



Food and Nutrition
Service

1320 Braddock Place
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June 4, 2021

SUBJECT: Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer Program (P-EBT)
Approval of Washington's State Plan for Children in Child Care

TO: Jesus Mendoza, Jr.
Regional Administrator
Western Regional Office

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (P.L. 116-127; the Act) as amended by the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2021 and Other Extensions Act (P.L. 116-159) and the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (P.L. 116-260) authorized a temporary assistance program for households with certain SNAP-enrolled children in child care during the public health emergency declared on January 27, 2020. Pursuant to the authority granted under Section 1101 of the Act, FNS approves Washington's enclosed plan to operate P-EBT for children in child care.

Summary of State's Plan

The Washington Department of Social and Health Services and the Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction will issue P-EBT benefits through the State's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) EBT card system to households with eligible children. The State's plan for SNAP-enrolled children in child care covers the months of October 2020 through June 2021.

Children in child care are eligible for benefits if they are enrolled in SNAP and their child care facility is closed or operating with reduced attendance or hours, or if they live in the area of a school that is closed or operating with reduced attendance or hours. The State will use the best feasibly available data and USDA-approved simplifying assumptions to issue benefits in amounts that are tied as closely as possible to the number of days that eligible children do not receive a meal service through their covered child care facility.

At a minimum, the State will identify all children under age 6 who are enrolled in SNAP at any time since October 1, 2020. The State will not issue child care benefits to any child for months after their SNAP enrollment ends. Finally, the State will ensure that children who receive a benefit through P-EBT's child care component do not also receive a benefit through P-EBT's school component for the same month.

In addition, Washington has or will:

- confirmed that child care facilities have been operating at reduced capacity from October 2020 through February 2021 based on a statewide public health ordinance that affects providers' ability to remain open, and on monthly administrative data that confirmed reduced attendance in each county,

- use county level school operating status to confirm continued eligibility and set benefit levels by month:
 - identify the county of residence for each SNAP-enrolled child under age 6,
 - for each month from October through June, identify the school in the county operating with the most virtual days and issuing the greatest P-EBT benefit to its students that month; the state will then issue a child care benefit to children in the county for the month as follows:
 - if the school is operating virtually 5 days per week, the State will issue a child care benefit for 18 days, the State’s benefit for children in fully virtual schools,
 - if the school is operating with a hybrid schedule of 3-4 virtual days per week, the State will issue a child care benefit equal to 70 percent of the 18-day fully virtual benefit,
 - if the school is operating with a hybrid schedule of 1-2 virtual days per week, the State will issue a child care benefit equal to 30 percent of the 18-day fully virtual benefit,
 - if no school in the county issues a P-EBT benefit to its school children in the month, then the state will not issue a P-EBT child care benefit to children in the county,
- *tentatively* issue benefits for the months of October through December in a single issuance in June;
- *tentatively* issue benefits for the months of April through June in July.

Finally, the State will identify risks for improper payments and ensure a high level of integrity.

Estimated Caseload and Value of P-EBT Benefits

The State will calculate monthly benefits for each eligible child in the household equal to the daily reimbursement for a free breakfast, lunch, and snack multiplied by the number of benefit days calculated as described in the State’s plan.

Washington estimates that it will issue \$115.4 million to approximately 140,000 SNAP-enrolled children in child care from October 2020 through June 2021.

Release of Information

Pursuant to Section 1101(e) of the Act, the Secretary hereby authorizes the release of the information necessary to carry out P-EBT in Washington. Section 1101(e) of the Act states, “Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of Agriculture may authorize State educational agencies and school food authorities administering a school lunch program under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1751 et seq.) to release to appropriate officials administering the supplemental nutrition assistance program such information as may be necessary to carry out this section.”

Plan Timetable and Revisions

Washington will distribute benefits to households consistent with the timeframes identified in the State plan. Should the State encounter challenges or delays that significantly impair its ability to implement the approved P-EBT plan or require substantive changes, the State must notify the FNS Regional Office as soon as possible. The FNS Regional Office will work with the State to identify reasonable solutions and review revised plans for approval or further revision.

Civil Rights

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

Administrative Funds

The Washington Department of Social and Health Services will participate in a P-EBT Administrative Budget Planning process using the FNS-366(a) Program and Budget Summary. When the FNS-366(a) is finalized, that will determine the State's Administrative Grant level. However, the FNS-366(a), Program and Budget Summary, may be updated and revised as the State's operational plan evolves.

Reporting

The Washington Department of Social and Health Services will complete the FNS-292B, the FNS-46, the FNS-388, and the FNS-778 reports in accordance with existing requirements.

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

Sincerely,

Cindy Long
Deputy Administrator
Child Nutrition Programs