

Important P-EBT Update; Register for Feb. 3 Webinar

The Illinois Department of Human Services will begin distributing P-EBT benefits for SY 2020-21 to known eligible Illinois students in March. Join us for a [P-EBT SY 2020-21 Basic Overview and Question and Answer webinar](#) 1:30 p.m. Feb. 3 to review and ask questions about the Illinois Plan for P-EBT and what you need to do to ensure your eligible students receive benefits.

Does this information apply to my school(s) if currently participating in the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)? The answer is yes based on the information provided in the tasks below.

In order to provide P-EBT benefits to students and families in need, we need your prompt action on the following tasks:

- Complete the *Illinois P-EBT Qualified Sponsor Survey* available now in the Web-Based Illinois Nutrition System (WINS) for all eligible schools. Once logged into WINS, on the main sponsor lookup page, access the survey link under “Sponsor Tasks.” Find detailed instructions to complete the survey at www.isbe.net/pebt.
- Ensure that enrolled students have an opportunity to provide current socioeconomic data to the school via the Household Eligibility Application, should they not currently be eligible. Schools should ensure that all Direct Certification reports have been accessed and should review the low-income indicator to ensure that it matches the student’s free or reduced-price eligibility. See complete Eligibility Determination Guidance below.
- Ensure that all P-EBT eligible students (all enrolled students in a CEP school, and those eligible for free or reduced-price meals in a non-CEP school) have a current mailing address on file with the school. If possible, verify current mailing addresses for eligible students to ensure accurate mailing of benefits and lessen questions from parents expecting benefits. Find a sample parent letter at www.isbe.net/pebt.
- Ensure the **monthly** student attendance data is recorded for eligible students. The attendance data is used to determine eligible P-EBT benefit days. ISBE strongly encourages school districts to update attendance data in the Student Information System (SIS) **on a monthly basis** so that P-EBT benefits may be regularly provided to students in need.

All schools should enter the required data for July 2020 through January 2021 into the appropriate system (for public schools, SIS; for nonpublic schools, WINS) no later than **Feb. 25** to ensure timely benefits to students. Information for both public and nonpublic schools related to data collection are posted at www.isbe.net/pebt. Going forward, enter data for each month by the 25th of the following month. For example, enter February 2021 data by March 25.

Eligibility Determination Guidance for P-EBT

Based on USDA requirements, a school day is a P-EBT eligible day if the day is an official school day and the student was not offered a reimbursable meal to consume at school due to reasons related to COVID-19. Scenarios may include a remote learning day, a day when a student is quarantining due to COVID-19, or a hybrid school day during which the student was not offered a reimbursable meal to consume at school. A day in which the student does not attend school for reasons other than COVID-19, such as an unexcused absence, are not P-EBT eligible days and should be excluded.

School Districts Operating the Seamless Summer Option (SSO) or Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)

- Students enrolled in schools operating SFSP **are eligible for P-EBT benefits** on P-EBT eligible days, if the school participated in the National School Lunch Program as of February 2020, and the students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals or enrolled in a CEP-approved school.
- School districts operating SSO or SFSP and providing universal free meals can use last year's (SY 2019-20) student eligibility as a starting point for SY 2020-21 P-EBT eligibility. Per USDA guidance, the eligibility carryover period for students is "paused during SSO/SFSP operations." **Therefore, SY 2019-20 free and reduced-price student eligibility can be used for P-EBT benefit issuance if a new eligibility determination for the student has not been made for SY 2020-21.**
- If a new household application is received this school year (SY 2020-21) for a student that was eligible for free or reduced-price meals in SY 2019-20 and the application is not certified for free or reduced-price meals, then the student is **no longer eligible** for P-EBT. If a student eligible for free or reduced-price meals in SY 2019-20 comes up as a "no match" through Direct Certification this school year (SY 2020-21), the student's eligibility does not change and they are **still eligible** for P-EBT as the 30-day carryover period continues to be "paused" during SSO/SFSP operations. Students newly approved free or reduced-price meals as of this year (SY 2020-21) through approved household applications, categorical eligibility (homeless, migrant, or runaway) or Direct Certification are **newly eligible** for P-EBT.

School Districts with Schools Approved as CEP (Operating SFSP, SSO, or NSLP/SBP)

- All students enrolled in CEP-approved schools are eligible for P-EBT on P-EBT eligible days.

School Districts Operating NSLP/SBP (Not CEP-Approved)

- Last year's student eligibility (SY 2019-20) cannot be used, if the 30-day carryover period of eligibility has already expired. Newly eligible free or reduced-price students for SY 2020-21 approved through household applications, categorical eligibility (homeless, migrant, or runaway) or Direct Certification are eligible for P-EBT on P-EBT eligible days.

P-EBT guidance materials, training videos, and sample letters to parents/guardians are posted online at www.isbe.net/pebt. Should you or your staff have any questions about P-EBT, please reach out to ISBE at pebt@isbe.net.

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