Governor Justice issued Executive Order # 1-21 sending all in-person learners back to physical classroom regardless of county infection rate. With the majority of students back in class in early February 2021, the student benefit will be greatly decreased from March – June 2021, ergo the non-school benefit would also sharply decrease since it is based on student issuance.

West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources (DHHR) and West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) estimates the state will need \$ 2,000,000 in administrative funds to fully implement this plan.

West Virginia is committed to informing USDA of any significant increase or decrease in these data points during the benefit period October 1, 2020 – September 30, 2021 as covered by this initial plan. West Virginia is committed to accurate reporting for all P-EBT federal reporting

Information regarding West Virginia's eligible student population can be found in the state's P-EBT student plan (approved on February 4, 2021).

West Virginia will issue P-EBT to eligible non-school children based on the following tentative schedule:

P-EBT Benefit Period	Tentative Issuance Date
October/November 2020	May 15, 2021
December 2020/January 2021	June 15, 2021
February/March 2021	July 15, 2021
April/May 2021	August 15, 2021
June 2021	September 15, 2021

4. P-EBT for School Children

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 2020-2021, *or*
 - b. certified through submission of a household application processed by the child’s school district for SY 2020-2021, *or*
 - c. enrolled in a Community Eligibility Provision school or a school operating under Provisions 2 or 3, *or*
 - d. directly certified, determined other source categorically eligible, or certified by application in SY 2019-2020 *and* the school district has not made a new school meal eligibility determination for the child in SY 2020-2021.
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 2019-2020 graduates and other non-students.
- How will the State determine and/or confirm each child’s eligibility for free or reduced-price meals? 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.
- How will the State confirm each child’s lack of access to meals at school? Please describe separately for SNAP-recipient and non-SNAP-recipient children, and children in public and non-public schools.
- 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.)

- 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).
- 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.

Response:

Information regarding West Virginia’s eligible student population can be found in the state’s P-EBT student plan (approved on February 4, 2021).

B. School Status

<p><i>Standard for P-EBT Eligible School Status</i></p> <p>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:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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.
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- 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.
- 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.

Response:

Information regarding West Virginia's eligible student population can be found in the state's P-EBT student plan (approved on February 4, 2021).

5. P-EBT for Children in Child Care

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 received SNAP benefits at any time since October 1, 2020.
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 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.

- 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?
- 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 childcare 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 childcare 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 childcare 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 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:

West Virginia's P-EBT non-school/childcare plan will be led jointly between the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) and West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources (DHHR).

WVDE is the state agency responsible for the administration of the National School Lunch Program NSLP (in both private and public schools) and the oversight of public education in West Virginia. WVDE operates a statewide educational information system (WVEIS) and a statewide student eligibility system (PrimerEdge). Both systems utilize data that is provided and owned by county level boards of education.

Within WVDE, the Office of Child Nutrition, Office of Data Management and Information Systems, and West Virginia Education Information System Office will provide initial and ongoing training to county boards of education about program eligibility, manage county level data collection, and determine the average benefit in each area for non-school children (for the duration of the school year). WVDE will be the agency responsible for providing and confirming the following data elements:

Individual Student Enrollment: WVDE's WVEIS captures enrollment information for WV's public-school students. Only students who are enrolled in school during SY 2020-2021 have active enrollment records in WVEIS. Students that have graduated are inactive in WVEIS, these students will not be included in eligibility file for P-EBT. WVEIS data batches nightly. Any changes in student enrollment for any student newly enrolled/newly withdrawn is captured daily. This system will allow the state to ensure that children do not receive more than one P-EBT benefit in a single month.

In West Virginia, some 3, 4 and 5-year old children qualify for P-EBT as both a student and a non-student. Children in West Virginia education programs such as Pre-K or Birth to Three may be eligible to receive P-EBT under the criteria for both P-EBT plans. **If a child appears in the WVEIS system, the child will receive PEBT benefits as a student and will not be eligible to receive PEBT benefits associated with childcare.** Using data from WVEIS and DHHR eligibility system, the state will ensure no child receives a benefit twice in a single month.

Individual Student Learning Model (in-person, hybrid or virtual): WVDE's WVEIS system incorporated indicators to capture individual student learning model. These indicators were in place and available to all public schools at the beginning of SY 2020-2021. County boards of education will update individual student learning models monthly.

