



Food and Nutrition  
Service

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July 20, 2022

**SUBJECT:** Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer Program (P-EBT)  
Approval of Wyoming's State Plan for School Children,  
School Year 2021-2022

**TO:** Cheryl Kennedy  
Regional Administrator  
Mountain Plains Regional Office

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (P.L. 116-127; the Act), as amended, authorized a temporary assistance program for households with children without access to meals in school and to 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 Wyoming's enclosed plan to operate P-EBT for school children.

### **Summary of State's Plan**

The Wyoming Department of Family Services and the Wyoming Department of Education 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 school children covers the months of September 2021 through May 2022.

School children are eligible for benefits if they would have received free or reduced price meals at their schools through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) if not for the closure or reduced attendance or hours of their schools for a period of at least 5 consecutive days. 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 at school.

The State and its school districts will identify children eligible for free or reduced price NSLP meals using the most current available data. All school districts that rely on eligibility data from the most recent prior year will have a means to address that they do not issue benefits to school year 2020-2021 graduates and other non-students, and will offer households with new students the ability to establish their eligibility through the traditional school food authority-run school meal application and direct certification processes.

In addition, Wyoming has or will:

- use schools' most current free and reduced price eligibility lists to identify students who may qualify for P-EBT benefits,
- request data for P-EBT eligible students from public school districts and private schools after USDA approval of the state's plan:

- for the majority of schools that tracked COVID-related absences and virtual learning days, the schools will report the actual count of those days for each student for each month,
- for schools that have not been tracking COVID-related absences, the schools will report excused absences of 5 or more consecutive days for each student for each month; excused absences of 5 or more consecutive days will be considered P-EBT-eligible:
  - for households attending schools using the 5 consecutive day threshold, the household may make a claim with the state through its call center for any COVID-related absence that is less than 5 consecutive days,
  - the household will verbally attest that these shorter absences are COVID-related and the state will retain a record of the parent or guardian's attestation to prevent duplicate claims and issuances,
  - prior to issuing benefits, the State will confirm that these shorter absences were at least excused; the State will do this by either communicating with and obtaining confirmation from the school district or by using verification provided by the household from the school,
- for schools that can identify children who were absent or quarantined for a COVID-related reason, but cannot report the length of the COVID-related absence or quarantine, the state will calculate and issue a benefit equal to the average benefit issued to students in schools that have reported the length of children's COVID-related absences:
  - the State will recalculate this average monthly,
  - children in these schools that have one or more COVID-related absences during the month will be issued the average benefit; children without any COVID-related absences will not receive a benefit,
- provide guidance to schools detailing the requirements for:
  - determining school eligibility based on school closures or reductions in attendance and hours,
  - determining what is a COVID-related absence and,
  - determining the number of benefit days for individual students,
- tentatively issue a single benefit for the entire school year in December.

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.

- Wyoming estimates that it will issue \$1.4 million to approximately 10,000 children for school closures and reductions in attendance and hours extending from September 2021 through May 2022.

### **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 Wyoming. 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**

Wyoming 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**

Wyoming 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 Wyoming Department of Family 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 Wyoming Department of Family Services will complete the FNS-292B, the FNS-46, the FNS-388, and the FNS-778 reports in accordance with existing requirements.

FNS appreciates Wyoming's exceptional efforts to maintain children's access to nutritious meals, and understands that even as the nation recovers from this difficult time, State agencies and local program operators will still face any number of challenges. FNS stands ready to provide additional support as needed. If you have questions, please contact the FNS Mountain Plains Regional Office.

Sincerely,

Cindy Long  
Administrator