

**Amendment to Approved State Plan for Pandemic EBT
Children in School and/or Child Care, Summer 2021**

Issuing Agency/Office:	FNS / Child Nutrition Programs, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
Title of Document:	Amendment to Approved State Plan for Pandemic EBT: Children in School and Child Care, Summer 2021
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Summary:	(1) This document is a template to assist States in the development of an amendment to extend their approved State plan to operate Pandemic EBT for school children and for children in childcare during summer 2021. (2) This document relates to Section 1106 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, 2021 (P.L. 117-2)
Disclaimer:	The contents of this guidance document do not have the force and effect of law and are not meant to bind the public in any way. This document is intended only to provide clarity to the public regarding existing requirements under the law or agency policies.

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

The submission of a P-EBT state plan, associated template and related reporting obligations are addressed in OMB# 0584-0660. This emergency information collection (IC) will be replaced by a full IC package to be submitted to OMB for approval prior to its expiration date of 8/31/21. All components of this summer 2021 P-EBT package will be addressed in the full IC package.

**Amendment to Approved State Plan for Pandemic EBT
Children in School and/or Child Care, Summer 2021**

1. **State:** West Virginia
2. **Primary Citation:** Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) as amended by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021
3. **Here is what FNS needs from you:**
 - a. If a State chooses to elect the U.S. standard benefit¹, simply check the box below. Next, go to letter 'c' (*Estimated total amount of P-EBT benefits*) of the template.

By checking this box, we are indicating that our State will use the U.S. standard benefit for the covered summer period.

- b. If a State chooses not to elect the U.S. standard benefit, FNS needs the following information:
 - The number of days for which benefits will be issued as part of the State's covered summer period; and
 - An explanation for how the State arrived at the number of days in the State's covered summer period. USDA will not approve a plan that does not tie the length of its covered summer period to the actual summer 2021 calendars of an enrollment-weighted average, or the median, of a representative sample of its school districts.

Response:

West Virginia elects to use the USDA standard benefit for the covered Summer period. The end date of the covered Summer period is **August 31, 2021**. West Virginia will not accept applications for free or reduced priced lunches after the end of the covered Summer period.

¹ The U.S. standard benefit – as defined in Question #5 of FNS' Q&A document titled, "Summer P-EBT Q&A" – is equal to the median number of weekdays in the sampled school districts multiplied by the daily P-EBT rate. For States in the continental U.S., that works out to a fixed summer benefit of \$375 per eligible child (55 days at \$6.82 per day). The U.S. standard benefit is higher for Alaska, Hawaii, and the territories; see Q/A #14 for a complete set of standard benefit amounts.

c. Estimated total amount of P-EBT benefits the State will issue within this amendment's date range. (Consult the appropriate table in Section 4, "Benefit Levels.")

- Estimated amount issued to school children:
 $\$375 \times 222,395 = \$83,398,125$
- Estimated amount issued to non-school children in childcare:
 $\$375 \times 35,463 = \$13,298,625$

Total issuance for P-EBT Summer: \$96,696,750

d. Estimated total number of children to which the State will issue P-EBT benefits.

- Estimated number of school children: **222,395**
- Estimated number of non-school children in childcare: **35,463**

Total eligible children issued P-EBT Summer: 257,858

e. Tentative P-EBT issuance schedule (the dates on which Summer P-EBT benefits will be issued). Note that USDA encourages States to distribute summer benefits in two or even three issuances across the summer, to the extent practical.

Response:

All eligible children (both students and children under the age of 6) will be issued P-EBT at the same time. West Virginia is proposing a single issuance date for all 257,858 eligible children. The tentative plans to issue Summer benefits on **July 12, 2021**. West Virginia understands that FNS recommends two or three issuances, but the state is attempting to mitigate administrative burden with a single issuance.

A single Summer issuance will allow the state to focus on accurate benefit issuance, reporting and other pandemic related measures the state continues to operate. The state operates an integrated eligibility system; our SNAP system team is also responsible for system changes/administration for TANF, Medicaid, LIEAP, and other special programs. All these programs have undergone major changes due to pandemic response. The state strongly feels doing a one-off issuance will ensure children receive the benefit in a timely and accurate manner and reporting to USDA is prompt and correct. The state also strongly feels a single issuance would be easier to communicate to both families and EBT retailers. A single issuance would also guarantee West Virginia issues Summer P-EBT benefits to children during the covered Summer period.

West Virginia will have a catchup issuance at the end of the covered Summer period for any students and children under 6 (enrolled in SNAP) who are eligible but were missed during the one-time scheduled issuance. Both populations of children will be issued P-EBT on the same issuance date. The end of Summer catchup is tentatively scheduled for September 18, 2021. At this time, the state is unable to estimate the number of additional students and children under 6 who may become eligible during Summer. The state is committed to accurate reporting of all children issued P-EBT benefits.

West Virginia will communicate the single issuance with our retailer community, school system and SNAP agency so that all organizations and families may prepare for P-EBT Summer issuance. Each eligible child will receive an eligibility letter explaining the extension of P-EBT Summer, the amount of the benefit, rights and responsibilities of the household and important general information.