This information will be used during the implementation of non-school to determine the level of benefits allocated to each child. The state is proposing to find the average P-EBT benefit days in each county and calculate an average benefit based on either a virtual or hybrid learning model.

Example: For October 2020, WVDE determines the average amount of benefit days in Monongalia county is 11. The county (area) has 10 schools operating on a reduced

attendance/hours schedule learning model in October 2020. The October P-EBT benefit for non-school children in Monongalia count would be $\$6.82 \times 11 = \75.02 .

Individual School Operational Dates: WVEIS has a built-in calendar feature that will allow counties to indicate closures reduced attendance/hours schedule due to COVID-19. This information will be provided to DHHR to confirm whether one or more schools in a county are operating at a closed or reduced attendance/hours schedule. This information will confirm whether deemed children under 6 are eligible to receive P-EBT in any month.

Individual County/Area Average Benefit Levels: Using a combination of the PrimeroEdge and WVEIS systems listed above, WVDE will provide DHHR with an average calculated benefit for non-school children based on virtual or hybrid status. County benefit levels will be revaluated/recalculated monthly. WVDE will also provide a list of all children under 6 who receive a P-EBT student benefit each month.

The West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources (DHHR) is the agency responsible for the statewide administration of SNAP; interpreting and enforcing federal regulations to ensure program integrity, issuing public assistance benefits; handling and tracking payment corrections; managing expungements; managing EBT processes and procedures; reporting issuances to FNS.

DHHR will also be responsible for providing program communication to county DHHR staff, SNAP households and the public. DHHR will receive data monthly from WVDE through a secured file. Eligibility data will be tested before each issuance. DHHR is responsible for P-EBT issuance to all eligible children. DHHR is responsible for all mass mailing. DHHR will coordinate effort with all parties to see P-EBT plan through administration and reporting, while issuing to all students who meet eligibility criteria.

West Virginia proposes using a simplified assumption that non-school children under 6 are eligible to receive P-EBT if one or more eligible schools in the same county (area) is operating on a closed or reduced attendance/hours schedule. All students issued P-EBT must meet the 5 consecutive day bench march. During the month of October 2020, all 55 counties in West Virginia had at least one or more schools operating on a closed or reduced attendance/hours schedule. All schools participating in the NSLP have met the 5-day benchmark. All non-school children under 6 must receive SNAP as an eligibility factor.

West Virginia will use SNAP eligibility data from eRapids to confirm every child issued P-EBT on or after October 1, 2020 receives SNAP. WVDE enrollment data will confirm whether one or more schools is operating on a closed or reduced attendance/hours schedule. All regular SNAP privacy protocols will be in place and observed.

West Virginia does not have a statewide childcare data infrastructure that will support issuing an individual benefit to children under 6. If a county does not any schools operating at closed or reduced attendance/hours in any month, children under 6 will be deemed as in-person learners and will not receive P-EBT for that benefit month.

There are no state or local orders limiting capacity of childcare facilities due to COVID-19 in the state of West Virginia. Conversely, since on the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic the State has worked with childcare providers to continue safely offering services to families of essential workers.

Each month Optum (responsible for maintaining SNAP eligibility system) will run a report of all children under 6. The state will then cross reference data provided from WVDE to confirm at least one or more schools in each county are operating at a closed or reduced/attendance. When a child turns 6 years old, he/she is no longer eligible to receive P-EBT as a non-school child. Optum will receive a secured file from WVDE of all children under 6 who received P-EBT under the student plan. Optum will remove all children under 6 who received P-EBT as a student from the non-school P-EBT issuance file monthly.

The state will issue P-EBT to non-school children retroactively in 2-month benefit periods. There is a possibility some 3, 4 and 5-year old children may be eligible for P-EBT as a student and a non-student. In the situation, the state will issue P-EBT to the child as a student. If the child has a WVEIS number, the child MUST be issued as a student. The state will cross reference data used to determine student eligibility to ensure that no child is issued more than a single P-EBT benefit in any benefit period.

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 2020-2021. The benefit is multiplied by the number of days that the eligible child's status makes them eligible for P-EBT benefits.

SY 2020-2021 July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021	Free Reimbursements USDA School Meal Programs			
	Lunch	Breakfast	Snack (NEW)	Daily Total
Contiguous U.S.	\$3.60	\$2.26	\$0.96	\$6.82
Alaska	5.79	3.64	1.56	10.99
Hawaii, Guam, Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico	4.20	2.64	1.13	7.97

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-2020-07-22/pdf/2020-15764.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 questions in detail.

