

**State Plan for Pandemic EBT
Summer 2023**

1. State: GUAM

2. Primary Citation: **Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA), as amended.**

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 summer period covered by this initial plan (or subsequent amendment).

a. Estimated total amount of P-EBT benefits the state will issue to school children within this amendment's date range.² (Consult the appropriate table in Section 4, "Benefit Levels.")

\$139 (Guam benefit level) X 24,465 (enrollment) = \$3,400,635.00 (total benefits)

b. Estimated total number of school children to which the state will issue P-EBT benefits.

24,465

c. Tentative P-EBT issuance schedule (the date(s) on which Summer P-EBT benefits will be issued) **(Please see response below)**. Assuming that the public health emergency ends on May 11 as anticipated, P-EBT funds will not be available beyond the end of fiscal year 2023. **As a result, states must issue all P-EBT benefits by September 30, 2023.** This applies to P-EBT benefits for school year 2022-2023 and summer 2023. Benefits issued by the states for the summer and school year after this date may result in liability to the state.

d. Names of state agencies involved in administering this plan.

Response: Guam Department of Education's Child Nutrition Programs, Guam Department of Public Health & Social Services. Guam will issue a one-time benefit no later than December 31, 2023. However, this is contingent upon contractual and procurement regulations and timelines. Guam will inform FNS in writing and obtain approval should the issuance of benefits be distributed after December 31, 2023.

4. Summer P-EBT for school children:

- Describe how the state will identify school children who attended an NSLP-participating school at the end of school year 2022-2023 who qualified to receive free or reduced price school meals under the NSLP or SBP. This group includes:

Only children who attended an NSLP participating school in Guam in the last month of School Year 2022-2023 will be eligible for P-EBT benefits for summer 2023. Students who have left an NSLP participating school in Guam earlier than the end of School Year 2022-2023 will not be eligible for P-EBT benefits for summer 2023.

- Describe how the state will ensure that households with children eligible for free or reduced price school meals will have an opportunity to establish their eligibility by application through the end of SY 22-23 and into the summer of 2023 (*to the extent possible*). USDA understands that states that elect to keep their school meal application process open beyond the end of the school year will set a summer application deadline that allows the states to process these applications and issue benefits by September 30, 2023.
- **The Guam Department of Education’s Year End Student Enrollment Data were utilized to establish eligibility as all schools within the District participated within the Community Eligibility Provision during school year 2022-2023.**

5. Benefit Levels

Summer 2023 P-EBT Benefit

Please note that this new benefit from the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 has Changed from the level for summer 2022 P-EBT benefits.

Summer 2023 P-EBT Benefit	
Contiguous U.S.	\$120
Alaska	188
Hawaii, Guam, Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands	139

6. Implementation Timeline, EBT Processing, and Benefit Issuance

Please provide an implementation timeline for summer 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.
- If the PHE ends on or before September 30, 2023, states must issue all P-EBT benefits by September 30, 2023.
- 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:

Guam will continue to use the existing EBT card designs for all SNAP and non-SNAP households. Guam's PHPro Systems vendor created a separate module strictly for P-EBT and created a unique identifier to distinguish between regular SNAP benefits vs. P-EBT benefits (i.e. P-1234). P-EBT will be the spending priority. Guam will also continue to use the existing expungement rules for SNAP. DPHSS does not provide EBT cards via mail for families that are on-island. However, students/families who have relocated outside of Guam are mailed the EBT cards to their current residence. Customers must physically pick up their EBT cards at the distribution site(s) determined by DPHSS. Therefore, we do not foresee any cards being returned via mail due to incorrect mailing addresses. Guam will continue with its current practice should replacement cards need to be issued. Children who previously existed in P-EBT SNAP households and who received a card, will not be issued a new card. The "new" group of children will receive a new card. However, should a P-EBT household no longer have their P-EBT cards whether it was lost, stolen, damaged etc., then we will continue with the current practice should it need to be replaced.

7. Customer Service

To complete Section 7, we encourage states to use language from their previously approved SY 22-23 plans, if applicable.

- 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 to 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: For any disputes or issuance errors, DPHSS created a troubleshooting” Form initiated since the first distribution of P-EBT. This form identifies the parent and child’s information and the issue needing to be resolved. The troubleshooting team reviews the documentation and conducts the research to resolve the dispute or issuance error. We also have two main cell phone numbers utilized for P-EBT inquiries, calls, and text messaging. Most parents utilize the “WhatsApp” on their phones to make “free” phone calls if calling from off-island. Zoom is another form of communication we use to help resolve disputes as well, if needed. Regardless of what method is used to resolve disputes, the parents’ identity is always validated before releasing any information.

DPHSS serves the groups with potential access problems in various ways:

- 1. Conduct home visits (most especially people living with disabilities, limited internet access, etc.)**
- 2. Work directly with Child Protective Services for foster children**
- 3. Work with available interpreters from the Guam Relief Center if needed for those with limited English proficiency**

Guam will continue using its existing public information campaign. We will utilize a variety of communication platforms such as:

- ✓ **Posting information and Q&A in DPHSS**
- ✓ **Printing flyers and broadcasting advertisements**
- ✓ **Social Media**
- ✓ **Continued collaboration with the Governor of Guam’s communication department in establishing P-EBT as one of the options in the existing “311” Hotline which links to phone numbers of staff identified to answer**

inquiries.

- ✓ **The phone numbers are as follows and begin with area code 671: 488-6815/488-6839 (may send text messages as well), 300-8867, 300-8870, 300-8871, 735-7267, 735-7310, 735-7325, 735-7368.**

8. Over-issuance of P-EBT benefits

To complete Section 8, we encourage states to use language from their previously approved SY 22-23 plans, if applicable.

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: DPHSS will utilize its current SNAP process to recover or adjust P-EBT payments to correct errors on previous issuances and WILL NOT apply their existing SNAP benefit claim process to P-EBT by developing P-EBT-specific rules and procedures and include those in the State Plan and consider the capability of the SNAP systems to distinguish P-EBT from SNAP benefits.

DPHSS will transmit the Investigation Recovery Office (IRO) Referral to the Bureau of Management Support.

This process will take into consideration that many households received their benefits, without application, through an automated match process that relied on DPHSS 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, the State's P-EBT plan will 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 DPHSS may attempt to recover benefits or reduce a future issuance. Under no circumstances may the DPHSS reduce a SNAP benefit to settle a P-EBT claim.

The recoupment of P-EBT benefits will be incorporated into the Bureau's existing recoupment module, with a separate P-EBT program category code to distinguish this from other claim types. This will assist in clearly delineating the difference between regular SNAP recoupment versus P-EBT. 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.

Any P-EBT Claims will be reported to FNS and coordinated with Guam's Investigation Recovery Office (IRO).

9. 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.

10. 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. 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 10 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.

11. 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."

12. 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.

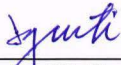
13. Administration of State P-EBT Plan

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.

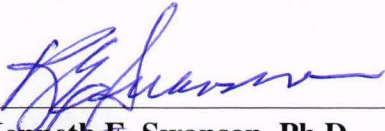
Reminder

If the state needs to make any significant changes to its summer 2023 plan after approval, the state needs to submit an amendment to USDA that describes the change and its impact on operating summer P-EBT. USDA will review the amendment and approve allowable amendments.

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



Arthur U. San Agustin, MHR
Director, Department of Public Health & Social Services



Kenneth E. Swanson, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Education

Date of Request: 9/29/23