- f. Describe how the State will identify eligible school children and children in childcare for summer P-EBT. You must address each of the following bulleted items, below, when responding.

For school-aged children:

- Describe how the State will identify school children who received P-EBT benefits during the last month of SY 20-21.

Response:

The P-EBT Program will continue to 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 (PrimeroEdge). Both systems utilize data that is provided and owned by county level boards of education.

Within WVDE, the Office of Child Nutrition, the Office of Data Management and Information Systems, and the West Virginia Education Information System Office provide ongoing training to county boards of education about program eligibility, and the processes and procedures for ensuring county level enrollment data is accurate. WVDE will be the agency responsible for providing and confirming the following data elements:

Individual Student Eligibility: WVDE's PrimeroEdge captures student eligibility information based on individual student status, or enrollment in a CEP school. PrimeroEdge captures free/reduced status in real time for all students participating in the NSLP. The state will be able to identify SNAP and non-SNAP students, for both public and private schools participating in the NSLP. West Virginia conducts direct certification (DC) matching at a more frequent interval than what is required by federal regulations. WV conducts DC matching at

weekly intervals for SNAP, TANF and Medicaid, and at monthly intervals for students in the Foster system.

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 who graduated May/June 2021 will remain active in WVEIS until June 30, 2021. This will ensure the state issues to all eligible graduating seniors. WVEIS data batches nightly. Any changes in student enrollment for any student newly enrolled/newly withdrawn is captured daily.

Individual Student Household Contact/Mailing Information: WVDE's WVEIS system captures contact/ mailing information for all students (regardless of selected learning model) enrolled in public schools. Students who attend private schools may have their contact information maintained in the statewide student eligibility system, or at the school level. In cases where eligibility information is maintained at the school level – WVDE will continue to work with these private schools (9 in total) to obtain required information in a secure method.

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.

Individual Student Attendance: WVDE's WVEIS incorporated attendance codes that will afford West Virginia the opportunity to capture attendance information on individual students. In addition, WVEIS has a code in place to capture attendance information on individual students who have been quarantined due to COVID-19. This individual student attendance will allow WVDE to determine a child's access of lack of access to meals at school.

Individual School Operational Dates: WVEIS has a built-in calendar feature that will allow counties to indicate closures due to COVID-19, inclement weather, or other extenuating circumstances. This feature will allow West Virginia to capture individual school operational days and calculate P-EBT benefits for days in-person learning was unavailable.

Using all the mechanisms and operational procedures as described, West Virginia will be able to adequately issue benefits to identified students who were receiving P-EBT in the last month of SY2020-21.

- Describe how the State will identify school children who were eligible for free or reduced price school meals under the NSLP and SBP in SY 20-21 but did not receive P-EBT benefits in the last month of the school year because they attended school in-person and benefitted from a free or reduced price meal service at school. This includes children who were eligible for F/RP meals during the school year and did not receive P-EBT benefits because the children attended school in-person during the school year.

Response:

West Virginia's P-EBT allocations are issued retrospectively. With an active approved plan for School Year 2020-21, West Virginia is issuing benefits to school-age children in two-month batches. West Virginia received a simplified assumption which allowed the State to apply a blanket statewide approval for all public/private school students in NSLP schools that qualify for free/reduced price school meals under the Executive Order issued by Governor Jim Justice that delayed the start of schools in West Virginia to September 8, 2020. This simplified assumption allowed the State to even the playing field in terms of having a starting point for which all students that qualify for free/reduced price school meals would meet the criteria of being out of school for a minimum of 5 days consecutively to establish P-EBT baseline criteria.

From here – using the methodology as described in the preceding bullet for operational management purposes – the State of West Virginia is able to view student enrollment data/learning model which is used to determine who is receiving instruction in-person or virtually in the last month of SY 2020-21. West Virginia's statewide systems that are already in place in terms of enrollment and free/reduced price status – makes this task of determining eligibility and comparing it to learning model/enrollment status relatively easy for the purposes of determining eligibility – even if a student was receiving full-time in-person instruction in the last month of the school year.

- Describe how the State will identify children who are determined newly eligible for free or reduced-price school meals during the covered summer period. States must provide an opportunity for families to apply for free or reduced-price meals using the normal application process. States and SFAs should consider maintaining a minimum presence to process Free and Reduced-Price Meal applications, perhaps on a part-time or weekly basis. Another alternative is for SFAs to accept new Free and Reduced-Price Meal applications during the summer but only process them after the start of the new school year. Children determined eligible on applications *submitted prior to the end of the summer* could then be issued P-EBT benefits retroactively after the start of the new school year. (Note that it is preferable to process applications and issue benefits during the summer period that the benefits are intended to cover).

Response:

85% of West Virginia counties are fully CEP. In other words, most public-school students attend a school in West Virginia where they automatically qualify for free/reduced price school meals. 7 of West Virginia's 55 counties are partially CEP – meaning some schools qualify and others operate under the traditional free/reduced priced school meal determination process. Finally, 1 county in West Virginia is not currently electing in CEP participation in SY 2020-21.