Response:

West Virginia is proposing to issue \$6.82 per day to each non-school child under 6 who has received SNAP since October 1, 2020 and resides in a county where one or more schools is operating on either a closed or reduced attendance/hours schedule.

The state has determined the data infrastructure in our childcare system does not support issuing an individual benefit to qualifying children. It is not practical for the state to make major across the board childcare upgrades to issue P-EBT to non-school children. Also, it is not equitable to directly certify some children when not all childcare facilities have the same available resources.

In response, West Virginia proposes using a simplified assumption that non-school children under 6 are eligible to receive P-EBT if one or more eligible schools in the same county (area) is operating on a closed or reduced attendance/hours schedule. All students issued P-EBT must meet the 5 consecutive day bench march. During the month of October 2020, all 55 counties in West Virginia had at least one or more schools operating on a closed or reduced attendance/hours schedule. All schools participating in the NSLP have met the 5-day benchmark.

Beginning October 2020 (and FY20-21 school year) West Virginia will utilize school enrollment provided by WVDE from the WVEIS and Primero Edge systems to calculate an average benefit in each county (area) for non-school children. This data is currently being utilized to issue individual P-EBT benefits to eligible students. This data will verify to DHHR that each county has one or more schools operating on a closed or reduced attendance/hours schedule.

Each month WVDE will determine an average benefit in each county. If one or more schools in the county are operating on a 100% virtual model due to COVID-19, the weekly P-EBT benefit will be \$6.82 x 5 benefit days per week. If no schools in the county are 100% virtual, WVDE will then determine the average county hybrid/reduced benefit. This will be \$6.82 x average benefit days of reduced status learners in each county.

Example, in January 2021, WVDE determines Kanawha county students received on average 8 benefits days, the non-school child would receive a P-EBT benefit equal to 8 days for that benefit period.

If no school(s) in a county are operating at either a closed or reduced/hybrid schedule, the state will deem the child under 6 in a 100% in-person learning model. Children deemed as in-person learners during any month will not be eligible for a P-EBT benefit in that specific month. Non-school children will be reevaluated monthly to determine the benefit level.

West Virginia will not utilize the Mountain state SNAP EBT card for P-EBT issuance of non-school children. Instead, the state will utilize a special WV P-EBT card for issuance. All eligible children/households will receive a new P-EBT card for FY20-21. The card will be issued in the name of the eligible child. The card will be mailed in care of the primary person/guardian

associated with the SNAP household. All future P-EBT issuances for both students and non-students will be issued on West Virginia's P-EBT card.

7. Implementation Timeline, EBT Processing, and Benefit Issuance

Please provide an implementation timeline for SY 2020-2021 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 2019-2020, 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 SY 2019-2020. 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.
- During SY 2019-2020, 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?
- 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: West Virginia P-EBT non-school timeline SY2020-2021

- Receive non-school plan approval from FNS (Day 0)
- Send child under 6 plan information WV P-EBT hotline (Day 1)
- Create child under 6 specific training material(s) for DHH/call center staff (Day 1)
- DHHR will create mass mailing specific to child under 6 P-EBT recipients (Day 2)
- Create joint agency press release (Day 7)
- P-EBT child under 6 specific training begins for DHHR/local boards of education/P-EBT hotline (Day 5-10)
- P-EBT child under 6 information goes live on platforms (Day 5)
- Optum pulls data for all children under 6 for Oct/Nov 2020 benefit period (day 5-10)
- WVDE provides Optum file of all children under 6 who received P-EBT as a student in Oct/Nov 2020 benefit period – these children removed from issuance (day 10-15)
- WVDE sends file of average benefit days/average benefit total per county (day 20)
- Any data issues will be sent to exception file to be worked later (day 22)
- All eligible children under 6 issued P-EBT for October/November period (day 30)
- Mail out P-EBT program informational letter to all eligible students (Day 31)
- P-EBT white cards begin being mailed to eligible students (Day 32)
- Optum pulls data for all children under 6 for Dec 20/Jan 21 benefit period (day 35)
- WVDE provides Optum file of all children under 6 who received P-EBT as a student in Dec 20/Jan 21 benefit period – these children removed from issuance (day 40-45)
- WVDE sends file of average benefit days/average benefit total per county (day 47)
- Any data issues will be sent to exception file to be worked later (day 47)
- All eligible children under 6 issued P-EBT for Dec 20/Jan 21 period (day 60)
- Optum pulls data for all children under 6 for Feb/March 21 benefit period (day 65)
- WVDE provides Optum file of all children under 6 who received P-EBT as a student in Feb/March 21 benefit period – these children removed from issuance (day 70-75)
- WVDE sends file of average benefit days/average benefit total per county (day 80)
- Any data issues will be sent to exception file to be worked later (day 82)
- All eligible children under 6 issued P-EBT for April/May 21 period (day 90)
- Optum pulls data for all children under 6 for April/May 21 benefit period (day 95)
- WVDE provides Optum file of all children under 6 who received P-EBT as a student in April/May 21 benefit period – these children removed from issuance (day 100-105)
- WVDE sends file of average benefit days/average benefit total per county (day 105-110)
- Any data issues will be sent to exception file to be worked later (day 112)
- All eligible children under 6 issued P-EBT for April/May 21 period (day 120)
- Optum pulls data for all children under 6 for June 21 benefit period (day 125)
- WVDE provides Optum file of all children under 6 who received P-EBT as a student in June 21 benefit period – these children removed from issuance (day 130-135)
- WVDE sends file of average benefit days/average benefit total per county (day 137)
- Any data issues will be sent to exception file to be worked later (day 140)
- All eligible children under 6 issued P-EBT for June 21 period (day 150)
- Exception issuance run reporting to FNS (Day 160)

West Virginia has elected to issue new cards to all eligible P-EBT children during SY 2020-2021. The state will issue P-EBT benefits on a unique WV P-EBT card design. All households will receive the same card. Cards/benefits will be issued in the name of the child. The state will issue one card per each non-school child and not attempt to group children based on household logic. The state will no longer utilize the Mountain state EBT card to issue P-EBT benefits.

P-EBT will be issued outside the SNAP eligibility system. It will be separated from SNAP. West Virginia will be able to distinguish the total number of non-school children and P-EBT benefits issued. West Virginia has worked specifically on statewide messaging for families to better understand that P-EBT is a food benefit, but P-EBT is not SNAP.

West Virginia's draw/spend priority is P-EBT, D-SNAP and SNAP in that order. The state currently expunges SNAP after 365-days of non-use or inactivity. The state practices first in, first out. The oldest unused SNAP benefit being removed first. WV will expunge unused P-EBT based on current SNAP rules. In 2021, all states are required to move from a 365-day expungement to 274-days. West Virginia is scheduled to make this transition September 1, 2021. For P-EBT, West Virginia will follow the same expungement rules that the state follows for SNAP (during that period).

West Virginia's EBT processor will provide a list of undeliverable cards – the processor will provide information that will allow the P-EBT team to identify specific families that need contacted regarding address/contact update. Since P-EBT non-school child issuance is based on receipt of SNAP, the state will utilize SNAP household demographic information to mail the benefit. WV will rely on address/contact information for Foster students from DHHR's FACTs (Foster eligibility system).

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 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.

- 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 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 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 Spring and Summer of 2020, 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:

Customer Service/Communication Strategy:

WVDE and DHHR will leverage existing communication channels and conduct outreach to ensure messaging for P-EBT is cohesive, effective, and targeted. Information will be provided in the same manner to all SNAP households through available and appropriate communication channels and through written correspondence accompanying the cards.

Both WVDE and DHHR will work together to compile press release information and social media posts. County boards of education will receive information and suggested content to share with their student communities through their regular communication channels (social media, robo-calls, text messages, apps, etc.). County DHHR staff will receive similar language to discuss with SNAP clients so that messaging is consistent across the agencies.

WVDE has a dedicated P-EBT email address (wvpebt@k12.wv.us) – the address is monitored by several staff members. Automatic response messages are provided with important information and updated regularly. Emails are monitored and timely responses are given to those who submit email questions, inquiries, or disputes.

WVDE also has a dedicated telephone number which is consistently monitored. At peak volumes, households are greeted with an automatic message that encourages households to leave a call-back number. A coordinator returns phone calls to provide dedicated customer service to research individual situations.

WVDE maintains a P-EBT web site (wvpebt.org) that is regularly updated with public information. This website explains the West Virginia P-EBT program, basic eligibility criteria, what households should expect, updated news blasts, etc. The website also maintains helpful information for families regarding SNAP-ED programs.