In the partial and non-CEP counties in West Virginia, targeted messages to non-CEP schools will be crafted from the State Agency for SFAs to use to alert families of the opportunity to apply for free/reduce priced school meals. Throughout the various iterations of P-EBT, West Virginia has used this methodology to support SFAs communicating with families about the connection between P-EBT and free/reduce priced school meal status. Messages from SFAs include scripts for robo-calls, web sites, social media pages, and e-learning platforms. The WVDE will also use their platforms of the P-EBT web site and social media pages to make similar announcements. Every effort will be made to target messages to those segmented areas of the state where an opportunity exists for families to receive information about the necessity to apply for school meal benefits as a connection with Summer P-EBT status. This same methodology and support will continue to be supplied to NSLP-participating private schools in West Virginia.

West Virginia will allow newly eligible students to establish eligibility for free or reduced prices meals until the end of the covered Summer period. These children will be issued P-EBT during the catchup issuance tentatively scheduled for September 18, 2021.

For children in childcare:

- Describe how the State will identify SNAP-enrolled children who received P-EBT childcare benefits in the last month of the school year.

Response:

West Virginia's approved P-EBT childcare/non-student plan makes the simplified assumption that all children in a SNAP household under the age of 6 are deemed eligible to receive some P-EBT due to all WV county boards of education being out of school for at least 5 consecutive days during the month of October 2020. The childcare plan is directly linked to the student plan in that the childcare benefit is based on the operational status of local schools in each county.

If one or more schools in a county is operating fully virtual, the childcare benefit is equal to that of a 100% virtual student. If no schools in a county are operating virtual, but one or more schools are operating on a hybrid model (a mix of in-person and on-line learning) the childcare benefit is equal to the average student benefit in each county. It does not matter the age of the child, if they have a WVEIS (school ID) they are issued as a student and removed from the non-student issuance file.

All eligible children under age 6 must be SNAP enrolled during Summer to be eligible for Summer P-EBT. However, children whose SNAP enrollment begins or ends during the Summer period will receive the full Summer benefit (\$375 USDA standard benefit).

- Describe how the State will identify SNAP-enrolled children who would have received P-EBT child care benefits in the last month of the school year, but did not receive benefits because their child care facility was not closed or operating at reduced attendance or hours in that month, and neither their child care facility nor the child's residence was in the area of a school that was closed or operating at reduced attendance or hours in that month.

Response:

West Virginia will pull updated SNAP enrollment data that includes all children under the age of 6 and enrolled in SNAP on **May 15, 2021**. Next, the state will cross reference data received from WVDE of all children under 6 who received P-EBT through the student plan. This is a safety net to ensure that no child (either student or non-student) receives P-EBT as both a student and a non-student. This data pull will capture all children who have become eligible for SNAP during the final month of SY20-21.

- Describe how the State will identify children who are part of a SNAP household and newly eligible for P-EBT childcare benefits during the covered summer period

Response:

West Virginia will complete a final catchup at the end of the covered Summer period, tentatively scheduled for September 18, 2021. This data pull will capture any child in a SNAP household under 6 who has become newly eligible during Summer. The state will deem these children eligible for the full Summer benefit and issue the \$375 USDA standard prior to the start of SY21-22. These children may include newborn babies added to the SNAP household or children under 6 whose families are SNAP eligible during the covered Summer period. All eligible children under age 6 must be SNAP enrolled during Summer to be eligible for Summer P-EBT. However, children whose SNAP enrollment begins or ends during the Summer period will receive the full Summer benefit.

4. Benefit Levels

A. U.S. Standard Benefit

2021 Covered Summer Period	U.S. Standard P-EBT Benefit		
	Median Length of Covered Summer Period (weekdays)	Daily P-EBT Rate	Standard Benefit
Contiguous U.S.	55	\$6.82	\$375
Alaska	55	10.99	604
Hawaii, Guam, Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico	55	7.97	438

B. State-Determined Benefit, Based on Daily Rate

Note: The daily benefit amount – \$6.82 – is only needed if a State elects to set its own covered summer period length; that is to say, if a State declines to use the U.S. standard benefit.

2021 Covered Summer Period	Free Reimbursements			
	Lunch	Breakfast	Snack	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>

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 will continue to comply with civil rights requirements, including providing equal access to individuals with disabilities and individuals with limited English proficiency.

Administration of State P-EBT Plan

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

Response:

West Virginia will administer P-EBT Summer according to the terms of its approved plan extension. The state is committed to accurate benefit issuance and reporting of P-EBT. Should West Virginia require changes to an approved extension, the state will notify FNS and submit an amended plan extension.

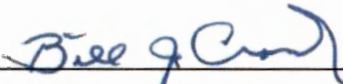
Reminder

If the State needs to make any significant changes to its Summer 2021 plan after approval, the State needs to submit an amendment to FNS that describes the change and its impact on operating summer P-EBT. USDA will review the amendment and approve allowable amendments.


Response:

West Virginia understands to make changes to an approved plan extension the state must inform FNS and submit an amendment.

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

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Bill J Crouch, Cabinet Secretary
West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources

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W. Clayton Burch, State Superintendent of Schools
West Virginia Department of Education

Date of Request: 6-15-21