For P-EBT SY 2020-2021, WVDE and DHHR bid out a remote call center to help triage calls and direct telephonic traffic specifically for the P-EBT program. The call center was provided training from the state on how to assist callers and regularly receive updated program information. West Virginia recognizes the WV P-EBT hotline (304-756-5431 or 304-756-KID1) has helped to mitigate the administrative burden across both agencies.

DHHR office of EBT has an email address and telephone number where individuals can call with questions that are relevant to the benefit issuance process. Also, DHHR's Office of Constituent Services is available 9 hours each business day offering SNAP households individual case information.

An ongoing issue experienced during SY 2019-2020 were disputes regarding custody/guardianship. For the P-EBT non-school plan all children under 6 are being evaluated based on DHHR SNAP eligibility data; the primary person in the SNAP household will be mailed the P-EBT card. All P-EBT cards will be issued in the name of the eligible child.

All public communication strategies listed in this plan will also serve as a basis for communication with those who are eligible for the benefit. Additionally, a letter of instruction will accompany cards explaining the terms, conditions, and other pertinent information with recipient households. Information provided will 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).

Serving Vulnerable Student Populations:

Representatives from West Virginia's Foster care system is involved in writing this plan. The greatest hurdle we must overcome with Foster students is rapid address changes. The state will rely on data provided by Foster care regarding the child's current address.

West Virginia serves a small number of SNAP recipients who primarily speak a foreign language. Spanish is the language with the highest percentage other than English spoken in West Virginia. This population is still very small compared to other states; Hardy county, WV has the highest population with 2.74%.

DHHR's interpreter service can be utilized for P-EBT households who require further information/instruction. DHHR and WVDE staff who are fluent in Spanish are available to interpret/communicate with individuals as well. P-EBT mass mailing will also be available in Spanish. In addition, a bidding requirement for the WV P-EBT hotline is fluency of the Spanish language.

Children with disabilities will be served the same as those without disabilities. DHHR will make larger font available for households who need larger print notices. Both DHHR and WVDE locations are ADA compliant. The state will work with all individuals who need accommodations to access P-EBT benefits.

West Virginia's P-EBT non-school plan will rely on social security numbers for benefit issuance for children under 6. DHHR will match children under 12 months (whose household has not reported a social security number to DHHR) based on name and birthdate. Social Security numbers are not a required data point to receive P-EBT. DHHR will utilize SSNs previously provided from SNAP households. By not requiring an SSN, the state is not creating unnecessary barriers for students/families to overcome.

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.

Response:

West Virginia recognizes that USDA is responsible for ensuring accountability of funds for P-EBT purposes. West Virginia acknowledges that USDA may hold State agencies liable for aggregate over-issuances or improper payments. West Virginia acknowledges that 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.

P-EBT's authorizing statute does not give USDA or the states the authority to reclaim P-EBT issuances from households who received their benefits in good faith. In addition, SNAP regulations do not apply, and do not provide states with the authority to reclaim P-EBT benefits from households.

WV agrees to be liable to all aggregate over-issuances and will strive to only issue correct payments based on student eligibility. By using WVDE's data to confirm school closure/reduced status the state will ensure non-school children receive P-EBT equitably. The state remains committed to using all available resources to issue correct P-EBT payments.

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.

Response:

West Virginia agrees to complete the FNS-292 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. The SNAP agency (DHHR) and WVDE will work together as necessary to complete these reports.

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, 2020 through September 30, 2021. 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.

Response:

West Virginia acknowledges that a separate grant application is required to cover State level administrative costs incurred during October 1, 2020 – September 30, 2021 associated with implementing P-EBT. West Virginia also understands to receive a grant for administrative costs it must submit a budget plan using FNS-366(a).

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.”

Response:

West Virginia acknowledges the release of information and agrees to comply with it herein.

13. Civil Rights Statement

The State will continue to comply with civil rights requirements, to include providing equal access to individuals with disabilities and individuals who are limited English proficient.

Response:

West Virginia affirms it will continue to comply with civil rights requirements, to include providing equal access to individuals with disabilities and individuals who are limited English proficient.

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.

Response:

West Virginia agrees to administer P-EBT according to the terms of its approved State plan. If any changes are intended to be made by the State (any terms of the plan), West Virginia agrees to first notify USDA, and 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 Bill J Crouch
WV DHHR Cabinet Secretary



Signature

Print Name and Title W. Clayton Burch
State Superintendent of Schools
WV Department of Education

Date of Request: 4-1-2021

